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The Practical Orthodoxy of Balthasar Meisner: The Content and Context of his Theology

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THE PRACTICAL ORTHODOXY OF BALTHASAR MEISNER:
THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT OF HIS THEOLOGY

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By
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To Jenny

ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ· ἐπίμενε αὐτοῖς· τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν καὶ σεαυτὸν σώσεις καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντάς σου.

1 Timothy 4:16

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ap.	Apology to the Augsburg Confession
ARG	Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte. Internationale Zeitschrift zur Erforschung der Reformation und ihrer Weltwirkungen.
AS	Meisner, Balthasar. Anthropologia Sacra, In Qua Status Naturae humanae, & eo spectantes Articuli exponuntur. Strassburg: Reppius Ledertz, 1625.
CA	Augsburg Confession (Confessio Augustana)
CR	Melanchthon, Philipp. Corpus Reformatorum. Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae superset omnia. Edited by Karl Bretschneider and Heinrich Bindweil. 28 vols. Halle: Schwetschke, 1834–60.
CTQ	Concordia Theological Quarterly
EKL	Evangelisch Kirchenlexikon. Kirchlich-theologisches Handwörterbuch
EM	Meisner, Balthasar. Epistolae ad Meisnerum. 4 vols. Stadtbibliothek in Hamburg
GUW	Friedensburg, Walter. Geschichte der Universität Wittenberg. Halle/Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1917.
KW	Kolb, Robert, and Timothy Wengert, eds. The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
LQ	Lutheran Quarterly
LW	Luther, Martin. Luther's Works, American Edition, 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman. St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1955-1986.
PhS	Meisner, Balthasar. Philosophia Sobria. Part 1: Pia consideratio quaestionum philosophicarum, in controversijs theologicis, quas Calviniani moverunt orthodoxis, subinde occurrentium; Part 2: In qua problemata lexica et logica, in controversiis papisticis subinde occurrentia . . . discutiuntur Part 3: Philosophiæ Sobriæ, In qua Problemata Ethica Et Politica, In Controversiis Papisticis subinde occurrentia, studiosè discutiuntur. Wittenberg: Heiden, 1611–1623.
PL	Patrologia Cursus Completus Latina. 221 vols. Edited by Migne, J. P. Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1878.

RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Edited by Hans Dieter Betz et al., 4th ed. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2007.
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
TRE	Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Berlin: de Gruyter
UUW	Walter Friedensburg, *Urkunden der Universität Wittenberg*. 2 vols. Magdeburg, 1926.
WA	Luther, Martin. Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Edited by J. K. F. Knaake et al. 65 vols. Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–1993.
WA TR	Luther, Martin. Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Tischreden. 6 vols. Weimar: Böhlau, 1912–21.
WChr	Johann Arndt, Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum. Studien zur Kirchengeschichte Niedersachsens. Edited by Hans Otte and Hans Schneider. Göttingen: Vandenheock & Ruprecht, 2007.

ABSTRACT

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Throughout his tenure at Wittenberg from 1611 to 1626 Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626) contended with defining "theology" in terms of a genuinely practical enterprise. His challenge was to preserve Luther's evangelical theology, along with its metaphysical and ethical implications, in the crucible of current political realities and shifting intellectual trends. Though drawn from Scripture, Luther's theology had certain metaphysical and ethical dimensions that simply could not be ignored by the first two generations after his death. In the interest of making Luther's dogmatic heritage teachable, learnable, and enforceable, Meisner strove to maintain logical consistency without succumbing to the tyranny of that irreducible dichotomy, imposed by scholastic university theologians, between *theoretical* disciplines (logic, physics, and metaphysics) on the one hand and *practical* disciplines (ethics and politics) on the other. As a university theologian and public churchman, Meisner carried the most current philosophical, pedagogical, and political developments into the service of defining the nature of theology: "theology" is a "God-given practical aptitude for leading sinful man to salvation." Practical theology, as it is traditionally understood, is not merely a supplemental addendum to Lutheran theoretical postulates; when it comes to theology, theory is inherently practical because it requires a God-given aptitude that leads to a spiritual goal. However, Meisner's solution precipitated a new problem concerning the relationship between "theology" and "faith." The chief article of Christian doctrine holds that justifying faith does not consist of an aptitude to do anything at all; it is purely passive vis-à-vis the righteousness of Christ freely bestowed through the means of grace. Even if a person were well equipped to lead another to salvation, this does not necessarily ensure that the one leading is himself a Christian. In an effort to strike an interface between the application and appropriation of doctrine, Meisner was forced to grapple anew with epistemological and anthropological questions that had been settled a generation ago: to what extent does the discipline of theology depend on the human capacity for understanding and believing doctrine? In the process of articulating a practical theology, Meisner made an important contribution to the normative tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Practical orthodoxy is an unlikely word pair, at least when it comes to historical theology. If anything should be called "practical" one would least expect "orthodoxy" to qualify. In most histories one learns how Luther's seventeenth-century followers, being more concerned with correct doctrine than faith and life, turned to Aristotelian philosophy and manufactured a medieval-like scholasticism that virtually ossified the practical-biblical spirit of the Reformation. Consequently, historians often have found little more to probe in that epoch known as "Lutheran orthodoxy" than the worn-out intellectual machinery of a "Protestant scholasticism." The following dissertation would offer an alternate perspective by permitting Lutheran orthodoxy to speak for itself in its own concrete historical and practical setting. The once famed and beloved Wittenberg theologian, Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626), will serve as the principal representative of what is here being called "practical orthodoxy." Throughout his tenure at Wittenberg from 1611 to 1626 Meisner took up the task of defining "theology" in terms of a genuinely practical enterprise without succumbing to the restraints of formal logic on the one hand and moral philosophy on the other. How Meisner strove to preserve Luther's evangelical legacy, along with its metaphysical and ethical implications, in the crucible of current political realities and shifting intellectual trends, and thus contributed to the construction of Lutheran orthodoxy, is the subject of this investigation.

The Current State of Scholarship

Despite the recent efforts of church historians to close the gaps in research, the history of

seventeenth-century Lutheranism remains for the most part a vast and uncultivated "no man's land."[1] This dearth of scholarship, especially in the English speaking world, owes to a number of factors: the relative inaccessibility of primary source materials,[2] linguistic and typographical barriers imposed by complex and sometimes poorly edited German and Latin texts, and a general lack of enthusiasm for the difficult but necessary task of doing primary research where so little has been done. The chief impediment to seventeenth century studies, however, is the negative historiography that has left its indelible stamp on an age three or four centuries removed. In an effort to gain a point of reference one finds oneself working against the grain of theological assumptions concerning a period of church history with which significantly few scholars are still engaged in theological conversation.

Traditionally, historians have accessed the theology of Lutheran orthodoxy through an investigation of the "topics," or "common places," of Christian doctrine. Such sixteenth and seventeenth century works, often titled, "Loci," follow the longstanding tradition of Philipp Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* of 1521, in which Christian doctrine is arranged under various headings—God, sin, redemption, justification, etc.—and expanded through exegetical insights and corresponding dogmatic inferences.[3] In North America, post-Reformation Lutheran theology

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[1] Johannes Wallmann, "Lutherische Konfessionalisierung – ein Überblick," in Hans-Christoph Rublack ed., *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1992), 47–48: "Es wäre schön, wenn wir in der Erforschung der Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte des späten 16. und des 17. Jahrhunderts einmal so weit kämen, dass wir Forschungslücken hätten. Vorläufig ragen auf einem weiten Feld einige, wenige Gebäude hervor, an denen immer wieder herumgebaut wird. Dazwischen: keine Lücken, sondern Niemandsland."

[2] This difficulty has been lifted to a great extent through the digitalization of library databases and sources. See especially, http://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/, accessed on 7/7/15; and the Post-Reformation Digital Library (http://www.prdl.org/authors.php?tradition=Lutheran, accessed on 7/7/15).

[3] Philipp Melanchthon, *Commonplaces: Loci Communes 1521*, trans. Christian Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 2014). For a helpful study of the development of the "Loci" tradition, see Quirinus Breen, "The Terms 'Loci Communes' and 'Loci' in Melanchthon," *Church History*, XVI, 4 (December, 1947): 197–209.

has been studied by way of C. F. W. Walther's critical edition of Wilhelm Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (Latin with German notes: 1877),[4] Heinrich Schmid's *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (German: 1863; English: 1889),[5] Adolf Hönecke's four-volume *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics* (German: 1912; English: 2009),[6] and Franz Pieper's four-volume *Christian Dogmatics* (German: 1920; English: 1953).[7]

There are at least three advantages to approaching seventeenth century Lutheran theology through the *topoi*, or topics. First, the topical method links all Lutheran theologians to their exegetical tradition. The *loci* method is by no means an arbitrary treatment of Scripture. It is, according to Melanchthon, a reflection of St. Paul's *ordo* in his letter to the Romans.[8] The topics assume that, left in its natural state unmarred by scholastic corruptions, the biblical doctrine forms a single unit, a *corpus*, with the *doctrina evangelii* comprising the chief part and central organizing feature: "for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Romans Rom. 1:16). Second, the topics join the Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth-century to the normative consensus of the Lutheran confessions, and especially, the Augsburg Confession (1530), its Apology (1531), and the Formula of Concord (1577), in which the united voice of the

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[4] Johann Wilhelm Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, 3 vols., ed. C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia, 1877). Walther's edition of Baier served seminary students at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis as the basis for lectures in dogmatic theology for decades.

[5] Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles A Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1899). This book is the first exhaustive presentation of Lutheran orthodox theology in the English language.

[6] Adolf Hönecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1999–2009). Hönecke (1835–1908) was professor of dogmatic theology at Northwestern University and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary from 1866 to 1908.

[7] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*. 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950–1953). Pieper's three volumes built on, and eventually replaced, Walther's edition of Baier at Concordia Seminary. Its translation into English made it the normative dogmatics text for the Synodical Conference of North America, and has yet to be replaced.

[8] See Melanchthon, *Commonplaces*, 20, 95. Luther also took a topical approach in the first half of his "Preface to the Romans" (published 1552). See *The Works of Martin Luther*, VI (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1931), 447–62.

church adheres to the same topical arrangement. Third, the topics represent the manner in which the Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century retrieved and cultivated their own dogmatic tradition. In this way, they display the remarkable theological consensus that existed in that period. All in all, the theological topics afford the most effective means for an expansive study of the theology of that period.

However, reading post-Reformation Lutheran theology through the lens of the topics presents certain drawbacks as well. First, where the topics establish the scope of research, relatively little attention may be given to the theological divergence that existed outside the parameters of those select topics. One may easily gain the impression that the Lutheran dogmaticians were agreed on every point.[9] Second, only the very best theologians who took up the topics most productively and with the most success—for example, Martin Chemnitz, John Gerhard, John Quenstedt, and Abraham Calov—are given due consideration. Meanwhile, many of the lesser-known theologians, who never wrote *Loci*, but worked just as fastidiously and contributed as generously to the production of that period's theology, are given minimal attention as preference for method trumps what could have been useful content.[10] Finally, limiting historical access to the topics runs the risk of expediting doctrinal apriorisms. The perennial nature of the topics may invite present-day theologians to transfix their own theological questions onto a timeless topical grid without fully appreciating the specific questions at stake

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[9] Schmid does not account for any divergence at all, but simply compiles a list of citations that represent a united doctrinal position on each topic. Walther, who prefers Baier for presenting the orthodox position as succinctly as possible, gives some hint of divergence in the orthodoxy tradition. In volume 4 he includes a section dealing with "several of Baier's phrases, opinions, and modes of teaching, of which Dr. Walther did not approve." See Baier, "Indices" (fecit Theodor Buenger), under "*Nonnulla Baieriana*," 130–32.

[10] Walther, introduces several theologians in his notes, and especially Luther, to elucidate Baier's assertions. He clearly favors Wittenberg theologian, John Quenstedt, to his colleague, Abraham Calov. Schmid's study includes only the fourteen most prominent theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy.

for the theologians of the past and the conceptual machinery they used to sort them out.[11] In addition to the diachronic consensus reflected by the topics, therefore, it is important to understand the historical plotline behind the development of doctrine and the synchronic factors involved in the precise coinage of theological terms.

In his unfinished two-volume study, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Robert Preus handled the historical development of doctrinal theology at a time when bibliographies for English audiences were rather thin. He reconstructs the theological topics from the standpoint of a diverse array of sources, indicating where theologians drew on their Lutheran tradition and sharpened their understanding through conversation with themselves and their adversaries.[12] In these studies, which grew out of his earlier work, *The Inspiration of Scripture*, Preus provides evidence of an overwhelming consensus among the theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy, but he also points to conceptual difficulties that stood in their way and suggests criticisms where their arguments were tenuous, incomplete, or misguided.[13] Kenneth Appold, too, in *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context* (1998), masterfully examines the contemporary philosophical factors in play for later Lutheran orthodoxy; however, more study is warranted regarding Calov's theological debt to the orthodox consensus upon which his dogmatic presentation of "the call" ultimately depends.[14]

[11] One sees this tendency in several twentieth century theologians, who assign to the various topics a modernist version of ontology foreign to Scripture in an effort to explore their contemporary significance. See, for instance, Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Christian Dogmatics*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

[12] Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970-1972).

