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THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE LUTHERAN SYMBOLS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Lutheran Symbols have very few articles directed especially at the concept of eschatology, and those articles which it has play a rather minor role in the Book of Concord as a whole.¹ This part of Christian doctrine was not a point around which controversy centered. In fact, the only seriously controverted point in connection with eschatology was that of purgatory. In spite of this eschatology plays a very important part in the Symbols.² Even the hermeneutics of the Symbols must be governed by the fact that they were written with an heightened eschatological awareness.³ Eschatological thought runs through the Confessions from beginning to end.⁴ Every article has an eschatological expectation.⁵ The writers of the Symbols saw that they were standing between creation and consummation, and just as the entire Gospel was

¹Hans Asmussen, Warum noch lutherische Kirche? (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1949), p. 210.

²Friedrich Brunstaed, Theologie der luthersichen Bekenntnisschriften (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1951), p. 222.

³Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXIX (January, 1958).

⁴Vorrede; S. D. XII, 40.

⁵Edmund Schlink, Theologie der luthersichen Bekenntnisschriften (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1954), p. 224.

Schoepfungsbotschaft, so it was also eschatological.⁶ Everything in the Symbols is directed toward this final act of God.

For some years there has been a renewed interest in eschatology.⁷ A specific treatment of eschatology from the Lutheran point of view, however, is still lacking. With the exception of Schlink and Brunstaed, neither of whose treatment is completely adequate, nothing has been written on the subject of the eschatological expectation found in the Lutheran Symbols.⁸ The goal of this paper, therefore, is to draw the eschatological references from the Symbols to discover how the writers looked at that which lay beyond this life and how this expectancy related to their presentation of the faith.

The work will first consider the formal eschatological pronouncements of the Catholic Creeds, Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, and the specific eschatological references in the other symbolical writings, especially those of the Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles of Martin Luther. The eschatological awareness of the times as the Symbols present it composes Chapter III. This will be limited to the eschatological tensions found in the Confessions themselves,

⁶Brunstaed, op. cit., p. 224.

⁷Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949) represents the greatest study on eschatology to date.

⁸U. Seeger, "Die eschatologische Grundhaltung in Luthers Grossem Katechismus," Evangelische Theologie (1935), cited by E. Schlink, op. cit., p. 224 is such a study. This work, however, is not available.

in regard to the appearance of the Antichrist, the increasing evil in the world, and the awareness of the writers that they must stand before God, the Judge, with their Confession. Since this is confined to the documents of the Lutheran Symbols, it will not include the extra symbolical writings of the Confessors.⁹ The bulk of the paper will present eschatology: as a future event, dealing with Christ's return, the resurrection, the judgment and eternal life; and eschatology in the present, in which we daily experience in life and death the drawing to an end of this existence.

Since eschatology so thoroughly pervades the Symbols, it would be possible to write a theology of the Symbols having eschatology as a basis for the study. However, in this paper the doctrines are discussed only in so far as the eschatological aspect of them is present in the Symbols. It is not intended that each of these doctrines is discussed in its entirety.

Throughout this paper the following abbreviations will be used for the individual confessions of the Book of Concord: The Introduction to the Book of Concord: Vorrede; The Augsburg Confession: A. C.; The Apology: Ap.; The Small Catechism: S. C.; The Large Catechism: L. C.; The Smalcald Articles: S. A.; Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope:

⁹Martin Luther, "Der Prophet Daniel deutsch, nebst der Auslegung des zwoelften Capitels," (Erlangen: Carl Heyder, 1847) XLI, 233 is just one example of some of Luther's eschatological thinking which is not present in the Symbols.

Tract.; The Epitome; Ep.; The Solid Declaration; S. D.; The Catalog of Testimonies; C. T.. The edition of the Symbols used was Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952).

CHAPTER II

THE FORMAL ESCHATOLOGICAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

In the Catholic Creeds we have several specific statements in regard to eschatology. The Second Article of the Apostolicum declares: "Jesus Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead." The Third Article says: "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh and life eternal." The resurrection of the flesh and life eternal are considered with the work of the Holy Spirit, closely connecting it with the forgiveness of sins, the Church, and the communio sanctorum.

The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum states Christ's return in these words: "And will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead whose kingdom shall have no end." The Third Article exhibits the same pattern as the Apostolicum saying: "I confess one baptism for the remission of sins and await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." Here the connection between the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the forgiveness of sins is tied together with the resurrection and the eternal life. While, of course, the thought of the resurrection of the dead is dependent neither on Baptism nor the forgiveness of sins, it is implied that the resurrection to glory and life eternal with God is dependent upon Baptism and the forgiveness of sins.

The Quicumque vult declares that if one is to be saved he must above all hold the catholic faith, without which he would perish

everlastingly. He who will be saved must think of the Trinity as,

It is also necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . That He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give an account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

The Quicumque vult is the only one of the three creeds which sets up a criterion for life everlasting. The acceptance of the catholic faith and the doing of good works is the basis on which Christ shall judge. This creed also mentions eternal punishment by fire.

Although Christ's coming to judge the living and the dead is mentioned and a reference is made to the eschatological sayings of the Apostolicum in Article III of the Augsburg Confession, the only full article in the Augsburg Confession, and in fact, the whole of the Lutheran Symbols, is Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession. In comparing both official versions of the German and Latin texts we find only minor differences. The German says that: "Jesus Christus am jungsten Tag kommen wird," while the Latin says: "apparebit in consummatione mundi." Article XVII covers the following points:

1. Jesus Christ will come to judge on the Last Day.
2. He will arouse the dead.
3. He will give the pious and elect eternal life and eternal joy.
4. He will damn the godless men and the devils in hell and eternal torment.

5. The Anabaptists are condemned for they teach that the devils and damned men will not endure eternal pain and torment.
6. Certain Jewish opinions are condemned for they teach that before the resurrection of the dead the pious shall set up a kingdom on earth and subject the faithless.

This statement concerning the Coming of Christ seems to be very much dependent on the closing confession of Luther in his Vom Abendmahl

Christi. Bekenntnis of 1528. Here Luther writes:

Am letzten glaube ich die auferstehung allen toeten am Juengsten tage, beyde der frumen und boesen, das ein iglicher daselb emphafe an seinem leibe, wie ers verdienst hat, Und also die frumen ewiglich leben mit Christo, und die boesen ewiglich sterben mit dem teuffel und seinen engeln, Denn ichs nicht halte mit denen, so da laren, das die teuffel auch werden endlich zur seligkeit kommen.¹

The Schwabach Articles, upon which the Augsburg Confession is built, written by Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Brenz, and Agricola and presented at Smalcald in 1529, treat the coming again of Christ in Article XIII in a manner very similar to Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession. The only differences noted are that the resurrection is not specifically mentioned but only implied, and the thought of deliverance from all evil is omitted.² The followers of Origen are condemned by name in the Schwabach Articles.

¹Martin Luther, "Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis" in D. Martin Luther's Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Herman Boehlau, 1884), XXVI, 509, 13.

²Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), p. 72.

Melanchthon's Variata of 1540 reverts back to the Schwabach Articles in that it condemns the Origenists by name.³ Melanchthon also re-introduces some of the thoughts of Article XIV of the Schwabach Articles into the Variata XVII by referring to government. He writes:

For we know that since the godly ought to obey the magistrates that now are, they must not seize their power from them or overthrow governments by sedition, because Paul enjoineth: "Let every soul be subject unto higher powers." (Rom. 13:1) We know also that the Church in this life is subject to the cross, and shall not be glorified until after this life; as Paul saith (Rom. 8:29; I Cor. 15:49): We must be made like the image of the Son of God. Therefore we utterly condemn and detest the folly and diabolical madness of the Anabaptists.⁴

Both Schlink⁵ and Asmussen⁶ make a point of the position of Article XVII, for it follows immediately upon the article on the kingdom of this world. This, they believe, shows that there will be a separation of the worldly and spiritual kingdoms. This is, beyond a doubt, true, but it remains to be proved that this was clearly the intention of the writer of the Augsburg Confession.

The Confutation accepted Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession,

³M. Reu, The Augsburg Confession. A Collection of Sources with An Historical Introduction (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1930), p. 403.

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Edmund Schlink, Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1954), p. 227.

⁶Hans Asmussen, Warum noch lutherische Kirche? (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1949), p. 215.

therefore, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession has but a summary of the already brief Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession. Here nothing new has been added. Article III of the Augsburg Confession was also accepted, thus the Apology also deals with Article III in a very brief manner, omitting any direct reference to the return of Christ but affirming both the Apostolicum and the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum of the early Church.

In their Christology, the Smalcald Articles list the three creeds and state that Christ shall come and judge the living and the dead.⁷

The Small Catechism adds:

That I might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns in eternity.⁸

The Third Article of the Apostolicum also has a note on eschatology, and Luther explains in the Small Catechism: "and at the last day He (the Holy Spirit) will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and all believers in Christ eternal life."⁹

The Large Catechism, with its fuller explanation, covers the following points in the second and third articles of the Apostolicum: At the last day Christ will completely part and separate us from the wicked

⁷S. A. I iv.

⁸S. C. II 4.

⁹S. C. II 6.

world, the devil, death, sins, and all other evil;¹⁰ the sinful aspect of the flesh will be destroyed, and the flesh will come forth in perfect holiness in a new and eternal life;¹¹ as the Holy Spirit worked in conversion and sanctification, so it has been His work which gives us the resurrection and life eternal;¹² the good German idiom would be to use Augerstehung des Leibes, instead of Augerstehung des Fleisches which could give rise to a false understanding of the resurrection.¹³

Beyond these specific statements on eschatology in the Symbols, one must look into the formulations of the remaining articles for a fuller picture of the eschatological outlook of the writers of the Symbols.

¹⁰L. C. II 31.

¹¹L. C. III 57.

¹²L. C. III 59.

¹³L. C. III 60.

