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SHORT TITLE

LUTHER TEACHING THROUGH PREACHING

Ritthamel, Th.D., 1965

LUTHER'S PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AS REFLECTED

IN HIS PREACHED SERMONS

1528-1532

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

by

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CHAPTER I

LUTHER TEACHING IN THE PULPIT

This thesis will explore the educational development and teaching activities of Martin Luther against the background of the Reformation. It will bring some understanding of the importance of education in the Lutheran Reformation, the scope of Luther's educational activities, the necessity of education for the success of the Reformation, and the objectives which marked the educational activity in the Reformation. It will show the theological development of Martin Luther and how this brought about educational reforms. This study is especially directed toward relating these items to Luther's preaching in the period of 1528-1532.

The years which have been chosen as the final focus of this thesis, 1528-1532, are important for a number of reasons. These years bring a mature Luther under scrutiny. They are years of some definite and specific educational activity. These years include the Visitation of the churches of Saxony which had a good deal of educational content and purpose. The Large and Small Catechisms of Luther were put into definite form in this period, growing out of the catechetical sermons which Luther preached at the end of 1528 and the beginning of 1529. While at Coburg during the Diet of Augsburg of 1530, Luther wrote an important "sermon" on the duty of parents to send their children to school.

This period is also important because there was a growing realization that the Evangelical (Lutheran) church was to be an entity separate from the Roman Church, realized after 1530 and the Augsburg Confession, which was delivered by the evangelical princes at Augsburg in June of 1530.

The overall plan of the thesis is to use a chronological development as much as possible. The chronological development has, in some measure, been dictated by the dates which become the final focus of the thesis. Luther's education and growth will be dealt with chronologically and topically. His theological principles will be dealt with in the same manner. The materials which he produced in the period 1528-1532 will be dealt with as a chronological block.

Another important reason for using the dates 1528-1532 is that two volumes of Luther's sermons in this period have been edited and reconstructed by one of the greatest scholars of Luther's preaching, Dr. Georg Buchwald, in his Predigten D. Martin Luthers auf Grund von Nachschriften Georg Roerers und Anton Lauterbachs.¹ There are one hundred and ninety-two sermons in these two volumes.

Note is also taken of the lectures delivered by Harold J. Grimm as part of the Martin Luther Lectures at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, in 1959, published in 1960, and entitled "Luther and Education." The second lecture, entitled "Luther as a Teacher in the Pulpit"² deals with part of the topic of this research. Grimm used the volumes of Buchwald.

¹Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, edited by Georg Buchwald, 2 vols. (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1926).

²Harold J. Grimm, "Luther as a Teacher in the Pulpit," "Luther and Education," in "Luther and Culture," Martin Luther Lectures, Vol. 4 (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, c.1960), pp. 94-118.

CHAPTER II

LUTHER'S EDUCATION AND GROWTH AS EDUCATOR

On November 11, 1483, a child was born to Hans and Margarethe Luther in Eisleben. This child was baptized on the next day, St. Martin's Day, in the Tower Room of St. Peter's Church, and was named for this saint. In the early summer of 1484, for some unknown reason, the parents moved with their infant son to Mansfeld. Martin Luther attended school in Mansfeld from about the age of five to fourteen. This school was a Trivialschule, a school in which the medieval Trivium was taught, id est, grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The school was graded in three groups. The first was the Tabulisten, or beginners, who were taught the ABC's of Latin, largely through a Fibel, or Latin primer. The children were taught the Benedicite or prayers at meals, the confession of sins, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. They had to recite several times a day and were expected to learn a few Latin words at home. The second group was called the Donatisten from a Latin textbook which was in use. Here the assignment was frequently an entire Psalm, a section of the Vulgate, or a part of the Service. In this manner the student became quite familiar with the different parts of the Roman Catholic service and mastered elementary Latin grammar. The upper division was known as the Alexandristen, named after a textbook by Alexander de Ville Dieu, in which the student was given more advanced Latin grammar and syntax. Here they also became acquainted with the Latin-German dictionary, used the German language, and were asked to take part in the Latin services of the church. That they might participate intelligently, they were taught hymns and responses, as

well as given explanations of the Epistles and Gospels of the pericopes.¹ The students were given musical training in the liturgy as well as in the theory of music. This may have been the basis of Luther's later musical abilities.²

Rhetoric, though not emphasized as much as it was in the early middle ages, still had a respected place in the school system. The literature that was read was extensive, including works of Cato, Aesop, Avian, Seculius, Plautus, and Terence. Later Luther thought that some of these materials, especially Aesop, were very useful for the teaching of morals.³

Much of the training in these schools had a religious purpose. The music was to prepare these children to understand and participate in the Roman Catholic church services. The schools wanted to train good Roman Catholics. Though Luther complained about the education which he received, especially the Kirchenlatein, or church Latin, it must be remembered that had Luther remained in the Roman Catholic Church, this training would have stood him in good stead.⁴

In 1497, about Easter, when he was in his fourteenth year, Luther was sent to a school at Magdeburg. Luther referred to this school as that of the Nullbrueder, a school of the Brethren of the Common Life. This was a

¹Ernest G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1950), pp. 104ff.

²Ibid., pp. 112f.

³Ibid., p. 113.

⁴Ibid., p. 116.

natural place for him to come into contact with the Bible, because Bible reading and study was emphasized in the program of these schools.⁵

For some unknown reason Luther's parents in the following year sent him to school at Eisenach, to the Georgenschule, which compared favorably with the one Luther had attended at Magdeburg. In this Trivialschule he received instruction from two able teachers. One was Trebonius, the rector of the school; the second teacher was Wigand Gueldennapf aus Fritzlar. Luther always had a soft spot in his heart for Eisenach.⁶ A number of things contributed to this. The instruction which Luther received here was of such high order that it won his lifelong praise. It was here that he had his contacts with the Cotta and the Schalbe families through tutoring Henry Schalbe. Through these contacts Luther was exposed to

a congenial, comfortable atmosphere dominated by strong religious convictions and often the scene of stimulating conversations with distinguished guests. One of the most frequent of these was the Vicar of St. Marten who was in charge of the Franciscan monastery at the foot of the Wartburg, the Barfuesser Kloster, supported by the Schalbe family.⁷

These discussions may have planted seeds in the fertile mind of Luther and influenced him to enter the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt in 1505.⁸

⁵Ibid., p. 119.

⁶Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia Edition; Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1932), IV, 172. Hereafter referred to as PE. Also in D. Martin Luthers Werke (Kritische Gesamtausgabe; Weimar: Hermann Boehlau, 1883-1948), XXX, part 2, 577. Hereafter referred to as WA.

⁷Schwiebert, p. 128.

⁸Ibid. There is a short personal note on Luther's origin and education in a letter which Luther wrote to Spalatin, dated January 14, 1520. The letter seems to have been written because someone made the charge that his parents may have been Bohemians. "I was born at Eisleben, and baptized in

In the summer of 1501 he entered the University of Erfurt to pursue the study of the liberal arts. Luther's training was in the standard subjects of his day, leaning heavily to the dialectics of the scholastics, though the humanist influence was felt on the campus. Two of Luther's leading professors, Trutvetter and Usingen, used a kind of "Scholastic Humanism," drawing upon the treasures of antiquity, quoting the classics to support the points they wished to establish.⁹

The year after he entered the University he took his Bachelor of Philosophy degree, ranking thirtieth in a class of fifty-seven. In 1505 he became a Master of Philosophy, ranking second in a group of seventeen. Though he was prepared to teach as a Master, he entered the school of law at the urging of his father to prepare for a legal profession. He could not have been involved in law school very long for on July 17, 1505, he quite suddenly entered the monastery of the Hermits of St. Augustine in Erfurt. What moved him to enter the monastery, whether the wound inflicted

the church of St. Peter there. I do not remember this, but I believe my parents and compatriots. My parents had migrated thither from Eisenach hard by. Eisenach has almost all my relatives, and there I am today recognized and known by most of them, since I studied there four years 1497 to 1501 nor does any city know me better. I hope they would not be so foolish that one should call the son of Luther nephew, another uncle, another cousin (of whom I have many there), if they knew that my father and mother were Bohemians and other than natives of their town." Martin Luther, Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, translated and edited by Preserved Smith and Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1913 and 1918), I, 273f. Hereafter referred to as Smith. Also in Dr. Martin Luther's Briefwechsel, edited by Ernst L. Enders and Gustav Kawerau (Frankfurt a. M.: Schriften Niederlage des Evangel. Vereins, 1884; Calw and Stuttgart: Verlag der Vereins Buchhandlung, 1887 to 1907; Leipzig: Verein fuer Reformationsgeschichte, 1910-1912), II, 292. Hereafter referred to as Enders.

⁹Gustav M. Bruce, Luther As An Educator (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1928), pp. 66f.

on himself in an accident with a short sword, the death of a close friend, or the storm encountered on his way back to Erfurt from Mansfeld, leads only to conjecture, and adds nothing to the understanding of the development of Luther. Luther never gave any indication of the struggle that he may have had at this time.¹⁰

Entrance into the monastery involved Luther in a novitiate which lasted about a year, until 1506. Perhaps in September of this year he went through the formality of taking the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity which were his first step toward the priesthood.¹¹ Luther's theological studies actually began before this time, for he was expected to study Gabriel Biel's Canon of the Mass. This book initiated him into the mystery of the Mass, the very cornerstone of the entire sacramental system of the Roman church.¹²

In the spring of 1507 Luther was ordained to the priesthood.

It is probable that he was ordained a subdeacon by Prior Winand on December 19 (1506); a deacon by the suffragan bishop of Erfurt, John von Laasphe, on February 27, 1507; and finally a priest on April 4 by the same prelate in the Erfurt cathedral . . . the first mass took place in the monastery church on Cantata Sunday, May 2, 1507.¹³

Luther's father had come from Mansfeld, accompanied by twenty horsemen,

¹⁰Heinrich Boehmer, Martin Luther: Road to Reformation, translated by John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1946), pp. 29ff.

¹¹Ibid., p. 41.

¹²Schwiebert, pp. 147f.

¹³Boehmer, p. 42.

and contributed twenty gulden to the monastic refectory for refreshments after the celebration.¹⁴

Though ordination to the priesthood meant being in a certain routine of monastic life, Luther also was involved in a further course of study in theology in the Order's school of advanced study (Studium Generale) connected with the monastery. Father John Nathin, a follower of the Occamist Gabriel Biel, was the chief instructor. While in the monastery school Luther studied the Sentences of Peter Lombard, hearing lectures from Nathin, who used the Collectorium of Biel and the Quaestiones of d'Ailly and Occam. He could have had some contact here with the Summa of Thomas Aquinas. No doubt Luther learned his lessons well, for he later felt at home in all of these writers of both the via moderna and via antiqua.¹⁵ He became familiar also with the works of Augustine, Athanasius, Jerome, Occam, Scotus, Anselm, Lombard, Bonaventura, Bernard of Clairvaux, Gerson, and others.¹⁶

In 1508 Luther was called to the University of Wittenberg on the order of Johann Staupitz, Vicar General of the Austinians in Germany, to fill the Order's chair of moral philosophy. He taught Aristotle's Ethics and Dialectics, beginning with the winter term, and remained there for about a year.¹⁷ His heavy schedule of teaching and studying he described briefly in a letter to John Brain, dated March 17, 1509:

Now I am at Wittenberg, by God's command or permission.
If you wish to know my condition, I am well, thank God,

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 42f.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 44f.

¹⁶Bruce, p. 75.

¹⁷Boehmer, p. 52.

except that my studies are very severe, especially philosophy, which from the first I would willingly have changed for theology; I mean that theology which searches out the meat of the nut, and the kernel and the marrow of the bones. . . .¹⁸

On March 9th of this same year (1509) he was elevated to the degree of Bachelor of Biblical Studies. Shortly after this he was transferred back to the monastery at Erfurt, and at the urging of Dr. Nathin was graduated from the University of Erfurt as a Master of the Sentences. Following this he had to lecture on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, which was the standard theological work of the day.¹⁹ During this time Luther continued his own studies, especially in the writings of Augustine.²⁰

From November, 1510, to March, 1511, Luther made his trip to Rome.²¹ In the summer of 1511 he was transferred to Wittenberg by Staupitz and directed to begin his studies toward the Doctorate in Biblical Theology that would eventually permit him to fill the chair of Biblical Theology held by Staupitz, who found it increasingly difficult to work in this area because of the press of business of the Order.²² He was also ordered to preach. Staupitz could appoint him a preacher, but only the University could confer the doctorate. The preparations for the doctorate were completed in October of 1512. The cost of the promotion was born by the

¹⁸Smith, I, 23.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 30.

²⁰Martin Luther, "Letters," Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1963), XLVIII, 5. Hereafter referred to as LW.

²¹Schwiebert, p. 149.

²²Luther, "Letters," LW, XLVIII, 5.

Elector on the assurance that Luther would teach for life at Wittenberg. The Elector's agents, Degenhart Pfeffinger and John von Dolzig, were authorized to pay the sum of fifty gulden to Staupitz.²³ Smith quotes from a list of expenses of these men at the St. Michael's Day Market at Leipzig:

which Martin, Augustinian friar at Wittenberg, received against his own written receipt. These fifty gulden our most gracious lord kindly commanded to be given to the said friar for his doctorate, which he will receive at Wittenberg shortly after this fair, in return for which Dr. (Staupitz) has undertaken that the said Martin shall during his life-time lecture on the subject assigned to him at Wittenberg.²⁴

The doctorate was conferred on October 18, 1512, after five years of graduate work in the most exacting disciplines of that day. Luther extended an invitation to the doctoral ceremonies to Prior Andrew Lohr and the Convent at Erfurt. He wrote:

in obedience to you and to our reverend Vicar Staupitz I shall take my examination in theology in the hall of the university First of all I beg you for Christ's sake to commend me to God in your common prayers Then I beg that you will deign to come and be present at the celebration, if convenient, for the glory and honor of religion and especially of our chapter. . . .²⁵

From the time Luther entered the monastery, during the years in which he prepared to receive his doctorate a struggle went on within him. He tried to find the long sought peace of soul as outlined in Roman theology. The more he studied the classic theology of his day, the more confused he was. His confusion came from the Roman understanding of penance, and the

²³Enders, I, 9.

²⁴Smith, I, 26.

²⁵Ibid., p. 24. Also Enders, I, 7f.

attempts he made to meet the requirements of the Roman system. In writing to Staupitz after his publication of the Ninety-five Theses he portrayed this struggle and also the Vicar's part in helping him:

I remember, reverend Father, among those happy and wholesome stories of yours, by which the Lord used wonderfully to console me, that you often mentioned the word "penitence," whereupon, distressed by our consciences and by those torturers who with endless and intolerable precept taught nothing by what they called a method of confession, we received you as a messenger from heaven, for penitence is not genuine save when it begins from the love of justice and of God, and this which they consider the end and consummation of repentance is rather its commencement.

Your words on this subject pierced me like the sharp arrows of the mighty, so that I began to see what the Scriptures had to say about penitence, and behold the happy result: the texts all supported and favored your doctrine, in so much that, while there had formerly been no word in almost all the Bible more bitter to me than "penitence" (although I zealously simulated it before God and tried to express an assumed and forced love), now no word sounds sweeter or more pleasant to me than that. For thus do the commands of God become sweet when we understand that they are not to be read in books only, but in the wounds of the sweetest Savior.

After this it happened by the favor of the learned men who taught me Hebrew and Greek that I learned that the Greek word is metanoia (μετάνοια) from meta (μετά) and noun (νοῦν), i. e., from "afterwards" and "mind," so that penitence of metanoia (μετάνοια) is "coming to one's right mind," afterwards, that is, comprehension of your own evil, after you had accepted loss and found out your error. This is impossible without a change in your affections. All this agrees so well with Paul's theology, that, in my opinion, at least, nothing is more characteristically Pauline.

Then I progressed and saw that metanoia meant not only "afterwards" and "mind," but also "change" and "mind," so that metanoia means change of mind and affection. . . .

Sticking fast to this conclusion, I dared to think that they were wrong who attributed so much to works of repentance and elaborate confession. They were seduced by the Latin, for "poenitentiam agere" means rather a work than

a change of affection and in no wise agrees with the Greek.²⁶

Luther continued with thoughts that led to his publication of the Ninety-five Theses:

When I was glowing with this thought, behold indulgences and remission of sins began to be trumpeted abroad with tremendous clangor, but these trumpets animated no one to real struggle. In short, the doctrine of true repentance was neglected, and only the cheapest part of it, that called penance was magnified. . . . As I was not able to oppose the fury of these preachers, I determined modestly to take issue with them and to call their theories in doubt, relying as I did on the opinion of all the doctors and of the whole Church, who all say it is better to perform the penance than buy it, that is, an indulgence. This is the reason why I, reverend Father, who always love retirement, have unhappily been forced into the public view.²⁷

When Luther was made a doctor he began his Bible teaching career with the Psalms. Beginning with the summer semester of 1513 he lectured on the Psalms until the winter semester of 1515. Luther had the printer in Wittenberg, Johann Grunenberg, print the Psalms with space between the lines and large margins. This was a novel use of printing but it gave ready space for notes. When he finished the Psalms, he turned to the Letter to the Romans, and had the printer prepare sheets with the same format. Luther met his classes twice a week, Mondays and Fridays, at 6 a.m. He needed three semesters for Romans, beginning at Easter of 1515 and finishing early in September of 1516.²⁸

²⁶Smith, I, 91f. Also Enders, I, 196f.

²⁷Smith, I, 92. Also Enders, I, 198.

²⁸Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, vol. XV of The Library of Christian Classics, translated and edited by Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1961), p. xx. Hereafter referred to as Pauck Romans.

In the winter semester of 1516-1517 he took up the letter to the Galatians and then turned to the Letter to Hebrews in the summer semester of 1517 and the winter semester of 1517-1518. Luther remained a professor of biblical theology all of his life and throughout his academic career his lectures were devoted to biblical exegesis. He never took up Romans again, nor does he refer to his own lecture notes on this important book. The reason for this was most likely that Melanchthon took this as a regular task on becoming a professor at the University; he may have used Luther's lecture notes. The original notes remained in the Luther family and the son, Paul, had them richly bound in 1582.²⁹

Luther himself gave an explanation of his developing understanding of biblical theology in a preface to the 1545 Latin edition of his collected works. He gave these reminiscences as the background to the works first published in 1517-1521, which formed the first volume of his collected works.³⁰ Luther mentioned the fact that he had turned again to lecturing on the Psalms (1519). He felt better qualified to deal with the Psalms after he had dealt with St. Paul's letters to Romans and Galatians and the book of Hebrews.³¹

I had been seized with a really extraordinary ardor to understand Paul in the letter to the Romans, but until then there stood in my way, not coldness of blood, but this one word, i. e., Romans I, 17: "The justice of God is revealed in it." For I hated this word "the justice of God" which by the use and usage of all the doctors I

²⁹Ibid., pp. xxf.

³⁰Ibid., p. xxxvi.

³¹Ibid., Also LW, XXXIV, 336 and WA, LIV, 183.

was taught to understand philosophically in terms of that so-called formal or active justice with which God is just and punished the sinner and the unrighteous.

For, however irreproachably I lived as a monk, I felt myself before God to be a sinner with a most unquiet conscience, nor could I be confident that I had pleased him with my satisfaction. I did not love, nay, rather I hated, this righteous God who punished sinners and if not with tacit blasphemy, certainly with huge murmurings I was angry with God, saying, "As though it really were not enough that miserable sinners should be eternally damned with original sin and have all kinds of calamities laid upon them by the law of the Ten Commandments, God must go and add sorrow upon sorrow and even through the Gospel itself bring his justice to bear!" I raged in this way with a wildly aroused and disturbed conscience, and yet I knocked importunately at Paul in this passage, thirsting more ardently to know what Paul meant.³²

The continuation of Luther's account does not give the exact time when the change came about in his thinking and his conviction, but he does say that it happened in connection with his work on Romans.

At least, God being merciful, as I thought about it day and night, I noticed the context of the words, namely, "The justice of God is revealed in it; as it is written, the just shall live by faith." Then and there, I began to understand the justice of God as that by which the righteous man lives by the gift of God, namely, by faith, and this sentence "the justice of God is revealed in [through] the gospel" to be that passive justice with which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The just lives by faith."³³

The joy which Luther found in this discovery cannot be minimized, because it had such a far-reaching effect upon his life and work. It gave him, finally, the peace of mind he sought, the peace of conscience, the joy

³²Martin Luther, "Preface," Omnium Operum (Wittenberg: Johannem Lufft, 1545), no pagination. Hereafter referred to as Operum. Also in Pauck Romans, xxxvif., and LW, XXXIV, 336f.

³³Operum, no pagination. Also Pauck Romans, xxxvii, and LW, XXXIV, 337.

of teaching and of preaching the unmerited free grace of God in Christ Jesus. This was a theme of which he never tired and it can be found in many of his utterances that have been recorded. He portrayed this joy in the same document referred to above in these words:

This straightway made me feel as though reborn and as though I had entered through open gates into Paradise itself. From then on, the whole face of Scripture appeared different. I ran through the Scripture then as memory served, and found that other words had the same meaning, for example: the work of God with which he makes us wise, the fortitude of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

And now, much as I had hated the word "justice of God" before, so much the more sweetly I extolled this word to myself now, so that this passage in Paul was to me a real gate to Paradise. Afterward, I read Augustine On the Spirit and the Letter, where unexpectedly I came upon the fact that I, too, interpreted the justice of God in a similar way: namely, as that with which God endues us when he justifies us. And although this was said still imperfectly, and he does not clearly explain about "imputation," it was gratifying to me that he should teach a justice of God by which we are justified.³⁴

Luther wrote that he had this conviction before he began his second lectures on Psalms in 1519, but mentioned that the Diet of Worms, called by Charles V, compelled him to lay aside this work.