[13] Robert Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1955). Preus is critical of the seventeenth century dogmaticians on a few points and offers caveats concerning imposing one's own theological presuppositions on the theology of a pre-Enlightenment era. See Preus, *Inspiration*, 193–211.

[14] Kenneth Appold, *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context*, Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, vol. 103 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998). Appold overstates Calov's divergence from Gerhard on the question of the "internal testimony of the Holy Spirit." Indicating that Calov located the efficacy of the Spirit's call in human language, as opposed to a secret illumination, he suggests that Gerhard did not maintain as close a union

Are there other ways of exploring the theological tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy? In his review essay, "Lutheran Theology in Seventeenth-Century Germany," Robert Kolb suggests that further studies should concentrate on the universities themselves:

> These explorations must go beyond the doctrinal topics as such and assess how philosophical and pedagogical trends and developments contributed to the cultivating and structuring of Lutheran theology anew in what is falsely reputed to be a sterile intellectual period.[15]

Balthasar Meisner then would appear to be a fitting subject. Not only did he devote his entire academic life (1602–1626) almost exclusively to the pursuit of philosophy and theology at the University of Wittenberg.[16] His *Philosophia sobria* (*Sober philosophy, that is, a pious examination of philosophical questions in theological controversies*),[17] which won him considerable fame in his own lifetime, is itself a reflection of the "philosophical and pedagogical trends and developments" that would typify the structure of the University of Wittenberg in the seventeenth century. The enduring relevance of Meisner's *magnum opus*, which he expanded to three volumes between 1611 and 1623, may be seen in the fact that it was republished in several editions well into the eighteenth century. While he is not known today for compiling normative *Loci theologici* on the order of Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, or John Gerhard, Meisner was an exemplary theologian and churchman. According to his biographers,[18] he was well known

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of Spirit and external word (133). Gerhard's careful refutation of Hermann Rahtmann would suggest that he did—even if his philosophical categories were not identical. Compare Bengt Hägglund, "The Theology of the Word in John Gerhard" (CTQ 46, 1982): 209–217. See also Preus, *Theology*, 374–78.

[15] Robert Kolb, "Lutheran Theology in Seventeenth-Century Germany," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 (2006): 429–55, here 436.

[16] See *Sächsisches Hauptstaatarchiv Dresden*, Loc. 7422/4, Bl. 50 (Kurfürst Johann Georg I. an das Oberkonsistorium, 16. September 1611), cited in Heinz Kathe, *Die Wittenberger Philosophische Fakultät 1501–1817* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002), 217.

[17] Balthasar Meisner, *Philosophia sobria, hoc est, pia consideratio quaestionum Philosophicarum in controversiis Theologicis*, 3 vols. (Wittenberg: 1611–1623).

[18] See Jacob Martini, *Christlicher Leichsermon Uber den schönen Spruch S. Pauli 2. Timoth. 4. Ich hab einen guten Kampff gekämpffet etc.* (Wittenberg: Solomon Auerbachs S. Erben, 1627). Appended to Martini's funeral

in his day for his intensive theological labor in the academy and his prudence in matters of church and state. Perhaps the fact that Meisner is virtually unknown today accounts in some degree for why the entire age lies in relative obscurity. Might Meisner, his life and work, serve to enhance the current conversation and, knowing there is much to more to learn, refresh the historical picture? Where does Meisner fit into the current scholarship? What cause has he been made to serve over the last four hundred years as he surfaces in the historiography of the seventeenth century?

Early Historiography

The most influential portrayal of Lutheran academic life in the seventeenth century, even as it prevailed into the twentieth century, did not come from the theologians who lived that life, but from representatives of the two great intellectual and religious movements that displaced Lutheran orthodoxy towards the end of the seventeenth century, namely, Pietism and the Rationalism.[19] Hans Leube traces this historiographical development to the influence of Gottfried Arnold's *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, published in 1699/1700.[20] Arnold operates on the assumption that the church was in a state of gradual decline since the close of apostolic age until Constantine solidified its demise in the fourth century.[21] Luther's Reformation in the

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sermon (1–32) are eulogies by Jacob Martini (33–48), George Wecker (49–58), and August Buchner (59–61). Wecker's eulogy is reproduced in Henning Witte, *Memoriae Theologorum nostri saeculi clarissimorum renovatae* (Königsberg, Frankfurt am Main: Hallervord, 1674–1675), 1:214–22. See also Gottlieb Spitzel, *Templum Honoris Reseratum* (Augsburg, 1673), 60–67.

[19] Hans Leube, *Die Reformideen in der deutschen lutherischen Kirche zur Zeit der Orthodoxie* (Leipzig: Verlag von Dörffling und Franke, 1924), 4: "Das geschichtliche Bild der lutherischen Kirche des 17. Jahrhunderts, wie es noch in unseren Tagen herrscht, ist von den Vertretern der beiden grossen geistigen Bewegungen, des Pietismus und der Aufklärung, welche die lutherische Orthodoxie abgelöst haben, gezeichnet worden."

[20] Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Thomas Fritschens sel. Erben, 1729).

[21] See Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1:143–55.

1520's signaled a return to the "pure faith" of the apostles, but the institutional church just as soon corrupted the truth, and external forms of dogmatism again displaced the inner life of faith.[22]

Arnold's scathing denunciation of Lutheran orthodoxy, which set the tone for nearly every subsequent critique, is based on the alleged mutual incompatibility of Luther and Melanchthon. Luther urged salvation by grace alone and "true sanctification, namely, as it comes alone by grace and union with Jesus Christ, and not by the law, … even as [Luther] himself was blameless in his life."[23] Melanchthon, on the other hand, introduced systematic theology taking the example of the scholastics, John of Damascus and Peter Lombard:

> Melanchthon says that teachers should be experienced in the *literae*, or the study of letters. Whoever would be an interpreter of Christian doctrine and yet refuses to bring to it a literal condition [*literale Condition*], which is not only an adornment of the Christian church but also gives some light to the doctrine itself, is presumptuous.

"In that case," Arnold quips, "the good apostles must have been lacking in light."[24] He regards Lutheran orthodoxy as the inevitable and regrettable outcome of Melanchthon's intellectualism—what he describes as a "mere academic discipline of theology."[25] His procedure throughout is to list the various sects and sectarians—Weigelians, Anabaptists, Crypto-

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[22] See Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 2:408–509.

[23] Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1: 657, in Leube, *Reformideen*, 5: "Man lese nur seine ersten Schriften," says Arnold, "in denen er Menschenstand und Verdienst über den Haufen geschmissen hat, mit was für Macht und Nachdruck er hingegen Christum erhebt und anpreist, den Unterschied des Evangelii so gründlich zeigt und Gott allein alle Ehre last. . . . So drang er damals auch immer mächtig auf die wahre Heiligung, und zwar wie sie allein aus der Gnade und Vereinigung mit Jesu Christo, nicht aber aus dem Gesetz herkommt, ... gleich wie er selbst in seinem Leben unsträflich ist."

[24] Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1: 702, in Leube, *Reformideen*, 5: "Melanchton sagt, dass die Lehrer der literarum oder des buchstäblichen Studierens erfahren sein sollen. Diejenigen sind unverschämt, welche sich für Ausleger der christlichen Lehre ausgeben und doch keine literale Condition dazu bringen wollen, welche nicht allein eine Zierde der christlichen Kirche ist, sondern auch der Lehre selbst etwas Licht gibt. . . . Wo dieses wahr ist, da muss es den guten Aposteln an Licht gemangelt haben."

[25] Arnold, *Die geistliche Gestalt eines Ev. Lehrers* (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1704), 142, cited in Hans Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, trans. Gerald T. MacDonald (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 78.

Calvinists, Socinians, etc.—that were deemed "heretical" and then to catalog the atrocities committed against them by the Lutheran schoolmen. These "heretics" were often the victims of one-sided historiography. Their "heresies" were simply repercussions of orthodoxy's penchant to bolster its claims to authority.

In some respects, Arnold's *Historie* offers a refreshing alternative to current accounts of orthodoxy, which were largely hagiographical in nature and depended on funerary eulogies lionizing the great theologians of the day and prejudiced interpretations of the leading controversies, which were all-too-easily epitomized in dedicatory epistles introducing their respective *status controversiae*.[26] By contrast, Arnold draws on many firsthand accounts, including sermons and written correspondences, and focuses on the concrete circumstances that gave rise to theological discord in the history of the church, and particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One of Arnold's trustworthy sources is the four-volume folio collection of Balthasar Meisner's correspondences, which appears under the title "*Ad Meisnerum*."[27] These letters yield more firsthand, personal accounts of the controversies that took place during the first quarter of the seventeenth century than any other source of its kind. Yet, despite his attempts to moderate the excessive polemics of his day, Meisner is unable to temper the historiographer's sweeping judgment of university theology. Meisner himself is either made to fit the same monolithic profile and play a part in the same regime,[28] or he is singled out as an exception to the orthodox rule.[29] He is occasionally distinguished for the moderation and gentility for which he

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[26] On the phenomenon of funerary eulogies serving as biographical sources, see Cornelia Niekus Moore, *Patterned Lives: The Lutheran Funeral Biography in Early Modern Germany* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006).

[27] The collection, *Ad Meisnerum*, can be found in the Stadtbibliothek in Hamburg.

[28] Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 2:900, 965–66.

[29] Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 2:928; 3:304; 4:1384.

was known in his day, but he is hardly recognized in these instances as a representative of the prevailing orthodoxy.

Not a single survey of the history of Lutheran orthodoxy was able to rival Arnold's imposing study with its sweeping condemnations.[30] Johann Georg Walch's *Historische und theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchen* (1730), while sympathetic to Lutheran confessional theology, does little to correct the impression that the entire age of orthodoxy was dominated by controversies, condemnations, and weighty theological opinions. Thus, in a certain respect, it lends credence to Arnold's "impartial" alternative.[31] It is unlikely that a history of orthodoxy may be found in the entire eighteenth century that does not highlight the excessive intellectualism and polemics of the age. Not surprisingly, therefore, Meisner is granted little more than honorable mention in the secondary literature until well into the eighteenth century.[32] Meisner's merits as a theologian were first recognized in 1848 by Carl Kaltenborn, who names him among the forerunners of the theory of natural law developed by Hugo Grotius.[33] Wilhelm Gaß, in his four-volume *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik* (1854–1867) offers a brief summary of Meisner's *Philosophia sobria*, but strictly in terms of an unfolding of the "Protestant principle" along the continuum of

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[30] See Leube, *Reformideen* 4–36 for a comprehensive summary of the success of Arnold's work. Despite fierce protests, the final success of Arnold's book owed in part to its positive appraisal by the philosopher, Christian Thomasius. Thomasius regarded it as the greatest and most useful book next to Holy Scriptures (17).

[31] Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirchen: von der Reformation an bis auf jetzige Zeiten* (Jena: Bey Johann Meyers Witwe, 1730). See also Walch, *Historische und theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten: welche sonderlich ausser der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche entstanden* (Jena: Johann Meyers Wittwe, 1733–1736).

[32] See Paul Tschackert, "Meisner, Balthasar," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig, 1885), 21:243.

[33] Carl Kaltenborn, *Die Vorläufer des Hugo Grotius auf dem Gebiete des Ius naturae et gentium sowie der Politik im Reformationszeitalter*: Abtheilung I. Literarhistorische Forschungen. Abtheilung II. Kritische Ausgabe der Autoren (Leipzig: Mayer, 1848), 220–28.

a quasi-Hegelian dialectical process.[34]

In 1852, August Tholuck worked with many of the same sources employed by Arnold, and especially *Ad Meisnerum*, to construct a rather sympathetic view of the Wittenberg theologians who were active in the first half of the seventeenth century. Tholuck's twenty-four page description of Meisner's "theological character" in *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im 17. Jahrhunderts*,[35] represents the most substantial historical biography of Meisner ever written. Meisner belongs to that constellation of theologians "whose heart…beat for the needs of the church," despite the polemical school they represented.[36] Indeed, he was the "most brilliant" (*hervorragendste*) of those "practical" theologians at the University of Wittenberg, which included such luminaries as Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610), Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628), Jacob Martini (1570–1649), and Paul Röber (1587–1651). While theologians in the latter half of the century lived up to their reputation, Tholuck notes that:

> this Lutheran orthodoxy in that earlier period did not lose itself in scholastic disputations, but simply preserved the Formula of Concord. The purity of the Christian life as the ultimate goal of pure doctrine was still not only expressed but also strived for.[37]

According to Tholuck, the difference between the early and late schools of Wittenberg orthodoxy lay in the proximity of the former school to the Reformation itself.[38] Yet, this does not

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[34] Wilhelm Gass, *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik: in ihrem Zusammenhange mit Theologie überhaupt*, 4 volumes (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1854–1867); especially 1:199–200.