CHAPTER III

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL AWARENESS OF THE TIMES

As a flash of lightening illumines the dark world, making visible that which lay hidden, so God in His mercy has permitted the light of the Gospel and His saving Word to arise and shine clearly and purely.¹ However, just as lightening shows both the good and the evil, so the light of the Gospel has not only revealed to men the grace of God in Christ, but it also has shown the great evil in the world, making it obvious that these are the last days of the world.

The last days are here, for the Antichrist has appeared. The Church has always had antichrists. Pastors, for example, who no longer act in the place of Christ are antichrists.² However, none of the antichrists, which have plagued the Church from its very inception, is the chief and great Antichrist of the end times. This man of lawlessness, the son of perdition, who would be manifest in the days immediately preceding the coming again of Christ as prophesied by St. John and St. Paul, has now revealed himself. The Antichrist is not atheistic. He is within the Church. Melanchthon explains that the kingdom of Antichrist is nothing

¹Vorrede 2.

²Ap. VII 48.

but a new service of God, devised by human authority which rejects Christ in a manner similar to that of Mohammed's teaching. A primary mark of the Antichrist is that he teaches that through services and works one is justified before God. Thus he opposes Christ, for he sets up services and works in the place of Christ as justifying before God.³ This the papacy has done. The papacy is the Antichrist.⁴

The papacy, and not individual popes, is considered the Antichrist for other reasons as well. Luther sees a relationship between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of the pope. Satan, who is trying every possible method to destroy the Church, is responsible for the development of the papacy, for it has helped make the Church impure.⁵ With Satanic power behind it, the papacy devises, defends, and practices doctrine and services conflicting with the Gospel to such an extent that it stands in opposition to Christ. Without the order or command of God, the pope has set himself over and against Christ by not permitting Christians to be saved without his power.⁶ He exalts himself above all that is worshiped and called God, so that he sits as God in the temple

³Ap. XV 18.

⁴Ap. VII 23; Ap. XV 18; Ap. XXIII 25; Ap. XXVII 98; S. A. II iv 10-14; Tract. 39, 40, 41, 42, 57. Of these three confessions, the S. A. is the most vigorous in declaring the papacy the Antichrist. The Tract. is somewhat milder, while the Ap. is the mildest.

⁵S. A. II iv 5.

⁶S. A. II iv 10.

of God. He assumes divine authority to himself,⁷ making himself an earthly god.⁸ The pope has also taken to himself the power, not only of binding and loosing sins in this life, but also assumes jurisdiction over souls after this life, clearly indicating that he is the Antichrist.⁹ He is guilty of godless doctrine, blasphemies, and unjust cruelty.¹⁰ The papacy and its followers are guilty of profaning the Mass and using it in an idolatrous manner.¹¹ They also pervert the doctrine of penance.¹² Such practice takes away the glory of Christ.

Even with regard to human tradition in the Church, the papacy shows itself to be a part of the kingdom of Antichrist, according to Daniel 11:38, for it defends human services as meriting justification, grace, and the remission of sins.¹³ The papacy's stand on the marriage of priests also reveals it to be the Antichrist, for Daniel 11:37 has foretold that the Antichrist would have the mark of showing a contempt for women.¹⁴ And not

⁷Tract. 39.

⁸Ap. VII 24. The unofficial German only. It is used by Edmund Schlinck, Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1954), p. 232.

⁹Tract. 40.

¹⁰Tract. 41.

¹¹S. A. II iv 1-11

¹²S. A. III iii 10-29

¹³Ap. XV 18.

¹⁴Ap. XXIII 25.

only does the pope frame articles of faith, abolish the Scriptures, according to his own pleasure, appoint rites of worship and sacrifices, but he also fuses the spiritual and worldly kingdoms, setting himself up as the supreme outward monarch of the whole world. He makes himself lord over the whole world, of all the kingdoms of the world, of all things private and public, and insists on absolute power in temporal and spiritual things. This too, according to the prophecy of Daniel 11:36ff, points out that the papacy is the Antichrist.¹⁵

Not only has the Antichrist been revealed, but there are many more indications that the Day of Judgement is upon the writers of the Symbols. The increase of vice shows Melanchthon that nature is growing older and is gradually becoming weaker.¹⁶ Surely the last days are here.¹⁷ The pre-diluvian days have returned. Again it can be said:

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all the flesh has corrupted their way upon the earth.¹⁸

The conditions which existed then and at the time preceding the burning

¹⁵ Ap. VII 23.

¹⁶ Ap. XXIII 54.

¹⁷ A. C. XXIII.

¹⁸ Genesis 6:11-12.

of Sodom and Gomorrah and the destruction of Rome and Sybaris are instances which serve as an image of the times which will be next to the end of things.¹⁹

Not only the world, but the Church as well is in a bad state. The bishops do not care whether the poor people live or die. Luther was so disturbed about the bishops' lack of interest in the welfare of the people, of their disregard for being good shepherds of their flock, that he feared God would, as He did at Sodom and Gomorrah, send a council of angels to destroy those who so wantonly mock Him.²⁰ In his despair Luther closes his introduction to the Smalcald Articles with the prayer: "O dear Lord Jesus Christ, invoke a council yourself and deliver your servants through your glorious advent."²¹ In closing Part II of the Smalcald Articles, Luther, after writing on the Office and Work of Jesus Christ, on the Redemption, on the Mass, on Chapters and Cloisters, and on the Papacy, and noting the sad condition of the Church of Christ, expresses the hope that Christ would come with His Spirit and Advent and beat down the adversary.²²

Thus the writers of the Lutheran Symbols, seeing the Antichrist

¹⁹Ap. XXIII 54.

²⁰S. A. Vorrede 11.

²¹S. A. Vorrede 15.

²²S. A. II iv 15.

embodied in the papacy, the world filled with vice and corruption, and the Church no longer interested in her people, have sober outlook on this existence and earnestly await the quickly approaching Parousia.

The closeness of the Judgment brings with it the urgency not only for sound doctrine, but also right living comes much more into focus.

Both Luther and Melanchthon take the adversaries to task, asking them to consider the complaints of the people under their jurisdiction, remembering that they will have to render an account of their stewardship.²³

In the Introduction to the Small Catechism, Luther asks the bishops how they are going to answer Christ for treating the people so shamefully and failing to instruct them properly. They know neither the Our Father, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, nor individual Bible passages.²⁴ Those bishops, who abuse the aims of the Church for luxury and thus neglect the ministry will pay God the penalty for the crime of defrauding the Church.²⁵ Their unjust cruelty in killing saints also will be revenged.²⁶ "God will not long endure such activity."²⁷

Luther also admonishes the faithful to live with the return of Christ and the judgment in mind. The Small Catechism's familiar "we should

²³Ap. XVIII 5; S. A. Vorrede II.

²⁴S. C. Vorrede 4.

²⁵Tract. 82.

²⁶Tract. 52, 53.

²⁷Ap. XI 124.

fear and love God" introducing the explanations to each of the Commandments are not just idle words but are directly related to God's punishing (here in time and hereafter in eternity) those who do evil and blessing those who do not act contrary to the Commandments. The arrangement of the Commandments, with the additional material connected with the First Commandment of Exodus 20:5b and 6 made into a conclusion to the Commandments gives the entire decalog an eschatological stamp for God is "a just and righteous God."²⁸

Luther brings the Small Catechism to a close with the eschatologically orientated "Table of Duties." "What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastor" quotes Hebrews 13:17 with the Judgment in mind.²⁹ "Concerning Civil Government" also bear the phrase "and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."³⁰ Husbands are also reminded to live with their wives giving them honor, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.³¹ Servants and laborers are encouraged to work "with good will, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men; know that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall be received of the Lord whether he be bond or free according to Ephesians 6:5;

²⁸S. C. I 21.

²⁹S. C. Table of Duties 3. In the Latin only.

³⁰S. C. ibid., 4.

³¹S. C. ibid., 6.

Colossians 3:22." ³² Masters and mistresses are reminded to be patient, knowing that they have a Master in heaven with whom there is no respect of persons, as St. Paul points out in Ephesians 6:9 and Colossians 4:1. ³³ Young persons are told that God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time, I Peter 5:5, 6. ³⁴ Whatever the Christian does in his daily activity, he is exhorted to hold before him the image of the Christ sitting on the Throne of Judgment condemning the disobedient and blessing the faithful.

The writers of the Symbols, however, not only saw the impending Day of Judgment as something to frighten those who had not carried out their obligations or as an encouragement to right living, but they realized that they too would stand before the Seat of Judgment and be required to give an account of their teaching. The imminent return of Christ pervaded everything that they wrote and taught the people. With great earnestness they returned to the apostolic writings of the Scriptures and the traditions of the early Church to build their theology. Thus they could express with confidence that their doctrine would be received approvingly on the last day. The Introduction to the Book of Concord

³²S. C. ibid., 10.

³³S. C. ibid., 11.

³⁴S. C. ibid., 12.

spells out decisively the milieu in which the Symbolical writers stated their catholic and apostolic theology. With joyful consciences, free of fear, the confessors will appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ. The confessors did not look at their work as a mere academic exercise, but rather it was the setting forth of the pure doctrine so that the people would not be misled, but that they, guided by the Christian doctrine and the proclamation of the Gospel, might come into the next world of blessedness.³⁵ Thus the Reformers worked out their theology with the urgency for pure doctrine, for not only would they have to stand before the Judge but also the people whom they were teaching were to give answer to their beliefs on that Day. Certainly the confessors realized that their task would not be perfectly accomplished, for it is impossible to know all things in this life. However, they knew that the Holy Spirit was always present in reading and meditation, bestowing new light as they worked.³⁶ They saw that this was no light matter. The writers of the Formula felt it very much in place to include Luther's unsophisticated words from the introduction to his Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntniss: "I am not drunk nor thoughtless; I know what I say; I also am sensible of what it means for me at the coming of the Lord Christ at the final judgment. . . . It is a serious matter for me."³⁷

³⁵A. C. Melanchthons erster Entwurf fuer den Beschluss.

³⁶L. C. Neue Vorrede 9.

³⁷G. D. VII 31.