Much consideration has been given as to how far back into Luther's development this trend can be seen, because he lectured on Romans in 1515-1516. Schwiebert has placed it in 1514. He brings out that by the time Luther completed his lectures on Galatians in the spring of 1517 he was a rapidly maturing theologian, far removed from the searching, questing monk of a few years before, who was beset by all sorts of uncertainty concerning his own salvation and justification.

³⁴Ibid.

The "iustitia Dei" question has been diligently dissected by now and the literature is overwhelming. When were the "Erstlinge" to which Luther referred in 1545? Ernst Bizer, Fides ex auditu (1952 and enlarged, 1961) claimed it was not until 1518 to which Heinrich Bornkamm replied, upholding Vogelsang that the "breakthrough" came in 1514 while Luther was explaining the 72nd Psalm, in "Zur Frage der Iustitia Dei beim jungen Luther," Part I, Archiv fuer Reformationsgeschichte, LII, Heft I, 16-29; and Part II, ibid. LIII, Heft II, 1-60. The author's reformation studies support this latter view.³⁵

The breakthrough could have come while Luther was lecturing on Romans itself (Easter 1515 to September 1516). At all events, too much evidence exists to say that it took place as late as 1518.

Some correspondence exists in which Luther specifically mentions the "righteousness of Christ." In a letter dated April 8, 1516, Luther wrote to George Spenlein at Memmingen:

Now I would like to know whether your soul, tired of her own righteousness, would learn to breathe and confide in the righteousness of Christ. For in our age the presumption besets many, especially those who try to be just and good before all men, not knowing the righteousness of God, which is most bountifully and freely given us in Christ. Thus they long seek to do right by themselves, that they may have courage to stand before God as though fortified with their own virtues and merits, which is impossible. You yourself were of this opinion, or rather error, and so was I, who still fight against the error and have not yet conquered it.

Therefore my sweet brother, learn Christ and him crucified; learn to pray to him despairing of yourself, saying: Thou Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am thy sin; thou hast taken on thyself what thou wast not, and hast given to me what I was not. . . . For Christ only dwells in sinners. . . .³⁶

³⁵Ernest G. Schwiebert, "The Reformation and Theological Education," The Springfielder, XXVIII (Autumn 1964), 35. Cf. also Uuras Saarnivaara, Luther Discovers the Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1951), pp. 92ff.

³⁶Smith, I, 33. Also Enders, I, 29.

Luther wrote to Spalatin on October 19, 1516, attacking Erasmus and his ideas of righteousness of the law or of works:

For whatever good is done outside the faith of Christ, even if it makes Fabricii and Reguli, men who were righteous before men, yet it no more savors of justification than do apples or figs. . . . ³⁷

Thus the future reformer had a clear idea of the centrality of Christ. He used his own developing insights in biblical studies, his growing knowledge of the original languages, and his keen ability to see through the dialectical arguments of the fathers, his teachers, and his own contemporaries, to find Christ and His righteousness in Scripture.

In the spring of 1517 Luther wrote to Spalatin mentioning that his publication of the penitential Psalms was not produced for readers like the court pastor but for simple minds, and then goes on:

You already have enough in the works just mentioned, or if they are not enough, I beg you trust yourself to me this once, and with all your power lay hold on the book of Tauler's sermons, of which I spoke to you before . . . from this book you will see how the learning of our age iron, or rather earthen, be it Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, compared to the learning of this true piety. ³⁸

Luther was not a reformer in all of these writings, but a soul seeking for peace with God, evaluating all of the teachings of his church in the light of his own studies. The publication of the Ninety-five Theses must be placed in this context. Luther was incensed at the claims made by the peddlers of indulgences, especially John Tetzel, and invited a scholarly debate among the university people of his day.

³⁷Smith, I, 42f. Also Enders I, 64.

³⁸Smith, I, 56. Also Enders, I, 89.

Spalatin must have asked Luther about the study of the Bible, for Luther in a letter dated January 18, 1518, wrote him:

In the first place it is most certain that the Bible cannot be mastered by study or talent. Therefore you should first begin by praying that not for your glory, but for his, the Lord may be mercifully pleased to give you some comprehension of his words. . . . Then having achieved this humble despair, read the Bible from beginning to end, that first you may get the simple story in your mind (as I believe you have already done) in which Jerome's epistles and commentaries will be of great help. But for the understanding of Christ and the grace of God, this is for the hidden knowledge of the spirit, Augustine and Ambrose seem to me far better guides, especially as Jerome seems to Origenize, that is, allegorize, too much. . . .³⁹

When Luther published his Commentary on Galatians in the fall of 1519 he wrote a preface in the form of a letter to Peter Lupinus in which he spoke of his "chatting about indulgences" or "trifling observations about indulgences," stating that he wanted to evaluate all of these things by the divine standard of the Bible and the Gospel of Christ Jesus, but that his opponents wanted to measure everything by the power of the pope and the privileges of the Roman Church. He also mentioned his examination at Augsburg before Cardinal Cajetan on October 12, 1518. He used strong words in condemning the corruptions of the Roman Church and the pope and appealed only to the Holy Scriptures:

as we groan in vain with many a groan, we see the holy and awesome name of Christ, in which we have been justified, sanctified, and glorified, is given as a pretext for such foul, such filthy, such fearful enormities of greed, tyranny, lust, and godlessness; that it is being forced into the service of vice; and what is the worst evil of all--that the name of Christ is being blotted out by means of the name of Christ; that the church is being laid waste by means of the name of the church . . . I have decided to turn to the least important things, that is, to Divine

³⁹Smith, I, 69. Also Enders, I, 142.

Scriptures, and to those which come from the author of least consequences, the Apostle Paul.⁴⁰

After the Heidelberg Disputation with Eck, Luther returned through Erfurt and tried to see his old professors Usingen and Trutvetter. His attempt was unsuccessful, for these men whom he esteemed highly had become his opponents. He wrote them a letter explaining his position with reference to indulgences and other matters. Later he had a temporary reconciliation with them, but the following passage from a letter to these two former teachers shows the extent to which Luther had gone in his thinking by 1518:

To explain myself further, I simply believe that it is impossible to reform the Church unless Canon Law, scholastic theology, philosophy and logic, as they are now taught, are thoroughly rooted out and other studies put in their stead. I am so fixed in this opinion that I daily ask the Lord, as far as now may be, that the pure study of the Bible and the Fathers may be restored. You think I am no logician; perhaps I am not, but I know that I fear no one's logic when I defend this opinion. . . .⁴¹

It appears that John Lang, the head of the Augustinians at Erfurt, first directed Luther to the writings of John Tauler, a German mystic. Luther wrote to Lang in October of 1516:

Therefore, take care, as your Tauler commands, to persevere, keeping yourself apart and yet accessible to all men, as is befitting the son of the same God and the same church. . . .⁴²

Toward the end of 1516 Luther edited an anonymous tract of the Tauler school, to which he gave the name A German Theology.⁴³ In December of the same year he wrote to Spalatin:

⁴⁰Smith, I, 155f. Also in LW, XXVII, 153f.; Enders, II, 136.

⁴¹Smith, I, 83. Also Enders, I, 188.

⁴²Smith, I, 41. Also Enders, I, 55.

⁴³Smith, I, 41.

If you delight in reading pure, sound theology, like that of the earliest age, and in German, read the sermons of John Tauler, the Dominican, of which I sent you, as it were the quintessence. I have never read either in Latin or in our own tongue theology more wholesome or more agreeable to the Gospel. Taste and see, therefore, how sweet is the Lord, as you have first tasted and seen how bitter is everything in us. . . .⁴⁴

Luther referred to Tauler in several letters which show his reliance upon this German theologian. In a letter dated March 31, 1518, addressed to John Staupitz he pointed out that Tauler had directed him to Christ alone.

I know that my name is in bad odor with many, . . . even good men found fault with me for condemning rosaries, tonsures, chanting of psalms and other prayers, in short, all "good works." . . . Truly I have followed the theology of Tauler and of that book which you recently gave to Christian Doering to print [Staupitz's own book "Von der Liebe Gottes"]; I teach that men should trust in nothing save in Jesus Christ only, not in their own prayers, or merits or works for we are not saved by our own exertions but by the mercy of God. . . .⁴⁵

In writing to Eck at Ingolstadt in a letter dated January 17, 1519, Luther stated why he preferred Tauler to Aquinas, Bonaventura, and Alexander of Hales, even though Eck did not know Tauler.

I gave my reason for preferring him to the schoolmen, namely, that I learned more from him alone than from all the others . . . I only urge you to strain every nerve of your mind and scholastic learning to see whether you can rightly understand a single one of his sermons.⁴⁶

Luther spoke out against scholastic theology on a number of occasions.

⁴⁴Smith, I, 48. Also Enders, I, 75.

⁴⁵Smith, I, 78. Also Enders, I, 175f.

⁴⁶Smith, I, 146. Also Enders, V, 5.

One of these was in "A Letter to the Christian Reader"⁴⁷ in which he said that if only eloquence was desired, scholastic theology would be wonderful, and then wrote:

when I compare scholastic with sacred theology, that is, with Holy Scripture, it seems full of impiety and vanity and dangerous in all ways to be put before Christian minds not forearmed with the armor of God. . . .⁴⁸

In this connection he again pointed to Tauler and added the name of Wessel, when he wrote:

In truth, I see that the purer theology has been and is hidden among the Germans. Recently John Tauler came out, a quondam Thomist, if I may call him so, but a writer the like of whom I think has hardly been born since the age of the Apostles. Joined to him is a tract of like sort and language, the German Theology. After these Wessel⁴⁹

The Reformer had a keen sense of his ministerial obligation, assumed when he took his doctorate, and spoke of this in a letter, dated July 9, 1520, and addressed to Elector Frederick, when the latter had received Pope Leo's Exsurge Domine, which condemned Luther. Luther wrote:

Anyone who wishes may have my position . . . burn my books. . . . If I am not allowed to lay aside my office of teaching and preaching the Word, at any rate I shall be free in the way I teach it. Loaded with enough sins I will not add this unpardonable one, that, when I am made a minister of the Word, I should fail in my ministry and be found guilty of impious silence, of neglecting the truth and of thousands of lost souls. . . . I will offer everything of my own accord, if they will allow the message of salvation to be free to Christians. . . .

⁴⁷Martin Luther, "A Letter to the Christian Reader," WA, X, part 2, 329ff.

⁴⁸Smith, I, 135.

⁴⁹Smith, I, 135. Also WA, X, part 2, 329. Wessel Gansfort of Groningen, a Brother of the Common Life, who anticipated the doctrine of salvation by grace so exactly that Luther said: "Had I read Wessel previously my opponents would have said that I had taken everything from him, so clearly do our spirits agree." Smith, I, 135.

I do not seek a cardinal's hat, nor gold, nor whatever else Rome now prizes. . . .⁵⁰

Luther's lecturing was a radical departure from the accepted manner of presentation. Luther was not concerned with taking every word of a text and trying to give a presentation of minutiae. He was concerned with giving his students an understanding of the Bible itself, using the fathers in places where he believed they had a proper understanding of the text under discussion. He no longer felt himself a slave to the Scholastic approach to the study of theology with its basis in the Sentences of Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and Aristotle. His lecture method had a freshness about it that made students flock to hear him. This freedom in the Scriptures did not come suddenly to Luther, but was the result of a long growth.

Shortly after Luther began his lectures on the Bible, he also began his study of the languages of the Sacred Scriptures. He began his study of Greek in 1514 and Hebrew in 1516. With these studies Luther eventually changed his entire methodology of biblical exegesis. He now assumed that there was only one sense to Scripture which had to be found by the grammatical-historical approach to the text. Schwiebert's comment is:

Now he assumed the Bible had but one sense which had to be discovered by the grammatical-historical approach. The former Glossae and Scholia were abandoned. The change began to appear first in Romans, matured more fully in Galatians, and by 1517-1518 in the lectures on Hebrews the

⁵⁰Smith, I, 336f. Also Enders, II, 428. In a letter written by Mario Da Pozo to Francis Spinelli is this item: "It is said the Pope will make him a cardinal to quiet him, provided he choose to accept the grace. . . ." Dated January 9, 1524. Smith, I, 210f.

transformation was completed. Luther had invented the modern method of Biblical exegesis.⁵¹

This grammatical-historical approach was predicated upon a knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. In Luther's view a knowledge of the sacred languages was a sine qua non of the biblical exegete. Having this view Luther addressed the Elector to create chairs in the faculty of Wittenberg for the teaching of these languages. Spalatin, Luther's close friend at the court, suggested Mosellanus, of Leipzig. The Elector, however, had different plans. He wanted John Reuchlin to teach Greek and Hebrew at Wittenberg and extended such an invitation to him. Reuchlin declined the honor, but suggested his great-nephew, Melanchthon, for the Greek post, describing him as a scholar who could stand next to Erasmus in knowledge of Greek. Melanchthon accepted the post and arrived in Wittenberg on August 25, 1518.⁵²

The chair in Hebrew was more difficult to fill. There were few scholars available who were trained in Hebrew, and fewer still who could fit into the environment of Wittenberg. After several unsuccessful attempts to find a teacher, Mathaeus Goldhahn, better known as Aurogallus, was appointed. He ably filled the chair of Hebrew from 1521 until his death in 1543. He gave able assistance to Luther in translating the Old Testament.⁵³

Melanchthon, on August 29, 1518, delivered his inaugural address at Wittenberg on the subject The Improvement of Studies. In this address he stressed the need to learn the ancient languages of Hebrew, Greek, and

⁵¹Schwiebert, "Education," Springfielder, p. 15.

⁵²Ibid., p. 17.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 19f.

Latin thoroughly. He pleaded for a renaissance through the study of the original sources.⁵⁴

The humanistic scholarship which Melanchthon brought to Wittenberg had been fostered at the Latin school in Pforzheim near Stuttgart, under men like Georg Simler and John Hildebrandt, both Reuchlinists. At thirteen he had entered the University of Heidelberg. When Heidelberg refused to grant him a Master's degree, he went to Tuebingen, on the recommendation of Reuchlin, where he received his Master's degree and the right to lecture on the classics. In 1515 he published a book on the rudiments of the Greek language.⁵⁵

Almost immediately Luther and Melanchthon became close friends. Luther was a seminal thinker, the daring reformer, who spoke freely and bluntly, and like a rough oak could weather the storms. Melanchthon, on the other hand, was a quiet scholar, a systematic organizer, who needed peace and quiet for his best efforts.⁵⁶

Much has been made of Melanchthon's humanistic training and whether he remained a humanist all of his life. It must be remembered that the reformers did not look at all aspects of humanism with jaundiced eye, but openly fostered the attempt to recover antiquity. Melanchthon continued to translate and interpret the ancient writers in Greek and Latin throughout

⁵⁴Clyde Leonard Manschreck, Melanchthon, the Quiet Reformer (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1958), p. 22.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 32ff.

⁵⁶Schwiebert, "Education," Springfielder, p. 18.

his life.⁵⁷ Both Luther and Melanchthon felt that the humanistic studies must serve the Gospel and the evangelical movement.⁵⁸

Luther lost no time in interesting his new friend in theological studies after his arrival at Wittenberg. On September 9, 1519, Melanchthon took the degree of *Biblicus*.⁵⁹ While Luther was at the Wartburg, Melanchthon lectured on the Bible. When Luther returned an effort was made to keep Melanchthon in the theological faculty; however, he was reluctant to give up his language studies, for he felt that without Latin, Greek, and Hebrew clergymen would not be adequately trained for their tasks. The final disposition of this problem was that Melanchthon was to remain in the classics, and help the theological faculty as time permitted.⁶⁰

Melanchthon taught over a wide range of subjects including theology and the languages as well as rhetoric, physics, and philosophy.⁶¹ The place of Melanchthon in the entire reformation is eloquently summarized by Pauck:

He became one of the chief organizers of the Reformation in Saxony and he quickly acquired wide fame as the most prominent scholar in the University of Wittenberg and as author of unusually influential textbooks and other pedagogical writings. He now pursued the task of building the bridge between school and church, scholarship and theology, education and faith, culture and religion.⁶²

⁵⁷Manschreck, p. 56.

⁵⁸Wilhelm Pauck, "Luther and Melanchthon," Luther and Melanchthon in the History and Theology of the Reformation, edited by Vilmos Vajta (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 14ff.

⁵⁹Schwiebert, "Education," Springfielder, p. 19.

⁶⁰Manschreck, pp. 92ff. Pauck, "Melanchthon," Melanchthon in History, p. 15.

⁶¹Manschreck, p. 43.

⁶²Pauck, "Melanchthon," Melanchthon in History, p. 18.

Melanchthon's educational endeavors earned for him already during his own lifetime the title of Praeceptor Germaniae. Through his schools were established and the university system completely reorganized. Thousands were trained in his methods and through his textbooks. In 1524 he laid the groundwork for the school at Nuernberg. In 1525 he supervised the organization of the Latin school in Eisleben.. In 1527 he visited the schools in Thuringia. Much of the material which was later included in the Schulordnung of 1528 was the result of this visitation in Thuringia. This plan was adopted as law in Saxon lands and became the model for schools to come.⁶³ He also had a part in several reorganizations of the University of Wittenberg 1524-1526 and 1533.

In the Reformation two principles made it mandatory to foster mass education. They can be expressed as the material and formal principles of the Reformation, the priesthood of all believers through justification by faith in Christ Jesus, and the Bible as the final authority in doctrine and life.⁶⁴

"An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" written and published sometime in August of 1520 promoted the Scriptural principle of a universal priesthood. In this letter he developed the theme that the "two estates" which Rome claimed existed was a figment of Rome's imagination, saying:

It is pure invention that pope, bishops, priests, and monks are to be called the "spiritual estate"; princes, Lords, artisans, and farmers, the "temporal estate." That is indeed

⁶³Manschreck, pp. 131ff.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 132

a fine bit of lying and hypocrisy. Yet no one should be frightened by it; and for this reason--viz., that all Christians are truly of the "spiritual estate," and there is among them no difference at all but that of office, as Paul says in I Corinthians xii, we are all one body, yet every member has its own work, whereby it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians; for baptism, Gospel, and faith alone make us "spiritual" and a Christian people.⁶⁵

He showed that the whole sacerdotal system which placed the "clerics" in a class by themselves is also founded upon a false premise.

Through Baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood. . . . Therefore when the bishop consecrates it is the same thing as if he, in the place and stead of the whole congregation, all of whom have like power, were to take one out of their number and charge him to use this power for the others.⁶⁶

Luther also recognized that the calling of priests was a function which had divine command for he said,

just because we are all in like manner priests, no one must put himself forward and undertake without our consent and election to do what is in the power of all of us. . . . Therefore a priest in Christendom is nothing else than an officeholder. While he is in office, he has precedence. . . .⁶⁷

All Christians were priests and had the power of the Office of the Keys, though limited. This fundamental principle that Baptism conferred priesthood depended on the Scriptural concept that the Christian is saved alone by faith and not by the intermediacy of the priesthood. In November 1520 Luther wrote his tract on "The Freedom of a Christian," at the instigation of Karl von Miltitz, a papal emissary to Elector Frederick and Luther. The

⁶⁵Martin Luther, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," PE, II, 66; WA, 6, 381.

⁶⁶Luther, "Open Letter," PE, II, 66f.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 68.

Latin text carried a dedicatory letter addressed to Pope Leo X. It was written in a conciliatory manner. Luther even consented to ante-date it to September 6 to indicate that he was not motivated by the bull Exsurge Domine issued by Leo on June 15, 1520, but published in Germany after the September date. This tract developed the theme that it is by faith alone that man has justification.

Therefore the moment you begin to have faith you learn that all things in you are altogether blameworthy, sinful, and damnable When you have learned this you will know that you need Christ, who suffered and rose again for you so that, if you believe in him, you may through this faith become a new man in so far as your sins are forgiven and you are justified by the merits of another, namely, of Christ alone.⁶⁸

He stated further:

it ought to be the first concern of every Christian to lay aside all confidence in works and increasingly to strengthen faith alone and through faith to grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, who suffered and rose for him⁶⁹

In another place he said:

He ought to think: "Although I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true."⁷⁰

With such teaching Luther brought an entirely different kind of religious life before these people. This was something which had not been heard for many years in the Roman Catholic Church. He condemned all work-righteousness.

⁶⁸Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," LW, XXI, 346f.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 347.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 367.

In speaking of fasting, which was demanded in the Roman Church he said:

In doing these works, however, we must not think that a man is justified before God by them, for faith, which alone is righteousness before God, cannot endure that erroneous opinion.⁷¹

In another section he spoke of the relationship of faith and works:

So also our works should be done, not that we may be justified by them, since, being justified beforehand by faith, we ought to do all things freely and joyfully for the sake of others.⁷²

The need for education in connection with faith was expressed by Luther in this connection when he wrote:

we must also preach the word of grace and the promises of forgiveness by which faith is taught and aroused. Without this word of grace the works of the law, contrition, penitence, and all the rest are done and taught in vain.⁷³

In another place he said:

there is need that the minister of Christ be far-seeing and faithful. He ought so to govern and teach Christians in all these matters that their conscience and faith will not be offended. . . . Unless faith is at the same time constantly taught, this happens easily and defiles a great many, as has been done until now through the pestilent, impious, soul-destroying traditions of our popes and the opinions of our theologians.⁷⁴

Luther's stress on the faith of the individual Christian dealt a serious blow to the whole sacerdotal system of priests and sacraments as necessary for salvation. In "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" of October, 1520, he wrote:

⁷¹Ibid., p. 359.

⁷²Ibid., p. 368.

⁷³Ibid., p. 364.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 374f.

it has seemed best to restrict the name of sacrament to such promises as have signs attached to them. The remainder, not being bound to signs, are bare promises. Hence there are, strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the Church of God--baptism and bread; for only in these two do we find both the divinely instituted sign and the promise of forgiveness of sins.⁷⁵

Not only did Luther strike out at the sacerdotal system of the Roman Church, but he repeatedly referred to the Word and its proclamation as the most important function of the priest. In the same tract referred to above he spoke of the priesthood of all believers, saying:

If they were forced to grant that as many of us as have been baptized are all priests without distinction, as indeed we are, and that to them was committed the ministry only, yet with our consent, they would presently learn that they have no right to rule over us except in so far as we freely concede it. . . .