[35] August Tholuck, *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg and Gotha: Friedrich und Andreas Partner, 1852), 14–37. See also Tholuck, Lebenszeugen der lutherischen Kirche aus allen Ständen vor und während des dreißigjährigen Krieges (Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben, 1859), 201–5.

[36] Tholuck, "Meisner, Balthasar," *Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie u. Kirche*, ed. Albert Hauck, 3d ed. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1897), 12:511–12.

[37] Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen*, 210: "Doch verlor sich diese lutherische Orthodoxie in jener früheren Periode noch nicht in die Schulstreitigkeiten, sondern hielt sich einfach in den Schranken der Conkordienformel. Noch wurde als letzter Zweck der reinen Lehre die Reinheit des christlichen Lebens nicht nur ausgesprochen, sondern auch angestrebt."

[38] Tholuck, *Geist*, 48.

suffice for a historical-theological assessment. While Meisner's practical interest in piety and devotion may reflect a personal connection to Luther's (and Melanchthon's) devotional theology, Tholuck's hypothesis does not adequately account for his deep commitment to the school of orthodoxy itself, to say nothing of the degree to which he influenced the next generation of university theologians. Portraying academic and ecclesiastic life in seventeenth century Germany in terms of a "prologue to rationalism" (*Vorgeschichte des Rationalismus*), Tholuck will argue that the intricate and complex rationality of Protestant scholasticism proved to be incompatible with the modest religiosity of the contemporary Zeitgeist, and this clash of spirits resulted in a drastic modification of theological paradigms—from purely philosophical to ethical.[39] Hence, orthodoxy gave way to rationalism, while pietism filled the need for a much-needed moral Reformation.[40]

As long as Balthasar Meisner is conveniently disassociated from the evolving school of orthodoxy, he may be regarded for his modest "theological character" quite apart from a general consideration of the shifting intellectual paradigms. By softening the hard fact that Meisner was primarily an academic theologian whose life was practically absorbed into the structure of the orthodox university, and who painstakingly contributed to the academic construction of later orthodoxy, Tholuck does little in the way of counterbalancing the historiographical bias. He fails to challenge Arnold's most momentous assumption, which went virtually unquestioned until the twentieth century, namely, that the scholastic character of the university was inconsistent with the "pure" theology of Martin Luther, and even exerted a material influence on the doctrine

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[39] Tholuck, *Vorgeschichte des Rationalismus,* 4 vols. (Berlin: 1853–1862). See also Tholuck, *Geist*, 51.

[40] See Peter Petersen, *Geschichte der aristotelischen Philosophie im protestantischen Deutschland* (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1921): 219–338. Petersen finds in seventeenth century Protestantism an intricate fusion of Protestant pedagogy (Melanchthonianism) and Jesuit metaphysics (Catholicism), which ultimately leads to German idealism (258).

produced by Lutheran orthodoxy. Hence, in 1908, for instance, Hans Emil Weber argued that the intellectual norms of the day—and he gives long shrift to Balthasar Meisner's role in cultivating Aristotle's metaphysics—more than merely guiding theological assertions to viable expression actually modified the content they were borrowed to preserve.[41] While this opinion bears some truth, it has acceded to the status of a sweeping historiographical presupposition that continues to cast a dark shadow on the history of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Late Historiography

The historiographical tide changed drastically in 1924 with the publication of Hans Leube's *Die Reformideen in der deutschen lutherischen Kirche zur Zeit der Orthodoxie*. Leube's careful study of concrete reform models that were being advanced by reputable orthodox Lutheran theologians from the beginning of the seventeenth century to its end makes two important contributions to forthcoming scholarship. First, it takes Arnold's theological commitments head on by referring to his Sitz im Leben as he undertook to write his mammoth *Historie*. After resigning his esteemed professorship at Giessen to live as a pietistic separatist in Quedlinburg, Arnold boarded on an historical quest for the sources of the "pure faith." His "impartial history" then proceeds to depict orthodoxy in strictly pejorative terms such as: "corruption, security, fleshly gospel, disparity with the first Christians, papistic essence, heathendom, blindness, idolatry, contentions, vexations, atheism, unfaithfulness, cruelty against self," etc. Leube observes: "The pietistic historiographer was unable to find [any] good attributes in the church of

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[41] Hans Emil Weber, *Der Einfluss der protestantischen Schulphilosophie auf die orthodox-lutherische Dogmatik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1908); see especially "Grundlegung: Das Verhältnis von Vernunft und Offenbarung in der lutherischen Orthodoxie," 5–13.

his fathers."[42] His denunciation of "mouth Christians" and "external church service"[43] betrays a personal devotion to the school of Radical Pietism.[44] He consistently defends and endorses the mystical theology of Valentin Weigel (1533–1588), who rejected the belief that the holy Christian church could be recognized by the outwardly preached Word and the administration of the sacraments.[45] This predominant appraisal of Lutheran orthodoxy, then, reflects a definite theological stance that was clearly perceived and repudiated by representatives of Lutheran orthodoxy, and by Meisner in particular, since the beginning of the seventeenth century.[46]

Second, Leube argues, over against both Arnold and Tholuck, that the roots of practical piety, and the broad ethical orientation that surfaces among theologians of Pietism later in the century, must be sought not in reaction to, but deep within, the Lutheran orthodox tradition.[47] Not

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[42] Leube, *Reformideen*, 5–6: "Bei der überrangenden Stellung, welche die dogmatische Theologie im Leben der lutherischen Kirche des 17. Jahrhunderts eingenommen hat, unterliegt infolgedessen dieser Zeitraum der protestantischen Kirchengeschichte bei Arnold einer äusserst heftigen Kritik. Wie der pietistische Separatist das Zeitalter der Orthodoxie beurteilt, zeigt ein Blick in das Register der Arnoldschen Kirchenhistorie, wo man unter dem Stichwort "Lutheraner" folgendes verzeichnet findet: ihr äusserstes Verderben, Sicherheit, fleischliches Evangelium, Unterschied von den ersten Christen, päpstliches Wesen, Heidentum, Blindheit, Abgötterei, Streitigkeiten, Ärgernisse, Atheismus, Untreue, Grausamkeit gegeneinander selbst. Gute Eigenschaften vermag der pietistische Geschichtsschreiber an der Kirche seiner Väter nicht zu entdecken."

[43] Gottfried Arnold, *Die Abwege oder Irrungen und Versuchungen gutwilliger und frommer Menschen, aus Beystimmung des gottseeligen Alterthums* (Frankfurt a.M., 1708), 172, cited in Schneider, 76.

[44] See Schneider, *German Radical Pietism*, 75–81, especially 78.

[45] Valentin Weigel, *Dialogus de Christianismu*, (1584), vol. 4 of *Sämtliche Schriften* (Stuttgart/BadCannstatt, 1967), 50. See Arnold, 2:1088–114.

[46] Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und Theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten außer der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, Jena 1733-1736* (Facsimile reprint Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt 1985), IV.2:1024-90. Walch begins his chapters dealing with Weigel and Weigelianism with the words: "Unter den Fanaticis, welche sonderlich in Deutschland bekannt worden, sind die Weigeliander als die Vornehmsten mit anzusehen." See Balthasar Meisner, *In systematis theologici partem primam generalem de religio et ejus articulis generatim consideratis disputatio, De Religione Fanatica*, disp. 16 (Wittenberg: Gorman. 1626).

[47] See also Leube, "Die altlutherische Orthodoxie: Ein Forschungsbericht," in *Orthodoxie und Pietismus: Gesammelte Studien von Hans Leube* (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1975), 19–35. In response to Tholuck's account of orthodoxy as "prelude to pietism," Leube notes: "Immerhin, je weiter diese Vorgeschichte des Pietismus in das 17. Jahrhundert ausgedehnt wurde, desto größer wurde die Zahl der Laien und Theologen, die nach Leistungen und Taten nicht recht in das überkommene Geschichtsbild hineinpaßten. . . . Man denke daran, daß der Wittenberger Theologe Balthasar Meißner bereits 1626 von den Missionsaufgaben der evangelischen Kirche gesprochen oder das Abraham Calovius die Vorschläge Speners zur Umgestaltung des theologischen Studiums wohlwollend geprüft und

only were many of these Lutheran schoolmen pursuing the theoretical-acroamatic side of

theology, they were writing practical tracts at the same time. Just to mention those crossing the

threshold of the seventeenth century, Leube lists several theologians committed to the Formula

of Concord and who were simultaneously addressing themselves with great urgency to the

problem of moral complacency. These include Johann Arndt (1555–l621), John Gerhard (1582–

1637), Sigismund Evenius (1585–1639), Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626), Johann Matthäus

Meyfart (1590–1642), Salomo Glassius (1593–1656), Johann Schmid (1594–1658), and Andreas

Kesler (1595–1643).[48] Finding himself in the company of both university scholars and moral

reformers,[49] Meisner wore both hats—the theoretical and the practical—and even took dogmatic

schemes into the service of admonitions to godly living.[50] These practically minded theologians

did not shrink from the academic task in order to pursue ethical reform, however. They were

equally committed to theory and practice. This is a groundbreaking insight into seventeenth

century Lutheran theology. Leube's pioneering work is helpful in that it carves out a place for

current scholarship to assess the contributions of Lutheran orthodoxy without giving obligatory

lip service to the old cliché of "dead orthodoxy."

For all of their emphasis on moral reform, it must be remembered that Meisner (and, for

that matter, most representatives of Lutheran orthodoxy) was not working in a parish setting. He

was in the first place an academic theologian well attuned to the most advanced scholarly

methods of his day. If he was chiefly concerned with awakening faith and piety in churchgoing

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ihre Beachtung empfohlen hat" (20).

[48] Leube, *Reformideen*, 112.

[49] See Leube, *Reformideen*, 45–51.

[50] See Meisner, *De reali vere infinitorum communicatione* (1609), cited in Leube, "Die Theologen und das Kirchenvolk im Zeitalter der lutherischen Orthodoxie," in *Orthodoxie und Pietismus*, 45.

people, he was equally interested in furnishing his students with the necessary logical instruments for proving the correctness of Lutheran confessional positions. Much has been written about the return of Aristotelian metaphysics to the Protestant universities, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[51] But it was not until scholars began to probe the motives behind the Lutheran renovation of metaphysics that Meisner came into the world of scholarship to such a degree that his scholarly contributions have become indispensable primary source material for recent studies of Lutheran academic life. In what qualifies as the only monograph to date that is dedicated to Balthasar Meisner, Walter Sparn's *Wiederkehr der Metaphysik* (1976) pivots on a meticulous reading of the *Philosophia sobria*[52] in order to show that the Lutheran schoolmen applied themselves to metaphysics in the interest of expounding the *reality* implicit in their theological assertions, specifically in the area of Christology and anthropology.[53] While Meisner initially turned to Aristotle for confessional reasons, one may observe a gradual shift of interest in his work from questions of faith to questions of logic, which were inextricably wedded to his theology.[54]

In conjunction with this renewed interest in metaphysics came the need to define "theology" in terms of a university discipline. What kind of a science (Wissenschaft) is it, and

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[51] Besides Petersen and Weber, mentioned above, see Gass, *Geschichte*; Karl Eschweiler, *Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1928); Ernst Lewalter, *Spanisch-Jesuitische und Deutsch-Lutherische Metaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); and Max Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 1939].

[52] Walter Sparn. *Wiederkehr der Metaphysik: Die ontologische Frage in der Theologie des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1976). Petersen, *Geschichte der aristotelischen Philosophie im protestantischen Deutschland* (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1921), 219; Max Wundt. *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1939], 34.

[53] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 14.

[54] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 196.

what methods should be used to carry it out?[55] Here, again, recent scholarship has found in

Meisner an essential outlet. Three noteworthy books written during the first decade of the

twenty-first century have focused on the developing structure of the University of Wittenberg.[56]

Each feature Meisner substantially. The first is Heinz Kathe's *Die Wittenberger Philosophische*

Fakultät (2002).[57] Through an ample study of the archives and matriculation records, Kathe

provides a detailed description of Meisner's early career at the University of Wittenberg. As the

faculty of arts came "under the influence of Lutheran orthodoxy" between the years 1591 and

1675, the university may be said to have taken on a theological character.[58] Serving briefly on the

philosophy faculty, but only as a temporary arrangement before being promoted to the theology

faculty,[59] Meisner's short career (1611–1626) represents a crucial phase in that process.

A second work that gives special attention to Meisner's academic career is Kenneth

Appold's *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung* (2004).[60] Following the practical proposal of Jakob

Andreae,[61] Meisner contributed to the renovation of the disputation method as a means to achieve

doctrinal consensus and make that consensus serviceable to the training of clergy and the

awakening of faith.[62] Through the course of 219 disputations Meisner gradually drafted a

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[55] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 9–13; 30–5.

[56] All three of these studies make ample use of Walter Friedenberg's *Geschichte der Universität Wittenberg* (Halle: 1917), and the latter two draw on Friedenberg's *Urkunden der Universität Wittenberg* (Magdeburg, 1926).

[57] Heinz Kathe, *Die Wittenberger Philosophische Fakultät 1501–1817* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002).

[58] Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät,* 163–263.

[59] Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 217–18.