While acknowledging their weaknesses and finiteness the Confessors express the strong confidence that their doctrine will be received approvingly at the Last Day. In putting on paper their beliefs the writers of the Formula stand with Luther when he declares that at the writing of his great confession on the Sacrament he intends to confess his faith point by point, before God and the world and appear before the Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ.³⁸ The Symbols are also brought to a resounding close with these words: This "is our faith, doctrine, and confession, in which we are also willing, by God's grace, to appear with intrepid hearts, before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and give an account of it."³⁹

³⁸ S. D. VII 29.

³⁹ S. D. XII 40.

CHAPTER IV

ESCHATOLOGY AS A FUTURE EVENT

The Coming of Christ

When Christ returns to judge the world, the entire order of the world and the Church will be changed. The Church has as its task to preach the Law and the Gospel, so that man trusts completely in Christ his Savior. The Symbols see that Scripture is so constructed that it has both Law and Gospel. In some places it presents the Law and in other places the promises concerning Christ. The Old Testament promises that Christ will come and offer, for His sake, the remission of sins, justification, and life eternal. In the New Testament Christ Himself, since He has appeared, promises the remission of sins, justification, and life eternal.¹

The whole concept of the law, itself, is an eschatological aspect of the Symbols, for the law condemns not just the actions and thoughts of a person in this life, but it convicts man to eternal destruction.² As Luther says: "Where the law alone carried out its office without the activity of the Gospel there is death and hell, and the man must doubt as Saul

¹Ap. IV 5.

²Ap. IV 40; Ap. IV 7; S. D. V 20; S. D. VI 12; S.A. III III 7.

and Judas, as St. Paul says: 'The law kills through sin.'³ Even though a person has been brought to Christ, he is still in need of the law for he is only half pure and holy and needs the Word and forgiveness daily.⁴ The old Adam as an intractable, refractory mule is still a part of man, which must be coerced to the obedience of Christ, not only by the teaching, admonition, force, and threatening of the law, but also oftentimes by the club of punishments and troubles.⁵

The gospel, however, brings the promise of eternal salvation.⁶ It does not teach an outward, temporal but an inner, eternal nature and righteousness of the heart.⁷

The Gospel (which is preached in the church) brings not merely the shadow of eternal things, but the eternal things themselves, the Holy Spirit and righteousness, by which we are righteous before God. (But every true Christian is even here upon earth a partaker of eternal blessings, even of eternal comfort, of eternal life, and of the Holy Spirit, and righteousness which is from God, until he will be completely saved in the world to come.)⁸

With the coming of Christ this will change. The Church will no longer find it necessary to keep diligently inculcating the proper

³S. A. III III 7.

⁴L. C. II 57.

⁵S. D. VI 24.

⁶S. D. II 9.

⁷A. C. XVI.

⁸Ap. VII 15.

distinction between law and gospel.⁹ With the return of Christ the functions of law and gospel will no longer be necessary, for then the Christian will be made completely pure and holy.¹⁰ The body of sin is entirely put off at this time, and man is perfectly renewed in the resurrection. He will need neither the preaching of the law nor its threatenings and punishments. The gospel too will not be necessary any longer, for these things belong to the imperfect life here on earth.¹¹ To this end the Pelagians, the Schwenkfelders, and the papists are condemned, for they teach that man need not wait until Christ's return and life eternal, but that man can be perfect already in this life. Original sin has made the proclamation of the law and the gospel necessary. Original sin, however, will remain in the grave, for God has not created, assumed, redeemed, or sanctified it.¹²

Just as God's Word is eternal, so the writers of the Symbols would have us remember that the law also is eternal.¹³ It will not have the function it did in the imperfect world. The law will not need to convict man of sin, so that he comes to believe the gospel. Neither will the law

⁹S. D. V 24.

¹⁰L. C. II 57.

¹¹S. D. VI 24.

¹²Ep. I 5.

¹³S. D. II 50; Ap. IV 10.

have to be used on the old man of the converted person, for he will now be removed from imperfection. The task of the gospel too will be at an end, for the faithful will now be in complete communion with the Godhead, no longer in need of the gospel's strengthening powers.

With the Coming of Christ not only will He bring to an end the earthly functions of the law and the gospel, but the working of the Holy Spirit within the Church will also cease. The Holy Spirit is He Who has "called, gathered, enlightened and sanctified the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins."¹⁴ Although creation and redemption are completed, the Holy Spirit continues His work of sanctification without interruption "until the last day." He speaks through the congregation in Word and Sacraments, and there He does all things.¹⁵ The means which the Holy Spirit uses come to an end with Christ's coming.¹⁶ Luther speaks of it in this manner: The office and work of the Holy Spirit is that He begins and daily increases holiness on earth through the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sins.¹⁷

He has not yet brought together all His Christian Church nor

¹⁴ S. C. II III 6.

¹⁵ L. C. II III 62.

¹⁶ S. D. VII 44.

¹⁷ L. C. II III 41, 59.

dispensed forgiveness. Therefore we believe in Him who through the Word daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian Church, and through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins bestows, increases, and strengthens faith, in order that when He has accomplished it all, and we abide therein, and die to the world and to all evil, He may finally make us perfectly and forever holy; which now we expect in faith through the Word.¹⁸

When we die or at His coming He will accomplish perfection in an instant and preserve us eternally by the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.¹⁹

With the coming of Christ there will also be a separation of the true from the false. On the last day the devil and all the powers of evil--the evil world, death, sin, etc. will be separated from the faithful.²⁰ The hypocrites and wicked men who have been mingled with the Church in this life and were members of the outward fellowship of the signs of the Church will be completely cut off from communion with God.²¹ The Church is compared by Christ to a threshing-floor on which wheat and chaff are heaped together (Matthew 3:12) and to a net in which there are both good and bad fish (Matthew 13:47).²² St. Paul also predicted that the Antichrist would sit in the temple of God. With the coming of Christ,

¹⁸ L. C. II III 162.

¹⁹ L. C. II III 41, 59

²⁰ L. C. II II 31 and I 1.

²¹ Ap. VII 3.

²² Ap. VII 1.

the chaff will be burned, the bad fish will be discarded, and the Antichrist will be cast down. Traditions, and all other things which do not profit a man in respect to eternal righteousness and eternal life, such as food, drink, clothing, will perish with using, as St. Paul says in Colossians 2:20ff. ²³ The Baalitic worship of the pope (the abuse of the Mass) will continue as long as the reign of the Antichrist by the glory of His Advent. ²⁴

In Christ's coming, man shall also be delivered from the unholy triad of sin, death and the devil. It was through Adam's sin that men are sinners and are brought under death and the devil. ²⁵ However, Jesus Christ, the second Adam, has redeemed man from sin, death and the power of the devil with His holy precious blood. Christ's action, however, does not completely rule out the evil triad in the lives of men. There is no invisible wall of protection about each of God's children. Eternal life was gained for man by Christ and given him through Holy Baptism. In Holy Baptism man is given a new birth, the tyranny of the devil, sin, and death is overthrown, and he is made a child of Life and an heir

²³ Ap. XXVIII 10.

²⁴ Ap. XXVII 98.

²⁵ S. A. III 1.

of all God's goodnesses. He becomes God's child and Christ's brother.²⁶ However, the Holy Spirit must continue His work to strengthen us through Word and Sacrament to overcome the attacks of these powers which seek our destruction.²⁷ At Christ's return all that Christ has done for us will be fully realized, so that we are able to live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness to all eternity.²⁸ On the last day the evil triad will be completely trampled underfoot, and we through Christ shall obtain the victory.²⁹

The Resurrection

When Christ comes He will raise the dead.³⁰ The Scriptures in John 5:21f. and 6:39f. clearly testify that the power to quicken has been handed over to Christ.³¹ Luther writes in the Small Catechism: "The Holy Ghost will raise up me and all the dead."³² The Quicunque vult adds that at the appearance of Christ all men must rise with their own bodies. Whether

²⁶S. C. Taufbuechlein 8.

²⁷L. C. V 70, 71.

²⁸S. C. II 11 4; L. C. III 54; L. C. IV 25.

²⁹S. C. III 6; L. C. II 11 31.

³⁰A. C. XVII.

³¹S. D. VIII 58.

³²S. C. II 111 6.

we say that Christ Himself or Christ working through His Spirit raises men is not the issue. The important point is that this is not man's doing. The part that man plays in his own resurrection is purely passive. It is comparable to a man's conversion, which is also a resurrection--a resurrection from spiritual death, which is in no way dependent upon the man himself. ³³ Man must be quickened by the Son of God from the death of sin. ³⁴ The resurrection gives man a new will. The Formula sees that the will of man has four different and unlike states: before the fall; since the fall; after regeneration; and after the resurrection of the body. ³⁵ In the resurrection, Scripture testifies that man's flesh shall have precisely the same substance, but without sin, and he will also retain precisely the same soul, but without sin. ³⁶ The Epitome insists that a distinction between man's corrupt nature and original sin must be maintained with the greatest care. Man's nature, even though corrupt, has been created, redeemed, sanctified, and will be raised by God, but original sin can claim none of these actions of God for itself. ³⁷ The distinction

³³ S. D. II 87.

³⁴ S. D. II 11.

³⁵ Ep. II 1.

³⁶ S. D. I 46. } *renew of body*

³⁷ Ep. I 1 Aff.

between original sin and human nature cannot be made except by God's Word, and no one but God alone can separate the two. God makes this separation through death and the resurrection, where the human nature which man now bears will rise and live eternally without original sin, separated and sundered from it, as is written in Job 19:26.³⁸ If this is not maintained it must follow that either man's flesh will not rise or that sin will rise and remain in the elect unto eternal life.³⁹ It is in the resurrection that eternal life, which the Holy Spirit has already begun in man and daily grants him, will be brought to a completion. Then man no longer will be half perfect but will be completely pure and holy, full of piety and righteousness, removed from sin and death and be given a glorified body.⁴⁰

Luther felt that it would be more appropriate to speak of a "resurrection of the body" rather than a resurrection of the flesh. With flesh one usually thinks of a butcher shop, but he added that this was of little import as long as the proper understanding of the resurrection was conveyed.⁴¹

The resurrection of man is dependent upon Christ's resurrection, for

³⁸ Ep. I 10.