It follows herefrom that whoever does not preach the Word, called by the Church to this very thing, is no priest at all.⁷⁶

In his tract "The Freedom of a Christian" Luther also referred to this need of the Word for the individual Christian life.

One thing, and only one thing, is necessary for Christian life, righteousness, and freedom. That one thing is the most holy Word of God, the Gospel of Christ, . . . Let us then consider it certain and firmly established that the soul can do without anything except the Word of God and that where the Word of God is missing there is no help at all for the soul. If it has the Word of God it is rich and lacks nothing since it is the Word of life, truth, light, peace, righteousness, salvation, joy, liberty, wisdom, power, grace, glory, and of every incalculable blessing. . . .⁷⁷

⁷⁵Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," PE, II, 291f.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 279

⁷⁷Luther, "Freedom of Christian," LW, XXXI, 345.

The Word is the Gospel of God concerning his Son, who was made flesh, suffered, rose from the dead, and was glorified through the Spirit who sanctifies. To preach Christ means to feed the soul, make it righteous, set it free, and save it, provided it believes the preaching. . . .⁷⁸

When Luther spoke of the importance of the Word of God in the life of God's people, the Christians, he contrasted this very sharply with what was offered in the schools of his time, especially the universities. In writing "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility" he pointed this out at length.

He wrote:

The universities also need a good, thorough reformation What else are the universities, if their present condition remains unchanged . . . in which loose living prevails, the Holy Scripture and the Christian faith are little taught, and the blind, heathen master Aristotle rules alone, even more than Christ. In this regard my advice would be that Aristotle's Physics, Metaphysics, On the Soul, Ethics, which have hitherto been thought his best books should be altogether discarded, together with all the rest of his books which boast of treating things of nature I venture to say that any potter has more knowledge of nature than is written in these books. It grieves me to the heart that this damned, conceited, rascally heathen has with his false words deluded and made fools of so many of the best Christians. . . . As though we had not the Holy Scriptures, in which we are abundantly instructed about all things, and of them Aristotle had not the faintest inkling. . . . Again, his books on Ethics is the worst of all books. It flatly opposes divine grace and all Christian virtues, and yet it is considered one of his best works. Away with such books! Keep them away from all Christians.⁷⁹

Luther in this same letter defended his judgment of these works of Aristotle on the basis of firsthand knowledge. He said that he had lectured on him

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 346.

⁷⁹Luther, "Open Letter," PE, II, 146f.

and heard lectures on him and that he understood him better than either St. Thomas or Scotus. He referred to the lectures which he delivered to his brothers, most likely in the Monastery at Erfurt.⁸⁰ He did make an exception to some of Aristotle's works when he wrote:

I should be glad to see Aristotle's books on Logic, Rhetoric and Poetics retained or used in an abridged form; as text books for the profitable training of young people in speaking and preaching. But the commentaries and notes should be abolished. . . .⁸¹

He also complained that the Sentences of Peter Lombard were considered proper study for the doctors of theology, but the Bible was considered proper only for those who were in the bachelor level. He pointed out that this should be reversed.

If we are called by the title of teachers (Doctors) of Holy Scripture, then we ought to be compelled in accordance with our name, to teach the Holy Scriptures and nothing else.⁸²

Not only was Luther concerned that the Universities had such studies and followed such a program, but he was concerned also that all school children should receive the benefit of study in the Bible.

Above all, the foremost and most general subject of study, both in the higher and lower schools, should be the Holy Scriptures, and for the young boys the Gospel. And would to God that every town had a girl's school also, in which the girls were taught the Gospel for an hour each day either in German or Latin. . . . Ought not every Christian

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 147. Also Smith, I, 169ff.

⁸¹Luther, "Open Letter," PE, II, 150.

⁸²Ibid. . . .

at his ninth or tenth year know the entire holy Gospel from which he derives his name and life?⁸³

The work of Luther and Melanchthon made an impact on education at the University and elsewhere in Saxon lands, for the Elector Frederick wrote to his agent at Rome, Valentin von Teutleben in a letter dated September, 1520:

Now that Germany is flourishing in geniuses and in men of learning and wisdom, expert in the tongues and in all sorts of learning, and since even the laity have begun to be educated, and are moved by the zeal of knowing the Holy Scripture⁸⁴

Luther felt the necessity of working on a translation of the Bible. It is true that there were other translations of the Bible into German already at Luther's time, but they were not of the best quality. The success of Luther's version was fostered by the growing use of moveable type in printing. This made the translation which Luther prepared, and his other works, readily available to a large group of people. Luther began work on the New Testament of the Bible while he was at the Wartburg. He carried a completed manuscript with him when he returned to Wittenberg, asked Melanchthon's help in editing it, and had it published in September of 1522. The Old Testament occupied much of Luther's time during the following years. In his correspondence he frequently referred to the difficulties he encountered in making some of the prophets speak German. He received valuable assistance from various members of the faculty at Wittenberg, principally Melanchthon and Aurogallus. The completed Bible was printed in 1534, though

⁸³Ibid., pp. 151f.

⁸⁴Smith, I, 350.

parts had been published as they were completed. A number of revisions were published by the reformers during Luther's lifetime.⁸⁵

The development of Luther from a medieval theologian into an exegete with an historico-exegetical approach to Scripture led to many changes in the University of Wittenberg. There was a fresh approach to all of teaching that was brought about by this changed attitude toward learning. This also led to the break with Roman tradition. The study of languages was an essential part of the program, but the prime purpose of such study was to get back to the sources, to use this knowledge as a tool in biblical interpretation. The popularity of Luther's translation of the Bible, its excellence, its readability, its acceptance would have been impossible without a growth in appreciation for a return to the sources. All of Luther's training, all of his education, made possible these drastic changes in the life of Saxon Germany. These things were reflected in the changed preaching in the Reformation. The emphasis was on Biblical preaching. Education on all levels was directed to giving people an understanding of the basic truths of the Christian faith founded in Scripture.

Theological education began to blossom at Wittenberg in the years 1519-1520 under the able leadership of Luther and Melancthon. Two papal bulls threatened this program. The first bull, Exsurge Domine, of June 1520 threatened Luther and condemned as heretical some of his teachings. He burned it outside the Elster Gate of Wittenberg in December of that year. The second bull, entitled Decet Romanum pontificem, dated January of 1521, declared Luther a heretic. When the Diet of Worms met in May of 1521,

⁸⁵Schwiebert, Luther Times, pp. 643ff. This is an extensive section.

Charles V had Luther condemned as a heretic by the Edict of Worms. This meant that he was under the ban of the Church and the Empire and could be killed on sight by anyone. Luther was taken to the Wartburg for safe keeping.⁸⁶

With these developments the enrollment at the University dropped from 552 to 200. By 1524 it was feared that the whole University would fall apart. There also were internal difficulties which revolved about Dr. Bodenstein von Carlstadt. He opposed the granting of degrees and none was given for ten years. They were reintroduced in 1533.⁸⁷

Luther's concern at this time is shown in his writing to the Councilmen:

First of all, then, we are experiencing today throughout Germany how schools are everywhere allowed to go to wrack and ruin; universities are growing weak, monasteries are declining. This grass is like to wither and the flower thereof fadeth, as Isaiah says [40:7], because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it in His Word, and shineth with so great heat upon it through the Gospel.⁸⁸

Manschreck says that the two years 1524 and 1525 were critical years for the Reformation. The conflict with Erasmus, the peasant uprising, the death of Frederick, and the marriage of Luther he feels hindered the progress of reforms. The humanists drew back, the common man became disillusioned, the government wavered momentarily, critics were spreading rumors, but

⁸⁶Schwiebert, "Education," Springfielder, p. 23.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 23f.

⁸⁸Martin Luther, "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," PE, IV, 104; WA, XV, 28.

from all of these things the Reformation rebounded and recovered much prestige through the work of Melanchthon in the schools.⁸⁹

For some time before the death of Elector Frederick, Luther had been alarmed at the declining number of students at the University, and the weakening of the faculty through the acceptance of some of its members to calls in other fields of activity. When John the Steadfast became Elector, Luther urgently pleaded with him to strengthen the University. One of Luther's letters in behalf of the University is dated May 20, 1525. In this letter he wrote in part:

I have written your Grace's father . . . that he . . . set the university in order and secure a man who will undertake the task. It is true that your Grace has much else to do in these troublous times, but in this matter, too, delay is dangerous. . . . Besides, men are moving away and being called away every day. It will not be easy to bring them together again, and our neighbors are already gloating, as though the death of the Elector were the end of Wittenberg. . . . Necessity . . . demands that if we are to continue to have a university here, we must take prompt action. It were a pity if such a school, from which the Gospel has gone out into all the world, were to go down, and if when men are needed everywhere nothing were done to educate them. . . . For your Grace sees that the world cannot now be ruled by force alone, but must have men of learning, who by preaching and teaching the Word of God, help to restrain the people. If there were no preachers and teachers the temporal government would not long endure, not to speak of the Kingdom of God which would be taken from us. . . .⁹⁰

Charles V found it increasingly difficult to enforce the Edict of Worms in German lands. At the Diet of Speyer in 1526 the formula cuius

⁸⁹Manschreck, p. 130.

⁹⁰Smith, II, 317. Also in Martin Luther, Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe, edited by Wilhelm De Wette (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1825-1856), II, 664.

regio eius religio was adopted and each prince was responsible for the religious affairs in his own lands. This led to concentrated efforts, especially in the Saxon lands, systematically to establish the church along evangelical lines.⁹¹ A program of religious education, fostered by princes and clergy, was to be essential in the process.

⁹¹Schwiebert, "Education," Springfielder, p. 24.

CHAPTER III

THE THEOLOGY THAT GUIDED LUTHER'S EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Luther wrote, spoke, and preached repeatedly about education. In most of his writing concerning education a pastoral concern was expressed. Luther had the ability to relate everything to the structure of the Christian life. Whatever a man does, it should be done as a Christian. When he wrote "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany," this concern was evident as he developed the thought that parents seemed only interested in training their children to care for their bellies, but he pointed out that if they were honestly concerned for the welfare of their children they would request:

show us another way to educate them that will be pleasing to God and profitable to them; we certainly want to provide not only for the bellies of our dear children, but also for their souls. . . .¹

In the introduction to "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," Luther showed his pastoral concern for children and schools.

Now because, as pastors, it is a part of the duty of our office to be on our guard against these and other wicked wiles, we must not go to sleep on this matter, which is of such great importance; but we must incite, exhort, torment, and nag with all our power and diligence and care, so that the common people may not let themselves be so deceived and deluded by the devil. [i.e., to not be willing to provide education for their children.]

.....

Nevertheless, because some may have forgotten this, or

²³ ¹Martin Luther, "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," Works of Martin Luther, Philadelphia Edition (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1932), IV, 104f. Hereafter referred to as PE. Also in D. Martin Luthers Werks, kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Boehlau, 1883-1948), XV, 28f. Hereafter referred to as WA.

would be more persistent on account of my example, I have sent you this sermon of mine, which I have preached more than once to our people. . . .²

Luther's concern was also shown in the high regard in which he held the pastoral office and the encouragement he gave parents to train their children for such offices. His "Sermon on Keeping Children in School" affirms:

I hope, indeed, that believers, and those who want to be called Christians, know very well that the ministerial office has been established and instituted by God, not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood and the bitter death of His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . and He earned it dearly that in the whole world men should have this office of preaching, baptizing, loosing, binding, giving the Sacrament, comforting, warning, exhorting with God's Word, and whatever else belongs to the pastoral office. . . . the clerical office of which I am thinking . . . includes the work of pastors, teachers, preachers, lectors, priests (whom men call chaplains), sacristans, school-teachers, and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons.³

If none would give his children for this office,

what will become of the ministerial office? The old men who are now in the office, will not live forever, but are dying off every day, and there are no others to take their place.⁴

Luther told parents that they should rejoice if God permitted them to use their wealth and labor to raise a son who would be a pious Christian pastor.

² Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," PE, IV, 140f.; WA, XXX, part 2, 525.

³ Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 142f.; WA, XXX, part 2, 526f.

⁴ Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 144; WA, XXX, part 2, 530.

There is no dearer treasure, nor any more precious thing on earth or in this life than a pious and faithful pastor or preacher.⁵

Even though not all of the men who prepare for the ministry will be as highly educated as Doctors and Masters of the Holy Scriptures, the need for parish pastors directed him to write:

other boys ought also to study, even though they are not so clever, and ought to learn to understand, write, and read Latin; for it is not only highly learned Doctors and Masters of Holy Scripture, that we need. We must also have ordinary pastors who will teach the Gospel and the Catechism to the young and the ignorant, and baptize, and administer the Sacrament. They are of no use in a conflict with heretics, but that does not matter; in a good building we must have not only hewn facings, but also backing-stone; so we must have sacristans and other persons, who serve and help the preachers and the Word of God.⁶

Luther laid this whole matter of Christian education upon the pastors and school teachers when he wrote:

Especially ought preachers to impress these ideas upon the people from their youth up, school teachers impress them on the boys, and parents on their children, so that they may well learn that classes and offices are God's and ordained by God. . . .⁷

The most important subject, Luther felt, was the study of the Sacred Scriptures. In "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility" he spelled this out:

Above all, the foremost and most general subject of study, both in the higher and the lower schools, should be the

⁵Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 146; WA, XXX, part 2, 532.

⁶Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 153; WA, XXX, part 2, 545f.

⁷Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 168; WA, XXX, part 2, 568.

Holy Scriptures, and for the younger boys the Gospel. And would to God that every town had a girl's school also, in which the girls were taught the Gospel for an hour each day either in German or Latin. . . . Ought not every Christian at his ninth or tenth year to know the entire holy Gospel from which he derives his name and life?⁸

He continued:

We must give a terrible accounting for our neglect to set the Word of God before them. . . . where the Holy Scripture does not rule, there I most assuredly advise no one to place his child.⁹

In his Table Talks he also brought out that the disputing which went on in the schools about mysterious and hidden things was of little value, but he exhorted people to remain with the Word of God.

Mein Rath ist dasz man nich disputire von heimlichen, verborgenen Dingen sondern infaeltig bleibe in Gottes Wort, fuerhmlich im Katechismo, denn im selben habt ihr einen sehr feinen, richtigen, Kurzen Weg der ganzen christlichen Religion und die fuernehmesten Hauertartikel kurz verfasst.¹⁰

The need for educated persons in all walks of life was emphasized by Luther in his writings. He recognized that even people who would not go on to the university, who would not fill high positions in commerce, business, or the court, should have an education which would prepare them to live as Christians in their calling and would be guided by God's Word. He felt that everyone should be able to read Scripture for himself. In his "Letter to the Councilmen" he wrote:

⁸Martin Luther, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility," PE, II, 151f.

⁹Luther, "Open Letter," PE, II, 152f.

¹⁰Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe, Tischreden (Weimar: Hermann Boehlau, 1912-1921), III, 685. Hereafter referred to as WA TR.

If then there were no soul, as I have said, and if there were no need at all of schools and languages for the sake of the Scripture and of God, this one consideration should suffice to establish everywhere the very best schools for both boys and girls, namely, that in order to maintain its temporal estate, the world must have good and skilled men and women, so that the former may rule well over land and people and the latter may keep house and train children and servants aright.

.....

We are living in a new world today and things are being done differently. My idea is to let boys go to such a school for one or two hours a day, and spend the remainder of time working at home, learning a trade or doing whatever their parents desired; so that both study and work might go hand in hand while they were young and able to do both. . . . In like manner, a girl can surely find time enough to go to school one hour a day and still attend to all her duties at home; . . . desire to train the young people and to benefit and serve the world with well bred men and women.¹¹

Even though a person had studied Latin, which Luther felt every pastor should know, and did not go into the ministry, but learned a handicraft or trade or became a burgher, he felt that such a person could be used in the service of the Word if the occasion arose. This knowledge would never hurt him in earning a living, but would make him better able to rule his house.¹²

The need for educated men in government was also evident to Luther:

Since our government in Germany must be guided by the Roman imperial law . . . men must learn to know the law and the wisdom of our worldly government. . . . When I speak of jurists, I do not mean only the Doctors of Laws, but the whole profession, including chancellors, secretaries, judges, advocates, notaries, and all who have to do with the legal side of government; also the bigbugs known as counsellors, for they, too, work with law and belong among the jurists. . . .

¹¹ Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 121ff; WA, XV, 46f.

¹² Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 154; WA, XXX, part 2, 546f.

.....

Is it not serving God, if we help maintain His ordinance of civil government?¹³

Luther understood the value and dignity of all of work:

All classes and all the works ordained of God are to be praised highly as ever they can be, and none of them is to be despised in favor of another.¹⁴

The same thought was expressed by Luther when he encouraged pastors, teachers, and parents to impress upon children that there were many classes and offices which God had ordained.

If they know this, so that they despise and mock at and speak evil of none of them, but hold them all in honor, that pleases God and serves the cause of peace and unity; for God is a great Lord, and has many kinds of servants.¹⁵

Luther voiced many complaints against parents who were neglecting the proper training of their children, and he exhorted and pleaded with parents to train their children as God-fearing Christians, who would be an asset to the church and community. He had a very high regard for the position in which God had placed parents and the responsibilities which God had delegated to them. In his exposition of Exodus 20:2 he said:

God communicates honor to father and mother; for which reason there is no greater dominion on earth than the dominion of father and mother.¹⁶

¹³Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 160ff; WA, XXX, part 2, 557ff.

¹⁴Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 168; WA, XXX, part 2, 568.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Martin Luther, "Exposition of Exodus," Saemtliche Schriften, edited by Joh. Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1885), III, 1093. Hereafter referred to as St. L. Translation from Paul E. Kretzmann, Luther on Education in the Christian Home and School (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1940), p. 11. Hereafter referred to as PEK.

He contrasted the honor based on fear which was due to government with that which is due to parents.

this honor is not on the same level with that which is to be shown to father and mother. . . . father and mother are not terrible in this measure, but altogether pleasant. . . . father and mother are a delicate, pleasant, happy government; they do not receive from their children, but risk body and life, for the sake of their children, place their possessions and property in jeopardy, make a stake of their neck and their body and everything that they possess. . . . if father and mother would not love their children so dearly, how would they be reared and trained?¹⁷

He faulted parents because they neglected the training of their children in the fear of God, though they were concerned with fitting them for life in this world. His complaint included their neglect to train them to pray properly and to instruct them in things pertaining to salvation, as well as their unwillingness to spend enough money to have someone else train them. Children were under the control of their parents and

Therefore father and mother should be concerned about them, diligently train, instruct, and teach them, not only after the manner of the world, but also in spiritual things which pertain to their soul's salvation.¹⁸

Parents were to recognize that God had placed them over their children in His place. If parents recognized this their home would become a true church, a cloister, and even a paradise.

For father and mother here become like God, for they are rulers, bishops, pope, doctor, minister, preacher, schoolmaster, judge, and lord. The father has all names and offices of God over his children; and just

17 Luther, "Exposition of Exodus," St. L., III, 1093f. PEK, pp. 11f.

18 Luther, "Exposition of Exodus," St. L., III, 1108f. PEK, p. 19.

as God cares for us, nourishes us, protects and defends, teaches and instructs us, thus also a father teaches his child, nourishes it, and cares for it.¹⁹

In his commentary on Joel Luther spoke of the discipline which parents should exercise in the home, and the instruction which they should give their children from God's Word in order that the public teaching office might be strengthened.²⁰

He expressed his high regard for parents in a sermon on John 2:

For a house father who governs his home in the fear of God and trains his children and servants in the fear and knowledge of God, in decency and honesty, he is in a blessed, good, holy station. Thus also a woman, who waits on her children in giving food and drink, in cleaning and bathing them, need not inquire after a holier and more God-pleasing station.²¹

In "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany," Luther faulted parents for not sending their children to school. He complained that parents were unwilling to have their children educated because the parents felt their children would no longer be able to enter the spiritual estates and have an easy living. He quoted the parents as saying:

"Tell us," they say, "why should we send them to school, if they are not to become priests, monks, and nuns? They had better learn such things as will help them to make a living."²²

In urging support of schools he complained that people who would be

¹⁹Luther, "Exposition of Exodus," St. L., III, 1096. PEK, p. 18.

²⁰Martin Luther, "Commentary on Joel," St. L., VI, 1499. PEK, p. 19.

²¹Martin Luther, "Sermon on John 2:1-11," St. L., XIII, part b, 1598. PEK, 13.

²²Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 104; WA, XV, 28.

willing to give one gulden to fight the Turks ought to be willing to give a hundred gulden in order that one boy might be trained to become a Christian man.²³

In the "Preface to the German Mass" of 1526 Luther spoke of Catechetical instruction that should be carried on in the church must also be strengthened by its daily use in the home. He mentioned that he had reference to the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Our Father.

This instruction must be given . . . from the pulpit at stated times or daily as may be needed, and repeated or read aloud evenings and mornings in the homes for the children and servants, in order to train them as Christians. . . . If parents and guardians won't take the trouble to do this either themselves or through others, there never will be a catechism²⁴

He gave specific directions as to how this instruction should be carried on in the home and also encouraged the parents to have the children repeat portions of Scripture:

When a child begins to understand this it should be encouraged to bring home verses of Scripture from the sermon and to repeat them at mealtime for the parents, even as they formerly used to recite their Latin.²⁵

In his Table Talk Luther also referred to the need for instruction received in church being supported by the work that was done in the home. He said:

↳ 23 Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 106; WA, XV, 29.

↳ 24 Martin Luther, "Preface to the German Mass," Luther's Works, editors, Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-), LIII, 65. Hereafter referred to as LW.

↳ 25 Ibid.