[60] Kenneth Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung: Das theologische Disputationswesen an der Universität Wittenberg zwischen 1570 und 1710* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

[61] Jacob Andreae, *Oratio instrauratione studii theologici, in Academia Witebergensi, ad eam puritatem Doctrinae coelestis, in qua, viuente D. Luthero, Doctores Sacrarum Literarum pie consenserunt, recitata Witebergae 25. Aprilis Anno 1577 per Jacobvm Andreae* (Wittenberg: Johannes Crato, 1577), cited in Appold, 18.

[62] Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 62, 72–77, 85–87, 95–98.

definition of "theology" and configured its systematic arrangement for subsequent generations of Lutheran orthodoxy.[63] Appold shows how Meisner used the disputation method to expand on his theology concept and coin an innovative and quasi-modern conception of "religion in general."[64] Meisner finds himself in the company of several other Wittenberg scholars whose disputations would obtain the status of normative statements and exert an enormous influence on the university of Wittenberg and on Saxony at large.[65]

A third study that draws attention to Meisner's academic achievements is Marcel Nieden's *Die Erfindung des Theologen* (2006).[66] Nieden focuses on Meisner's contribution to the fluid Lutheran tradition of offering directives (*Ermahnungen*) to students for theological study (*studium theologicum*) and how his interest in the nature of theology served to generate theologians and prepare pastors in the age of orthodoxy. Nieden notes that:

> among the Lutheran orthodox theology professors who taught in the theological faculty of the Leucoria during the first decades of the seventeenth century, Balthasar Meisner above all appeared to be interested in questions concerning the nature of theology and the study of theology.[67]

Leaning heavily on Meisner's *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputatio* (1625),[68] Nieden relates how Meisner moved beyond the traditional self-study model suggested by Melanchthon and proposed a *Systema* in its place. Here, Meisner outlines the principles of applying the

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[63] Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 242.

[64] Appold, *Orthodoxie* 116, 241–65.

[65] Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 59.

[66] Marcel Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen: Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

[67] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 188: "Unter den lutherisch-orthodoxen Theologieprofessoren, die in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 17. Jahrhunderts an der Theologischen Fakultät der Leucorea lehrten, zeigte sich vor allem Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626) an den Fragen nach dem Wesen der Theologie und des Theologiestudiums interessiert."

[68] Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputatio* (1625), consists of ten disputations dealing with preliminary considerations (*prolegomena*) before carrying out the task of theology.

knowledge of salvation not to oneself but to one's hearers. These disputations build on previous

insights from the *Philosophia sobria* concerning the nature of the theologian's task. Although

they are not mentioned in the literature until the twenty-first century, and represent a large step in

the professionalization of theology at the German university in the seventeenth century and

beyond.[69]

A word should be added to this survey concerning the emergence of the confessionalization

paradigm.[70] Almost all of recent scholarship, including the latter three studies, makes reference

to this paradigm and interacts with it to some extent. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Heinz

Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard introduced the term "confessionalization" to describe a

symbiotic process of confession building and state building. The process began with the Peace of

Augsburg in 1555, crested in the transformation of religious and social life in the seventeenth

century, and culminated in the formation of the modern state.[71] Were it not for a "fundamental

consensus concerning religion, church, and culture" on the part of rulers and their subjects in the

early modern period, the emergence of the modern state (Absolutism) would never have taken

place.[72] While the concept of confessionalization as a "process of society" may well account for

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[69] See Nieden, *Erfindung*, 188–216. See especially189: "In einer im Wittenberger theologischen Lehrbetrieb so noch nie da gewesenen Weise und Konsequenz ließ Meisner nahezu alle Bausteine eines geplanten, groß angelegten, dogmatischen "systema" zunächst von Studenten disputieren allen systematisch-theologischen Themengebieten."

[70] For a helpful review of the scholarship dealing with the concept of "confessionalization," see Thomas A. Brady Jr., "Confessionalization: The Career of a Concept," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700. Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan,* ed. John M. Headly, Hans J. Hillerbrand and Anthony J. Papalas. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 1–20.

[71] See Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung: Eine Fallstudie über das Verhältnis von religiösem und sozialem Wandel in der Frühneuzeit am Beispiel der Graftschaft Lippe* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1981). Schilling developed the concept in conjunction with a case study of the relationship between religious and social changes in the German county of Lippe during the early modern era, but it soon evolved into a macrohistorical description of the fundamental process of society in the development of the modern state. For a helpful review of the concept of confessionalization, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, Edited by David M. Whitfield (2008): 136–57.

[72] Wolfgang Reinhard, "Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen

"functional similarities" among competing confessions in the age of orthodoxy, and while it

promises some methodological advantage from a social-historical point of view, its usefulness

for the study of historical theology is questionable. The paradigm presupposes that in each case a

religious "consensus" was achieved by means of a top-down social disciplinary process

involving the mutual collaboration of state and church. In effect, the individual agents of

confessionalization (theologians) and their specific interests (theology) are taken up, as per a

Hegelian *Aufhebung*, into the general interest of the ever-modernizing state.[73]

　　Thomas Kaufmann has coined the phrase, "functional-reductionist," to describe the manner

in which the confessionalization paradigm regards the phenomenon of religion. It reduces

religion to a mere function of state and society without consideration for the unique features

(*propria*) of competing confessions and the distinctive cultures they produce.[74] Kaufmann is no

doubt correct in his critique, but his suggestion of "confessional cultures" does not promise a

better alternative for studying ecclesiastical and academic life on a macro-historical level. Ute

Lotz-Heumann suggests that a tension between macro- and micro-historical accounts of the

confessional state could be helpful "to describe the process of confessionalization as one of

conflict, negotiation, and accommodation."[75] Lotz-Heumann's characterization takes

confesionalization in a political stream. One important micro-historical account of such

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Zeitalters," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 10 (1983): 269. Drawing on Schilling, Reinhard states: "Die Entfaltung der Frühform des modernen Staates *kann* also gar nicht unabhängig vom Konfessionsproblem erfolgen, sondern nur auf der Basis eines 'Obrigkeit und Untertanen umfassenden Fundamentalkonsenses über Religion, Kirche und Kultur.'"

[73] See Constantin Fassolt, "Hegel's Ghost: Eurpoe, the Reformation, and the Middle Ages," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 39, 1 (2008), 345–86.

[74] Thomas Kaufmann, "Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche und Gesellschaft," 1121, cited in Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," 145. While Kaufmann is undoubtedly correct in his assessment, his suggestion of "confessional cultures" as an alternative to confessionalization does not promise a better method for a critical analysis of ecclesiastical and academic life.

[75] Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," 151.

confessional tension is Bodo Nischan's study, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*.[76] Nischan makes brief reference to Meisner's *Seven Sermons*, preached partly on the way to Brandenburg and partly within the private chambers of Electress Anna, to depict a course of resistance to the top-down effort of the prince to impose the Calvinist Reformation on his Lutheran subjects. As he documents the surge of Hollenzollern power in Brandenburg, Nischan does not neglect Meisner's role, agitating as it comes across, as theological agent in the conflict-ridden process.[77] The following dissertation assumes that there is even more to explore in Meisner's theological agenda vis-à-vis the gestalt of "confessionalization" in general and "orthodoxy" in particular.

Historiography in Light of Current Luther Research

Despite Hans Leube's prompting of a century-long recovery of Lutheran orthodoxy, scholarship must continue to work against the grain of Arnold's historiography. Karl Holl's "Luther Renaissance," which flourished during the same decade as Leube's tide-changing research on Lutheran orthodoxy, did not help the situation. The bulging scholarship of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolph von Harnack had already reinforced the historiographical wedge between Luther and Melanchthon, and between Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy, particularly as it concerned the doctrine of justification.[78] Holl's focus came in part as a response to the popular

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[76] Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: Univiersity of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[77] Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession*, 230–33. See Meisner, *Sieben Predigten uber unterschiedene biblische Text* (Wittenberg: 1620).

[78] See Albrecht Ritchl, A *Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation,* tr. John S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 167–69. According to Ritschl, the extent to which the "consciousness" of justification gave way to a *doctrine* of justification it was corrupted—by orthodoxy. He even suggests that the orthodox stress on pure doctrine coincides with the Socinian view that the church is merely an external school of thought: "But insofar as the Lutherans seek their orthodoxy in the affirmation that pure theological doctrine is the chief mark of the church, they approximate most closely, by their attachment to

contention of Roman Catholic historian, Heinrich Denifle, that Luther's "new gospel" was detrimental to good works.[79] In his vindication of Luther's "personal" doctrine of justification and "religion of the conscience," gleaned primarily from the reformer's Romans Commentary of 1515, Holl essentially reduplicated the standard dichotomy of Ritschl and Harnack.[80] What had promised to be a surge in seventeenth century studies and a renewed appreciation for the rich theology of Lutheran orthodoxy, therefore, suffered collateral damage in a "quest for the historical Luther."[81]

Granting that Holl's was by no means the first attempt at rehabilitating the historical Luther, it must be asked to what degree historians not only noticed changes in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but to what extent have they also acknowledged a theological continuity between Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy. To what extent, moreover, has orthodoxy even served as a means for recovering Luther's evangelical theology? Already during the age of orthodoxy, one finds attempts to save Luther's "pure doctrine of Christ" from "orthodox"

Melanchthon, to the Socinians" (296n2). See also Adolph von Harnack, *History* of *Dogma,* 7 vols, trans. William M'Gilchrist (London: Williams & Norgate , 1899), 7. Chronicling an ostensible shift in the history of Lutheran theology from "kerygma" to "dogma," Harnack explains that: "the fundamental evangelical view of Christianity as a whole . . . became obscured, and the practical aim of religion became uncertain. . . . The incorrect view of faith (contemplated as assent to a sum of many articuli fidei of equal value) became especially disastrous for the evangelical doctrine of justification" (240). For a good critique of the move separating Luther from Melancthon on the topic of forensic justification, see Rainer Flogaus, "Luther and Melanchthon? Zur Frage der Einheit der Wittenberger Reformation in der Rechtfergigungslehre," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000), 6–46.

[79] Heinrich Denifle, *Luther and Lutherdom,* trans. Raymond Volz (Somerset, OH: Torch Press, 1917), 384–86.

[80] Karl Holl, "Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewißheit," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, Vol. I. Luther* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1921): 91–130. Holl rejects the orthodox teaching of "forensic justification" as an innovation and claims that Luther's doctrine was rather effectual and pertaining to the conscience.

[81] Holl, *Die Rechtfertigungslehre im Licht der Geschichte des Protestantismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1906), 22: "Man sucht die Ursachen der Schäden nicht darin, dass die Rechtfertigungslehre unpraktisch sei und zum Leichtsinn verführe. Im Gegenteil! Gerade von der Vertiefung in dieses Dogma erwartet man das Heil. Nun will man jetzt das nachholen, was die Orthodoxie verabsäumt hat: man will die Rechtfertigung persönlich erleben." See here R. Scott Clark, "*Iustitia Imputata Christi*: Alien or Proper to Luther's Doctrine of Justification?" CTQ 70 (2006): 269–310: 277–79.

corruptions. In 1671, a certain graduate of the University of Jena and parish pastor in

Halberstadt, published a hefty critique of the university theology of his time. The work appeared

under the pseudonym, Heinrich Ammersbach, and bore the title, *Cathedra Mosis: Das ist Mosis*

Stuel auff welchen die Pharisäer und Schrifftgelehrten sitzen.[82] A devotee of Philipp Jacob

Spener, Ammersbach certainly presaged Arnold's legendary quest for the sources of the true

faith; yet, he did not discard the orthodox school altogether. In a tract from 1677, *Rettung der*

reinen Lehre Dd. Lutheri, Meisneri, Speneri, und andrer..., he recognizes Balthasar Meisner, in

particular, as an orthodox bridge from Spener to Luther concerning the question of whether an

individual Christian may rightly identify himself as "Christ."[83] In an effort to boost his credibility

with his orthodox opponents and simultaneously defend his own mystical theology, he appeals to

Meisner's academic oration "On the Dignity of a Christian," which affirms a supernatural

Christian union with Christ that is analogous to Christ's natural union with humanity in the

incarnation.[84]

Ammersbach would not be the last to use Meisner as a mediator of Luther's theology. Over

the past century at least two studies have referred to Meisner's orthodox attempt at recovering

Luther's original insights, particularly in the area of theological anthropology. Most recently,

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[82] Heinrich Ammersbach, *Cathedra Mosis: Das ist Mosis Stuel auff welchen die Pharisäer und Schrifftgelehrten sitzen. Die nach ihrer eingebildeten Sohn Weißheit für andern Orthodoxi rechtgläubige Lehrer seyn wollen, und doch ... die reine Lehre Christi für e. irrige Ketzer- und Schwermer-Lehre zur ungebühr ausschreyen.* (Frankfurt am Main, 1674).