³⁹ S. D. I 47.

⁴⁰ L. C. II 111 57; Ap VI 56.

⁴¹ L. C. II 111 60.

it is with Christ's resurrection that death was conquered and devoured.⁴²

The words of Athananius in On Humanity Assumed are quoted in the Catalog of Testimonies to give further basis to this position:

Whatever Scripture says that the Son has received, it understands as having been received with respect to His Body, and that this body is the first-fruits of the Church. The Lord therefore first raised and exalted His body but afterward also the members of His body.⁴³

The Judgment

Christ's purpose for coming will be to judge the living and the dead.⁴⁴

We shall examine the criterion for the judgment to live eternally with God and for condemnation.

The relationship of works, grace and faith is one of the greatly controverted points of the Reformation. The Reformers following the Quicunque vult said that good works would be rewarded.⁴⁵ Luther says that he who seeks and desires good works will find in helping his neighbor more than enough to do which is heartily acceptable and pleasing to God, and also is crowned with blessings, as King Solomon teaches in Proverbs 19:17: "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for

⁴²L. C. II II 31.

⁴³C. T. III.

⁴⁴The Catholic Creeds; A. C. III; A. C. XVII; S. A. I, 4.

⁴⁵Ap. IV 278.

his deed.⁴⁶ It is God's will and express command that believers do good works. The Holy Spirit works this in believers. God is pleased for Christ's sake with good works and He promises a glorious reward in this life and in the life to come.⁴⁷ These are the true, holy and godly works in which God and all the angels rejoice.⁴⁸ However, even though the Holy Spirit helps us do good works and God has commanded them, they in no way enter into the obtaining of eternal life, for human holiness is but stench and filth, and deserves nothing but wrath and damnation.⁴⁹ Election is not based upon godliness or virtue, but only upon the merit of Christ and the gracious will of His Father.⁵⁰ It is impossible that remission of sins should occur and the terrors of death and sin be overcome by any work or anything else, but by faith in Christ, as St. Paul says in Romans 5:1.⁵¹

good
works

We are made sons of God and coheirs with Christ by faith, for faith justifies. Eternal life is due to the justified according to the passage

⁴⁶ L. C. I vii 252.

⁴⁷ S. D. IV 38.

⁴⁸ L. C. I v 198.

⁴⁹ L. C. I v 198.

⁵⁰ S. D. XI 75.

⁵¹ Ap. XXIV 60.

Romans 8:30: "Whom He justified, them He also glorified."⁵² If any thinks that he has a reconciled God because he has observed the law, he must always doubt whether he has truly a reconciled God.⁵³ St.

Bernard is cited as a father who stands as a testimony against adversaries, for he said that one can have no good works unless they have been given, and that one cannot merit eternal life by works.⁵⁴ The Symbols are especially critical of the mediaeval monastic life, which is carried out with the thought that the monastic vow was equal to baptism and that eternal life was thus gained through monasticism.⁵⁵

Since it is impossible for man to affect his own salvation, he must be completely dependent on the mercy and grace of God. St. Augustine says: "Woe to the life of man, however much it may be worthy of praise if it be judged with mercy removed."⁵⁶ The Apology in quoting St. Augustine maintains that the entire Church confesses that eternal life is attained through mercy. The Formula also says that although God, according to His just, strict sentence, has utterly cast away the fallen evil

⁵²Ap. IV 195.

⁵³Ap. IV 302.

⁵⁴Ap. XXVII 32.

⁵⁵Ap. XXVII 21, 27, 30, 40; S. A. III xiv.

⁵⁶Ap. IV 322.

spirits forever, He has nevertheless, out of special, pure mercy, willed that poor fallen human nature might again become and be capable and participant of conversion, the grace of God, and eternal life.⁵⁷ Since man's nature is so corrupted by sin, and is worthy of, and subject to, God's wrath and condemnation, God owes His creatures neither the Word nor the Spirit.⁵⁸ Yet He bestows upon man these gifts through His grace. Frequently men, as the Jews of Paul's time (Acts 13:46), thrust His gifts from them, and make themselves unworthy of everlasting life.⁵⁹

It was through the grace of God that He first sent His Son into the world to gain salvation for man. Secondly it is through the grace of God that He sends His Holy Spirit into men's lives by the Word and the Sacraments which bestow the benefit of this work of Christ upon them.

Melanchthon says: "The grace of God is set forth in the preaching of the Gospel which has been preceded by the preaching of the law."⁶⁰ This is the free gift of God, therefore, no injustice is done those who are punished and receive the wages of their sins.⁶¹ In the Taufbuechlein, appended to the Small Catechism, Luther shows how important the concept

⁵⁷S. D. II 22.

⁵⁸S. D. XI 60.

⁵⁹S. D. XI 60.

⁶⁰Ap. IV 366.

⁶¹S. D. XI 61.

of grace is in Holy Baptism. It is through the help and grace of God in Baptism that a child of sin may become a child of God.⁶² It is through God's eternal grace that this washing was a heavenly washing and a new birth unto eternal life.⁶³ In this vein the Apology, as before mentioned, condemns the thought that the monastic vow is equal to Baptism.⁶⁴

Neither is God's grace shown only in sending His Son into the world, and in bringing men the message of the Gospel and Holy Baptism so that they are converted. It is an on-going process. As the work of the Holy Spirit continues throughout the Church until the end, so it is necessary that God shower His grace upon this people for they sin daily and deserve nothing but punishment.⁶⁵

It is through God's grace that He sends the Holy Spirit into our lives and grants us faith. Through the preaching of the law and the gospel an eternal Church is collected unto God in faith. In the hearts of these people He works true repentance, a knowledge of sins, and a true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.⁶⁶ This faith is not only knowledge in the

⁶²S. C. Taufbuechlein 2.

⁶³S. C. Taufbuechlein 13, 30.

⁶⁴Ap. XXVII 21.

⁶⁵S. C. III 5.

⁶⁶S. D. II 50.

intellect, but it is also confidence in the will.⁶⁷ It is not the bare knowledge of the history of Christ, but such a gift of God by which we come to a right knowledge of Christ as our Redeemer in the word of the gospel, and trust in Him, that for the sake of His obedience alone we have, by grace, the forgiveness of sins, are regarded as holy and righteous before God the Father and are saved eternally.⁶⁸ It is faith which makes eternal life available to us, because faith justifies us,⁶⁹ and through it we receive the forgiveness of sins.⁷⁰ The Apology lauds Tertullian in the way that he speaks of faith on the basis of Exekiel 33:11, for he says:

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." For as God swears that He does not wish the death of a sinner, he shows that faith is required, in order that we may believe the one swearing, and be firmly confident that He forgives us.⁷¹

This faith is anchored in Christ, the Book of Life.⁷² This faith in Christ overcomes both the wrath of God toward the sinner and death.⁷³ When the Holy Spirit kindles this faith in Christ in man, it is truly a

⁶⁷ Ap. IV 302.

⁶⁸ Ep. III 7.

⁶⁹ Ap. IV 189.

⁷⁰ Ap. IV 206.

⁷¹ Ap. XII 94.

⁷² S. D. XI 13, 18; Ap. XII 157.

⁷³ Ap. XII 49.

regeneration because here a child of wrath becomes a child of God and is thus transferred from death to life as is written in Ephesians 2:5, Habbakuk 2:4 and Romans 1:17.⁷⁴ This faith is not in antithesis to works. True faith also embraces fruits. The Apology therefore says that it is the entire newness of life that saves, for works are the exercises of faith which receives the remission of sins and overcomes death.⁷⁵ Faith, however, is open to attack on many sides and is in constant need of defense. God with His grace must come to His weak followers and lift them up and strengthen their faith. By daily exercise of reading and practicing God's Word He preserves the redeemed in faith and daily strengthens them until the end.⁷⁶ In regard to the Sacrament of the Altar, however, he who is without true faith receives the Sacrament to his damnation.⁷⁷

The immediate purpose of Christ's return, according to the creeds, is to judge. The Lutheran Symbols reiterate this.⁷⁸ The power to quicken and to execute judgment, according to John 5:2f and 6:39f, has been

⁷⁴S. D. III 20.

⁷⁵Ap. IV 278.

⁷⁶S. D. II 16, 14; S. C. III 111.

⁷⁷S. D. VII 68.

⁷⁸A. C. III; A. C. XVII; S. A. I 4.

given to Christ, because He is the Son of Man and has flesh and blood.⁷⁹

All the powers of heaven and earth: to have all things in His hands, to have all things in subjection beneath His feet, to cleanse from sin, to have all judgment are not created gifts, are but divine and infinite properties which have been given and communicated to the man Christ Jesus.⁸⁰

Christ is the all-knowing judge. In defense of the person of Christ the Epitome even condemns the thought that Christ's human mind is limited, and that He knows no more than is becoming and needful for Him to know for His office as Judge.⁸¹

The judgment brings terror to man. Sin and death with their terrors are not only thoughts of the intellect, but also are horrible movements of the will fleeing God's judgment.⁸² Flesh and human righteousness cannot endure the judgment of God.⁸³ No one can keep the law. The Ten Commandments are so high that no one through human power is able to keep them, and whoever could would be a heavenly, angelic man far above all the holiness of the world.⁸⁴ If such people existed there

⁷⁹S. D. VIII 58.

⁸⁰S. D. VIII 55.

⁸¹Ep. VIII 36.

⁸²Ap. IV 302.

⁸³Ap. IV 330.

⁸⁴L. C. Beschluss 317.

would be no need for Christ, for man by his love, without Christ as Propitiation, would have access to God. The promise concerning Christ and the gospel would not be necessary.