The common and public sermons do little for the youth and children learn and retain little from them. But more needful is it that they be taught and well instructed with diligence in schools and at home; that they be heard and examined as to what they have learned, that is worth much. Indeed this is very wearisome and a great trouble, but it is necessary. The papists flee such labor and pains; they trouble themselves rather with keeping records of their rents and customs, so that the congregation of God is forsaken and neglected.²⁶

Many of the exhortations, comments, and directions of Luther referred to in this section were repeated by him in the contributions which he made to education in the years 1528-1530. These items will be dealt with in Section IV.²⁷

The efforts of Luther and his co-workers must have had a widespread, wholesome effect upon the education of the children in Germany. Mark Spavento in a letter addressed to Leonard Guistinian, dated May 5, 1525, had this to say:

during our two days stay at Coir every person we spoke to was a Lutheran, and so well acquainted with Luther's doctrine as to defy exaggeration. The boys and girls from eight to ten years of age, in support of their tenets, answer you by evangelical precepts better than many doctors of divinity could do in favor of the Catholic faith. . . .²⁸

The reform efforts of the faculty at Wittenberg, led by Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, made it important that the schools be retained or

²⁶WA TR, III, 679. Translation adapted from Frederick Eby, Early Protestant Educators, (New York: American Theological Library Association, 1962), p. 96.

²⁷Infra, pp. 57ff.

²⁸Martin Luther, Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, translated and edited by Preserved Smith and Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1913 and 1918), II, 412. Hereafter referred to as Smith.

strengthened and re-established where they had been permitted to disappear. Luther felt that the state should have a part in the moulding and shaping of the school system. He also felt that state and city governments should accept a responsibility toward the establishment and maintenance of a school system. In writing to the Councilmen he vividly portrayed a contrast of what had been and what was possible at that time:

For Almighty God has indeed graciously visited us Germans and proclaimed a true year of jubilee. We have at present the most excellent and learned young men, adorned with the languages and all arts, who could be of much service if we made use of them as instructors of the young. Is it not evident that we are now able to prepare a boy in three years, so that at the age of fifteen or eighteen he will know more than all universities and monasteries hitherto? Indeed, what did men learn in those institutions but how to become asses, blockheads, and dunces! For twenty and forty years one sat over one's books without acquiring either Latin or German. I say nothing of the shameful and vicious life, by which the excellent youths were miserably corrupted.

.....

it is my earnest intention, prayer, and desire that those ass-stables and devil's schools should either sink into the abyss or be converted into Christian Schools.²⁹

The support of these schools should be the responsibility of the government and the people should support such efforts of the government.

If money that needed to be expended upon

firearms, roads, bridges, dams, and countless similar items in order that a city may enjoy temporal peace and prosperity, why should not at least as much be devoted to the poor, needy youth, so that we might engage one or two competent men to teach school?³⁰

²⁹Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 107f.; WA, XV, 31.

³⁰Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 106; WA, XV, 30.

The people had been forced to give so much money and property for

indulgences, masses, vigils, endowments, testaments, anniversaries, mendicants, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, and all other like humbug; but now that he is rid by the grace of God of all that robbing and giving, he ought, out of gratitude to God and for His glory, to give a part of that amount for schools in which to train poor children, which would indeed be a good and precious investment. If the light of the Gospel had not dawned and set him free, he would have to give up to the above mentioned robbers ten times as much and more for ever, without any return.³¹

Though Luther realized that parents had the first responsibility to train their children, he also recognized that many of them would be unable to do this satisfactorily for a number of reasons.

There are various reasons why parents neglect their duty. In the first place, there are those who lack piety and decency, even if they had the ability to do it. . . . Secondly, the great majority of parents are, alas! unfitted for this work and do not know how children are to be trained and taught, for they themselves have learned nothing but how to provide for the belly; whereas it takes persons of exceptional ability to teach and train children aright. Thirdly, even if parents were able and willing to do it themselves, they have neither the time nor the opportunity for it, what with their other duties and housework. Necessity compels us, therefore, to engage public schoolteachers for the children, unless everyone were willing to engage an instructor of his own. But that would be too heavy a burden upon the common man, and many a promising boy would be neglected on account of poverty. . . .³²

Therefore it was the business of the councilmen and magistrates to establish and care for schools.

His arguments to the Councilmen included that they support and establish schools that people might be trained for government as well as the

∇³¹Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 106f.; WA, XV, 30.

∇³²Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 110; WA, XV, 34.

ministry of the Word. The study of languages was needed for all of the different offices in which men were to be engaged in the secular and spiritual realm. He also called languages the means whereby the Gospel had come to them, saying:

For though the Gospel has come and daily comes through the Holy Spirit alone, we cannot deny that it has come by means of the languages, by which it has been spread abroad, and by which it must be preserved. . . . And let us be sure of this: we shall not long preserve the Gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which we carry this jewel; they are the vessel in which we hold this wine; they are the larder in which this food is stored. . . .³³

Universal education was one of the goals that Luther set for the Reformation, for he realized that everyone ought to have the training that would enable him to read the Bible and fulfill his calling. He wanted schools for boys and girls and on several occasions wrote of this.

to establish everywhere the very best schools for both boys and girls, namely, that in order to maintain its temporal estate, the world must have good and skilled men and women, so that the former may rule well over land and people and the latter may keep house and train children and servants aright.³⁴

He answered the objection that there were too many other things to do with the proposal:

It is not in the least my intention to have such schools established as we had heretofore, in which a boy sat over his Donatus and Alexander for twenty or thirty years and yet learned nothing. We are living in a new world today and things are being done differently. My idea is to let

^{v2} 33Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 110; WA, XV, 34.

^{v3} 34Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 121; WA, XV, 44.

boys go to such a school for one or two hours a day, and spend the remainder of the time working at home, learning a trade In like manner, a girl can surely find enough time to go to school one hour a day and still attend to all her duties at home. . . . 35

Luther had a direct hand in trying to obtain a teacher for girls in Wittenberg. He wrote a letter to Elsa von Canitz, who was one of the nuns who had come with Catherine von Bora to Luther in 1523. In this letter he told her that she was to teach girls:

I have written to your aunt, Hanna von Plausig, asking her to send you to me for a time. I had intended to use you as a teacher for young girls, and thus by your means to set others an example in undertaking such work. You would live and board at my home and thus would run no risks and have no worries. . . . If you come we shall talk further of this matter.³⁶

Though Luther was in favor of general education for both boys and girls on the lower level, he felt there should be a selection of those who would go on to higher education. Already in "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility" in 1520 he wrote:

Moreover, if the universities were diligent in the study of Holy Scripture, we should not send everybody there, as we do when all we ask is numbers, and everyone wishes to have a doctor's degree; but we should send only the best qualified students, who have previously been well trained in the lower schools. A prince or city council ought to see to this, and permit only the well qualified to be sent. . . .³⁷

So also in his tract "To the Councilmen" in 1524 he wrote:

But the exceptional pupils, who give promise of becoming skilled teachers, preachers and holders of other spiritual

35-Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 123; WA, XV, 46f.

65 36-Smith, II, 413.

66 37-Luther, "Open Letter," PE, II, 152.

positions, should be kept longer at school or altogether dedicated to a life of study. . . . We must certainly have men to administer God's Word and Sacraments and to do pastoral work among the people. But where shall we get them if we let our schools decline and do not replace them with others that are Christian?³⁸

The Reformation wrought many changes in educational patterns and emphases throughout Germany and the world. At one time there was a concern voiced that the Reformation would bring with it a sterility in education, that many of the things which had been important before would be lost because of the Reformation. Some of the learned men of the day expressed concern that the new theology would do away with the study of letters or liberal education. Luther was emphatic that all of the different areas of education should be fostered, *id est*, the areas which were helpful to Christianity and the Reformation or the areas which would add something to man's appreciation of God's world. He expressed this concern in writing to Eoban Hess in a letter dated March 29, 1523, who had received the impression that the Reformation was interested in doing away with things like poetry and rhetoric.

Do not be disturbed by the fears which you express, that our theology will make us Germans more barbarous in letters than ever we have been; some people often have their fears when there is nothing to fear. I am persuaded that without knowledge of literature pure theology cannot at all endure, just as heretofore, when letters have declined and lain prostrate, theology, too, has wretchedly fallen and lain prostrate; nay, I see that there has never been a great revelation of the Word of God unless He has first prepared the way by the rise and prosperity of languages and letters, as though they were John the Baptists. There is, indeed, nothing that I have less wish to see done against our young people than that they should omit to study poetry and rhetoric. Certainly it is my desire

³⁸Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 124; WA, XV, 47.

that there shall be as many poets and rhetoricians as possible because I see that by these studies as by no other means, people are wonderfully fitted for the grasping of sacred truth and for handling it skillfully and happily. . . . Therefore I beg of you that at my request . . . you will urge your young people to be diligent in the study of poetry and rhetoric. As Christ lives, I am often angry with myself that my age and my manner of life do not leave me any time to busy myself with the poets and orators. I have bought me a Homer that I might become a Greek. . . .³⁹

Already in his "Letter to the Christian Nobility," Luther had specifically stated that there should be a reform in all of the disciplines. Some of these disciplines like medicine, mathematics, history, and music he felt should be brought into line with the new learning. He felt that the specialists in these fields should come forth with reforms, all of which should serve the purpose of training Christian youth, for the future of Christendom remained with them.⁴⁰

The one subject toward which Luther had little sympathy was Canon Law. He felt that all of it should be done away and he claimed a partial responsibility toward doing this when he wrote:

the jurist and theologians I take as my share, and I say, in the first place that it were well if the canon law, from the first letter to the last, and especially the decretals were utterly blotted out. The Bible contains more than enough directions for all our living, and so the study of the canon law only stands in the way of the study of the Holy Scriptures⁴¹

Secular law, on the other hand, he felt should be reformed by those who knew more about it than he did.

³⁹Smith, I, 175.

⁴⁰Luther, "Open Letter," PE, II, 147f.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 148.

In the "Letter to the Councilmen" Luther stated what he would do personally if he had children, giving an idea of the scope in which he would want them instructed:

If I had children and could accomplish it, they would study not only the languages and history, but singing, instrumental music, and all of mathematics. . . . How I regret now that I did not read more poets and historians, and that no one taught me them. I was obliged instead to read, with great cost, labor, and injury, that devil's filth, the philosophers and sophists, from which I have all I can do to get myself clean.⁴²

Music was one of the things which Luther greatly enjoyed and felt that young people should receive training in this discipline. In writing a Preface to the hymnbook by Walther in 1524 he said:

And these [songs] are arranged in four parts for no other reason than that I greatly desire the youth, who certainly should and must be trained in music and other proper and useful arts, to have something whereby they may be weaned away and freed from the love ballads and worldly songs, and instead of those learn something wholesome and beneficial. . . . Furthermore I am not of the opinion that all arts are to be cast down and destroyed on account of the Gospel as some fanatics protest; on the other hand I would gladly see all arts, especially music, in the service of Him who has given and created them. . . .⁴³

A modern note was struck by Luther when he wrote to the Councilmen concerning libraries and the kind of books that should be placed in them. He felt that no effort or expense should be spared in founding good libraries. He felt that the larger cities should be especially able to do this. He recognized the value of books but gave the following advice:

But my advice is not to huddle together indiscriminately all sorts of books and to look only to their

71 ⁴²Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 122f.; WA, XV, 46.

72 ⁴³Martin Luther, "Preface to Spiritual Hymn Booklet," PE, VI, 284.

number and quantity. I would gather only the best; there is no need of collecting the commentaries of all jurists, the sentences of all theologians, the questions of all philosophers, and the sermons of all monks. . . . First of all there should be in it the Holy Scriptures in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and in whatever other languages they might be had. Then the best commentaries. . . . Then books that aid us in acquiring the languages, such as the poets and orators, no matter whether heathen or Christian, Greek or Latin; for it is from such books that one must learn grammar. Then should come books of the liberal arts and all the other arts. Lastly, books of law and of medicine, though here too a careful choice among commentaries should be made. . . .

.....

Among the chief books, however, should be chronicles and histories, in whatever language they may be had; for they are of wondrous value for understanding and controlling the course of this world and especially for noting the wonderful works of God. . . .⁴⁴

He also complained in this connection that the Germans were not in the habit of recording the current events which would become history at a future date. He felt that the Germans could well emulate the Greeks, Romans, and the Hebrews in this respect.⁴⁵

This comment of Luther makes a fitting conclusion to this section:

Since, then, God has at present so graciously bestowed upon us an abundance of arts, scholars, and books, it is time to reap and gather in the best, so far as we are able, and to lay up treasure in order that we may preserve for the future something of these years of jubilee and not lose this bountiful harvest.⁴⁶

Luther wanted all the tools and disciplines of education to be used in the training of young people.

73 ⁴⁴Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 125ff.; WA, XV, 49ff.

79 ⁴⁵Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 128f.; WA, XV, 52.

75 ⁴⁶Luther, "To Councilmen," PE, IV, 129; WA, XV, 52.

Worship was also to serve the purposes of education through the instruction that was to take place in the service. Luther felt that God's Word was to be read in the service and an interpretation made of at least a part of that reading, "so that all others may understand and learn it, and be admonished."⁴⁷ In the "Preface to the German Mass" he wrote that the service should have instruction as an integral part, for he felt that many of the people did not know Christian doctrine, but were in many respects nothing more than heathen who came into church to gape and look for something new. He wrote:

First, the German service needs a plain and simple, fair and square catechism. Catechism means the instruction in which the heathen who want to be Christians are taught and guided in what they should believe, know, do, and leave undone, according to the Christian faith. . . .⁴⁸

In another part of this "Preface" he wrote:

such orders are needed for those who are still becoming Christians or need to be strengthened, since a Christian does not need baptism, the Word, and the sacrament as a Christian--for all things are his--but as a sinner. They are essential especially for the immature and the young who must be trained and educated in the Scripture and God's Word daily so that they may become familiar with the Bible, grounded, well versed, and skilled in it, ready to defend their faith and in due time to teach others and to increase the kingdom of Christ. For such, one must read, sing, preach, write, and compose. And if it would help matters along, I would have all the bells pealing, and all the organs playing, and have everything ring that can make a sound. For this is the damnable thing about the popish services: that men made laws, works, and merits out of them--to the detriment of faith and did not use them to train the youth and common people in the Scriptures and in the Word of God, but became so engrossed in them as to regard them as inherently useful and necessary for salvation. . . .⁴⁹

⁴⁷Martin Luther, "Concerning the Order of Public Worship," LW, LIII, 12.

⁴⁸Luther, "Preface Mass," LW, LIII, 64.

⁴⁹Ibid., 62.

CHAPTER IV

LUTHER'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION IN THE PERIOD 1528-1532

The period of time which forms the focus of this study, the years 1528-1532, made several important contributions to education. These years brought the "Saxon Visitation" of 1528, the "Catechisms" of Luther in 1529, and the "Sermon on Sending Children to School," also in 1530.

The Reformation wrought such drastic changes in the entire parish life that new forms were needed to keep the church institutions in operation. Many of the pastors did not fully understand the new evangelical doctrines nor were they able to grasp their full significance for congregational life. Duke John Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, had turned to Luther for guidance in 1524, but the Peasant Uprising made it impossible to do anything about it at that time.¹

On October 31, 1525, Luther addressed a letter to the Elector in which he pointed out some of his concerns and pleaded for a visitation. Luther started his letter with an apology for being so insistent on the reorganization of the University, but pointed out the good that had come from it. He then continued:

Therefore, gracious lord, now that the university is set in order, and the Order of Worship (The German Mass) has been composed and is about to go into use, there remain two things which demand the attention and disposition of your Grace, as our temporal lord. The first thing is that the parishes everywhere are in such miserable condition. No one gives anything or pays for anything;

¹Martin Luther, "Preface to Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony," Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1955-), XL, 265. Hereafter referred to as LW.

the mass-fees are abolished, and either there are no taxes at all, or else they are too small; the common man does not think of the priest and preachers, and unless your Grace makes a strict law and undertakes to give proper support to the parishes and preaching places, there will soon be no parsonages or schools of pupils, and thus God's Word and Christian worship will be destroyed. . . . There are enough monasteries, foundations, benefices, charitable endowments and the like if only your Grace will interest himself sufficiently to command that they be inspected, reckoned up and organized. God will give His blessing to this work and prosper it, so that, if God will, the ordinances that concern men's souls will not be hindered by the needs or neglect of the poor stomach. . . .

The second is a matter of which I once spoke with your Grace here at Wittenberg. Your Grace ought to order an inspection of the temporal government also. . . .²

On November 7 of this same year the Elector wrote Luther requesting his advice:

We hold . . . that it would be altogether proper for the citizens, in the cities and also in the country, to contribute something to this purpose, either out of their own property or out of the ecclesiastical benefices that are at their disposal, so that the pastors and preachers who proclaim God's Word and administer the holy sacraments to them can be more fittingly supported. It is our gracious request that you will give us your opinion what sort of an ordinance you think ought to be made to cover the cases in which the needs and the support of the pastors and preachers are not provided for. . . .³

In November of 1525 Luther wrote the Elector telling him that his dominions should be divided into four or five parts and into each part several people ought to be sent to find out what the needs were and to

²Martin Luther, Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, translated and edited by Preserved Smith and Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1913 and 1918), II, 341ff. Hereafter referred to as Smith.

³Ibid., pp. 350f.

make provisions to meet these needs.⁴ On November 22, 1526, Luther wrote the Elector with very specific directions as to how the visitations should be conducted. He mentioned again that the people were not supporting the ministrations and went on to state:

because all of us, and especially the rulers are commanded to care for the poor children who are born every day and are growing up, and to keep them in the fear of God and under discipline, we must have schools and pastors and preachers. If the older people do not want them they may go to the devil; but if the young people are neglected and are not trained, it is the fault of the rulers, and the land will be filled with wild, loose-living people. . . . Therefore . . . it will be necessary for your Grace . . . to have the land visited as quickly as possible by four persons; two whose specialty is taxes and property, and two who are competent to pass on doctrine and character. These men, at your Grace's command, ought to have the schools and parishes set in order and provided for, where it is necessary.

If there is a town or a village which can do it, your Grace has the power to compel it to support schools, preaching places, and parishes. If they are unwilling to do this or to consider it for their own salvation's sake, then your Grace is the supreme guardian of the youth and of all who need his guardianship, and ought to hold them to it by force so that they must do it. It is just like compelling them by force to contribute to work for the building of bridges and roads, or any other of the country's needs. . . . But if they cannot do it and are overburdened with other things, there are the monastic properties which were established chiefly for the purpose of relieving the common man, and ought still be used for that purpose. . . .⁵

This visitation started in July of 1527 with Melanchthon and Hans von der Planitz going to Jena.⁶ The visitation articles were drawn up by

⁴Ibid., pp. 353f.

⁵Ibid., pp. 383f.

⁶According to a letter of Luther to Nicholas Hausmann, dated July 13, 1527. Smith, II, 408.

Melanchthon on the basis of his experience in this first visitation. Luther gave his guidance to these efforts and served as a mediator when differences arose with Agricola. John Bugenhagen, the pastor at Wittenberg, and Luther were called upon by the Elector to pass on the ordinances which were drawn up.⁷

According to a letter of Luther the "Visitation Articles" were published about Laetare Sunday in 1528. The articles actually appeared on March 22 of that year.⁸

In a letter to his friend Spalatin at Altenburg dated October 20, 1528, Luther mentioned his own part in this visitation:

Bugenhagen has gone to Hamburg, Philip to Thuringia. On the day after Ursula's day [October 22] we shall go at our part of the Visitation; I hope that you will do, or are already doing the same. . . .⁹

Luther wrote the preface to these articles in which he showed how the Apostles went about visiting churches and strengthening them. He also wrote of the desire to re-establish a true visitation practice and the part the Elector played in ordering such a visitation.¹⁰

The first part of the articles dealt with doctrine and practice in congregational life. The concluding section dealt with schools and curriculum.¹¹

⁷Ibid., pp. 415 and 426.

⁸Ibid., p. 431.

⁹Ibid., p. 458.

¹⁰Luther, "Preface Visitors," LW, XL, 269ff.

¹¹Martin Luther, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony," LW, XL, 269-320; also in D. Martin Luthers Werke,

The school plan in the articles called for Latin schools to train men for the varied offices in the church and state.

The preachers are to exhort the people to send their children to school so that persons are educated for competent service in church and state.¹²

A criticism of the schools was given as well as a syllabus:

At present many faults exist in the schools. We have set up the following syllabus of study so that the youth may be rightly instructed.

In the first place the schoolmasters are to be concerned about teaching the children Latin only, not German or Greek or Hebrew as some have done hitherto and troubled the poor children with so many languages. . . .

Secondly, they are also not to burden the children with a great many books, but avoid multiplicity in every possible way.

Thirdly, it is necessary to divide the children into groups.¹³

The first division (Haufen) was to teach the children to read with the primer, to write, to learn the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Donatus and Cato were to be taught to give the children a Latin vocabulary and an understanding of simple grammar. Music and the memorization of simple Latin words were also to be taught.¹⁴

The second group was to study grammar especially, have music as a

kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Boehlau, 1883-1948), XXVI, 195 to 249; hereafter referred to as WA; also in Emil Sehling, Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts, vol. III, 149-174; hereafter referred to as SE.

¹²Luther, "Visitors," LW, XL, 314; SE, III, 171.

¹³Luther, "Visitors," LW, XL, 315; SE, III, 172.

¹⁴Luther, "Visitors," LW, XL, 315f.; SE, III, 172.

regular part of the curriculum, Aesop's fables were to be expounded. A list of Latin authors and their works which were to be used was given. The children were to learn the rules of syntax. A regular time was to be appointed for the study of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. Selected Psalms and portions of the New Testament were to be taught.¹⁵

The third group was to be drilled in grammar, to become acquainted with Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero. The pupils were to be required to speak Latin and the schoolmasters were encouraged, as far as possible, to use only Latin with the pupils.¹⁶

These "Visitation Articles" were revised several times (1538 and 1545) and were used constantly in the supervision of the churches and schools. The educational section became the basis of the German educational system as embodied in the later Gymnasium.¹⁷

One of the lasting contributions which Luther made to education was his "Small Catechism," for it is still used in Lutheran circles to this day.