[83] Ammersbach, *Rettung der reinen Lehre Dd. Lutheri, Meisneri, Speneri, und andrer, welche lehren: daß aus einem Christen und Christo gleich als eine Person wärde, daher ein gläubiger Christ wol sagen könne: Ich bin Christus* (Frankfurt am Main: Seiler, 1687), 6. Republishing the tract under his real name, Heinrich Hanson, in 1691, Ammersbach refers to Meisner as "the former Wittenberg professor who . . . is doubtlessly held as orthodox."

[84] See Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken von der Vortreflichkeit und Würde Eines Christen/ als welcher das herzlichtse und heiligste Geschöpf Gottes/ aller Göttlichen Wunder und Geschöpffe Schauplatz/ Spiegel/ Siegel/ Mittel-Punkt und kurtzer Begriff ist/ Auf Begehren eines wohlbekandten Theologi*, translated by Hermann Gerhard Weland (Hamburg: Philip Ludwig Stromer, 1709).

Anselm Schubert's *Das Ende der Sünde*[85] analyzes the strands of theological discourse between the Reformation and Enlightenment that radically changed the modern portrait of the human being—from "sinner" to "paradisiacal man."[86] Schubert explains how Meisner skillfully walked the line between the extremes of Matthias Flacius and Robert Bellarmine to formulate a theological conception of the philosophically loaded term, "natural." Unlike his Lutheran contemporaries who blissfully ignored the "discourse regulation" (*Diskursregulatorium*) of their Jesuit opponent without fully appreciating its theological import, Meisner understood that the restraints imposed by Bellarmine on the Lutheran "subject of discourse" (*Diskursgegenstand*) were themselves the problem.[87] Schubert's analysis is helpful because it demonstrates the influence of Meisner's terminology on later orthodoxy, particularly as it was molded against the background of Aristotelian philosophy.[88] Unfortunately, by focusing entirely on Luther's remarks in his *Genesis Lectures*, which Schubert regards as consistent with the extreme view of Flacius that is rejected by the Formula of Concord (FC, SD I, 1, 40–48),[89] he neglects the wider context of Luther's anthropology. Thus, his study artificially tips the advantage of discourse to Bellarmine, who assumes Luther's ambiguous and philosophically imprecise language as his own polemical point of departure, and Meisner's recovery comes across as a reluctant accommodation of Luther's doctrine to the magisterium of Jesuit philosophy.

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[85] Anselm Schubert, *Das Ende der Sünde: Anthropologie und Erbsünde zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

[86] Schubert, *Sünde*, 30: "Praktisch bestand das grösste Problem allerdings darin, sich durch extensives Lesen die Sprache des anthropologishcen Diskurses im 17. Jahrhunderts überhaupt erst einmal anzueignen, um festzustellen in welchen Diskursen, mit welchen Begriffen hier die Anthropologie verhandelt wurde."

[87] Schubert, *Sünde*, 53–54.

[88] Schubert, *Sünde*, 56.

[89] Robert Kolb, Timothy Wengert, eds. *The Book of Convord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 531, 538–40; hereafter, KW, 531, 538–40.

Much of this conversation has to do with understanding Luther correctly. Had Schubert paid closer attention to Luther's use of "sin" and "nature" in both essential and existential—not existentialist—terms, his analysis would have found much more in classical Lutheran anthropology with which to reconstruct an accurate and comprehensive subject of discourse. Indeed, he would have benefited from a closer reading of Bengt Hägglund's book, *De Homine* (1959).[90] In this excellent study of classical Lutheran anthropology, which has yet to be translated into English, Hägglund shows how Meisner and his contemporaries overcame the philosophical restraints imposed by Flacius and Bellarmine through thought patterns inherited from Luther himself. He draws on Luther's *Disputation on Man* (1536) and Meisner's *Anthropologias sacrae* (1615) to illustrate the extent to which Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century held a biblical view of man that was consistent with Luther's. The present study will proceed on the assumption that the Lutheran Wittenberg theologians, particularly Meisner, were not only conversant with Luther's writings, but considered themselves his rightful heirs.

Summary

To summarize, the historiographical *datum* of a necessary dichotomy between Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy deserves to be questioned. Whether a hard distinction is being made between Luther's spirit and Melanchthon's letter (Arnold's Radical Pietism), between the theological *character* and the theological *school* of Lutheran orthodoxy (Tholuck's *Geistesgeschichte*), between Lutheran confessional *propria* and the inexorable process of state building (Schilling's confessionalization paradigm), between a personal experience of and an orthodox "assent" to

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[90] Bengt Hägglund, *De Homine: Människoupfattningen i äldre luthersk tradition* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1959), 103–28.

justification (Holl's Luther Renaissance), or between sixteenth century reformational *Diskursgegenstand* and seventeenth century polemical *Diskursregulatorium* (Schubert's *Diskursgeschichte*), one is likely dealing with an exaggeration of external influences on orthodox religion without consideration for the purpose orthodox theologians were intending to accomplish in their own historical context. What, specifically, if anything at all, did Melanchthon's *literae* add to Luther's biblical theology at Wittenberg? Should such a "literal condition" be identified with the Aristotelian metaphysics that Lutheran orthodoxy came to espouse nearly half a century after Melanchthon's death? What was the relationship between theory and practice, between orthodox teaching and pious living, from the Lutheran orthodox perspective? Could it be argued that the confessionalization of Saxony went hand in hand with a practical concern for leading sinners to salvation? These and similar questions will be taken up here through an investigation of Balthasar Meisner—the man, his world, and his work.

Thesis and Chapter Summaries

Balthasar Meisner embodied the practical spirit of Lutheran orthodoxy in the first quarter of the seventeenth century by (1) taking the latest philosophical and pedagogical developments into the service of preserving Luther's evangelical theology, while (2) carefully avoiding the scholastic tendency to subordinate "theology" to the philosophical choice of either theory or practice, and, thus, (3) reinforcing the normative influence of Lutheran orthodoxy in Saxony for the remainder of the seventeenth century.

(1) Luther's evangelical theology, though based on biblical arguments, had certain metaphysical and ethical dimensions that simply could not be ignored by the first two generations after his death. Whether his heirs were forced to reckon with the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, or the doctrine of the two natures in Christ, or the

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necessity of good works in the life of the saints, a universal criterion of truth and a demonstration of that truth could not be surrendered for the sake of practical simplicity. On the other hand, orthodox Lutheran theologians recognized that such ministerial reason could be, and certainty had been, converted into a philosophical magisterium that endangered the simplicity of faith and the humility of Christian life. In a manner analogous to his characteristic prudence in the face of controversy, Meisner surpassed his like-minded contemporaries in showing how philosophy might be used "soberly" for the purpose of teaching theology effectively.

(2) Nevertheless, as a university theologian and public churchman, Meisner was required to exercise more than personal restraint and moderation. In the interest of making Luther's dogmatic heritage teachable, learnable, and enforceable, he strove to maintain logical consistency without succumbing to the tyranny of that irreducible dichotomy, imposed by scholastic university theologians, between *theoretical* disciplines (logic, physics, and metaphysics) on the one hand and *practical* disciplines (ethics and politics) on the other. From the time of the Reformation to the seventeenth century the same philosophical regulation had threatened to subordinate all learning, including theology, to philosophy. In line with the orthodox tradition, Meisner borrows the most innovative and scientific terminology available to describe the task of every true theologian: "theology" is a "God-given practical aptitude for leading sinful man to salvation." Practical theology is not merely a supplemental addendum to Lutheran theoretical postulates; theory (*credenda*) is inherently practical because it requires a God-given aptitude that leads to a spiritual goal (*agenda*).

(3) Meisner's theoretic association of theory and practice, innovative as it was, precipitated a new problem concerning the relationship between "theology" and "faith."[91] The chief article of

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[91] The rub between theology and faith has not gone away in present times. Peter Leithart, *Against Christianity*

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all Lutheran teaching states that justifying faith does not consist of an aptitude to do anything at all; it is purely passive vis-à-vis the righteousness of Christ freely given through the means of grace. Even if a person were well equipped to lead another to salvation, this does not necessarily ensure that the theologian, as the one leading, is himself a Christian. Besides, such a theology (*allo*-practice) extends only to the application of Christian doctrine; the rest of the way—from justifying faith to final salvation—remains a personal pursuit (*auto*-practice) on the part of the religious wayfarer. In an effort to strike an interface between the application and appropriation of doctrine, and thus pull the two together, Meisner contended with a twofold task. First, he was forced to grapple anew with epistemological and anthropological questions that had been settled a generation ago: to what extent does the discipline of theology depend on the human capacity for understanding and believing doctrine? Second, he addressed himself to political and pedagogical questions surrounding the nature of true religion: what articles of doctrine are "fundamental," or necessary, for attaining eternal life, and why? Which ceremonies and external orders assisted the church on its way to that theological goal? In the process of coining a "practical theology" and exploring its theoretical and practical implications, Meisner made an important contribution to the normative tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy.

The rest of the dissertation will unfold in the following chapters.

Chapter two will attempt to clarify the subject and scope of the dissertation, and thus come to terms with Meisner's challenge, by exploring the semantic field of the seemingly oxymoronic expression, "practical orthodoxy." It will rely on both secondary and primary sources in order to ascertain what those post-Reformation theologians, who designated themselves as "orthodox,"

(Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003) asks whether the point of the New Testament, Reformation, or since, should be the development of a system of doctrine ("Christianity" in his title), as if the position laid in tomes on the shelf were the goal, or if the point has been to build the church (people) through proclamation and use in life together. It reminds one of Luther's remark that the church is "not a pen-house but a mouth-house" (*WA* 10–1–2.:48).

meant by "orthodoxy?" How did they distinguish their own from "scholastic" theology? How did Lutheran theologians in the seventeenth century understand the term, "practical," and why was this term so important to them?

Chapter three will focus on Meisner himself and the political world in which he made his made his lasting contributions to the structure of Lutheran orthodoxy. Building on August Tholuck's description of Meisner's theological character in *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im 17. Jahrhunderts*, the chapter will move beyond ego documents and funerary orations to include publications, both academic and popular, which disclose Meisner's practical interests as a Wittenberg professor and Saxon churchman in the age of confessionalization. Tracing the rise of Wittenberg orthodoxy from its inception in the Reformation to its fruition a century later, it will conclude with an examination of Meisner's *Pia Desideria*, his last will and testament before his death in 1626, which indicates various defects and improvements he would like to have seen in church and society. To what extent did Meisner intend for the political and pedagogical forces of the university to facilitate the living faith of Luther's legacy?

Chapter four will examine the polemical context in which Meisner strove to defend the walls of orthodoxy against the attacks of Jesuits, Calvinists, and Socinians. His modest approach to controversy matched by his meticulous clarity of the issues was instrumental in winning over a certain Jacob Reihing to the Lutheran religion, exposing the "false peace" implicit in the encroaching "second reformation" in Brandenburg, and putting the dangerous antitrinitarian heresy of the Socinans into clear perspective. These polemics, which show the inherent practicality of Lutheran doctrine, will serve to enhance and contextualize Meisner's emerging theology concept.

Chapter five will consider the most important intramural threats vexing the University of Wittenberg during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, namely, the "fanatics," so reputed because they identified with certain extra-scriptural mystical teachings, and the academic elites of the University of Helmstedt, and especially the famous logician, Cornelius Martini. As a promoter of truth and piety, Meisner was confronted with the complicated task of representing both the University of Wittenberg and the Saxon Council in the rendering of *Gutachten*, while treading as lightly as possible, while continuing to contribute to the Lutheran devotional tradition represented by Arndt. Is it possible to be orthodox and pious at the same time?

Chapter six will investigate the philosophical trends leading up to Meisner's career-launching *Philosophia sobria* (1611). It will then take up the general question that made the young theologian tick, namely, whether philosophy is useful for theology, and if so, to what extent. Are philosophy and theology so mutually exclusive that the mere use of the former necessarily entails a material modification of the latter? To what degree did Aristotle's return to the Lutheran academy go hand in hand with Luther's biblical theology?

Chapter seven will recount Meisner's struggle to define "theology" as a practical enterprise. A comparison of volumes one and three of his career-spanning *Philosophia sobria* (1611–1623) will show a development in Meisner's understanding of the theologian's task and the best method for carrying it out. To what extent did his emergent theology concept depend on his interaction with other intellectual and religious dimensions in seventeenth century Germany?

In conclusion, the dissertation will evaluate Meisner's contribution to the construction of Lutheran orthodoxy in the seventeenth century. Like a soldier, a theologian must grapple with an apparent contradiction between his vocation and personal life, or rather, between theology and faith. In keeping theology cognitive, normative, and theoretical, Meisner did more to preserve

Luther's practical theology than to pave the road to either of its two alternatives—rationalism and pietiesm. Provided that Meisner was claimed by both orthodoxists and pietist as a representative of their cause, might his "practical orthodoxy" reveal a common trajectory back to Luther's *doctrina evangelii*?

CHAPTER TWO

COMING TO TERMS WITH "PRACTICAL ORTHODOXY"

Qui enim orthodoxus in Deum est, non potest sine bona facere, bonos mores prestare.[1]

Introduction: Why a Term Study?