Not only is Christ the Judge, but He is also the Expiator. He Himself is man's reward.⁸⁵ It was His death that not only made a satisfaction for man's guilt but for eternal death as well.⁸⁶ It is only through Him that we recognize the Father's love and grace, for He is the mirror of the Paternal heart, outside of which one sees only an angry and cruel Judge.⁸⁷ It is for Christ's sake, through mercy, that eternal life is granted to those who by faith receive the remission of sins and do not set their own merits against God's judgment.⁸⁸

The judgment brings either eternal blessing and righteousness or eternal wrath and suffering.⁸⁹ This is the eschatological aspect of the law and gospel fully realized. Although both the law and the gospel are for this world only,⁹⁰ the result of the law is seen in damnation, while the prize of the gospel is seen in eternal life.

⁸⁵S. C. Vorrede 27.

⁸⁶Ap. XII 140, 146.

⁸⁷L. C. II III 65.

⁸⁸Ap. XXVII 32.

⁸⁹L. C. I 1 41; L. C. Beschluss 322.

⁹⁰S. D. VI 24.

Damnation

In the judgment it is not God's desire that any should perish, but that all be converted and be saved eternally as Ezekiel 33:11 and John 3:16 testify.⁹¹ For just as God is not the cause of sin, so too, He is not the cause of punishment or damnation. The only cause for this is sin which has been brought about by the devil and man.⁹² It was through the fraud of the serpent that man transgressed God's command, becoming a sinner, corrupting and precipitating himself with all his posterity into death and eternal condemnation.⁹³ It is therefore the inherited sin which man has that brings about his condemnation.⁹⁴ Man neither sees nor perceives the terrible and fierce wrath of God on account of sin and death, but he continues in his security into eternal death and damnation because of his inherited sin.⁹⁵ Since man is sinful it is impossible for flesh and the righteousness of the flesh to endure the judgment of God.⁹⁶ The punishment and penalty of original sin are death, eternal damnation,

⁹¹S. D. II 49.

⁹²S. D. XI 81.

⁹³S. D. V 23.

⁹⁴A. C. II.

⁹⁵S. D. II 20.

⁹⁶Ap. IV 209; L. C. II II 28.

and also other bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal miseries, and the tyranny and dominion of the devil. ⁹⁷

Man cannot be freed from sin and be justified by the law. ⁹⁸ Those who do not trust completely in Christ will fall under the condemnation of the just and righteous Judge. The heathen, the Turks, the Jews, the false Christians and the hypocrites stay in eternal anger and condemnation, for they do not want the Lord Christ, and will not be enlightened and blessed by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. ⁹⁹

The writers of the Confessions felt this very gravely in their damnamus of false doctrine. Their damnamus was not just an empty condemnation for deviations which the Church had already condemned, but in their damnamus they felt as strongly as did St. Paul in Galatians 1:8, for this was "another gospel," a gospel which beclouded the "chief article." The Manichaens, the Arians, the Mohammedans, the Pelagians, the semi-Pelagians, the Donatists, the Novatians, the Anabaptists, the Papists, and others were placed under the damnamus. ¹⁰⁰ Also included under the damnamus were those who taught post millenniumism and

⁹⁷S. D. I 13.

⁹⁸Ap. IV 161.

⁹⁹L. C. II III 66.

¹⁰⁰For a full treatment of the damnamus in the 16th Century Lutheranism see Hans-Werner Gensichen, Damnamus, Die Verwerfung von Irrlehre bei Luther und in Luthertums des 16. Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955).

Jewish opinions that the pious will rule over the godless;¹⁰¹ those who maintained a purgatory;¹⁰² those who think that they can fulfill the law perfectly;¹⁰³ and those who take jurisdiction over souls after this life.¹⁰⁴

Not only, however, was the damnamus spoken out against false teaching, but also against improper practice and living which took away from the glory of Christ. Luther said that all who teach, speak and live in any manner other than as pious and heavenly children are not considered God's but rather the devil's children.¹⁰⁵ Those who perverted the Mass,¹⁰⁶ a ministry which misappropriated the Church's alms,¹⁰⁷ the bishops who disregard their office,¹⁰⁸ those who kill the saints,¹⁰⁹ those who are disobedient to their parents and masters,¹¹⁰ parents who

¹⁰¹A. C. III; XVII.

¹⁰²S. A. II 1, 12; Ap. XII 13; S. A. III 21.

¹⁰³Ap. IV 146, 278; Ap. XII 146; Ap. XXVII 21, 27, 30, 40; S. A. III xiv; S. D. II 79.

¹⁰⁴Tract. 40.

¹⁰⁵L. C. III 44.

¹⁰⁶Ap. XXVII 5, 98.

¹⁰⁷Tract. 82.

¹⁰⁸S. C. Vorrede 4.

¹⁰⁹Tract. 52, 3.

¹¹⁰L. C. I iv.

do not properly raise their children,¹¹¹ the government which does not rule well,¹¹² those who fail to show love,¹¹³ those who make false confessions,¹¹⁴ and those who receive the Sacrament without believing,¹¹⁵ stand under the damnamus of the Symbols and the wrath of God.

God will also punish those who wilfully turn away from the Holy Commandments and again entangle themselves in the filth of the world (2 Peter 2:20), garnish their hearts for Satan (Luke 11:25f) and do despite unto the Spirit of God (Hebrews 10:29). If they continue therein they shall be hardened, blinded and eternally condemned. Pharaoh is the warning example.¹¹⁶ It is man's own fault, therefore, if he is not saved. The reason why all who hear the gospel do not believe and why some are condemned more severely is not that God has begrudged them their salvation, but rather they heard the Word in such a manner as not to learn, but only to despise, blaspheme, and disgrace it. They have resisted the Holy Spirit, who through the Word wishes to work in them, as was

¹¹¹ L. C. I iv 176.

¹¹² S. C. Haustafel 3, 4.

¹¹³ L. C. I v 191.

¹¹⁴ S. D. VII 31; S. D. XII 39.

¹¹⁵ Ep. VII 2, 16.

¹¹⁶ S. D. XI 83, 84.

the case of Christ with the Pharisees and the adherents.¹¹⁷ No injustice is done to such a person if the Holy Spirit does not enlighten him, but allows him to remain in the darkness of his unbelief to perish. This happened at the time of our Lord, for He said:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!¹¹⁸

Punishment which is meted out to those who have been condemned is variously stated. It is a perishing;¹¹⁹ eternal wrath and death;¹²⁰ eternal wrath, misfortune and heartache;¹²¹ eternal anger and condemnation;¹²² eternal misery;¹²³ eternal death and damnation;¹²⁴ paying God the penalty for their crime;¹²⁵ an eternal burden on their shoulders;¹²⁶ a destruction

¹¹⁷S. D. XI 78.

¹¹⁸S. D. II 58.

¹¹⁹S. D. II 58.

¹²⁰Ap. IV 161.

¹²¹L. C. I 1 40.

¹²²L. C. II 111 66.

¹²³S. D. I 13.

¹²⁴S. D. II 20.

¹²⁵Tract. 82.

¹²⁶S. C. Vorrede 4.

of souls;¹²⁷ a being held in the jaws of hell;¹²⁸ hellfire;¹²⁹ an eternal fire;¹³⁰ hell's vengeance.¹³¹ Nowhere is hell defined. It is viewed as a state of eternal suffering from which there is never any hope of relief.

Neither shall the devil, who used the fraud of the serpent to make man transgress God's command, escape the judgment and eternal punishment.¹³² The devil and all his powers have been conquered by Christ, and he and his cohorts shall be completely cut off from the blessed and be subdued under foot.¹³³ Christ by His descent into hell, after His burial, conquered the devil, destroyed the powers of hell, and took from the devil all his might.¹³⁴ As Athanasius says in his Against the Arians:

Why should the body of the Lord not be worshiped when the Word, by stretching out His bodily hand, healed the one sick of a fever, and by uttering a human voice raised Lazarus, and by extending His hands upon the cross overthrew the prince of the air?¹³⁵

¹²⁷ Tract. 48.

¹²⁸ Ep. IX 4.

¹²⁹ S. D. V 20.

¹³⁰ Quincunque vult.

¹³¹ L. C. II II 30.

¹³² A. C. XVII.

¹³³ L. C. II II 31.

¹³⁴ S. D. IX 3.

¹³⁵ C. T. Oration 4.

There is no opportunity for Satan and his cohorts to repent. They know of Christ and His work but do not accept it.¹³⁶ God has utterly cast the fallen spirits away forever.¹³⁷

The Symbols do not, however, consider the thought of those who have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel.

Eternal Blessing

Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession declares that when Christ comes to judge He shall give the believers and elect eternal life and joy. It is in the doctrine of election that one sees the broad sweep of the eschatological thinking of the writers of the Symbols. That which is to happen ultimately to the faithful, as St. Paul writes in Ephesians 1:4, 5, dates from the period before the foundations of the world were laid.¹³⁸ Since man, being tempted by Satan, fell into sin, it is only because of God's mercy that man has any chance to be a participant in eternal life.¹³⁹ The core of this teaching is that God will finally eternally save and glorify in life eternal those whom He has elected, called and justified.¹⁴⁰ Christ's words in Matthew 22:14 that many are called but few are chosen

¹³⁶ A. C. XX.

¹³⁷ S. D. II 22.

¹³⁸ Ep. XI 5; S. D. XI 5, 66.

¹³⁹ S. D. II 22; S. D. II 61.

¹⁴⁰ S. D. XI 22.

do not mean that God is not willing to save everyone.¹⁴¹ All thoughts of a double election must be ruled out. God's ordination is to salvation and does not extend over both the godly and the wicked, but only over the children of God.¹⁴² Those who are not saved are rejected because they, as Pharaoh, refused the Holy Spirit the opportunity to work in their hearts.¹⁴³ Election is a difficult doctrine and is offensive to reason; therefore, the Epitome warns not to judge concerning election to eternal life either from reason or from the law of God.¹⁴⁴

Man's election cannot be sought outside of Jesus Christ, Who is the Book of Life (John 14:6) in Whom all who are saved in eternity are written and elected. No one except those who know God's Son and truly believe on Him are among the elect.¹⁴⁵ The eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps, and promotes our salvation and what pertains thereto. Man's salvation is so founded upon God's election "that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18), as is also written in John 10:28: "Neither shall any man pluck my sheep out of my hand," and again in

¹⁴¹Ep. XI 11.