The preparation of a Catechism had been contemplated for a number of years before it was actually produced. Luther in writing to Nicholas Hausmann on February 2, 1525, had stated that the "preparation of a Catechism for boys has been committed to Jonas and Agricola."¹⁸ This work,

¹⁵Luther, "Visitors," LW, XL, 316ff.; SE, III, 172f.

¹⁶Luther, "Visitors," LW, XL, 319f.; SE, III, 173f.

¹⁷Luther, "Preface Visitors," LW, XL, 266f.

¹⁸Smith, II, 298.

however, was never finished. In a letter addressed to this same Hausmann on September 27, 1525, Luther said that he was putting off the Catechism because he wanted to do both the instructions for the visitation and the Catechism at the same time.¹⁹

The immediate occasion for writing both of the Catechisms is found in Luther's experience with the visitation in Saxony in the fall of 1528 and the early part of 1529. He spoke of this in the Preface to the "Small Catechism":

The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor constrained me to prepare this brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching. Although the people are supposed to be Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments, they live as if they were pigs and irrational beasts, and now that the Gospel has been restored they have mastered the fine art of abusing liberty.²⁰

The Preface was addressed to pastors and preachers whom he enjoined to be actively engaged in teaching and encouraging parents to have their children instructed. He also pleaded that in instructing small children the text of the Catechism should not be varied, but one form should be used consistently.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., p. 338.

²⁰Martin Luther, "Preface to The Small Catechism," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1959), p. 338.

²¹Ibid., pp. 338f.

The "Small Catechism" appeared originally in January of 1529 in wall chart form; it was published in book form in May of that same year. This "Small Catechism" was intended primarily for the instruction of children and so has none of the polemical material which is found in the "Large Catechism." The "Large Catechism" was intended primarily for use of pastors and teachers. The one is not merely an elaboration or condensation of the other, though both of them grew out of the same materials.²²

The sermonic materials from which the Catechisms were drawn will be dealt with in the sermons of 1528-1532.

In the summer of 1530, while the Diet met in Augsburg, Luther was quartered at the castle Coburg in Saxon lands, to be readily available if needed by the princes and theologians. During his stay at Coburg he had more leisure than had been available to him in his schedule at Wittenberg. He used this leisure to write "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," the complementary piece to his letter "To the Councilmen of all the Cities of Germany." The latter argued for the establishment of schools throughout Germany, while the former pleaded for the use of such schools by parents.

Luther called this tract a sermon, using this word in its broad Latin sense of any written or spoken piece. Though he stated that he had preached this more than once to his people, he was referring to the contents of the tract.²³

²²Ibid., pp. 337f.. Cf. Smith, II, 468. Much has been written about Luther's Catechism. Perhaps the best known English work is by J. Michael Reu, Catechetics (Chicago: The Wartburg Publishing House, 1918 and 1927), chapters 13ff.

²³Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," Works of Martin Luther, Philadelphia Edition (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1932), IV, 141. Hereafter referred to as PE. Also in WA, XXX, part 2, 525.

He complained that people were not sending their children to school because they felt that it was enough to read German and do sums to enable them to make a living. He exhorted the preachers to correct this mistaken notion, stating:

for preaching and governing and sitting in judgment, all the knowledge and all the languages in the world are too little, to say nothing of German only.²⁴

He also said that there would come a day when they would give one hundred gulden for half a scholar, though now they would not give ten gulden for two whole scholars.²⁵

Luther spelled out that he was pleading for students who would prepare for the ministerial office, not as it was known formerly, but the office which Jesus Christ earned

that in the whole world men should have this office of preaching, baptizing, loosing, binding, giving the Sacrament, comforting, warning, exhorting with God's Word, and whatever else belongs to the pastoral office. . . . the clerical office of which I am thinking . . . includes the work of pastors, teachers, preachers, lecturers, priests (whom men call chaplains), sacristans, schoolteachers and whatever other work belongs to these offices and persons.²⁶

He pointed out that those especially gifted should be kept at their studies, however, he also emphasized that

We must also have ordinary pastors who will teach the Gospel and the Catechism to the young and the ignorant, and baptize, and administer the Sacrament. They are of no use in a conflict with heretics, but that does not

²⁴Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 137; WA, XXX, part 2, 519.

²⁵Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 140; WA, XXX, part 2, 524.

²⁶Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 142f.; WA, XXX, part 2, 526f.

matter; in a good building we must have not only hews facings, but also backing-stone; so we must have sacristans and other persons, who serve and help the preachers and the Word of God.²⁷

With the wealth of educational materials that were available for the study of Holy Scriptures and all of the other fields of learning, Luther felt that these rich blessings of God should not be wasted, but used to the fullest extent.²⁸

The temporal government also needed educated men to fill the many varied offices which Luther also felt were means of serving God.²⁹

He expressed the thought that all of the works ordained by God were to be highly praised and made the plea:

Especially ought preachers to impress these ideas upon the people from their youth up, schoolteachers impress them on the boys, and parents on their children, so that they may well learn what classes and offices are God's and ordained of God. If they know this, so that they despise and mock and speak evil of none of them, but hold them all in honor, that pleases God and serves the cause of peace and unity; for God is a great Lord, and has many kinds of servants.³⁰

It was in this publication that Luther gave high praise to teachers when he wrote:

I would be brief and say that a diligent and pious school-teacher, or master, or whoever it is that faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never be sufficiently regarded, or repaid with any money, as even the heathen Aristotle says.

²⁷Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 153; WA, XXX, part 2, 545f.

²⁸Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 154; WA, XXX, part 2, 546f.

²⁹Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 158ff.; WA, XXX, part 2, 554ff.

³⁰Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 168; WA, XXX, part 2, 568.

Nevertheless, this work is as shamefully despised among us as though it was nothing at all. I myself, if I could leave the preaching office and other things, or had to do so, would not be so glad to have any other work as that of schoolmaster, or teacher of boys, for I know that this is the most useful, the greatest, and the best work, next to the work of preaching. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better; for it is hard to make old dogs obedient and old rascals pious; and that is the work at which the preacher must labor, often in vain. But young trees can be better bent and trained though some break in the process. Let it be one of the greatest virtues on earth faithfully to train other people's children; very few people, almost none, in fact, do this for their own.³¹

Luther felt that the government should keep promising boys in school and if the parents did not have the money needed for this purpose church properties should be used to help pay the costs. He also encouraged rich people to remember this work in their wills. The responsibility of government was indicated in the following:

But I hold that it is the duty of the government to compel its subjects to keep their children in school For it is truly its duty to maintain the offices and classes that have been mentioned, so that preachers, jurists, pastors, writers, physicians, schoolmasters, and the like may continue, for we cannot do without them. If it can compel its subjects who are fitted for the work to carry pike and musket, man the walls, and do other kinds of work, when war is necessary, how much more can it compel its subjects to keep their children in school, because here there is a worse war on, a war with the very devil, who goes about to suck out secretly the strength of cities and principalities, and empty them of able persons. . . .³²

³¹Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 174f.; WA, XXX, part 2, 579f.

³²Luther, "Children in School," PE, IV, 177f.; WA, XXX, part 2, 586f.

CHAPTER V

LUTHER THE PREACHER

An appreciation of Luther as a preacher must be gathered against the background of preaching at this time. There were good preachers before Luther, such as Geiler of Kaiserberg, a member of the Humanistic circle, who denounced corruption of the clergy, the evil lives in monasteries and convents, relic worship, pilgrimages, buying indulgences and most of all of the gross abuses and superstitions practiced in that day. Others like Savonarola of Italy, Lefevre in France, John Colet of England, preached powerfully against the evils of the day. Mystics like Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, and Gerson were also preachers. All of them were men of character, scholarship, and genius, but they were the exception, for there was much that passed for preaching which was mere grandstanding.¹ Luther in one of his Table Talks mentioned the Franciscan, Fleck of Leipzig, who began his sermon with laughter and shrieking, a Master Dietrich who entertained his hearers with popular songs which they had sung yesterday, and another who, crowing like a cock in the pulpit, awakened the sacristan, who cried out "And with thy spirit," thinking that the pastor had said, "The Lord be with you."²

¹Harold J. Grimm, Martin Luther As A Preacher (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, c.1929), pp. 58ff.

²Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe, Tischreden (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus, 1912-1921), II, 549. Hereafter referred to as WA TR. Also in English in James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation (London: Longmans, Green and Co., c.1930), IV, 309.

In his Table Talks Luther spoke of the foibles of the scholastic preachers who, he said, considered it effeminate and unmanly to use the name of Christ, and the names of the prophets and apostles or their writings. The rule and manner of preaching was this:

first take a theme, a saying or a question out of Scotus, or Aristotle, the heathen master (Scotus, Bonaventura, Occam, Aristotle, and Plato ruled). Secondly divide the same. Thirdly one came with the distinctions and questions. And this kind of preaching was the best, it did not remain with the Gospel, it did not deal even with one saying of Scripture, yes, the Holy Scripture was covered up, unknown, and buried.³

Mention could also be made of the mendicant friars, the wandering preachers of the Middle Ages, who went about the countryside trying to extract money from the parish for the benefit of their orders.⁴ Luther referred to them on several occasions in the sermons under study.

Luther restored the evangelical sermon to its place in the Christian Church. Grimm summarizes this:

Christ and His redemptive work had been entirely obscured and obliterated by the legends of the saints, by redemption through the use of money, and by the general doctrine of extolling good works. He went further than the reformers before him in that he not only destroyed the confidence of the people in the existing order of religious affairs, but in that he also attacked the root of the entire matter and gave them something positive in its stead. He shattered the entire structure of religion by formula and led his people back to a simple faith resembling that of the early church.⁵

³WA TR, III, 145; Mackinnon, IV, 309.

⁴Franklin W. Ritthamel, "The Relationship of Preaching and Life in Medieval England" (unpublished Bachelor's thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1957), pp. 45ff.

⁵Grimm, Preacher, p. 61.

The physical qualities which Luther brought to the pulpit are preserved for us in several descriptions which have come down to us from the time. One is written by Peter Mosellanus in a letter to Julius Pflug, dated early, December, 1519.

Martin is of middle height with a slender body worn out both by study and care, so that you can almost count his bones. He is in the vigor of manhood; his voice is sharp and clear. He is so wonderfully learned in the Bible that he has almost all the texts in memory. . . . In daily life and manners he is cultivated and affable, having nothing of the stoic and nothing supercilious about him; rather he plays the man at all seasons. . . .⁶

Another letter by Albert Burer to Beatus Rhenanus, dated in March of 1522, described Luther's concern for the weak consciences on his return from the Wartburg following the troubles with Carlstadt and Zwilling.

As far as one can tell from his face the man is kind, gentle, and cheerful. His voice is sweet and sonorous, so that I wonder at the sweet speaking of the man. Whatever he does, teaches, and says is most pious, even though his impious enemies say the opposite. Everyone, even though not Saxon, who hears him once, desires to hear him again and again, such tenacious hooks does he fix in the minds of his auditors. In short, there is nothing lacking in that man which makes for the most perfect Christian piety, even though all mortals and the gates of hell may say the contrary. . . .⁷

Luther was a man endowed with many natural gifts. He had a manliness of character which led men of strength to support him. He had a sympathetic love of humanity, and appreciated the lot of the common man; he was

⁶Martin Luther, Luther's Correspondence and other Contemporary Letters, translated and edited by Preserved Smith and Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1913 and 1918), I, 261. Hereafter referred to as Smith.

⁷Ibid., 115.

a man of the people, who was interested in his fellow men. His domestic life, when he entered marriage, was a picture of understanding, love for his family, and congenial company and fellowship. He had a deep love for nature and a humility which made him realize his utter dependence upon God.⁸

It is strange indeed that Luther, who by nature was an orator, should have been fearful of preaching when commanded to do so by Vicar Staupitz. Luther talked of this while seated under the pear tree in his garden. He asked Anthony Lauterbach how this preaching was faring. Lauterbach answered that he was having his difficulties and mentioned the fears which he had. Luther replied that he also was filled with fears when he was commanded to preach in the refectory before the brothers. He said he feared that pulpit. He mentioned part of his conversation with Dr. Staupitz:

Under this pear tree I advanced fully fifteen arguments to Dr. Staupitz with which I wanted to decline the call; but they did not help. When finally I said, "Dr. Staupitz you are taking my life, I will not live for a quarter of a year." He answered, "Very well, in God's Name! Our Lord God has great things to do. He needs wise people also in heaven."⁹

In this same conversation he encouraged this young man to preach Christ Jesus and the Catechism, not to seek praise in the office, nor preach only things which would please the people. The more important thing was to seek the praise of Christ.¹⁰

⁸Grimm, Preacher, pp. 17ff.

⁹WA TR, III, 188.

¹⁰Ibid.

Luther preached on an average of one hundred and fifty times a year from the time he began to preach in the city Church at Wittenberg, in 1515, until the time of his death in 1546.¹¹ Most of his sermons were not written; the notable exception was the Postillen which were prepared at the insistence of the Elector for those priests who were poorly educated. In March of 1522 he published his Weihnachtspostille, later in the same year his Adventspostille, and in 1525 his Fastenpostille.¹² In writing to his friend Spalatin, Luther said of these publications:

Of all that I do there is nothing I would do more willingly than that, because by this means alone I believe I could succor the priests and monks, so that they might cut off and reject those dirty fables of sermon-writers, which rather proscribe than describe Christ, and that they might have something by which they might publish the pure theology of Christ among the people, and expel those errors which flood the land like a deluge. . . .¹³

Luther usually preached from outlines which have not been preserved. Most of his sermons that have come down to the present are from notes taken by scribes from among his students and followers.

The purpose of the sermon for Luther was to bring the Word of God, to preach Christ and His redemption to the people. He felt that the preacher should address himself to the people in simple, homely language which the small children, young girls, old women and men could understand. He urged using Christ as the model Preacher.¹⁴ His advice was not to preach

¹¹Grimm, Preacher, pp. 93ff.

¹²Ibid., p. 100.

¹³Smith, I, 228 and 245.

¹⁴WA TR, VI, 198.

to the learned men like Jonas or Philip or the whole University, for these people could read the Scripture themselves. If preaching was directed to these learned ones, the poor people would stand around like a bunch of cows.¹⁵

In one of his Table Talks Luther gave what he felt were the qualifications of a good preacher:

First, that he can teach in a correct and orderly way. Second, that he has a good head. Third, that he can speak well. Fourth, that he has a good voice. Fifth, that he has a good memory. Sixth, he should know when to stop. Seventh, he should be well acquainted with his subject. Eighth, he should place his life and living, goods and home in it. Ninth, he should not let anyone vex him.¹⁶

A George Kunzelt, pastor at Elienburg, wrote Luther asking about his practice in preaching. Luther's answer, dated June 15, 1520, is revealing:

7 You inquire, venerable Father, as to my practice in beginning and ending a sermon; my usage is not the common one. Omitting wordy prologues I briefly say: "invoke the divine grace, and say an inward Ave Maria or Paternoster, that the Word of God may be fruitful to us and God accept us." Then I read the text, without announcing the topic. Then I explain or propound doctrines from it. At the end I say: "Enough of this," or, "More another time," or, "Having said this, we will pray God for his grace to enable us to do it," or thus: "God help us do it." Then most briefly: "Let us commend to God the spiritual and temporal estates, particularly so and so, for whom and for all, as we ought, we will recite the Lord's prayer in common." After this as all rise: "The blessing of God the Father, etc., Amen." This is my manner of preaching. . . .¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 196f.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 193.

¹⁷Smith, I, 331f.

The sermon was for Luther one of the high spots in the service or as he stated it in The German Mass:

Since the preaching and teaching of God's Word is the most important part of the divine service, we have arranged for sermons and lessons. . . .¹⁸

Marc Antony Longin, Secretary to Charles Contarini, writing to his brother John, observed that Germany was so entirely Lutheran that people did not follow the procession of the host. He continued his observations:

They go solely to the sermon, whither all flock universally, both great and small, with great devotion; and there are few who do not possess the book of the Epistles and the Gospels, viz., the New Testament. They go to the sermons as to a lecture; and nothing is preached but the interpretation of the pure Gospel. . . . Luther's whole faith, in short consists in loving God above all things, and one's neighbor as one's self, and he maintains that so many external ceremonies are unnecessary because Christ, by His passion, made atonement for everything. . . .¹⁹

The observations of various writers on the importance of the sermon for Luther can be seen from the following:

To Luther, therefore, the sermon was the strength and vitality of the Christian Church. It was the sermon that converted the souls to the Lord; it was the sermon alone that brought the church into being; the sermon alone should strengthen faith and preserve faith and love.²⁰

¹⁸Martin Luther, "The German Mass," Luther's Works, editors Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-), LIII, 68.

¹⁹Smith, II, 330.

²⁰Grimm, Preacher, p. 79.

CHAPTER VI

LUTHER'S CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION AS REFLECTED IN HIS PREACHED SERMONS 1528-1532

Very few of the many sermons which appeared during the life time of Luther, purported to be his, were actually written by him. Even of the Kirchenpostille, Buchwald says:

Von der Kirchenpostille hat Luther nur den Advents-, Weihnachts- und Fastenteil selbst gearbeitet.¹

What appeared as Luther's sermons were in most instances published from notes taken by students or hearers while Luther was preaching. Editions of these sermons appeared not only in Wittenberg, but also in Augsburg, Nuerenberg, and Erfurt. This became so aggravated that Luther felt impelled to issue his own at times. Buchwald reports one such instance as follows:

Im Jahre 1522 fuehlte sich Luther veranlaszt, den "Sermon von dem reichen Mann und dem armen Lasaro", den jemand in Augsburg hatte drucken lassen, selbst herauszugeben. Bitter beklagt er sich in einer Vorrede an die Buchdrucker: "Ich bitt um Christus willen alle, die da meine Sermon schreiben oder fassen, wollten sich derselben zu drucken und auszulassen enthalten, es sei denn, das sie durch meine Hand gefertigt oder hier zu Wittenberg durch meinen Befehl zuvor gedruckt sind. Denn es taugt doch gar nichts, dasz man das Wort Gottes so unfleiszig und ungeschickt laeszt ausgehen, das wir nur Spott und Greuel dran haben."²

¹Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, edited by Georg Buchwald (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1925), I, 2. Hereafter referred to as BP.

²Ibid.

Stephan Roth completed the Kirchenpostille; however, he did a poor job. Included were parts of Melancthon's notes on John and some items from Luther's Commentary on Galatians. With a heavy heart Luther wrote an introduction to this. He had Kasper Kreuziger put out a new edition of the Sommerpostille. This was a similar effort, for there were sermons from later years; the notes were used very freely. Veit Dietrich did a similar job on the Hauspostille. Andreas Poach also worked on a new edition of the Hauspostille in 1559. He used notes of Georg Roerer, but fell back on Veit Dietrich, so that a true picture of Luther's preaching was not given.³

The notes which Georg Roerer took were found in the University Library at Jena and were worked on by Andreas Poach and Johannes Aurifaber already in the 16th century. Poach made it his life's work to employ these notes in Roerer's own handwriting.⁴

In 1730 a Pastor M. Johann Melchior Krafft worked with Roerer's notes to reconstruct nine of Luther's sermons. Georg Buchwald did a similar thing in 1909 for the sermons of 1534. The two volumes which will be dealt with in this section of this thesis are sermons that were reconstructed from the notes of Roerer and also from the notes of Anton Lauterbach. Lauterbach not only left notes, but worked on his own notes during his own life time. He had been a resident at Wittenberg, so would have been familiar with Luther's preaching. He even left, in his notes, the warnings which Luther gave the congregation at Wittenberg.⁵

³Ibid., pp. 2ff.

⁴Ibid., pp. 5f.

⁵Ibid., pp. 6f.

These two volumes of Luther's sermons have been reconstructed from these reliable sources by Georg Buchwald, no doubt one of the greatest scholars of Luther's preaching. Buchwald was also the editor of the Weimar edition of Luther's sermons.

The collection presents a mature Luther who was in his forties when these sermons were preached in Wittenberg. Johann Bugenhagen, the town pastor, was absent from Wittenberg on organizational business in the evangelical cause, so Luther filled his pulpit.

All of Luther's adult life was spent in teaching. This was true from his first activity as a classroom lecturer, and especially after receiving his doctorate. His many writings for publication on a wide range of subjects as well as his personal correspondence, which brought many requests for pastoral counsel and guidance, served the purpose of teaching. This same was true of the debates in which he engaged, as well as the debates which he directed for the students and faculty at the University. They all served the purpose of education.

It was particularly by means of his sermons that Luther put into practice what today would be called adult education. He used the pulpit to instruct the people in the new evangelical doctrines, his own particularly, which had been brought back into the church through the efforts of the reformers. Luther occupied the pulpit frequently, on some Sundays preaching three times. Not infrequently he preached in the morning and again in the afternoon. In 1515 he was urged by the aged Simon Heinze, the city pastor in Wittenberg, to assist him. In that same year the town council of Wittenberg extended Luther a regular call as preacher in the city church, and his duty was "to supply all otherwise unprovided-for

appointments in that church."⁶ Even when Dr. Johann Bugenhagen became city pastor, Luther considered himself the vicar of the pastor. When Bugenhagen was away, it was natural for Luther to take over all of the pastoral functions. It is reported that in 1529 Luther preached from three to four times a week.⁷

Luther was primarily engaged in exegetical theology through his work in the University faculty; however, he was forced by the evangelical cause which he espoused to work in the systematic field to some extent, as evidenced in his catechetical work especially. He was also forced into the practical field by the problems which confronted him in the changed forms that were called for by the reformation, by the practical questions which were addressed to him by people throughout Germany who espoused his cause, as well as by the immediate parish concerns in Wittenberg which became his responsibility as the vicar and the pastor of the city church.

Much of Luther's preaching evidenced a supervisory concern for the people who were under his spiritual charge. It is doubtful that Luther did much pastoral calling in the homes of the people in Wittenberg. Still he seemed to have his finger on the pulsebeat of the community. This was true, perhaps, because it was a small community and much of what he mentioned was common knowledge in the town. He also exercised this supervisory concern in the pulpit. He even went so far as to warn about "gefaelscht

⁶Harold John Grimm, Martin Luther as Preacher (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, c.1929), p. 75.