The terminology typically associated with the central features of seventeenth century Lutheran orthodoxy is puzzling and cumbersome. Hasty comparisons and contrasts based on anachronistic assumptions have formed into inflexible dichotomies like "theory and practice" and misleading associations like "orthodoxy and scholasticism." For example, since Protestant orthodoxy was almost exclusively engaged with theoretical questions—an assertion that hardly bears the strain of historical analysis—it is often assumed, with even less historical warrant, that these theologians were mostly disinterested in practical theology. Another popular argument runs like a tacit syllogism: (1) Lutheran orthodoxy was scholastic, (2) but Luther was anti-scholastic; (3) therefore, Lutheran orthodoxy abandoned Luther. On the face of it, the problem is elementary, and a simple clarification of terms would likely set the matter straight. Since these terms are not merely historiographical, but were essential to the self-understanding of Lutheran orthodoxy, it is important to know what its proponents meant when they used them. If a professed continuity between orthodoxy and Luther is broken through an alleged scholasticism

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[1] Martin Luther, *Operationes in Psalmos 1519–1521*, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesammtausgabe, vol. 5 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1892), 28; hereafter, *WA* 5, 28.

then Lutheran orthodoxy fails to be what it purports to be, namely, "eminently practical."[2]

Through a brief study of the terms, "orthodox," "scholastic," and "practical," the following

chapter will attempt to contextualize the problem of "practical orthodoxy" so that Balthasar

Meisner might better speak for himself—and Lutheran orthodoxy.

What is Orthodoxy?

Normative Theology

The word "orthodoxy" stems from the Greek $ορθός + δόξα$, meaning "right teaching." In

ecclesiastical idiom, this term denotes faithful adherence to the pattern of sound teaching as it is

contained in the apostolic Scriptures (Acts 2:42, 1 Tim. 1:13, Titus 2:1).[3] One is orthodox whose

dogmatic assertions are categorically "correct" ($ορθός$) as opposed to "different" ($έτερος$).[4]

Cognitive in form and propositional in content, orthodox theology assumes a harmonious

relationship between faith and reason, provided that faith is the higher authority. Orthodoxy calls

for an aptitude on the part of its teachers; however in addition to correct teaching it also covers

the correct apprehension and use of that teaching. Hence, in German it is rendered:

"Rechtgläubigkeit" (right believing). The term appears in Justinian's *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (529–

534) to designate those bishops who adhered to the Nicene Creed,[5] and throughout the church's

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[2] See Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 1:191–92, 197–98, 228–29. See also David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum acroamaticum* (1707), Prolegomena, c. 1, 15d.

[3] See Jörg Baur, "Orthodoxie, Genese und Struktur," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter Verlag, 1977-2004), 25: 498–507; hereafter, Baur, "Orthodoxie," in TRE 25: 498–507. According to Baur, the term, "orthodoxy" has no precise meaning apart from its use in Christianity (498).

[4] Clement of Alexandria (150–215) was probably the first to use the term "orthodoxy" in contrast to "heterodoxy." See Baur, "Orthodoxie," in TRE 25: 499.

[5] *Corpus Juris Civilis* (The Civil Law, the Code of Justinian), volume 12, trans. S.P. Scott, A.M. (Cincinnati: Central Trust Company, 1932), 10; Title I, 2.2. "We direct that all Catholic Churches, throughout the entire world, shall be placed under the control of the orthodox bishops who have embraced the Nicene Creed."

history it has continued to embrace that creedal component of the Christian religion.[6] In most literature, orthodoxy is discussed—*in bonam et malam partem*—with reference to its normative function vis-à-vis diverse and competing claims to religious truth. Orthodoxy is *normative* theology. This was particularly the case with *Lutheran* orthodoxy.

Lutheran orthodoxy was a theological development that emerged from the political shadow of the Diet of Augsburg in 1555. Having obtained the *ius reformandi* under the principle, "*cuius regio, eius religio*,"[7] the Lutheran electors and estates of the Holy Roman Empire began to undergo intense legal pressure to produce a correct interpretation of the theology of the Augsburg Confession—and to state it as succinctly as possible. To that end, each territory's leading theologians were summoned by their respective regents to draft collections of creeds and theological writings, called *corpora doctrinae*, which would serve to regulate the teaching and preaching in a particular territorial church. Beginning with the *Corpus Philippicum*, drafted by Philipp Melanchthon for Ducal Saxony and published shortly after his death in 1560,[8] several other *corpora* followed suit, each vying for first place in a pan-German effort to establish a single authoritative body of Lutheran doctrine. After nearly three decades of fierce debate and political course-plotting, the Lutheran theologians were able to gain their desired consensus from

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[6] St. John of Damascus's authoritative *De Fide Orthodoxa*, a concise compendium of the correct opinions of theologians through the first eight centuries, has withstood the test of time and remains a touchstone for creedal Christianity in both the East and the West. See John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, vol. 9 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1899).

[7] Gerhard Pfeiffer, "Augsburger Religionsfriede," in TRE 4: 639–54; Martin Heckel, "Politischer Frieden und geistliche Freiheit im Ringen um die Wahrheit: zur Historiographie des Augsburger Friedens von 1555," in *Historische Zeitschrift* 282 (2006): 391–425. See also Berndt Christian Schneider, *Ius reformandi: Die Entwicklung eines Staatskirchenrechts von seinen Anfängen bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches*, in *Jus Ecclesiasticum* 68 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 85–119.

[8] See Irene Dingel, "Melanchthon and the Establishment of Confessional Norms," in *Philip Melanchthon: Theologian in Classroom, Confession, and Controversy*, ed. Robert Kolb (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 161–79. See also CR 9:929.

about two thirds of Germany in the Formula of Concord of 1577.[9]

The strenuous theological labors that succeeded in the gradual formation of the Formula of Concord, and subsequently emerged through its extensive establishment as a permanent standard of doctrine in most German territories, distinguish Lutheran orthodoxy as a concrete historical development.[10] If Scripture is, according to the Binding Summary of the Formula of Concord, "the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged,"[11] then the middle-man entrusted with rendering the correct opinion—the veritable watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem—were the Lutheran dogmaticians sitting on the theological faculties of the most illustrious Lutheran universities in Germany.[12] The correct teaching of these *doctores ecclesiae* were proliferated through various means and had ramifications both within and without the walls of the university. Countless polemical tracts (*Ermahnungen*) issued from legally sanctioned presses, were reprinted, and were circulated far and wide. Theological disputations (*disputationes publicae*) compiled and defended within the

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[9] See Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds., "Editors' Introduction to the Formula of Concord," in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000),; hereafter, KW, 481–485. For a study of the controversies leading up to the Formula of Concord, see Charles Arand, Robert Kolb, and James Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 161–282. For a detailed look at the controversies following the adoption of the Formula, see Irene Dingel, *Concordia controversa, Die öffentlichen Diskussionen um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996).

[10] The "age of Lutheran orthodoxy" has not received a uniform periodization. Robert Preus prefers the following division: (1) "Golden Age," which extends from the writing of the Formula of Concord in 1587 to the second decade of the seventeenth century; (2) "High Orthodoxy," which covers entire period of the Thirty Years' War; and (3) "Silver Age," which extends from the close of the Thirty Years' War to the time of David Hollaz in the early eighteenth century (44–47). See Preus, *Theology*, 44–47. Markus Mathias suggests a slightly different chronology: (1) "Early Orthodoxy" (1555–1600), during which the Lutheran church struggled to consolidate its confessional identity as an adherent to the Augsburg Confession; (2) "High Orthodoxy" (1600–1675), which was the time of its "scholarly blossom" [wissenschaftliche Blüte.], spanning roughly from Johann Gerhard to Abraham Calov; and (3) "Late Orthodoxy" (1675–1740), which is characterized by orthodoxy's struggle with the new science of the Enlightenment. See Markus Matthias, "Lutherische Orthodoxie," in TRE 25: 465–66.

[11] KW, 487.

[12] The most important centers of Lutheran orthodoxy during the seventeenth century were the universities of Wittenberg, Tübingen, Strasbourg, Leipzig, and Jena. See Robert Preus, *Theology*, 66.

halls of the university were dedicated to noble patrons with deep pockets in order to propagate

the Lutheran position and reinforce the church's legal status (*Staatskirchenrecht*) in the empire.[13]

Likewise, *Kirchenordungen*, by which the princes effectually regulated the public practice of

religion in their territories,[14] and *Universitätsordnungen*, which governed the curricular activities

of the universities, depended to a great extent on the normative influence of these Lutheran

dogmaticians.[15] When thorny questions regarding correct practice proved too difficult for given

pastors or parishes to decide, requests were often made of these trusted theological faculties for

Gutachten, or theological opinions, which served to adjudicate the matters and set precedents for

future cases.[16]

　　While it is common practice to label this period "Lutheran orthodoxy" or "the age of

Lutheran orthodoxy,"[17] historians have preferred various descriptions, depending on their

scholarly proclivities. For years German historians have drawn attention to the religious

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[13] See Schneider, *Ius reformandi*, 75–119. A collection of Wittenberg disputations from 1600 to 1615 were published by special privilege of the Elector of Saxony in 1625 with the intention that they would obtain the status of normative statements for pastors in Saxony. See Kenneth Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung: Das theologische Disputationswesen an der Universität Wittenberg zwischen 1570 und 1710* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 59.

[14] See, for instance, *Kursächsische Kirchenordnung von 1580, in Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Emil Sehling (Göttingen: Institut für Evangelisches Kirchenrecht der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1860–1928), 1/1:59–459.

[15] See Friedrich Paulsen, *Die deutschen Universitäten und das Universitätsstudium* (Berlin: Verlag von A. Asher & Co., 1902), 39: "Das Uebergewicht der theologisch-confessionellen Interessen giebt [das Zeitalter der territorial-confessionellen Universitäten] das Gepräge; die theologische Fakultät steht im Vordergrund." See also Walter Friedenberg, *Geschichte der Universität Wittenberg* (Halle, 1917) and *Urkunden der Universität Wittenberg* (Magdeburg, 1926).

[16] See *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia, Das ist/ Wittenbergische Geistliche Ratschläge* (Frankfurt a.M.: Johann A. Endter, Wolfgang d. J. Erben, 1644) and George Dedeken, *Thesaurus consiliorum et decisionum* (Hamburg: Hertel, 1671). See also Benjamin Mayes, *Council and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning after the Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

[17] Preus, *Theology*; Johannes Wallmann, "Lutherische Orthodoxie," *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957–1962), 696–702; hereafter, Wallmann, "Orthodoxie," in RRG: 696–702; Matthias, "Lutherische Orthodoxie," 464–85; Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 299–324.

struggles and denominational rifts that typified a "Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe" or "Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung."[18] More recently social historians have welcomed the narrative of "Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung" to acknowledge those religious aspects but then to move beyond to broader cultural and political developments that characterized the early modern period.[19] Considered with reference to its normative features, as here, "orthodoxy" is primarily a dogmatic or a dogma-historical (*dogmengeschichtliche*) depiction of an age long past and unrepeatable.[20] Nonetheless, regardless of historiographical taxonomies, it is noteworthy that those theologians spanning the years leading up to the Formula of Concord and the first quarter of the eighteenth century were not merely reputed as orthodox but were conscientiously and enthusiastically so.

Orthodoxy as Lutheran Consensus

What did Lutheran orthodoxy understand by "orthodoxy?" In the first place, orthodoxy denoted "continuity with the *religio* (*fides, doctrina*) of the ancient church." In this sense it was

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[18] See Zeeden's discussion in Ernst Walter Zeeden, "Grundlagen und Wege der Konfessionsbildung im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe," *Historische Zeitung* 185 (1958): 249–99.

[19] See Wolfgang Reinhard, "Gegenreformation als Modernisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 68 (1977), 226–251; Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung. Eine Fallstudie über das Verhältnis von religiösem und sozialem Wandel in der Frühneuzeit am Beispiel der Grafschaft Lippe*. Quellen und Forschungen der Reformationsgeschichte 48 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1981).