¹⁴²S. D. XI 5.

¹⁴³S. D. XI 184, 185.

¹⁴⁴Ep. XI 9.

¹⁴⁵Ep. XII 13; S. D. XI 66.

Acts 13:48: "And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed."¹⁴⁶

The human race has been redeemed by Christ Who has merited eternal life for all men.¹⁴⁷ This is conveyed to man through Word and Sacraments.¹⁴⁸ Thus the Holy Spirit becomes efficacious and active in man, converting him.¹⁴⁹ Those whom He justifies, He receives into eternal life,¹⁵⁰ protecting them until the end,¹⁵¹ saving them eternally.¹⁵²

In the election to eternal life it is the mercy of God in Christ alone, and there is no cause in man that he should be granted the election to everlasting life.¹⁵³

For although in the elect, who are justified by Christ and reconciled with God, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who is the eternal and essential righteousness, dwells by faith (for all Christians are temples of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who also impells them to do right), yet this indwelling of God is not the righteousness of faith of which St. Paul treats and which he calls iustitiam Dei, that is, the righteousness of God, for the sake of

¹⁴⁶S. D. XI 8.

¹⁴⁷S. D. XI 15.

¹⁴⁸S. D. XI 16.

¹⁴⁹S. D. XI 17.

¹⁵⁰S. D. XI 18.

¹⁵¹S. D. XI 20.

¹⁵²S. D. XI 22.

¹⁵³Ep. XI 20.

which we are declared righteous before God; but it follows the preceding righteousness of faith, which is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins and the gracious adoption of the poor sinner, for the sake of Christ's obedience and merit alone.¹⁵⁴

The elect, however, will still suffer strong temptations, for Satan will ever be trying to remove them from Christ's kingdom. Therefore God has not only promised this gracious election with mere words, but He has also certified it with an oath and sealed it with the Holy Sacraments, which the faithful can call to mind in the most severe temptations, and take comfort in them and therein quench the fiery darts of the devil.¹⁵⁵ This doctrine "of the mystery of the eternal election of God" is "useful and consolatory" for the Christian, as St. Paul speaks in Romans.¹⁵⁶

The condition of those who are the "faithful and elect" after the judgment is variously described throughout the Symbols. It is a gift, as St. Paul says in Romans 6:23.¹⁵⁷ The elect are eternally saved and enjoy eternal salvation.¹⁵⁸ In the world to come, man will be completely saved, the process which began at his conversion will then be complete.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴S. D. III 54.

¹⁵⁵Ep. XI 13; S. D. XI 37.

¹⁵⁶Ep. XI 11.

¹⁵⁷Ap. IV 356.

¹⁵⁸S. D. V 20; S. D. II 9.

¹⁵⁹Ap. VII 15.

He will live eternally in complete righteousness and blessedness.¹⁶⁰
 He has received the adoption of sons,¹⁶¹ and is received into the son-
 ship and heirship of eternal life, being a coheir with Christ.¹⁶² He is
 eternally saved and is therefore considered holy and righteous before
 God the Father.¹⁶³ Complete salvation is the knowing of God's Son and
 truly believing on Him as the key to salvation;¹⁶⁴ being fully in the King-
 dom of God;¹⁶⁵ the fruit of faith, the salvation of the soul;¹⁶⁶ a treas-
 ure;¹⁶⁷ a gift;¹⁶⁸ unmingled joy, unconstrained, without any hindrance,
 with entire purity and perfection, and man will rejoice in it eternally;¹⁶⁹
 a promise;¹⁷⁰ the gaining of the victory over the devil, the world, and
 flesh which were continually seeking to bring man into misbelief, doubt

¹⁶⁰S. D. III 54.

¹⁶¹S. D. XI 18.

¹⁶²S. D. III 9.

¹⁶³Ep. III 7.

¹⁶⁴Ep. XI 13.

¹⁶⁵L. C. III 52.

¹⁶⁶Ap. IV 354.

¹⁶⁷L. C. III 52.

¹⁶⁸A. C. IV.

¹⁶⁹S. D. VI 25.

¹⁷⁰Ap. IV 348.

or other great shame and vice;¹⁷¹ a living under Him in His Kingdom and serving Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness to all eternity;¹⁷² living with all divine goodness and all the saints;¹⁷³ eternal blessing, happiness and salvation;¹⁷⁴ peace;¹⁷⁵ eternal comfort and righteousness from God;¹⁷⁶ being eternally rich;¹⁷⁷ possessing all goodness and release from this valley of miserableness (Jammertal).¹⁷⁸ It will be here where not only the problems concerning Christ's descent into hell but all other theological problems which we here must simply believe and cannot comprehend with our blind reason will be resolved.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷¹ S. C. III 6.

¹⁷² S. C. II 11.

¹⁷³ S. C. Taufbuechlein 9.

¹⁷⁴ L. C. I 41.

¹⁷⁵ Ap. XXIV 60.

¹⁷⁶ Ap. VII 15.

¹⁷⁷ L. C. I iv 164.

¹⁷⁸ L. C. I i 24, 40.

¹⁷⁹ S. C. III 7.

¹⁸⁰ Ep. IX 4.

CHAPTER V

ESCHATOLOGY IN THE PRESENT

Death

The Symbols know not only of an eschatology of the future, but also an eschatology of the present. Eschatology is not restricted to catastrophic events in the hazy future. Eschatological happenings are continually breaking through into the life of the individual Christian and of the Church. The forgiving of sins, excommunication, the administration of the Sacraments, and the preaching of the law and the gospel are eschatological acts of the Church. Death, too, has a deep eschatological meaning.

Death for the Symbols is not just the drawing of the last breath and expiring. For the Symbols there are three different deaths: spiritual death, physical death and eternal death. These three are manifestations of sin which man has suffered since Satan beguiled mankind.¹ Spiritual death is man's condition when he is without God, both before his conversion and also after a person has fallen from the faith. It was Satan who brought death upon mankind.² Satan's great goal is to keep men

¹S. D. V 23.

²L. C. II 11 28.

dead, to prevent men from being vivified by the Holy Spirit, and to kill any life which man has been granted by the working of the Holy Spirit. When, however, a man is justified through faith by the Holy Spirit, this is a new birth, a regeneration because a child of wrath has become a child of God and is transferred from death to life as is written in Ephesians 2:5, Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:17.³ The Formula also uses the analogy in conversion that just as a dead man can do nothing to bring about his resurrection, so the unconverted man can do nothing which will bring unto him any spiritual or heavenly righteousness, for he is spiritually dead in sins and has no strength to take life unto himself. He must be delivered and quickened by the Son of God from the death of sin.⁴ This brings in original sin which makes man truly spiritually dead with all his powers--dead to that which is good.⁵ This is where the Synergists are in error, for they say that man is only badly wounded and half dead, and that he is able to take part in his own conversion. This is condemned, for since the fall there is not the least spark of spiritual power remaining in man by which, of himself, he can prepare himself for God's grace.⁶ Since mankind is afflicted with original sin, death and

³S. D. III 20.

⁴S. D. II 11; S. D. II 87.

⁵S. D. I 60.

⁶S. D. II 77.

sin are his lords, and the devil is his god and prince.⁷ The law therefore comes and accuses man, displaying its office which is death and hell, as St. Paul says in Romans 7:10.⁸ It makes him aware that he is subject to eternal wrath and death.⁹

He also who despises the instruments of the Holy Spirit will remain in the darkness of his unbelief and death.¹⁰ It is these very instruments of the Holy Spirit by which He brings man life. They give life initially and continually bring life to man both in body and soul.¹¹ People who have forsaken Christ and live in sin are also dead while they still live. Luther in the Haustafel used the words of St. Paul in 1 Timothy 5:6 to remind the widows that they should lead godly lives of prayer and supplication night and day. In his explanation of the Fourth Commandment Luther also implies this thought many times.

Physical death is dealt with very little in the Symbols. The terrors connected with physical death are a sense of wrath, and the desire of man's will to flee God's judgments.¹² Physical death is always seen in

⁷S. D. II 43.

⁸S. A. III 111 7.

⁹Ap. IV 161.

¹⁰S. D. II 58.

¹¹L. C. V 68.

¹²Ap. IV 302; Ap. XII 153.

relation to spiritual death and depravity. Luther saw that evil people rarely died a proper or timely death.¹³ In this connection a light of Weltfreudigkeit shows through in Luther, for being an Old Testament scholar, he realized that a full long life, as promised in the Fourth Commandment, is a precious gift of God with its pleasures of health, wife, and children, livelihood, peace, good government, etc.¹⁴ However, he he who is evil, dies an early and evil death. In speaking to children, Luther says:

If, therefore, you will not obey father and mother and submit to their discipline, then obey the hangman; if you will not obey him, then submit to the skeletonman, which is death. For God insists upon this: if you obey Him, you show love and service, and He will abundantly reward you with all goodness, or if you offend Him He will send upon you both death and the hangman.¹⁵

Ruining the rule of death, however, is the death of Christ which made satisfaction for eternal death.¹⁶ Christ has beaten down death and devoured it,¹⁷ and has delivered the believers from the power of death and the devil.¹⁸ Thus He is man's consolation against eternal

¹³ L. C. I iv 137.

¹⁴ L. C. I iv 134.

¹⁵ L. C. I iv 134.

¹⁶ Ap. XII 140; Ap. IV 277.

¹⁷ L. C. II ii 31.

¹⁸ Ep. IX 4.

death.¹⁹ Eternal death is not atoned for by compensation of works, but death is overcome by faith in Christ.²⁰ Alms also are the exercise of faith, which receives the remission of sins and overcomes death.²¹ Even though a person has been brought to faith, his corrupt nature, with all its weaknesses, still clings to him.²² St. Paul says in Romans 8:10: "The body is dead because of sin."²³

The only extended polemical section dealing with eschatology in the Symbols is the teaching of purgatory. The Apology, Article XII, has frequent references to purgatory. However, the point of contention is made most explicit by Luther in the Smalcald Articles. Luther sums it up in these words, seeing it as a development from the perversion of the Mass:

First: Purgatory. Here they carried their trade into purgatory by masses for the souls, and vigils, weekly, monthly and yearly celebrations, and finally with the Common Week and All Soul's Day and soul-baths, so that the Mass is used only for the dead, although Christ instituted it only for the living. Therefore purgatory with all its pageantry, rites and trade is to be regarded as a genuine ghost of the devil. For it is also contrary to the chief article that Christ alone and not the work of men are able to help the souls. Not only

¹⁹ Ap. IV 85.