⁷Ibid.

Bier" and "dasz die Hurerei hier zunimmt."⁸ With reference to the beer he said, "Wenn du's nicht zurecknehmen willst, werden wir beten, dasz dein Bier Dreck und Traebem werde."⁹ In connection with the other problem he said:

Ihr Ratsherrn, denen das Amt gehoert, solit's strafen. . . .
 Ich predige nicht gern davon. Soll ich's aber tun, so werde
 ich die Hurer in den Bann tun und die elende Hurerei anzeigen
 und will nicht in fremde Suenden verwilligen. . . .¹⁰

The educational concerns which Luther reflected in his preaching can be seen especially in the catechetical sermons that Luther preached in the period covered. Luther had preached two series of catechetical sermons earlier in the year. The first consisted of eleven sermons, from May 18 to May 30, 1528. The second series consisted of ten sermons preached from September 14 to September 25, 1528. The series contained in Buchwald's volumes were preached from November 30 to December 18, 1528. The importance of these sermons in the work of Luther can be seen from the following:

It is apparent that Luther is here forming the vocabulary into which he cast both his Large and Small Catechisms and that the Large Catechism particularly is a reworking of this catechetical preaching.¹¹

In the announcement of these sermons Luther showed his concern that the whole family should receive this instruction, which was held regularly through the year.

⁸BP, II, 427f.

⁹Ibid., p. 427.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 428.

¹¹Martin Luther, Luther's Works, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-), II, 135.

wir sind's bisher gewohnt und haben's also geordnet, viermal in jedem Jahre den Angang und Grund christlicher Erkenntnis und Lebens zu lehren, dass solches in jedem Vierteljahr zwei Wochen, vier Tage in einer Woche nachmittags zwei Uhr geprediget werde. Weil uns jene Stuecke hoch vonnoeten sind, ermahne ich euch treulich, dass ihr zur bezeichneten Zeit mit eurem Hause zusammenkommt. . . .¹²

His exhortation continued with the thought that they should not let their work interfere with such attendance:

Lasset euch nicht abhalten durch Arbeit und Handwerk und klagt nicht, ihr haettet Schaden, wenn ihr einmal eure Arbeit auf eine Stunde unterbrecht. . . .¹³

He told them of the freedom which they had received in the Gospel from all the demands of many festivals which they had been formerly called upon to celebrate, and then went on:

Dazu wie viel Zeit bringt ihr hin mit Trinken und Saufen. Die rechnet ihr nicht, aben wenn ihr auf Gottes Wort Zeit verwenden solit, da seid ihr ekel.¹⁴

He pleaded with them to give their children and servants free time that they might come to know Christ more fully.

If the children and servants did not want to come when they had been given time to do so, he urged the "Hausvaeter":

Denket doch ja nicht, ihr Hausvaeter, ihr waeret der Sorge um euer Gesinde ledig, so ihr sprecht: O wollen sie nicht neingehen, was darf ich sie zu treiben? Ich darf des nicht. O nein, des nicht, du bist ihnen zum Bischof und Pfarrer gesetzt: huete dich, dass du dein Amt ueber sie vernachlaessigest. Vernachlaessigt ihr solch Amt in euren

¹²BP, I, 70.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 70f.

Haeusern, so geraten wir in oeffentliche Verachtung, wie wir sehen, dasz schon bisher geschehen ist.¹⁵

Having placed the responsibility upon the father of the house, making him the bishop and pastor of those under his care in the home, he exhorted them:

hast du auszen und innen ihre Erziehung vernachlaessigt, da sich du zu! Sorget also, dasz jene zu dieser Predigt kommen. . . .¹⁶

He showed that he felt that this was primarily the responsibility of the parents when he wrote at the end of this section:

Ich verwalte des Pfarrers Amt und werde diese Predigt halten, ich will das Meine tun und mehr, denn wir verpflichtet sind.¹⁷

On November 27, 1530, he had a similar announcement, though the Catechism sermons are not included in the volume. There he mentioned that they all must remain pupils, that even he, Doctor Martin, a Doctor and a preacher, had need to daily say the parts of the Catechism as children do.¹⁸

In his first Catechism sermon Luther stated what he understood by this word "catechism," when he said:

Diese Stuecke, die ihr mich habt behandeln hoeren, sind genannt bei den alten Vaetern Katechismus, das ist: eine Kinderpredigt, die die Kinder wissen sollten und alle, die da wollen Christen sein.¹⁹

¹⁵Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., II, 46. Similar announcements May 14, 1531 (II, 271); September 10, 1531 (II, 486f.); December 3, 1531 (II, 577).

¹⁹Ibid., I, 72.

He spoke of the five chief parts with which he would deal and gave the directions:

Die heissen wir die Kinderpredigt, die man fuer die Einfael-tigen lehren musz, dasz sie zum ersten lernen sie Wort fuer Wort herzusagen, alsdann aber sie verstehen.²⁰

Lest people should get the idea that the Catechism was the end of all Christian instruction and growth, Luther pointed out:

Darum sprechen wir, dasz nicht alles in diesen drei Stuecken beschlossen sei, was die Christenheit wissen musz. Aber die Saueingen haben daran satt, bis sie erwachsen. Es sind andre in der Stadt, die die Kinder erziehen, andre, die in den Krieg gehen. Die einen haben Essen und Trinken, die andern fuehren das Schwert. So wird denn hier, wenn diese drei Stuecke gepredigt werden, nur der Katechismus angezeigt. Darnach, wenn sie erwachsen sind, wird ihnen auch gepredigt, wie man kaempfen muesse. Eine Mutter gibt dem Kinde nicht sogleich Wein, Brot und Fleisch in den Mund, sondern Milch.

Hiernach wollen wir auch von den beiden Sakramenten handeln. Der Katechismus ist die Lehre gewesen, damit man die Leute bereitet zum Sakrament.²¹

He looked upon the Catechism instruction as preparation for holy communion and also threatened the parents that if they did not help in this instruction they would not be permitted to go to holy communion.

Darum habe ich euch Alte ermahnt, dasz ihr eure Kinder und Gesinde und euch selbst dazu haltet: sonst werden wir euch nicht zur heiligen Kommunion zulassen.²²

The importance that he attached to this instruction was also clearly indicated when he said that all should know these things:

²⁰Ibid., pp. 73, 77.

²¹Ibid., pp. 132f. Refers to the Sacrament of the Altar. Also I, 72.

²²Ibid., p. 72.

Da sollt ihr wissen: wer der Katechismus nicht kennt, der soll nicht ein Christ heissen, nicht zum Abendmahl zugelassen werden, soll auch nicht Gevatter werden.²³

Because he felt these instructions were so important he said that these teachings should be used everywhere and learned:

Darum wird euch der Katechismus zu Hause und in der Kirche an die Wand gemalt, dasz ihr ihn lernen sollt. Es ist ein und dasselbe, was euch allen vertragen wird. Ich bin auch ein Doktor und in der Welt gewandelt von Gottes Gnaden und Ungnaden, dennoch hab ich nicht koennen zu dieser Erkenntnis kommen. . . . Darum sollt ihr eure Kinder sorgsam zu solcher Erkenntnis erziehen.²⁴

Luther vividly brought out the need for parental instruction in this whole matter when he said in his first Catechism sermon:

Denn wenn ihr Eltern und Herren nicht helft, werden wir mit unsrer Predigt wenig ausrichten. Und wenn ich das ganze Jahr predige und das Gesinde kommt nur herein und sieht die Waende und Fenster der Kirche an, so nuetzt es nichts.²⁵

He also gave instruction to the parents as to when these things should be used in the home when he said:

Gott hat dick darum zu einem Herrn und einer Frau gesetzt, dasz du dein Gesinde dazu haltest. Und das koennt ihr wohl, dasz sie morgens, wenn mann aufstehe, und abends wenn man schlafen gehe, und vor und nach dem Essen beten.²⁶

The Reformer had a very high esteem for parents and indicated this when he brought out:

Aber ein jeglicher Hausherr und Frau sollen gedenken, dasz sie Bischoefe und Bischoefinnen seien ueber Grete und Haensichen.²⁷

²³Ibid., p. 501.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., p. 72.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 75.

He had mentioned the same thing earlier in this same sermon in the introduction to the First Commandment:

Ein jeglicher Hausvater ist in seinem Hause ein Bischof und die Frau eine Bischoefin. Darum gedenket, dasz ihr uns in euern Haeusern helft das Predigtamt treiben wie wir in der Kirche!²⁸

In preaching on the Fourth Commandment he extolled the position of parents, showing that God has given them a very high place:

Hier setzt er nicht lieben, gehorchen, wohltun, obgleich solches grosz genug ist, sondern braucht das hohe Wort "ehren." Vater und Mutter hat er neben sich gesetzt und braucht das Wort, mit dem man ihn selbst ehrt. . . . Denn Gott sieht wohl, dasz die Welt die Eltern verachtet, sonderlich, wenn sie ihr Amt tun, das ist: ihre Kinder Zuechtigen und sie vom Beosen abhalten wollen, dann flucht heimlich der alte Adam. . . .²⁹

He also brought out the thought of the patres familiae to show that the father has a responsibility toward all of the members of the household, as well as the responsibilities of the members of the family toward the father. He mentioned the Greek and Latin use of this term.³⁰ This extolling of the position of parents went even further when he preached on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism:

Wenn ich den Vater ansehen will, nachdem er eine Nase hat, Fleisch und Blut ist, hat Knochen, Bein, Haut und Haar, desgleichen die Mutter, wenn ich sie nicht anders ansehe, so will ich sie nicht ansehen, sondern mit Fueszen ueber sie laufen. Wenn aber das vierte Gebot kommt, so sehe ich sie mit einer herrlichen Krone und goldenen Ketten geschmueckt, das ist das Wort Gottes. Und das seigt dir, wie du sollst dies Fleisch und Blut der Eltern ehren um

²⁸Ibid., p. 73.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 82f.

³⁰Ibid., p. 84.

des Wortes Gottes willen. . . . Der runde Schirm, der um die Koepfe der Heiligen gemalt wird, ist um die Eltern herum gemalt. . . .³¹

Discipline was another area in which Luther felt the parents had a definite responsibility under God. He had mentioned that parents should force their children to learn the Catechism. If they refused, the parents were instructed not to feed them, "so soll er ihnen kein Brot zu essen geben."³² He felt that the parents had been given the authority to discipline their children:

Also haben die Eltern ihre Vernunft, dasz sie ihr Kind regieren, desgleichen die Obrigkeit. In solcher Herrschaft hat Gott die Vernunft gegeben, dasz wir moegen regieren.³³

In another spot he said:

Es ist nicht der Christ, der die Kinder staept, sondern der Vater und die Mutter, weil Gott es ihnen aufgelegt hat, dasz sie ein Kind strafen.³⁴

In another place he spoke of the uniqueness of the parents' position in the discipline of children:

Eine Frau kann die Magd schelten und schlagen. Aber nicht die Nachbarin darf es tun, weil sie nicht weiter Recht hat als im eigenen Hause. Also hat eins recht in seinem eigenen Hause, dasz man nicht drin fluche; aber, dasz einer wollte seinem Nachbarn mitfahren, als seinem Kinde und Gesinde, der soll er seinen Zorn lassen anstehen, sondern hingehen und freundlich strafen.³⁵

³¹Ibid., p. 135.

³²Ibid., p. 72.

³³Ibid., p. 413.

³⁴Ibid., II, 129.

³⁵Ibid., p. 417.

The arduous labor of the mother in the education of the children was recognized by Luther when he said:

Wenn eine Hausmutter will ihrem Amt genug tun, moechte sie vier Haende dazu nehmen, und wird noch nicht genug tun, und wartet doch nur ihres Hauses.³⁶

He also spoke of different household responsibilities of parents. The mother teaches God's Word:

Das kann ein Weib tun. Ein Weib, ein Maegdlein koennen andre troesten und das wahre Wort Gottes reden, das ist: Die Schrift recht verstehen, auslegen und deuten und die Leute troesten und lehren, dasz sie selig werden. Das heiszt alles weissagen. Und ob sie auch nicht so predigen wie ich, so soll doch eine Mutter ihre Tochter und ihr Gesinde lehren. Denn sie hat das Wort und der Heilige Geist hat ihr gegeben, dasz sie's versteht.³⁷

Though Luther felt keenly that parents should have a part in the training of their children, he also realized that this would be an ideal situation in many cases. In speaking on the first commandment he said that observing this command should be practiced daily in the home, but this was not done. He continued:

Es mangelt an uns Haushaltern. Die Not hat gedrungen, dasz man Lehrer halten musz, weil die Eltern sich des nicht annehmen.³⁸

It was necessary to employ teachers, so Luther felt impelled to urge parents to send their children to school, for God had charged them to teach these children. He spoke of this specifically as follows:

³⁶Ibid., pp. 514f.

³⁷Ibid., p. 339.

³⁸Ibid., I, 75.

Also rede ich auch von den Schulen, dasz ihr eure Soehne zum Studieren erzieht. Denn wir alten Baeume, die wir unter dem Papstum verdorrt sind, koennen nicht frische Triebe bringen. Darum muessen wir an jungen Reisern arbeiten. Deshalb sollst du wissen: hast du einen Knaben mit guten Anlagen, der ist dir gegeben, dasz durch ihn die Kirche Gottes erbauet werde. Gott hat dir Kinder darum gegeben, dasz du sie zum besten ziehen sollst.³⁹

In another instance, when he spoke on the Fourth Commandment, he said:

Wenn du merkst dasz dein Kind ein geschickter Knabe werden kann, schicke ihn zur Schule! Tust du's nicht, so wirst du Rechenschaft geben muessen und bist ein Schalk gegen den Fuersten und die Stadt und ungehorsam deinem Gott.⁴⁰

This remark was preceded by the statement that the prince needed advisors and the cities needed pastors and doctors.

Luther understood that life was a continuum and the training which was given to children would be passed on to their children. He spoke of this as follows:

Gedenket und helfet, dasz man Leute aufziehe, dasz du Vater einen frommen Sohn aufziehst, du Mutter eine fromme Tochter, die ein geschickt Weib werde, die wiederum ihre Kinder in der Froemigkeit erziehe.⁴¹

In writing about Baptism Luther showed his concern for the Sacrament and showed that he recognized this as a means of grace for children:

Ein kind, das getauft ist, ist heilig und geistlich. . . .

Darum haben wir die Taufe verdeutscht, dasz ihr mit betet und die trefflichen, schoenen Worte hoert. Aber ich

³⁹Ibid., p. 502.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 88.

⁴¹Ibid.

vernehme, dasz ihr's macht wie in der Schenke. Macht nicht einen Scherz draus; denn es ist keiner.

Zum andern: weil die Taufe ein so heilig Ding ist, sollt ihr nicht gottlose Menschen zu Gevatter bitten.⁴²

He complained that people were not coming to the Sacrament of the Altar, saying that there were many who were so strong that they had not come in five years. He pleaded that they should come for their own sakes, and not be cold toward this Sacrament. His plea continued:

Darum stellt euch nun besser zum Sakrament und haltet eure Kinder auch dazu, wenn sie zu Verstand kommen. Denn daran wollen wir erkennen, welche Christen sind und welche nicht. . . . Denn wenn ihr Alten schon zum Teufel wollt fahren, so werden wir dennoch nach euren Kindern fragen.⁴³

In another place he warned parents:

Ich ermahne euch aber, dasz ihr eure Kinder und Gesinde unterrichtet und anleitet zum Abendmahl und dasz sie am Sonnabend Abend zur Beichte und zur Pruefung gehen, . . .⁴⁴

He also encouraged parents to teach their children to pray when he spoke:

Die Eltern sollen Kinder und Gesinde beten lehren, und die beten besser, weil sie keine Anfechtung haben.⁴⁵

A complaint was raised by Luther that people did not want to learn.

This gives a clear indication that Luther looked upon the pulpit as a means of education.

⁴²Ibid., II, 619.

⁴³Ibid., I, 144.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 151.

⁴⁵Ibid., II, 275.

Wenn ich einen sehe, der Hebraeisch und Griechisch wohl versteht, und ich verstehe es nicht, was schadet mir's wenn ich ihn ehre? Wenn ich sehe, dasz einer Gnade hat, die Schrift auszulegen, was schadet mir's, dasz ich das Huetlein abziehe und spreche: Gott sei Dank, der dir die Gnade gegeben hat! Ich will dein Schueler sein. . . . Wenn ich wohl schreiben und lehren kann, und andre nicht, warum wollen sie nicht von mir lernen?⁴⁶

With the foregoing items it has been demonstrated that Luther showed his educational concerns explicitly in many places in his preached sermons in the period 1528-1532. The criticism might be made that Luther was not too concerned with ethical content in referring to the subject of education; however, this is only partially true. Luther was dealing with people who were practically unschooled in many instances, and so became very concerned that they acquire a certain body of facts which he covered with the word "Catechism." At times, this was to the detriment of ethical content.

There are numerous items in these sermons which show Luther's educational concerns, not explicitly, but implicitly. In some instances large portions of these sermons could be used to show these implicit concerns; however, an attempt will be made to keep the examples manageable.

A keen pastoral concern was evidenced by Luther in many of these sermons, heightened, no doubt, by the fact that he was the Pfarrer in the absence of Johann Bugenhagen. He expressed this when speaking of the basic facts of Christian doctrine and then proceeded:

Was ueber diesen einfaeltigen Unterricht zu lehren ist, das gehoert den Predigern, die die Christenheit regieren, dasz sie wehren und die Kirche verfechten. . . . Ein

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 439.

Prediger aber musz mit Gottes Wort unterrichtet sein, dass er's koenne verfechten.⁴⁷

The concern is also expressed in the following:

Ein Pfarrer musz zu dir kommen in der Pest, musz dir zu dienen bereit sein mit den Sakramenten, mit der Predigt im Leben und im Tode.⁴⁸

The expression which he used repeatedly, "Ich hab oft gesagt" and variations of this expression showed his pastoral concern.

Ich hab oft gesagt, . . . sondern auch das junge Volk, so zukommt und aufwaechst, darin unterwiesen werde. Denn es ist eine Kunst, welche niemals genug gelernt werden kann.⁴⁹

Another example of this follows:

Ich hab oft gesagt: . . . Antworten soll man wohl drauf, wie es der Glaube hat, aber doch musz man allezeit daran lernen.⁵⁰

There are variants of this expression which Luther used in many connections, as evidenced by the following: "Ich hab euch oft gesagt";⁵¹ another expression was, with variants: "ihr oft gehoert";⁵² another expression was: "Ich habe euch noch viel zu sagen,"⁵³ or "Diese Lehre praege ich euch immer ein,"⁵⁴

⁴⁷Ibid., I, 132.

⁴⁸Ibid., II, 183.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 280.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 4

⁵¹Ibid., I, 60, 605; II, 137, 141, 280, 556.

⁵²Ibid., I, 557; II, 22, 263.

⁵³Ibid., II, 257.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 651.

or still another: "Das ist unsere Predigt durch's ganze Jahr,"⁵⁵ or "Ich habe euch oft vermahnt."⁵⁶ In connection with these expressions Luther said of the preaching office: "Das vornehmste Amt in der Welt ist das Predigamt."⁵⁷ These repeated expressions also find strength in Luther's keen pastoral concern which he expressed about those under his spiritual care, "Ich musz am juengsten Tag fuer euch antworten."⁵⁸

Luther directed his hearers constantly to the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures as the place where God's grace was to be found. His many sayings about the Scriptures reflect the implicit concern which he had that people come to know and accept this revelation from God.

He defined his understanding of the Scriptures in several of his pronouncements:

Das Schrift ist nicht nur ein geschriebenes Ding. Sie sagen, sie sei ein Buchstabe, der kein Leben gebe. Und wenn er auch kein Leben gibt, so sagt doch hier der Text, dass du in der Schrift bleiben sollst oder wirst Christum verlieren.⁵⁹

The Gospel was the means by which the grace of God was brought to the individual sinner as he pointed out:

Im Papstum hat man gelehrt, das Evangelium sei ein Buch voll guter Gesetze, wie wir gute Werke tun sollen, so Hieronymus und andere grosse Heilige.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 602.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 506.

⁵⁷Ibid., I, 453.

⁵⁸Ibid., II, 293.

⁵⁹Ibid., I, 393f.

Definier's also gewiszlich, dasz das Evangelium sei eine Predigt der Gnade . . . dasz Gott aus lauter Barmherzigkeit seinen Sohn gesandt hat, dasz er unsre Suenden tilgte. In der Schrift heiszt Evangelium ueberall Wort der Gnade, des Heils, der Gerechtigkeit, eine Lehre der Seligkeit.⁶⁰

He spelled out similar thoughts when he said:

Das ist keinem Wort zugeeignet in der ganzen Schrift als dem Worte der Gnade, dasz Christi Wort der Heilige Geist folgen soll. . . . Das soll eine Vermahnung sein, dasz wir gern hoeren und lesen im Neuen Testament, die Briefe Pauli, Johannis, das Evangelium. . . . Darum soll man's gedenken bei Tisch, im Bett.⁶¹

He wanted the people to realize that not his own writings, but Scripture was to be their first concern:

Lieber, folge meiner Schrift nicht gleich wie der Heiligen Schrift; sondern was du in der Heiligen Schrift findest, das du zuvor nicht glaubtest, das glaube ohne Zweifel; aber in meinen Schriften sollst du nichts fuer gewisz haben, das du zuvor ungewisz hattest, es sei dir denn durch mich beweisest, dasz es gewisz sei.⁶²

He directed people to look to the Holy Scriptures when he said: "Ihr Laien, die ihr's tun koennt, lernet auch aus der Heiligen Schrift!"⁶³

This Word must be communicated; it must be a word that is spoken:

Darum kann's nich anders zugehen, als durch das Wort; denn der Glaube kommt durch's Hoeren (Roem. 10:14). Deshalb hat der Heiligen Geist heute die Zungen gegeben. Denn zum Glauben und zum Schatze der Vergebung der Suenden kommt man nur durch feurige Zungen.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Ibid., II, 286f.