[20] See Matthias, "Lutherische Orthodoxie," in TRE 25, 465: "Orthodoxie so als Inbegriff der öffenlichen Lehre der Kirche verstanden, dient als Orientierungsrahmen für die je eigene, sich mehr oder weniger an die kirchliche Lehre anlehnende Theologie. Der wissenschaftliche Begriff der Orthodoxie ist demnach ursprünglich ein dogmatischer und dogmengeschichtlicher Begriff. Er bezieht sich nur auf einen Bereich der kirchengeschichtlichen Entwicklung, eben auf die kirchliche Dogmatik als diejenige Gestalt altprotestantischer Theologie, die wegen ihrer normativen oder traditionsbildenden Funktion nicht gänzlich historish überholt zu sein scheint." See also Robert Kolb, "Lutheran Theology in Seventeenth-Century Germany," *LQ* 20 (2006): 429–55. Kolb warns that the term, "orthodoxy" may be deceptive insofar as it refers to the theology and theological works of university instructors: "The life of the church in the two centuries following the Formula of Concord…embraced more than dogmatics at the university and much more than formal theology in the lives of pastors and laity" (431).

coterminous with "catholic" or "Christian."[21] An equivalence of "Christian" and "orthodox" in

the Lutheran perspective is suggested by the choice of translating the German "christliche

Augsburgische Konfession" with the Latin "*Augustana confessio orthodoxa*" in the Formula of

Concord of 1577/1582.[22] By the seventeenth century the term had taken on specific confessional

connotations. Wittenberg theologian, Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616), outlines the four marks of

"orthodoxy" in his *Concordia Concors* of 1614: it denotes perfect agreement on (1) the Holy

Scriptures, (2) the ecumenical symbols, (3) the totality of purer antiquity, and (4) the first and

completely unaltered Augsburg Confession.[23] Indeed, there was no orthodoxy that was not

"Orthodoxia lutherana," or better, "Soliditas Orthodoxiae Lutheranae." It was for them a

distinctly *Lutheran* consensus, or, to abbreviate the title of one book from the late sixteenth

century, a "*consensus orthodoxus Ecclesiae Lutheranae in doctrina.*"[24] This Lutheran

"*concordia*" reflected most accurately and authoritatively *in rebus et phrasibus* of the Formula of

Concord, was what Lutheran orthodoxy understood itself to be.[25]

While it would be erroneous to suppose that all Lutheran orthodox theologians were of one

mind in every respect, they were certainly united around a desire to preserve and defend the

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[21] See Theodor Mahlmann, "Orthodoxie II," *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. Jochim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (Basel: Schwabe., 1984), 6:1382–5. See also Mathias, "Orthodoxie I," in TRE 25: 464.

[22] See *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (1952), 768, 14–16; 832, 38, cited in Mahlmann, "Orthodoxie II," 1383.

[23] Leonhard Hutter, *Concordia Concors, De Origine Et Progressu Formvlae Concordiae Ecclesiarum Confessionis Augustanae, Liber Unus: "In quo ejus Orthodoxia, Scripturae sacrae, Oecumenicis Symbolis, toti Antiquitati puriori, & primae illi, minimeque variatae Confessioni, ex asse consona"* (Wittenberg: Bergerus, 1621).

[24] See Mahlmann, "Orthodoxie II," 1383. See also Matthias, "Orthodoxie," TRE 25: 464: "Die fortgeschrittene Konfessionsbildung und das Aufkommen der Selbstbezeichnung als lutherische Kirche gegen Ende des 16. Jahrhundert machen den Begriff eines *Consensus orthodoxus Ecclesiae Lutheranae* (J. Pandochaeus, 1596) oder vekürzend einer *Orthodoxia lutherana* (M. S. Eckard, *Genuinus Christianismus*, 1651, 247; J. Micraelius, 1654) möglich ohne damit den Orthodoxie-Begriff historisch oder Konfessionell zu relativieren." See here Hans Emil Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie, und Rationalismus*, vol. 1 (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1937–1951), 62.

[25] On the development of Lutheran confessional identity after Luther's death, see Robert Kolb, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church 1530–1580* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1991), 65–131.

doctrina evangelii they inherited from Martin Luther.[26] In 1537, at the behest of Elector John

Fredrick, Luther wrote what was supposed to be his "last will and testament" for an anticipated

council in Mantua that never took place. In this work, known today as The Smalcald Articles,

and included in the Book of Concord of 1580, he states his evangelical conviction by listing,

among several other Bible passages, the key verses: "All have sinned," and "they are justified

without merit by [God's] grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus…by his blood

(Rom. 3[:23–25])." He concludes this "first and chief article" with the oft-cited admonition:

> Nothing in this article can be conceded or given up, even if heaven and earth or
> whatever is transitory passed away…. On this article stands all that we teach and
> practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain
> and have no doubt about it. Otherwise everything is lost, and the pope and the devil
> and whatever opposes us will gain victory and be proved right.[27]

Luther's battle cry provided the stimulus for Lutheran orthodoxy. The *doctrina evangelii*,

which found Luther declared an outlaw for the last twenty-five years of his life, was the compass

and scope of the normative walls that orthodoxy would build for its defense. At least that is what

Lutheran orthodoxy believed itself to be—the fulfillment of Luther's great expectations. It is no

wonder that, nearly forty years after the reformer's death, Balthasar Meisner should (perhaps

unwittingly) coin a phrase he mistakenly believed to have come from Luther's own mouth:

"*iustificatio est articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*."[28] The same Meisner joined the

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[26] According to Robert Preus, the orthodox Lutheran movement had three aspects: (1) a conservative attempt to preserve the evangelical legacy of Luther's reformation; (2) an ardent zeal for the purity of the doctrina evangelii; and (3) a definite confession and doctrinal position. See Preus, *Theology*, 27–31.

[27] SA II, 1, in *KW*, 301.

[28] Balthasar Meisner, *AS, Disputation* 24 (1615), A2b: "Nam articulus hic quasi centrum Theologiae est, ad quod Omnia collimant: Sacer oceanus est, in quem Omnia confluent; arca fidei est, quae omnia servat tuta & illibata…. Adeo verissimum est illud Lutheri proverbium, quo saepius fuit usus Iustificatio est articulus stantis & cadentis ecclesiae." For the oral and written tradition of this well-known Lutheran mantra, see Theodor Mahlmann, "Die Rechtfertigung is der Artikel, mit dem die Kirche steht und fällt," in *Zur Rechtfertigungslehre in der Lutherischen Orthodoxie*, ed. Udo Sträter, *Beiträge des Sechsten Wittenberger Symposiums zur Lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Leipzig, 2005), 184–95.

theological faculty of Wittenberg on November 19, 1613, with an inaugural disputation

dissecting and defending the disputed subject of "justifying faith," with respect to "its names,

parts, efficient cause, object, and subject."[29] An intense zeal for proving—to the hilt—the utter

correctness of Luther's core evangelical insight drove orthodox theologians like Meisner to

unparalleled heights of theological innovation and productivity, and they took the most

sophisticated political and intellectual forces into the service of their cause.[30] Indicative of the

Lutheran orthodox self-understanding is that Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586), co-author of the

Formula of Concord and superintendent of the Duchy of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel from 1567

to 1586, who is recognized today as the father of normative Lutheran theology, was revered in

his own day (by his Catholic foes) as "*Alter Martinus*," the second Martin, without whose

coming the first Martin would scarcely have survived.[31] Likewise, Leonhard Hutter, the later

champion of Wittenberg orthodoxy, whose *Compendium locororum theologicorum* became the

standard of orthodox teaching for centuries to come, won himself the title, "*Luther redonatus*,"

for his role in reclaiming Luther's theology for Wittenberg towards the turn of the seventeenth

century.[32]

 Lutheran orthodoxy was normative in function, but self-reflective in spirit and "nervously"

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[29] Meisner, *Disputatio Inauguralis de Fidei Iustificantis 1. Appellationibus 2. Partibus.3. Causa efficiente. 4. Objecto. & 5. Subjecto. Photinianorum & Pontificiorum erroribus opposita* (Wittenberg: John Gormann, 1613), Title page.

[30] Hägglund writes: "With respect to its versatile comprehension of theological material and the breadth of its knowledge of the Bible, Lutheran orthodoxy marks the high point in the entire history of theology." See Hägglund, *History of Theology*, 303.

[31] See "Translator's Preface," in Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, vol. 1, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989), 14. See J. A. O. Preus, *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1994). See also Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 3, From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975), 265: "In summary, orthodox Lutheran theologians were to Luther what his epigones were to Alexander: members of a later generation, lacking the genius of the founder, but without whom the founder's work would have been in vain."

[32] See Gottlieb Spitzel, *Templum Honoris Reseratum* (Augsburg, 1673), 36.

conscious of its practical task.[33] Their devotion to Luther's legacy comprised the sole

qualification of what it meant for these theologians to be both "orthodox" and "practical."

Contrary to the modern conception, where "practical theology" is absolutely distinct from the

scientific ("*wissenschaftliche*") disciplines, Lutheran orthodoxy was unanimous on the proposal

that the theoretical and practical were bound up together. This enormous claim bears further

clarification. It is not merely to suggest that Lutheran school theology was being supplemented,

or balanced, with a contemporaneous practical theology (*praxis pietatis*) but that Lutheran

orthodoxy, normative as it was, was also "practical" in every sense of the word.

Modern Misgivings

The concept of "practical orthodoxy" will no doubt raise questions for the modern

historian. When it comes to the careful formulation of Christian doctrine, one may be as correct

and accurate as heaven is high, but it is doubtful that such orthodoxy will ensure any practical

consequences here below. Might it even be said that too much emphasis on doctrine and its

logical consistency will invariably stymie the devotional life of the Christian individual? Or is

there a balance to be struck? To what extent, moreover, should these theologians be credited with

preserving Luther's legacy when in the process they adopted much of that old scholastic

language their master had taken great pains to abandon? To what extent was it the content, or

was it the method they used, that made the difference? Was not orthodoxy rather a move *away*

from Luther's evangelical theology? Many introductory surveys of church history make the case

that "scholasticism" is that in which the difference between Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy

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[33] See John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici, cum pro adstruenda veritate, tum pro destruenda quorumvis contradicentium falsitate, per theses nervose, solide et copiose explicati* (Jena, 1610–1622). An essential part of Gerhard's explaining each thesis "nervously, solidly, and copiously" was show the practical and consiliatory nature of each theological topic.

consists. In a series of popular lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1956, Paul Tillich advocates this common historical perspective:

> Classical Orthodoxy was … Protestant Scholasticism, with all the refinements and methods which the word 'Scholastic' includes. Therefore, when I speak of 'Orthodoxy' I mean the way in which the Reformation established itself as an ecclesiastical form of life and thought, after the dynamic movement of the Reformation had come to an end.[34]

Even its professed consensus raises doubts. According to Williston Walker, the supreme disadvantage of Lutheranism after the Formula of Concord is that it had no other basis for unity than "pure doctrine." Meanwhile, "…the believing soul tended to shade off into a belief which, as Melanchthon once defined it, is 'an assent by which you accept all articles of faith.' The result was a new Protestant scholasticism."[35] Likewise, in *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, Ernst Stoeffler maintains that Lutheran orthodoxy entailed "an unprecedented hardening of Lutheran doctrine." He explains: "*Fiducia* had become *assensus*, the liberty of the Christian man had given way to the tyranny of scholastic theology, and the Bible had once again become an arsenal of proof texts."[36] Hence, taken as synonymous with "scholasticism," orthodoxy is regarded as antithetical to Luther's fluid and regenerate theology of which "Evangelical Pietism" considered itself the great restorer.

Who could deny that many writings, and most polemical discourses, were (and remain to this day) completely inaccessible to those not versed in subtler arts of philosophy and the scholastic tradition? One could argue that the social fabric of the German republic was practically torn apart, through no fault of the uninformed, over words the common people could

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[34] Paul Tillich, "A History of Christian Thought," recorded and ed. Peter H. John (Harvard University, 1956), 228.

[35] Wilston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1918), 441–42.

[36] See F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 183–84.

scarcely pronounce, much less comprehend.[37] One might even conclude that it was precisely the

normative-cognitive character of orthodoxy that brought about its ultimate demise and, in the

process, the near total dissolution of European society in the Thirty Years War.[38] Heinz Schilling

ties the normative dogmatic function of Lutheran orthodoxy to the top-down social control of the

"confessionalized state," and concludes that "the isolating and marginalizing orthodoxy [die ab-

und ausgrenzende Orthodoxie] for which the immovable letter of the law was stronger than the

living spirit of Christian renewal . . . led to a disintegration of theology and piety."[39]

Be that as it may, whatever perceived ravages their "correct doctrine" inflicted on the state

of church and society in the seventeenth century, and however much their freighted vocabulary is

believed to have hamstrung the theological imagination of Lutheran posterity, a dichotomy

between a scientific-objective theology (doctrine) and a personal-subjective piety (life), between

correct doctrine and godly living, though felt by later pietist theologians, was foreign to Lutheran

orthodoxy itself.[40] The goal of this investigation, therefore, is not to construct or deconstruct

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[37] Not only were Lutherans divided from Calvinists and Roman Catholics, but they also fought among themselves over a correct understanding of the "ubiquity" of Christ's human flesh. For a careful study of inter-Lutheran Christological controversies see Joar Haga, *Was There a Lutheran Metaphysics? The Interpretation of communication idiomatum in Early Modern Lutheranism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 115–270.

[38] See Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung: Eine Fallstudie über das Verhältnis von religiösem und sozialem Wandel in der Frühneuzeit am Beispiel der Grafschaft Lippe* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1981), 36: writes: "Die konfessionellen Loyalitäten konnten aber auch zu empfindlichen Störfaktoren innerhalb dieses Prozesses warden. . . . Abgesehen von dem dafür bezahlten hohen Blutzoll ist aber in Rencnung zu stellen, daß diese Auseinandersetzungen wegen der nur schwer kontrollierbaren konfessionallen Dynamik immer die Gefahr einer Sebstzerstörung der europäischen Staatenwelt in sich bargen."