²⁰ Ap. XII 146.

²¹ Ap. IV 278.

²² Ep. I 10; S. D. III 22.

²³ Ap. XII 153.

that but nothing has been required or demanded of us concerning the dead.²⁴

The objection to purgatory was not that it was an intermediate state, but rather the objection was that it detracted from the chief article of the Christian faith, that of justification by faith in Christ. The third step of repentance, which is satisfaction, has also played into the Roman teaching of purgatory where the complete satisfaction is to be worked out.²⁵

In speaking of death, one is also confronted with the concept of soul. The Symbols use the term frequently, speaking of salvation²⁶ and destruction of souls.²⁷ Following Hebrews 13:17, the Small Catechism's Haustafel speaks of those who watch for your souls.³⁰ The soul is sinful and will remain so until the resurrection.³¹ We also sin with our souls.³² Soul is defined by Luther in his explanation of Psalm 16:10, 11

²⁴ S. A. II 12.

²⁵ Ap. XII 14, 24, etc..

²⁶ Tract. 52, 3.

²⁷ S. A. Vorrede 409.

²⁸ L. C. V 23.

²⁹ L. C. V 68.

³⁰ S. C. Haustafel 3.

³¹ S. D. I 46, 47.

³² L. C. II 1 19.

in the "Torgau Sermon" referred to by Article IX of the Solida Declaratio.

Soul, however, according to the Scriptural use of the term, does not mean, as we usually think, a separated essence in distinction to the body, but the entire man, as it is called by the saints of God.³³

The Confessions have no definite statements concerning an intermediate state. Luther speaks of saints both in the grave and in heaven.³⁴ The Formula says that Christ did not ascend into heaven, merely as any other saint.³⁵ It is also mentioned that Peter, Paul and all the saints are in heaven.³⁶ Nothing more specific is said of the place of the faithful departed. The faithful departed, however, do have an existence, an active existence. Melancthon is willing to grant that blessed Mary prays for the Church.³⁷ Although the saints may not understand our invocation,³⁸ the Symbols concede that in heaven they pray for the Church in general, although no testimony concerning their praying to the dead is extant in the Scriptures, except the dream taken from the second book of Maccabees 15:14.³⁹ Even though the saints do pray for the

³³Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), p. 1051.

³⁴S. A. II 11 25.

³⁵S. D. VII 27.

³⁶S. D. VIII 77.

³⁷Ap. XXI 27.

³⁸Ap. XXI 12.

³⁹Ap. XXI 8.

Church, and perhaps for individuals,⁴⁰ it does not follow that we should pray to them, have celebrations for them, or have Masses to their honor.⁴¹ Praying to the saints is wrong because it is against the chief article of the Christian faith. There is no example of it in Scripture. Prayer to Christ is a thousand times better. Prayer to saints detracts from God's honor.⁴² Indulgences for the dead are wrong.⁴³ Masses for the dead are wrong.⁴⁴

Life

It is Christ Who has changed the creature's eschatological outlook from a thing of terror to a thing of joy. By His first Advent and by incorporating the believer into His reign, the Kingdom of Christ is established. The Kingdom of Christ does not begin after the coming of Christ to judge, but it has already been established by Christ and exists here in time. In praying "Thy Kingdom Come" we are not only praying that Christ would come speedily to take us to Himself in heaven, but we also pray that just as Christ's Kingdom has been set up in our midst through

⁴⁰S. A. II II 25.

⁴¹S. A. II II 25.

⁴²S. A. II II 25.

⁴³S. A. II II 24.

⁴⁴Ep. VII 23; S. A. II II 21.

the Word and faith, it would also be established among others who are still in spiritual death.⁴⁵ It is the Father's will that His Kingdom comes to all, but the devil, the world, and our flesh fight against the will of God with their evil council and will, so that man does not honor His name nor let His Kingdom come.⁴⁶ God, therefore, must break and hinder them by His Word.

This activity of the Spirit takes place within the framework of the Church.⁴⁷ This gives the Church a strong eschatological coloring.⁴⁸ The Church is the assembly of all believers of all time⁴⁹ through which the Holy Spirit brings people to Christ.⁵⁰ He places the people into His holy congregation, and places them in the womb of the Church, whereby He preaches to them and brings them Christ.⁵¹ The Holy Spirit confines His operation to the Word and the Sacraments, therefore one does not receive the Holy Spirit, eternal righteousness or eternal life without the

⁴⁵ S. C. III 8; L. C. III 53.

⁴⁶ S. C. III 11.

⁴⁷ L. C. II III 41.

⁴⁸ Regin Prenter, Spiritus Creator, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), pp. 244ff.

⁴⁹ A. C. VII.

⁵⁰ L. C. II III 44.

⁵¹ L. C. II III 37.

office of the ministry and the administration of the Holy Sacraments.⁵² Without the Holy Spirit, man could not perceive, apprehend or believe and regard the gospel as true.⁵³ This process goes on until the end of time, for there is always a need for a call to repentance which the Holy Spirit does through the Word.⁵⁴ Until the last day He makes saints and strengthens them so that they increase in faith and in its fruits.⁵⁵ Luther looks at the work of the Holy Spirit in this manner:

While, however, holiness has begun and daily increases, we await the destruction of our flesh to be destroyed with all uncleanness which, however, will gloriously come forth and arise to a full and complete holiness in a new eternal life. For now, however, we remain only half pure and holy, so that the Holy Spirit works on us continually through the Word and daily dispenses forgiveness until in that life where there will be no more forgiveness, but only completely pure and holy men full of piety and righteousness, removed and free from sin, death and all evil with a new immortal and glorified body.⁵⁶

He must protect the faithful in their great weaknesses against the devil, the world, and the flesh and rule and lead them in His ways, raise them again when they stumble, comfort them under the cross and in temptation, and preserve them for eternal life.⁵⁷ If those who have

⁵²A. C. XXIII 9.

⁵³S. D. II 9; Ep. XI 13.

⁵⁴S. D. XI 75.

⁵⁵L. C. II III 53.

⁵⁶L. C. II III 5f.

⁵⁷S. D. XI 20. The mention of eternal life in German only.

been brought to faith adhere to God's Word, pray diligently, abide in God's goodness, and faithfully use the gifts received, God will strengthen, increase, and support to the end the good work which He has begun in them. ⁵⁸ It is stressed over and over again that the eternal Church is gathered through the Word and the Sacraments from the human race, and men are brought to true repentance and knowledge of sins, and true faith in Jesus Christ. ⁵⁹ It is through the Word that man is led to Christ Who is the Book of Life in Whom all are written, elected and saved eternally. ⁶⁰ Those who reject the instruments of the Holy Spirit reject eternal life, for the Holy Spirit wishes to work through the Word, and these men would not, as was the case at the time of Christ with the Pharisees⁶¹ and Pharaoh. ⁶²

The Sacraments , along with the preaching of the Word, have a very strong eschatological character in the Symbols. The Church is there where the gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are properly administered. ⁶³ Baptism is closely tied up with the actual existence of

⁵⁸S. D. XI 21.

⁵⁹A. C. XXVIII; Ap. IV 244; L. C. II 111 62; Ep. XI 13; S. D. II 16, 50; S. D. XI 16, etc.

⁶⁰Ep. XI 7; S. D. XI 14.

⁶¹S. D. XI 78.

⁶²S. D. XI 86.

⁶³A. C. VII.

Imp't of
Baptism

the Church. In speaking of infant baptism, Luther says that St. Bernhard, Gerson and Hus were baptized as infants as were all Christians in his day. The Church exists even with this practice and will continue until the end of the world.⁶⁴ Baptism is the entrance into the Church--an entrance into all divine goodness and fellowship.⁶⁵ Baptism is considered necessary to salvation.⁶⁶ The Apology also reasons that just as salvation is offered to all, so baptism is offered to all.⁶⁷ Also as Christ, Himself, speaks in Mark 16:16: "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned."⁶⁸ Baptism is the breaking in of eternal life.⁶⁹ Luther describes the effects of Baptism in these words:

I am baptized; if I have been baptized I have been promised that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in body and soul. For this is the reason why these two things happen in Baptism, namely that the body, which can comprehend nothing more than water, is sprinkled, and to this the Word is spoken for the soul to comprehend. Now since both water and Word is one Baptism, therefore both the body and soul must be saved, and live eternally: the soul through the Word which it believes. The body, however, because it is united with the soul and also comprehended Baptism as it is able to comprehend it. Therefore we have no greater jewel for our

⁶⁴ L. C. IV 50.

⁶⁵ S. C. Taufbuechlein 9.

⁶⁶ A. C. II; A. C. IX; Ap. IX 1; S. D. XII 11.

⁶⁷ Ap. IX 3.

⁶⁸ S. C. IV 8.

⁶⁹ S. D. I 14.

body and soul, for through it we are holy and saved, which no other life, or work on earth could obtain.⁷⁰

Baptism, therefore, is a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit whereby ~~whereby~~ we are made heirs of eternal life according to Titus 3:5-8.⁷¹ It is not simple water alone, but a divine heavenly, holy and saving water because of the Word.⁷² Baptism is a treasure and a medicine which destroys death and preserves all men alive.⁷³ In the Taufbuechlein there is a prayer which brings out the eschatological aspect of the Sacrament of Baptism very clearly.