⁶¹Ibid., I, 422.

⁶²Ibid., p. 201.

⁶³Ibid., II, 354.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 331.

He spoke of the Word as the means through which the Holy Ghost created his Kingdom. It was not a worldly kingdom created with worldly weapons, but:

Aber er nimmt allein die armen Zungen dazu. So schwach ist's angefangen. Die Zunge ist das allerschwaechste Glied, nicht Ader noch Bein, das geringste, leichtste und elendeste Glied, und doch greift er die ganze Welt damit an und will damit ein Reich bauen, das auf ewig besteht. Sonst haette er Schwert und Feuer genommen. Aber er nimmt nur die Zunge. Damit will er anzeigen, dasz sein Reich sei ein Predigtreich, und will seinen Juengern einen Mut geben, dasz sie nicht erschrecken vor dem Teufel, Kaiphas und Herodes und nichts mehr tun denn das Wort reden. So soll's angehen, ein wunderbar Ding!⁶⁵

In speaking about the Christmas story, Luther asked the question whether the shepherds found the Babe through direct spiritual contact or through the word spoken to them:

Sage mir: Haben jene Hirten das Kindlein nach dem Wort oder nach dem Geist gefunden? Antwort: der Geist ist da, aber aus dem Wort. Siehe, das ist ein ausdermaszen schoener Spruch, der da dient gegen jene Schwaermer.

Denn ohne das aueserliche Wort kommt der Heilige Geist nicht, sondern durch das Wort.⁶⁶

The Word which was spoken, he pointed out, was the means by which God's grace came, "Dazu dient das aueserliche Wort, dasz man zum Glauben dadurch kommet."⁶⁷ He also spoke of the Gospel as a wagon which brought the knowledge of the resurrected Christ:

Da ist das Stueck, von dem wir oft geredet haben, dasz das Evangelium ist der Wagen oder das Mittel, dadurch solche Kenntnis kommt. . . . Von dem aueserlichen Wort

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 323.

⁶⁶Ibid., I, 166f.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 187.

waere viel zu reden gegen die Rotten. . . . Die koenne nicht zurueck gedenken, dasz sie es auch durch's Wort haben, dasz Christus gelitten hat, gestorben und auferstanden ist, und haben's aueszerlich hoeren und in der Schrift lesen muessen.⁶⁸

This was the message which Luther felt the sermon was to bring to the people. He said:

Aber ich darf nicht murren, sondern weil ich einmal in dieses Amt gestoszen bin, so singe ich dies Liedlein: Um deinetwillen nich angehoben noch gelassen! Um Gottes und um derer willen, die das Evangelium gern hoeren und lernen, ist's angefangen.⁶⁹

The purpose of all of the spoken Word of the Gospel was that people might find Christ:

Das ist die Predigt des Evangeliums, dasz Christus nicht gefunden wird mit Werken, sondern dadurch, dasz man das Wort hoert, nicht mit Nachdenken, sondern durch die Predigt.⁷⁰

He also spoke of previous reformers John Hus and John Gerson, who had been hindered from restoring the Gospel by too few books. He wanted to lead people to be grateful for the Gospel through the Bible:

Wenn sie haetten nur ein Buch lesen koennen, deren jetzt so viele im Brauche sind! Ich haette einst fuer eine Bibel und eine fromme Lektion zweihundert Goldgulden gegeben, ja, alles haette ich dahingegeben, haette ich nur ein Evangelium, eine Epistel oder einen Psalm recht verstehen koennen. Ich haette damals gesagt: O selig; wenn ich diese Zeit erleben koennte! Ich waere mit barfueszigen Knieen gekrochen, dies Evangelium zu hoeren, auch bis an die Knochen.⁷¹

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 363.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 556.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 365.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 544f. Similar, p. 620.

He felt his charge as a preacher was to proclaim this Word of God to the people:

Gewiszlich muessen wir uns ruehmen, dasz wir eure Prediger sind. Wir haben uns nicht hierher gesetzt. Das Wort, die Taufe, die Predigt ist nicht unser, sondern wir sind Diener dazu und dazu berufen. Wir legen das Evangelium und die Psalmen aus.⁷²

He called the Word of God a sure anchor, a stone, when he said: "meine Gerechtigkeit sei gegruendet auf Gottes Wort, das ist ein Fels, der wird festhalten. Das merket wohl."⁷³

Some people seemed to have the idea that once they had heard the message of Scripture they had enough. Luther tried in various ways to bring home to people that the learning of Scripture was a life-long thing.

Es ist die groeszte Undankbarkeit, dasz alle diese Lehre wissen wollen, und ist kein Buch oder Kunst in der Welt, die so schnell gelernt wird als die Schrift. Wenn Gott ein Wort gesprochen hat, so wissen sie's nicht nur, sondern werden auch Lehrmeister Gottes und Legen ihm seine Worte aus und werden unnuetze Richter wie die Rotten.⁷⁴

Using himself as an example he said:

Ich habe mit der ganzen Schrift und den Teufeln gekaempft, und habe doch kaum das Abc erreicht. . . .⁷⁵

.
Ich bin bis ins Abc gekommen. Aber das b und c kann ich noch nicht. . . .⁷⁶

⁷²Ibid., II, 117.

⁷³Ibid., p. 113.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁵Ibid., I, 496.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 577.

In another place he spoke:

Die aber fuchlen, dasz sie das Fleisch, die Suende und des Teufels Reich am Halse haben, die werden niemals am Evangelium satt, sondern bleiben immer seine gewissen Schueler. Ein Christ ist ein gewisser Schueler, hat angefangen zu lernen von Mutterleib und lernt in Ewigkeit, und auch ich bin ein gewisser Schueler, aber nicht so sehr fleiszig. Also wird ein Christ an viel Orten sein, da er noch ein Schueler ist, und ich will nicht laenger der Welt, sondern der Christen Prediger sein.⁷⁷

The centrality in the entire Reformation of the doctrine of forgiveness in Christ through the grace of God was stressed by Luther repeatedly in his preaching. It is understandable that such an emphasis should be shown for it contrasted so vividly with what Luther had been taught and what the Roman Church continued to teach in his time.

Luther showed this contrast when he said:

Der Papst aber predigt, das sei die christliche Kirche, die die zehn Gebote haelt, und macht sie so rein, dasz sie Christi und der Vergebung der Suenden nicht beduerfe. Das ist der leidige Teufel, . . .⁷⁸

Therefore he said:

Darum sagen wir immer, jetzt und in Ewigkeit: Allein, allein, allein, durch den Glauben werden wir gerecht.⁷⁹

He specifically and pointedly spoke of the most important teaching to which he held and which he taught when he said:

Die Summa und das Hauptstueck unsrer Lehre ist, dasz die Gerechtigkeit liege allein an der Gnade und nicht an den Verdiensten, "nicht an jemandes Wollen oder

⁷⁷Ibid., II, 9.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 326.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 223.

Laufen, sondern an Gottes Erbarmen" (Roem. 9:16), wie man taeglich reichlich hoert.⁸⁰

What he did, did not bring forgiveness of sins, as he said:

Gewisz musz ich gute Werke tun und gehorchen, aber ich soll sprechen: Es ist Gottes Gabe, dasz ich das tue. Aber damit bin ich nicht erloest von den Suenden, sondern mit dem, was nicht ich, sondern was Christus tue, werde ich selig.⁸¹

In this same connection he had said:

dasz es keinen Weg zum Himmel gibt als Christus, der allein den Namen hat, dasz wir durch ihn selig werden.⁸²

Therefore believe in Christ!

Nun soll aber unser Hauptstueck sein dasz wir uns selber verlassen und on Christo haengen. . . . Glaube an Christus! Alle Exempel der heiligsten Leute, . . . sind nicht genug zur Seligkeit.⁸³

Speaking of the Kingdom of Christ and comparing it to what the "Sophisten" said it was, he said:

Nein, Christus regiert durch die Vergebung der Suenden und hat allzeit den Thron der Gnaden auf. Sein Reich ist immer wie das offene Paradies und so grosz und so weit wie der Himmel, fuer alle erbaut, die Busze tun und glauben, and zu jeder Stunde, so er nur will, kann der Mensch glauben an Christus, und, so er auch zum oeftern zu Falle kommt, in der Busze kann er immer wieder herzutreten.⁸⁴

He emphasized again and again that salvation did not depend upon the works of man but on the grace of God:

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 520.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 304.

⁸²Ibid., p. 303.

⁸³Ibid., I, 116.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 48.

ein Christ ist, der rein ist von allen Werken und haengt allein an Christus, und sein Leben schwebt und lebt in Gnade und Barmherzigkeit. Das macht einen Christen.⁸⁵

In the back of Luther's mind there was always his own experience as he had sought for peace of heart and mind in Roman Catholicism:

Ich und andre haben auch etwas Sonderliches gegen den Weg Gottes erwaeht: Kappen und Wallfahrten zu den Heiligen, and alsdann sind wir zu den Heiligen abgefallen. Da trieb uns die Not und der Zwang, dasz wir muszten verzagen, dasz unser Herz keine Ruhe fand, und muszten endlich aus unsrer Gerechtigkeit in eine fremde treten, naemlich Maria und der andern Heiligen.⁸⁶

His theology and teaching revolved about the question of who Christ was, and he expressed this repeatedly:

Darum bleibt jene Frage in Ewigkeit, wer Christus sei. Er ist gewiszlich unser Heiland, der uns von Tod, Suende und Teufel erloeset hat, und von dem wir Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Seligkeit empfangen haben.⁸⁷

Another way he stated this was:

Willst du wissen, was Christus fuer ein Mann ist: nenne ihn den Koenig Zion, den Koenig der Seligkeit und Gerechtigkeit. Sein Werk heiszt, dasz er die Leute gerecht, fromm und selig mache.⁸⁸

Luther felt that everyone should be grateful to God for faith and said:

Du, der du glaubst, sprichst: Ich danke dir, Gott, ich weisz, dasz ich mein Herz und meinen Trost soll setzen auf deine Gnade, nicht auf mein Werk, das das Herz nicht ruhig macht.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 617. Similar pp. 47, 114.

⁸⁶Ibid., II, 92. Similar I, 237, "Verzweiflung macht Moenche."

⁸⁷Ibid., II, 5.

⁸⁸Ibid., I, 69.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 35.

In exhorting people to remain in the faith in Christ, he said: "um hunderttausend Gulden sollst du deinen Glauben nicht lassen."⁹⁰ This was to be a lifelong learning process:

Das ganze Leben hindurch haben wir daran zu lernen. Ein Christ is also, der zum ersten sich selbst erkennt, zum andern sich an Christus haelt, und zum dritten gute Werke tut.⁹¹

Luther had been accused of teaching that there was no need for good works in the life of a Christian; however, in his preaching he repeatedly showed that good works had to follow faith:

Es musz nicht stehen in Worten und Ruehmen, sondern in der Tat.

.....

Ist der Glaube wahr, so soll er sich mit Werken beweisen.

.....

dasz wir unsern Glauben sollen beweisen durch die Liebe.⁹²

.....

und das habt ihr oft von uns gehoert, dasz der Glaube ohne Werke tot sei; ist er aber recht, so folgen die Werke, allein, dasz sie Werke nicht vorangesetzt werden, wie es der Papst getan hat, sondern wenn, sie dem Glauben folgen, so ist's recht.⁹³

The relationship of the Christian faith and the good works which one is supposed to do was brought out by Luther in many different ways.

⁹⁰Ibid., II, 131.

⁹¹Ibid., I, 664.

⁹²Ibid., II, 146ff.

⁹³Ibid., p. 144.

Denn es ist etwas anders: geboren werden, und: gute Werke tun, wie es etwas anderes ist, dasz ein Baum gepflanzt werde, und Fruechte bringen. Denn ein Mensch kann nichts tun, ehe er denn geboren ist. Erst musz die Person werden, ehe sie ein Werk tut. Ein Zimmermann baut nicht ein Haus, ehe er ein Mensch ist, der Haende hat. Also macht Christus hier einen Unterschied zwischen diesen beiden: Geboren sein und Tun und Wirken, und stoeszt alle Werke zurueck, die vor der Wiedergeburt geschehen.⁹⁴

In another context he stated it as follows:

Hier aber hast du das Christenleben: Glaube, Liebe und Gebet. Das sind die Fruechte und die rechten Werke, wie oben angezeigt, dasz ich mit reinen Augen meines Naechsten Not ansehe.⁹⁵

He showed what good works are:

Denn wo Christus ist, da folgen gewiszlich auch Christi Werke. . . . Unsre Werke sind, dasz wir den Naechsten dienen. . . . So du einen Ehemann siehst oder ein Eheweib, die ihrem Manne gehorcht, und die ihre Kinder in Gottes Furcht erziehen, solche tun Werke, die nicht ihnen selbst zugute kommen, also tun sie christliche Werke. . . . So aber ein Vater seinen Sohn erzieht, dasz Gott dadurch gedienet werde, oder er kocnnt in der Stadt helfen regieren oder ein Prediger werden, so Kinder und Gesinde gehorsam sind, das ist ein christlich Werk. . . . Wo solche Werke sind, sind's christliche Werke, und da ist Christus. Und wer seinem Naechsten dient, der dient Christus. . . .⁹⁶

Closely associated with the many thoughts expressed by Luther concerning the practical Christian life and good works were his references to the calling in which a person had been placed by God. He encouraged people to stay where they were and do the work that was their lot. It is

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 357.

⁹⁵Ibid., I, 541.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 117.

understandable that Luther would emphasize this area of life, because of the medieval pattern that glorified certain practices in the Roman Church. It was considered a higher good to enter the convent and remain a virgin than to marry. Men entered the cloister because it was an easy living. Others went on pilgrimages to many of the "sacred" places. With this background Luther's emphasis becomes clearer. He used a number of words in this connection, "Beruf," "Amt," "Stand," and "Weg."

In der hebraeischen Sprache heiszt nun Weg nicht nur der Weg, der mit den Fueszen getreten wird, sondern das ganze Tun und Wesen eines Menschen, als wenn ich von einer Ehefrau sage, die ihrem Ehemann gehorsam ist, ihre Kinder erzieht und lehrt, ihr Haus versorge: Die ist auf ihrem Wege das ist: sie tut als einem frommen Weibe zugehoert, sie fuehrt das Wesen, das einer Frau zusteht. Desgleichen ein Fuerst, der seines Amtes waltet, und jeder, der seinem Berufe und seine Arbeit dient, der geht auf seinem Wege. . . . Der Weg des Franziskus war, dasz man eine graue, der Predigermoenche, dasz man eine schwarze Kappe anzoege. Das sind Abwege. . . . Wenn ein rechtschaffener Hausvater, Ratsherr, Sohn, Tochter, Knecht, Magd gingen in ihrem Stand, der ihm aufgelegt ist, so waere das auch noch nicht der Weg des Herrn, sondern Christi Handel, Wesen, Tun soll's tun.⁹⁷

In preaching on the story of the shepherds in connection with the Christmas Gospel he brought out that these men could serve as an example to all to do their work:

Gott fragt nicht darnach, ob du ein Herr, Knecht, Mann oder Weib bist, sondern bleib in dem Stande, darin du berufen bist, und lerne darin Gott dienen gegen deinen Naechsten. Du Ehemann, diene deiner Ehefrau, ihr Kinder gehorchet euern Eltern! Da sind eines Christenmenschen Werke beschrieben. Es ist nicht not, dasz du nach St. Jakob wallfahrtest oder ins Kloster gehst, sondern geh heim in dein Haus wie die Hirten, aber mit einer bessern Meinung! Noch tun sie dieselben Werke wie zuvor, aber

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 149.

aus dem Glauben und aus dem Wort. . . . Besser kann ein christliches Leben nicht geordnet werden als eben in dem Exempel.⁹⁸

Luther indicated the dissatisfaction with vocation that must have been expressed by people of that day when he said:

So war es schon in der Heidenschaft, und dergleichen Versuchung ist auch unter den Christen, dasz niemand mit seinem Los und Stand zufrieden ist noch seiner fleiszig warte. Wer ein Bauer ist, will ein Buerger sein, ein Buerger ein Edelmann, ein Edelmann ein Graf, ein Graf ein Fuerst, ein Fuerst ein Koenig, ein Koenig der Kaiser, der Kaiser Gott. Und waere er Gott, so wolt er noch hoehere sein. Wenn aber einer mit seinem Stande zufrieden waere, zu dem er berufen ist, und hielt sich des und wartet sein, so waere er selig.

Ueber die Unlust ist aber noch die Untreue, dasz ein jeglicher sein Amt verachtet. Als ein Knecht hat einen Stand, zu dem ihn Gott berufen hat, dasz er seinem Herrn diene. Darum mueszte er solche seine Werke, von Gott geboten, fuer die allerbesten halten. Indessen aber denkt er: waere ich ein Richter in der Stadt, so wolt ich mich aufs Pferd setzen und einherreiten. Darum hat er nicht nur Unlust, sondern Verachtung seiner Werke. Ein solcher achtet nicht auf Christi Wort und seinen Beruf, von Gott empfangen. So sollt er aber sprechen: solange ich ein Knecht bin, gibt, es auf Erden kein koestlicher Werk, als meines. Ursach: es ist dir kein andres von Gott befohlen. Die groszen, herrlichen Werke hat Christus fuer dich getan: er ist fuer dich gestorben. Und der spricht: Glaube on mich und tue das Deine treulich! . . . darum will ich ihm das widerum zuliebe tun, will nicht nach St. Jakob oder ins Kloster Laufen, weil ich Hier ein Werk habe, das mir Christus befohlen hat.⁹⁹

Later in this same sermon he said:

Denn der Teufel kann's nicht leiden, dasz due inwendig im Glauben so fest wirst, dasz due auswendig deinem

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 176, 644-648; II, 69.

⁹⁹Ibid., II, 16.

Berufe genugtust. Und doch musz man's immer predigen,
dasz es ein jeder hoere. Aber laszt's nicht dabei
bleiben, dasz ihr's gehoert habt: ihr habt noch daran
zu arbeiten, dasz ihr fest darin werdet.¹⁰⁰

He used a number of variants of "Tu dein Amt"¹⁰¹ in his sermons, and pointed out that this was very important, because God had placed the Christians there.

Darum ist's naechst dem Glauben die hoechst Kunst, dasz
einer lerne sein Amt und in seinem Zirkel bleibe: Gott
hat dich gemacht zu einem Ehemann, einer Ehefrau, einem
Sohn, einem Schuhmeister, einem Schueler. Die haben
alle ihre Aemter.¹⁰²

He also brought out: "Wir haben einen zweifaeltigen Beruf, einen geistlichen und einen aeuszerlichen,"¹⁰³ realizing that there were many people who did not appreciate this. He also complained that since the Gospel had come to them, and they knew that children should obey their parents and not go into a monastery, they were not doing the things they should be doing.

Nun es jetzt gepredigt wird, und das Licht gekommen ist
und jeder weisz was er tun soll, tut niemand sein Amt.¹⁰⁴

He also encouraged his hearers to find joy in their work:

Darum habe ich oft gesagt: wer weisz, dasz er einen
Stand und Amt hat, das Gott wohlgefaellt, der soll von
Herzen froehlich sein.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 581, 405, 260, 528.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 441. Similar, I, 178, 644.

¹⁰³Ibid., II, 510.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 581.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 141.

As they worked, he told them they could expect God's blessing:

Geben will Gott und den reichen Segen ueber uns sprechen, aber nicht ohne Arbeit. . . . Ich als ein Schuster oder dergleichen will arbeiten und es mit froehlichem Herzen tun. Alsdann wird Gott seinen Segen dazu geben.¹⁰⁶

Luther also instructed his congregation in their duty as Christians to have a part in bringing the message of salvation to others in their service to their fellowmen.

Wir tun's auch, aber geistlich, wenn wir andere Leute lehren und ermahnen und ihnen zum Heile verhelfen, wenn wir ihnen vor Augen fuehren, wie schwer ihre Suende ist, und ihnen wiederum zeigen, wo Vergebung der Suenden zu holen ist, wenn wir ihnen Christum vorstellen und zureden, wer von Suende los sein wolle, nehme zu Christus seine Zuflucht.¹⁰⁷

In another instance he said:

Also ein Christenmensch, wenn er selbst glaubt, ruht er nicht, sondern ist ein fruchtbarer Mann und fuehrt andre herzu. . . . In Gefahr versuche, ob du Glauben hast, als zur Zeit der Pestilenz.¹⁰⁸

Prayer was another area in which Luther gave instruction to the congregation from the pulpit, showing that it was a fruit of faith:

Denn das Gebet is des Glaubens Frucht, und kann Glauben ohne Beten nicht sein, gleichwie das Feuer nicht ohne Hitze. . . .¹⁰⁹

He felt that children should be taught to pray from the very cradle on in life:

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 404.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., I, 32.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 59. Similar, p. 539.

Darum sollen die Kinder gleich von der Wiege an anfangen zu beten fuer die Fuersten, fuer ihre Brueder und Nachbarn. 110

He pointed out that in praying the individual was talking to God:

Naechst dem Predigtamt ist das Gebet das groeszte Amt in der Christenheit. Im Predigtamt redet Gott mit uns, wiederum in Gebet rede ich mit ihm.¹¹¹

Though he complained and warned the congregation that they should remain for the Litany because it contained many necessary petitions,¹¹² he said that prayers need not be long:

Das Gebet ist nicht lang on Worten, geschieht auch nicht allein in der Kirche, sondern auf dem Feld, in der Werkstaette, in der Kueche, im Kaemmerlein, braucht auch nicht lange Worte, sondern so oft einer etwas tut, betet er, als: Ach, lieber Herr, gib und erhoere um Christi willen, dasz der Tuerke weiche, dasz der Hunger aufhoere, dasz das Papsttum falle. Das ist wohl zu merken, weil der Teufel diesem Werke ausdermaszen feind ist.¹¹³

Luther also exhorted and pleaded that prayers be offered for himself, for the pastor of the congregation, Johann Bugenhagen, for the prince and others.¹¹⁴

Vivid illustration was used by Luther to bring color and life to his preaching; however, the illustrations were quite different from many used in the Middle Ages. Luther was interested in illustrating and supporting

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 59. Similar, p. 539.