Almighty, eternal God, you who through the Flood, according to your hard judgment, condemned the unbelieving world and preserved the faithful Noah according to your great mercy. You who drowned the impenitent Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea but led your people Israel through the Sea dry-shod, by which bath you showed your present Holy Baptism. You who through the baptism of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, have sanctified and instituted the Jordan and all water to a holy flood and a gracious washing away of sin, we pray that through your mercy you will graciously look upon this N. _____ and bless him with the true faith, that through this salutary flood which was administered that all he is born with from Adam and that he himself has done is removed, that he is removed from the number of the unbelievers and preserved dry and certain in the holy Ark of Christendom, ardent in Spirit, happy in hope and serve your name until he worthily receives with all believers your promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.⁷⁴

⁷⁰L. C. IV 46.

⁷¹S. C. IV 10; S. C. Taufbuechlein 13; L. C. IV 27.

⁷²L. C. IV 17.

⁷³L. C. IV 43.

⁷⁴S. C. Taufbuechlein 14.

It is with the Sacrament of Baptism that the tyranny of the devil, of sin, death, and hell is overcome and people are made children of life and heirs of all the blessings of God and are made God's children and Christ's brothers.⁷⁵

Although the baptized might be called the telaioi, as they were called in the early Church, it is wrong to say that these people now can completely fulfill God's law. In Baptism only the beginning of eternal life was made, but the old Adam still clings to man's nature exerting both internal and external forces upon him.⁷⁶ Since the old Adam still clings to the baptized person's nature, and Satan and the world still tempt him causing him to fall into sin, penance has been given to man so that the sins which he commits after Baptism might be forgiven.⁷⁷ Luther said that this third sacrament is actually nothing other than Baptism, for it earnestly attacks the old man and grants an entrance to a new life.⁷⁸ Confession is repentance, therefore, it must continue as long as we live, for here we recognize ourselves as sinners and beg for grace.⁷⁹

⁷⁵S. C. Taufbuechlein 2, 8; L. C. IV 83.

⁷⁶Ep. II 12; S. D. VI 7.

⁷⁷A. C. XII.

⁷⁸L. C. IV 75.

⁷⁹L. C. Ein kurze Vermahnung zu der Beicht 9.

Wherever there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation.⁸⁰

The Small Catechism puts it:

What does such baptizing with water signify?

It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.⁸¹

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is strongly eschatological. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ to be used until the end of the world as a certain pledge and sign against sin, death and all misfortune.⁸² As the early Church said, it is the medicine of immortality. The Lord's Supper is food for the soul⁸³ and a medicine which helps and gives life to both body and soul, for where the soul is fed, the body is also helped.⁸⁴ With the reception of the Sacrament one receives from the mouth of Christ the forgiveness of sins, which contains and brings with it the grace of God and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune,⁸⁵ bringing comfort and strength to the weak.⁸⁶

⁸⁰S. C. VI 6; S. D. III 9.

⁸¹S. C. IV 12.

⁸²S. D. VII 77; L. C. VI 22.

⁸³L. C. VI 23.

⁸⁴L. C. VI 68.

⁸⁵L. C. VI 70.

⁸⁶L. C. VI 71.

Those who receive the Sacrament are joined to Christ, and thus through the eating of this food, they are made alive.⁸⁷ Christ instituted it for the living so that they might obtain Life.⁸⁸ Along with the other Sacraments, the Lord's Supper seals our eternal election, serving as our comfort in temptation, and by which the fiery darts of the devil are quenched.⁸⁹

The gifts given in the Sacrament are the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, for where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation.⁹⁰ The far reaching and eschatological effects of the Sacrament are clearly expressed by Luther in the Introduction to the Small Catechism:

However, he who does not highly regard the Sacrament thereby shows that he has no sins, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell, that he believes none of these, although he is stuck in them over his ears, and is doubly the devil's. On the other hand he needs also no grace, life, paradise, kingdom of heaven, Christ, God, or any other good. For if he believed that he had so much evil and needed so much good he would not thus neglect the Sacrament by which such evil is remedied and so much good is bestowed. Neither will it be necessary to force him to the Sacrament by any law, but he would come running and racing of his own accord and urge you that you must give him the sacrament.⁹¹

⁸⁷Ap. XXII 10.

⁸⁸S. A. II 12.

⁸⁹Ep. XI 13; S. D. XI 13.

⁹⁰S. C. VI 6.

⁹¹S. C. Vorrede 23.

He who does not regard the Sacrament highly is already a child of the devil, and since he despised the instruments of the Holy Spirit, no injustice is done him if he perish.⁹² One does not, however, have to be perfect to receive the Sacrament for blessing and not for judgment.⁹³ Those who are unworthy guests, that is, those who receive the Sacrament without true repentance and sorrow for their sins, and without true faith, and the good intention of amending their lives, load themselves with damnation, which is temporal and eternal punishments.⁹⁴ Since both believing and unbelieving receive Christ's body and blood, it is either received for consolation and life or for judgment.⁹⁵ He who receives the Sacrament unbelievingly is already condemned according to John 3:18, but his judgment is made more grievous since it is aggravated by the unworthy eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ.⁹⁶

The whole attitude of the argumentation about the nature and effects of the Sacrament is eschatological, with the words of St. Paul ever forming the background for the presentation: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."⁹⁷

⁹²S. D. II 58.

⁹³Ep. VII 39.

⁹⁴S. D. VII 68.

⁹⁵Ep. VII 2, 17.

⁹⁶Ep. VII 18.

⁹⁷1 Corinthians 11:26.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The eschatological awareness of the Symbols arises out of the situation in which the writers lived. The papacy appears as the Antichrist, for it frames articles of faith, abolishes the Scriptures, appoints rites of worship and sacrifices, fuses the spiritual and worldly kingdoms into one, profanes the Mass, sets up services and works through which one is to be justified before God, and assumes authority over the dead as well as the living. Not only has the Antichrist appeared, but the increase of vice in the world shows that nature is becoming weaker, and the conditions which existed before the flood have returned, indicating that the confessors were living in the last days. The Church's condition, with bishops and clergy no longer interested in the people, also indicates that the return of Christ is imminent.

With the Parousia so close there is an urgency for sound doctrine and consecrated living. The doctrinal statements of the Symbols are not academic exercises, but they are the setting forth of the Scriptures as correctly as possible so that no one be led astray. This was done with great earnestness of purpose, for the Confessors realized that they too had to give an account of their teaching. Proper living is also extremely vital. The Small Catechism is especially rich in the admonitions to the

faithful to lead an upright life, for God holds them accountable for their actions.

Even though there are very few specific articles on eschatology in the Symbols, all the articles are written with the judgment clearly in mind. The Symbols' approach to eschatology shows that "eschatology is not the teaching about the last things after everything else but rather the teaching about the relation of all things to the 'last things' or, as it were, about the lastness of things."¹

The Symbols, in looking at eschatology as a future event, see it beginning with Christ's return. When Christ returns to earth in physical form, much of the customary activity within the Church will cease. It will no longer be necessary for the Church to proclaim the law and the gospel, rightly dividing the two. The Holy Spirit's activity in the Church will also come to an end. With Christ's coming perfection is granted man; therefore, the means and goals of the Holy Spirit cease, for they belong to this world. Christ's return will also bring about a complete separation of the true from the false. False doctrine will be cast out with the false teachers and the hypocrites. The Antichrist will no longer sit in the temple of God. Sin, death, and the devil will be trampled under the foot of Christ, and the faithful will live completely under Him in His kingdom in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness to all eternity.

¹John A. T. Robinson, In The End, God. . . (London: James Clarke & Co., 1958) p. 124.

When Christ returns He will raise up all men from the dead. In the resurrection man's flesh will have precisely the same substance, but without sin. It is through death and the resurrection that the separation between man's nature and original sin is made. The resurrection is totally dependent upon God and Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Christ comes to judge. The criterion for the judgment will be faith in Christ. It is this faith which overcomes both the wrath of God and death. Christ has a dual role--the Judge and the Expiator. The judgment brings either eternal blessing and righteousness or eternal wrath and suffering. Here the eschatological aspects of law and gospel are fully realized. God is not the cause of punishment and damnation. The cause is sin. The fallen angels and men who continue in sin, rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit, will not be saved. They shall suffer eternal punishment.

Those who are saved have been elected since the foundations of the world were laid. This election cannot be sought outside of Jesus Christ. They who have been brought to faith in Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacraments shall at the last day enter into complete communion with God, and live eternally with Him.

The Symbols also have an eschatology in the present. Death is viewed with eschatological significance. Three types of death are referred to in the Symbols: physical, spiritual, and eternal. Physical death is seen in relation to spiritual death. Spiritual death is man's

condition without God. Without divine help man is unable to come to faith in God. He must be vivified by the working of the Holy Spirit. Eternal death is eternal punishment. It is in connection with death that we have the only extended polemics in eschatology. This is concerning pur-gatory. Although the Symbols do not rule out an intermediate state as such, they strongly condemn a place where satisfaction is worked out, for this takes away the glory of Christ and is contrary to the chief article of justification by faith.

The Church has a strong eschatological coloring. Wherever there is the forgiveness of sins, excommunication, the administration of the Sacraments and the preaching of the law and the gospel there is eschatology. We see this especially in the Sacraments. Baptism is the breaking in of eternal life. It is in Baptism that the tyranny of the devil, of sin, death, and hell is overcome and people are made children of life and heirs of the blessings of God. The same is true in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The gifts given in the Sacrament of Holy Communion are the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. It is a proclaiming of the Lord's death until He comes.

This examination of the statements made in the Confessions regarding eschatology is not meant to be an end in itself, but rather it should serve as a step in the study toward a specifically Lutheran statement on eschatology. Our materialistic age's need for a renewed interest in

eschatology is obvious. However, the development of eschatology has many pitfalls which must be avoided with the greatest caution. One of the greatest dangers is that eschatology is presented in such a manner that man's entire outlook on life becomes extremely pessimistic. Too frequently it happens that one does not hold eschatology in its proper perspective so that he can say with Ivan Karamazov: "I accept God, but I do not accept His world."² A proper balance must always be maintained between the joys of God's creation and the expectation of God's final intervention.

²F. H. Heinemann, Existentialism and the Modern Predicament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958) p. 157.

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