¹¹¹Ibid., II, 275, 308.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 45.

¹¹³Ibid., p. 268.

¹¹⁴Ibid., I, 71, 119, 151.

his point, whereas many others were interested only in entertaining their audiences.

When Luther spoke of Baptismal water connected with God's Word, he said it was holy water because of God's command. He complained that the fanatics ripped off the Word of God and then continued:

So ich eine Kuh schinde, gilt sie nicht viel; nehme ich
aber das Fleisch mit dem Fell, so gilt sie vier Gulden.
Darum sage, die Taufe sein ein lebendiges, heilsames
Wasser, um des Wortes Gottes willen, das drinnen ist.¹¹⁵

He also told the story of the old crone who was approached by the devil to break up a husband and wife. The devil promised the old crone a pair of red shoes if she could do it. Through her conniving, the trollop led the husband to kill his wife with a razor. The conclusion of the story as told by Luther was:

Da kommt das alte Weib zum Teufel und fordert das rote
Paar Schuhe. Der Teufel reicht ihr die Schuhe an einer
langen Stange, fuercht sich vor ihr, und sprach: Nimm
hin, du bist aerger denn ich.¹¹⁶

On another occasion he compared Baptism to the sun when he said:

Aber sprich du: Meine Taufe bleibt, wie die Sonne
immerdar bleibt. Wenn ich stehe oder in den Dreck falle,
daz meine Augen die Sonne nicht sehen, so bleibt doch
die Sonne; wasche ich aber meine Augen, so sehe ich sie
wieder. Gehe ich in den Keller, so sehe ich die Sonne
nicht, aber dennoch bleibt sie. Ich bin nur davon-
gegangen; komme ich wieder heraus, so finde ich sie wie-
der. Also ist die Taufe ein ewig Ding und zerbricht dir
niemals. Suendigst du aber wider sie, so lasz die
Suende anstehen, tritt wieder in die Taufe und sprich:

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 135.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 197.

Wahr ist's ich bin gefallen. Aber ich glaube wiederum an meine Taufe, rufe meinen Herrn an und glaube, dasz ich gleichwohl getauft bin.¹¹⁷

Talking of the rebirth in the life of the Christian in connection with the story of Nicodemus, he said:

Denn es ist etwas anders: geboren werden, und: gute Werke tun, wie es etwas anderes ist, dasz ein Baum gepflanzt werde, und Fruechte bringen. Denn ein Mensch kann nichts tun, ehe er denn geboren ist. Erst musz die Person werden, ehe sie ein Werk tut. Ein Zimmermann baut nicht ein Haus, ehe er ein Mensch ist, der Haende hat. Also macht Christus hier einen Unterschied zwischen diesen beiden: Geboren sein und Tun und Wirken und stoeszt alle Werke zurueck, die vor der Wiedergeburt geschehen.¹¹⁸

Luther referred to current events in his preaching from time to time.

In this respect there seems to be a bit of a throw-back to the itinerant preacher of the Middle Ages who served as the local newspaper bringing news of events which happened outside of the community.¹¹⁹ In October of 1529 he referred to the siege of Vienna by the Turks.¹²⁰ He also referred to this westward march of the Turks in later sermons.¹²¹ Following the Diet of Augsburg he made frequent reference to this important meeting of the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire. In October of 1530 he said:

¹¹⁷Ibid., II, 112f.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 357. For additional examples cf. I, 323; II, 134, 237, 314.

¹¹⁹Franklin C. W. Ritthamel, "The Relationship of Preaching and Life in Medieval England." (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, 1955), p. 45.

¹²⁰BP, I, 581.

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 596, 598; II, 594.

Ich will nun vom Reichstag reden. . . . Es ist auf diesem Reichstag noch nichts Endliches beschlossen, und wir koennen noch nicht wissen, was werden wird.¹²²

In April and May of 1531 he made a number of references to this Diet.

Also wollten sie's auch zu Augsburg nicht anders haben also auf ihre tolle, naerrichte Weise.¹²³

The above was said on April 6, 1531. On April 11, 1531, he said:

Sie haben die Beichte auch in die Busze gezogen, haben aber geschwiegen des Glaubens und der Lossprechung, und auch zu Augsburg wollten sie nicht den Glauben bei der Busze haben.¹²⁴

On May 7, 1531, he spoke of the position taken by the Papacy:

Aber im ganzen Papstum ist nicht ein einziger, der doch heute diesen Text verstuende, dasz der Herr spricht: "Ich habe euch noch viel zu sagen." Das ist wahr, aber er spricht nicht: ich habe euch noch viel andres zu lehren. Nein. Ich moechte wohl, dasz sie viel aus dem Eingeben des Heiligen Geistes lehrten; aber unter dem Worte "viel" wollen sie einfuehren, dasz sie andres lehren. Gleichwie jetzt auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg: obgleich bei den Evangelisten hell und deutlich von zwei Gestalten des heiligen Abendmahls geredet wird, hat doch der Heilige Geist der Kirche eingesprochen und gesetzt nur eine Gestalt.
 . . .¹²⁵

Though many of the items cited from Luther's preaching deal with things that could be included under the heading of stewardship, this writer, being a parish pastor, feels that some mention should be made to Luther's repeated appeals for funds for the work of the Church in Wittenberg.

Man wird diese Wochen das Opfergeld erfordern. Ich hoere dasz man den Fordernden nichts geben will und

¹²²Ibid., II, 5.

¹²³Ibid., p. 174.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 237.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 258. Similar, pp. 254, 261, 269.

weist sie ohne Bedenken ab. Gnad euch Gott, ihr undankbaren Leute, die ihr wegen derlei Geldes also geizig seid und wollt nich allein nichts geben, sondern laestert dazu mit boesen Worten die Kirchendiener. Ich wollt, dasz ihr das gut Jahr haette. Ich bin erschrocken und weisz nicht ob ich mehr predigen will, ihr groben Ruelzen, die ihr nich einmal vier Pfennige von Herzen geben moeget. Ihr sollt wissen, ihr Wittenberger Leute, dasz ihr gaenzlich aller guten Werke leer und ledig seid, die ihr niemals eine Gabe dargereicht habt den Dienern der Kirche, naemlich damit die Knaben unterrichtet und die Armen im Hospital erhalten wuerden. Denn bisher ist das alles aus dem gemeinen Kasten genommen werden.¹²⁶

These preached sermons which have been studied show that Luther did reflect his teaching principles in the pulpit at Wittenberg in the years 1528-1532. It is astounding and unique that a man of his stature, his position, his work-load should have been able to keep as close a touch on the lives of the people in this congregation as he did. The comparatively small size of the community undoubtedly contributed to the closeness of the University Professor to the local parish with its many problems, the cares of its people as well as their joys.

There is also a certain subjective quality in a study such as this, which will be seen reflected in the choice of the quotations which were selected in some of the instances.

¹²⁶Ibid., I, 49. Other references to the same: pp. 118f., 444f., 696, 651; II, 53, 243, 635.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The burden of this thesis has been that Luther reflected his educational concerns in his preached sermons from 1528-1532. Some of these concerns were reflected explicitly, while others of them were reflected implicitly.

The entire training of the Reformer had a bearing upon his educational concerns as well as his preaching. His training in the Trivialschulen that he attended, his training in the University where he became well acquainted with much of the learning of his day, his studies in the monastery school, as well as his independent studies are all reflected in his educational concerns and his work in the pulpit. His unusual theological insight, centered in his Christological approach to all of life and faith, was founded in his personal study of God's revelation to man as contained in Scripture. The personal struggle through which he went in arriving at this conviction that man is saved alone in Christ without any merit of his own is evident in all of his educational concerns and is reflected vividly in his preaching. His sermons often reflected a concern with learning almost for learning's sake itself. The times in which he lived, dominated as they were by the Roman Catholic doctrines of work-righteousness, had a bearing on this preoccupation with having people learn the truths of Scripture. The people knew little about how God had revealed Himself, about His love manifested in Christ, about the forgiveness of sins through the grace of God, the meaning of the Sacraments, and other basic doctrines of Scripture. Luther lived in a world fraught with

superstitions, a world which had poor means of communication, was beset with dire poverty, and was largely uneducated.

The relationship of life, teaching, and preaching was evident in the town of Wittenberg. Luther was the moving figure in bringing about this relationship and projecting this relationship in his preached sermons.

Luther was concerned that everyone know the Scriptural facts relating to salvation. This is seen in his repeated catechetical sermons. Among the sermons under study there are a number of announcements which report that he scheduled catechetical sermons four times a year. He said that he would preach on the basis of Christian knowledge and life which everyone needed.¹

He was willing to use his office, his time, and his pulpit to teach these fundamental truths. Though he called them sermons, they are primarily lectures which expounded the nature of faith, the central need of it, and the truths of God's Word which creates and sustains faith.² In these sermons he took the historical presentations of Christian doctrine, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer and explained them. He said that to these he would add an explanation of the two Sacraments, Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar.³

Luther was anxious to use his pulpit to teach these catechetical truths which he called "Kinderpredigt" and stated that he wanted to teach

¹Supra, p. 80.

²Supra, p. 81.

³Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, edited by Georg Buchwald (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1925 and 1926), I, 71, 134. Hereafter referred to as BP.

these truths of the faith to children and uneducated adults especially.⁴ The Reformer recognized the magnitude of this task. He sought the aid of the parents of the children, the housefathers, and the masters of servants. He stressed their responsibility in order that their children and servants would come to these catechetical sermons. He urged parents and masters to give the children and servants time off from work and chores that they would be free to take advantage of this opportunity for instruction. If it was necessary, the parents were to use force, even to refusing to feed children and servants, to get them to attend this instruction.⁵ Luther recognized that he would have difficulty training children without the help of parents. Parents were called upon to use their good office to encourage their children and to impress upon them the importance of instruction in the faith that they did not come to sit in church and gape at the windows and walls.⁶

In asking the help of parents Luther recognized the home as the basic educational unit in society. He realized that in the home the parents had an opportunity to instruct the children. He felt that the father had the responsibility to see that this instruction was carried on in the home.⁷ Luther also realized that the mother had a greater opportunity to teach the children because she was with them for a greater amount of time than the father would be, especially if he worked outside the home. He felt

⁴Supra, pp. 81f.

⁵Supra, pp. 82, 85.

⁶Supra, p. 83.

⁷Supra, p. 81.

that the mother should use these opportunities to instruct the young in the Word, especially if she understood it correctly.⁸

Luther also recognized the home as an educational agency of high order when he asked that the catechism charts be hung on the wall of the home. This would provide the parents with an excellent opportunity to review constantly the facts of faith.⁹ In asking parents to be involved, he sanctioned the home as the most natural agency for the training of children, because the home afforded many opportunities for learning in a normal atmosphere on an informal basis.

Luther was specific in making suggestions about how parents should instruct. These catechism truths could be reviewed in the morning on getting out of bed, at meals, and at the time the family prepared to retire.¹⁰ All were opportune times for such instruction. In recognizing the home as an important educational agency, he also felt that it was the place where children should be trained for a pious life, so that they would be able to pass this on to their children. He recognized life as a continuous process of education from parents to children. The children later would become parents and have their own children. In many ways Luther emphasized the importance of the home in education.¹¹

When he said that he would use his pulpit, his office, his time to

⁸Supra, pp. 82, 86.

⁹Supra, pp. 81f.

¹⁰Supra, p. 83.

¹¹Supra, p. 87.

help the parents, he felt that he was doing his share and expected the parents to do their share.¹²

Luther set great goals for his instruction of children and the uneducated from the pulpit. Although he expected the parents to take an active part in the instruction of their children, he also realized that the cooperation which he sought from the parents would be only partially realized. Nor did he have any false notions about the ability of his sermons to impart all needed knowledge to the children. These reasons led him to speak forcefully in behalf of schools, urging parents to send their children. The instruction which they received in church and in the home was to be part of their training. He spoke to parents, urging them to send their children because God had given them children to educate. These children should be trained to have a part in building the church of God.¹³ This was especially true of gifted children. He called parents scoundrels if they did not educate them. He told parents they were working against the princes and the cities, as well as disobeying God if they failed to train their children. The needs were there. The princes needed advisors. The cities needed pastors and doctors.¹⁴

When preaching about the Sacraments, Luther went beyond mere factual knowledge. He spelled out that Baptism is a means of grace through which children become holy and spiritual. He also said that he had translated the Baptismal service into German so people could hear and understand

¹²Supra, p. 81.

¹³Supra, p. 87.

¹⁴Ibid.

these wonderful truths.¹⁵ He spoke of the catechetical instruction through the public sermons and training at home which nurtured faith in what God was giving in the Sacrament of the Altar, thus urging people to attend and to bring their older children to the Holy Supper.¹⁶ The confessional was not slighted either. When he spoke of prayer, he urged that they be from the heart as well as the mouth.¹⁷ In these areas Luther went beyond imparting mere knowledge and showed a desire to motivate through training in specific Christian action.

Luther used the pulpit to stimulate interest in, to elicit support of, and to enjoin participation in the educational activity in the parish. The pulpit was used to impart catechetical facts and was thus used as a direct educational agency. A number of educational principles are evident. The home was affirmed as an important agency in education since the parents have a direct responsibility from God to carry on this activity in behalf of their children. The repetitive process for learning was recognized by the Reformer. He saw the necessity of schools for the training of the young, and urged parents to make use of these schools. He set the goal before the parents to train their children for service to God in the church, city, and state.

The sermon as developed by Luther and the reformers became a means of public instruction in religious doctrines and ethics. It was a means of carrying on a program of adult education. The pulpit became a lecture

¹⁵Supra, pp. 87f.

¹⁶Supra, pp. 82, 88.

¹⁷Supra, p. 88.

platform for the Reformer. From this important place he taught the basic doctrines not only to children, but especially to adults. He realized that children would not get too much out of a sermon; therefore, he pleaded with parents to help in their instruction. Moreover, he looked upon the sermon as a means of educating the laity in the truths of Scripture. In the medieval church the sermon had been a presentation of logical minutiae keenly developed by the preacher on the basis of writings of earlier theologians. In other instances the sermon had been a means of entertaining the crowds.¹⁸ For Luther the sermon was a presentation of God's truth from the Gospel and an application of this to the lives of his hearers. Luther returned to a homily type of preaching of the earlier church which was refreshing. He said, ". . . I read the text, without announcing the topic. Then I explain or propound doctrines from it."¹⁹

The instructive character of the sermon in the Reformation is seen in the frequent repetition of "I have said, I have told you before, you have heard before," and similar expressions used by the Reformer in his preaching.²⁰ He recognized the need for repetition if people were to learn the new doctrines after a life under Roman Catholicism. Luther realized that he was not only fighting deeply entrenched hierarchial power, but also a deep ignorance among the people which had been fostered by the work-righteousness of the Roman Church.

Opposed to the work doctrines of the Roman Church were Luther's

¹⁸Supra, pp. 68f.

¹⁹Supra, p. 73.

²⁰Supra, p. 90.

teachings on the basis of God's Word that salvation and faith are man's by God's free grace. His emphasis on faith was motivated by the conviction that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and that man was brought to faith by that Word.²¹ It was by the grace of God, not by works, that man received the mercy and righteousness of God.²² This grace, the unmerited goodness of God in Christ, was his emphasis continually. He said there was no greater word in all of Scripture than "grace." He felt so keenly about this grace of God that he said a man should have it continually by his bed and table.²³ It was only through what Christ has done that a man is saved, for it is Christ alone who makes righteous and saves.²⁴ Luther emphasized the "allein" character of grace that brought faith and righteousness, an emphasis which reflected the struggle through which he went back in the years before 1516 to find peace with God. He had entered the monastery in an effort to find peace with God in the Roman system, but did not find it until he came to a clearer understanding of God's Word through his own personal studies and struggles.²⁵

Out of his conviction that people should read the Scriptures, Luther was motivated to translate the Bible into the language of the people. In his sermons he exhorted people to read the Scriptures and the Gospel if

²¹Supra, pp. 92f.

²²Supra, pp. 96f.

²³Supra, p. 92.

²⁴Supra, p. 97.

²⁵Supra, pp. 13ff.

they were able.²⁶ He did not want people to look upon the Word as a collection of dead letters, but pointed out that if they did not know the Word, they would be in danger of losing Christ Himself.²⁷ He pointed out in his sermons that the Bible was no longer a book of rules as it had been under the papacy, but it was a Gospel message of God's grace that shows man that God sent His Son out of great mercy to blot out sins.²⁸ This outward Word was a means of grace which brought the Holy Ghost, which brought holiness, justification, and the teachings of salvation.²⁹ He said that the Gospel was a means or a wagon which brought to the heart that Christ suffered, died, and was resurrected, and therefore his hearers should hear, read, and learn this Gospel all their lives.³⁰ No one would ever get enough of the Gospel from his mother's side to eternity.³¹ The importance of the Scripture led Luther to speak of it as an anchor, a stone upon which faith should be built.³² The things found in Scripture should be accepted firmly and without doubt.³³

It was from the pulpit that Luther taught the importance of salvation by grace, through faith. It was from the pulpit that Luther taught the

²⁶Supra, p. 92.

²⁷Supra, p. 91.

²⁸Supra, pp. 91f.

²⁹Supra, p. 93.

³⁰Supra, pp. 93f.

³¹Supra, pp. 95f.

³²Supra, p. 95.

³³Supra, p. 92.

importance of Scripture and the Gospel. It was from the pulpit that Luther encouraged his people to hear, read, and learn the Gospel. He had a very high regard for the office of the preacher. He called it the most important office in the world.³⁴ He felt the preaching office was so important because it brought people to God through the Gospel. He recognized his preaching office as a means of teaching the people the Gospel for God's sake and their own.³⁵ Through preaching he believed he could lead people to a proper understanding of the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Psalms, and thus lead them to Christ.³⁶ He looked upon himself as a servant of the Word, called to proclaim that Word, and he believed that God through preaching talks to his people.³⁷ Luther did much to elevate the sermon from the banal, entertaining, hair-splitting mode of preaching characteristic of many of his predecessors and contemporaries to a means of reaching the hearts of his hearers with the power of God's Word.³⁸ He used the sermon to instruct his hearers in the truths of the Christian faith. He used it to direct their hearts and minds to God, His love, His forgiveness, His peace in Christ Jesus. He knew that the people of his day had to come to know Christ and His work of redemption and felt keenly that the sermon was a means of bringing this to them.

³⁴Supra, p. 91.

³⁵Supra, p. 94.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Supra, pp. 95, 105.

³⁸Supra, p. 97.

In his preaching Luther showed that he expected a wholesome response. He had been accused of preaching the Gospel and grace alone to the exclusion of works.³⁹ He went to great lengths to show that faith without works is dead, for works must follow faith if faith is right.⁴⁰ He compared faith to a tree, and a good tree must bear fruit. He said that rebirth was one thing, but "doing" was another, and the two must go together.⁴¹ Good works, the fruits of faith, were also a gift of God.⁴² The expectation which he held out to his hearers was that they believe, love, and pray; and correct fruits and good works would result.⁴³ He cited specific items when he said that a married woman should be obedient to her husband. The wife and husband are to live in the fear of God. They should accept the responsibility of training their children to rule in the city, to be preachers, to be obedient, for all of these are the works of a Christian.⁴⁴ He exhorted the people to stay on their jobs. The Gospel had changed the pattern of life in the lands of the reformation. People were discouraged from going on pilgrimages or going into monasteries and nunneries. Instead they were urged to stay where they were and not to try to run away from the life which God had given them.⁴⁵ Luther used the example of the

³⁹Supra, p. 96.

⁴⁰Supra, p. 99.

⁴¹Supra, p. 100.

⁴²Supra, p. 97.

⁴³Supra, p. 100.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Supra, p. 101.

shepherds in the Christmas story to show this. After these shepherds had seen Christ in the manger, they did not run off on a pilgrimage, or retire to a monastery, but instead they returned to their sheep and their jobs.⁴⁶ He pointed out to his hearers that the devil cannot stand them to be firm in their faith and do the work which God has given them.⁴⁷ He complained that some people did not do their works of themselves. He wanted them to recognize that they had a spiritual and an earthly calling and to find joy in the work which God had given them.⁴⁸ Another work which Luther expected them to do as believers was to share with others what they had received of God. They were to lead others to faith in Christ and forgiveness.⁴⁹ He spoke of prayer as one of the fruits of faith. In the sermon God talked to His people. In prayer God's people talked to Him. Children from earliest childhood were to be taught to pray for the rulers, for their brothers, and for their neighbors. In his sermons Luther also spoke of the expected support of the Word of God in church, school, and community. They should be grateful for the blessings which God had given them.⁵⁰

When speaking of the Gospel, Luther affirmed that it did not consist of rules for living, but that it was the power of God operating in their lives, enabling them to do those works which pleased God. Since man by

⁴⁶Supra, pp. 101f.

⁴⁷Supra, pp. 102f.

⁴⁸Supra, p. 103.

⁴⁹Supra, p. 104.

⁵⁰Supra, pp. 108f.

nature is sinful and so commits sin, the Christian is to come back to the Gospel again and again.⁵¹ The Gospel alone brings the message of Christ, and His hearers are to remain with Christ alone, the Redeemer, the one who has freed them from sin, the King of their salvation and righteousness.⁵² Wherever the power of the Gospel and faith dwells people will live as Christians.⁵³

Luther implicitly and explicitly used his pulpit as an agency for educating the people of the town of Wittenberg. He preached to impart Scriptural truths which he knew formed the basis of faith. He also preached to instruct people in the kind of life God expected of them as believing, practicing Christians.

⁵¹Supra, p. 97.

⁵²Supra, p. 98.

⁵³Supra, pp. 92f.

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