[39] Schilling, *Aufbruch und Krise. Deutschland 1517–1648. Das Reich und die Deutschen* (Berlin: Siedler, 1988), 394–96: "Im letzten Viertel des 16. Jahrhunderts war auch die Religion in eine Krise geraten. Das war eine direkte Folge der Konfessionalisierung, denn die ab- und ausgrenzende Orthodoxie, der der unwandelbare Buchstabe des Gesetzes wichtiger war als der lebendige Geist christlicher Erneuerung, hatte dazu geführt, dass Theologie und Frömmigkeit auseinanderfielen."

[40] See Matthias, "Orthodoxy," in *TRE* 25:465: "Mit dieser dogmatischen Funktionalisierung der Orthodoxie geht im Zuge der neuzeitlichen, fundamentalen Umwertung des Orthodoxie-Begriffs die Behauptung einer der lutherischen Orthodoxie selbst fremden Diastase von wissenschaftlich-objektiver Theologie (Lehre) und persönlich subjektiver Frömmigkeit (Leben) einher wie sie der Pietismus im Anschluß an J. Arndt empfunden und als Opposition von toter Orthodoxie und lebendigen Glauben gegen die akademische Theologie seiner Zeit gekehrt hat."

dogma- or social-historical categories, but to gain an empathetic understanding of those seventeenth century theologians who adhered to the Formula of Concord and to learn what they themselves believed they were doing in the world in which they lived. This is to ask: first, how did Lutheran orthodoxy understand itself in relation to scholasticism? Second, what did these theologians mean when they distinguished their trade as "practical?"

Orthodoxy and Scholasticism

A Definition of Scholastic Theology

The term, "scholasticism," has its root in the Greek, "σχολή," meaning "leisure," and specifically a leisure that is dedicated to contemplation (θεωρία). Aristotle uses the word, "σχολαστικός," in his *Politics* to designate a voluntary activity, or pursuit, unencumbered by the cares of everyday life, that is performed for its own sake.[41] The term finds its way into ecclesiastical usage not as a description—to say nothing of a self-description—of any particular kind of theology, but simply as a synonym for "learned" or "scholarly," especially in reference to people, books, and manners of speaking (*scholastice loquentes*, *scholasticae disputationes*).[42] As it came to describe medieval theology "scholastic" is a modern description. Martin Luther and Erasmus of Rotterdam defined their own religious agendas, respectively, in opposition to scholastic theology, but for slightly different reasons. Erasmus, following the humanist tradition reaching back to the times of Petrarch, scorned their quest for useless and impious knowledge,

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[41] Aristotle, *Politics* 1313 b, 2–3; 1322 b, 38–39; 1341 a, 18 – 19, cited in Ulrich Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology*, trans. Michael J. Miller (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 1–2. See also Leinsle, "Scholastik I" in *TRE* 30:361.

[42] Leinsle, *Introduction*, 2. For instance, Melanchthon has this sense in mind when he refers to the church as "coestus scholasticus." See CR 21:835.

their supercilious means of argumentation, and their barbaric Latin.[43] Luther, theologian that he was, directed his criticism at their penchant for Aristotle and exaggerated view of the powers of human nature vis-à-vis the grace of God.[44] Indeed, one wonders if Aristotle would have recognized himself in the writings of the scholastic fathers—enlisted, as he was, to argue transubstantiation, for example. Yet, Luther has a legitimate target in the popular, if not always the most faithful, use of the Stagirite.[45]

Most attempts at defining "scholasticism" originated in the nineteenth century Catholic renewal movement known as Neo-Scholasticism. As new theological questions were being resolved according to old methods, "scholasticism," or rather, "scholastic method," came to denote a "normative standard of philosophy and theology."[46] In his 1909 *Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*, Martin Grabmann advocated the following definition:

> The Scholastic method intends to gain as much insight as possible into the contents of the faith through the application of reason and philosophy to the truths of revelation, so as [1] to bring supernatural truth closer to the human mind which reflects on it, [2] to make possible a systematic, organically structured general presentation of the truth about salvation, and [3] to be able [to] answer reasonably the objections raised against the contents of revelation."[47]

On the face of it, Grabmann's delineation of the scholastic method is reasonable enough. It embraces all of these features. However, upon closer examination it is difficult to see how such a

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[43] Desiderius Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, trans. John Wilson (New York: Cosimo, 2010).

[44] Leinsle, *Introduction*, 3.

[45] A good place to start for Luther's use of Aristotle is Theodor Dieter, Der junge Luther und Aristoteles: Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zum Verhältnis von Theologie und Philosophie (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001).

[46] Leinsle, *Introduction*, 4–5.

[47] Martin Grabmann, *Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*: 2 vols. Freiburg im Breisgau (1909/11), 1:36–37; in Leinsle, 5. According to Leinsle, Grabmann's definition is both too broad and too narrow. In critical response to Neoscholasticism, and in search of "a substantial formal component of Scholasticism," he conflates scholastic method with scholastic theology and fails to take into consideration that the same method was being employed simultaneously in the development of other disciplines, particularly medicine. See Leinsle, *Introduction*, 5–6.

method is unique to "scholastic theology." To what extent would the prerequisites of cognitive, organized, and apologetic not refer to every kind of theology characterized by a faith-seeking-understanding—from St. Paul[48] to St. Augustine[49] to St. Anselm[50] to Balthasar Meisner?[51] Such a method would appear quite as ordinary as the act of thinking and speaking intelligently about the Christian faith. The second-century Christian apologists, by no means *doctores scholastici*, were certainly engaged in the kind of method delineated above. Clement of Alexandria (150–215) made the case "that one cannot possibly understand the teachings contained in the faith without learning. For the ability to accept correct teachings and to reject the others comes not simply from faith, but only from faith that is based on knowledge."[52] If the truths of revelation are to be understood, they must to some degree become commensurate with correct reasoning (*recta ratio*) and necessitate that kind of mental exertion designated by seventeenth century Lutheran thinkers as "*adaequatio intellectus ad rem.*"[53]

If scholastic theology should be classified according to its *academic character* (*Schulmässigkeit*), and thus in distinction to other kinds of theology being developed at the same time, i.e., "free, literary philosophizing, monastic theology, and mysticism," then it must be understood with reference to the Parisian cathedral schools of the twelfth century and the rise of the universities in the thirteenth century. [54] The contributions of three important theologians

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[48] Romans 1:17: "The just will live by faith [ἐκ πίστεως];" Ephesians 3:4 "you can perceive [νοῆσαι] my insight into the mystery of Christ;" Hebrews 11:3: "πίστει νοοῦμεν."

[49] Augustine, In Johan. Evangel. Tractat. vii, cap. i Ev Jo 29.6, in PL, 35:1435: "*crede, ut intelligas.*"

[50] Anselm (1033–1109), Proslogion 1: "Fides quaerens intellectum." "Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam."

[51] Meisner, *Philosophia sobria* I, 5: "Credenda sunt mysteria fidei, ut intelligantur."

[52] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromatais*, I 25, 2; in Leinsle, *Introduction*,17.

[53] See Meisner, *Philosophia sobria*, 1: 708–9, 777.

[54] Leinsle, "Scholastik I," 361: "Historisch brauchbar ist der Terminus "Scholastik" zur Abgrenzung der im Schulbetrieb entstanden und vermittelten Philosophie und Theologie, vor allem des Mittelalters und der frühen

serving in Paris around the same time bequeathed to university theology its scholastic profile.

Hugh of St. Victor (1096 –1141), the great systemetizer of St. Augustine, is often credited with

bringing philosophy to bear on sacred theology.[55] Peter Abelard (1079-1142), whose *Sic et Non*

set out to resolve apparent contradictions in Scripture, introduced the "*quaestio* method"

characteristic of theologians in the High Middle Ages.[56] Finally, the *Libri Quattuor Sententiarum*

of Peter Lombard (1096–1160) became the normative textbook and basis for theological

commentaries and held this status until the mid-sixteenth century when the *Summa Theologiae* of

Thomas Aquinas took its place in the Roman Catholic schools.[57]

   According to Leinsle, that which "*creates* and *distinguishes* scholastic theology as a

scientific or academic theology, and thus as a particular undertaking," must account for the

"synchronic [zeitbedingte] standards of science" that made it possible. These standards,

moreover, differ from time to time and from place to place according to changing criteria of

science. For instance, what made Abelard's *sic-et-non*-dialectical method a viable means of

"academic, scientific, and rational penetration of the deposit of faith" in the twelfth century will

have given way to the standards of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* by the seventeenth century.[58]

Whether one is lecturing on St. Paul's letter to the Romans or the *Quattuor libri sententiarum* of

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Neuzeit, von anderen Formen, z. B. dem freien, literarischen Philosophieren, der monastischen Theologie und Mystik." With few exceptions, like Bonaventure, one pursued one or the other.

   [55] Hugh of St Victor, *On the sacraments of the Christian faith (De sacramentis)*, translated by Roy J. Deferrari (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951). See PL 176 and 177. Hugh speaks of two "works of God," *opus creationis*, which is mixed with natural reason; and *opus restaurationis*, which is totally based on revelation.

   [56] Peter Abelard, *Sic et non: A Critical Edition*, ed. Blanche B. Boyer and Richard McKeon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

   [57] Peter Lombard, *The Sentences,* Books 1–4, trans. Giulio Silano, Mediaeval Sources in Translation, 4 vols (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2007–2010).

   [58] Leinsle, *Introduction,* 10–11.

Peter Lombard or the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas or even the *Loci Theologici* of Philipp Melanchthon—such reflection must regularly account for those shifting standards of philosophical inquiry that always accompany theology an academic discipline. Ever since Albert the Great came to Paris in 1245 with the intention of making Aristotle's natural philosophy "intelligible to the Latins," the test of every theological assertion, even those resting on faith, came to rest on the consistency of whatever university criteria won the day.[59] Leinsle explains how theology and philosophical method thus converged to form a unified academic discipline (*subjectum scientiae*):

> If theology would claim to be a university science, it must clarify the status of its subject matter, its presuppositions, its method of argumentation, and its scientific character. If the principles are recognized only in faith, theology can nonetheless draw valid conclusions from it syllogistically according to the Aristotelian pattern. But the unity of theology will be guaranteed by a uniform subject of science (*subjectum scientiae*), which, given the diversity of theological assertions, can only be demonstrated in the same way as its scientific character. [60]

Here, then, is the challenge of scholasticism. The methods used to gain as much insight as possible into the contents of the faith depend on how various schools at various times and places processed Aristotle—from Thomas Aquinas to John Dun Scotus to Gabriel Biel to John Gerhard. Meanwhile, if there was ever anything unique to "scholastic method," or rather, its relationship to the divine mysteries it probes, then every variation of that method that failed to bring sufficient reason to faith should have been deemed "anti-scholastic" in comparison to others.

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[59] Albert Magnus, *On Physics*, 1. 1. 1., in Michael W. Tkacs, "Albert the Great on Logic, Knowledge, and Science," *A Companion to Albert the Great: Theology, Philosophy, and the Sciences,* ed. Erven Resnick (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 507.

[60] Leinsle, "Scholastik I," 363: "Will sich Theologie als universitäre Wissenschaft behaupten, muß sie den Status ihres Gegenstandes, ihre Voraussetzungen, ihr Beweisverfahren und ihren Wissenschaftscharacter klären. Werden die Prinzipien nur im Glauben erkannt, kann die Theologie nach aristotelischem Muster syllogistisch gleichwohl daraus wahre Konklusionen beweisen. Die Einheit der Theologie aber wird garantiert durch einen einheitlichen Wissenschaftsgegenstand (*subiectum scientiae*), der angesichts der Vielfalt theologischer Aussagen erst ebenso zu beweisen ist wie der Wissenschaftscharakter."

Inversely, anything less than "scholastic" would hardly have qualified as orthodox. On the scholastic model, orthodoxy owed its final allegiance to a normative magisterium—an interpretation of Aristotle—that was always subject to change. The question remains in respect to Lutheran orthodoxy: was it normative insofar as it kept up with the philosophical standards of its day or because it preserved the Lutheran Reformation?

Scholasticism and Reformation

The Reformation, like scholasticism, was a university phenomenon. Lewis Spitz has written: "Luther never spoke of his cause as 'the reformation,' but reserved that word for the reform of the university."[61] When Elector Frederick III of Saxony founded the University of Wittenberg in 1502 in hopes that it would become a center for *studia humanitatis*, it was still unreformed. That is to say, its theological curriculum still adhered to the scholastic rule. The university statutes of 1508 resembled those of every other medieval university in that they prescribed lectures on the Bible and Lombard's *Sentences*.[62] Martin Luther, too, before he was a bona fide university reformer, was by all rights a scholastic theologian.[63] Shortly after coming to Wittenberg in 1509 through the influence of his Augustinian father, John Staupitz, Luther earned his bachelorate of biblical studies (*baccalaureus biblicus*) in Lombard's *Sentences*. Meanwhile,

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[61] Lewis W. Spitz, "The Impact of the Reformation on the Universities," in *Lectures from the University of Copenhagen Symposium*, ed. Leif Grane (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 10. Spitz continues: "The magisterial Reformation was born in the university, was opposed by universities, triumphed with the help of universities, and in turn, had profound impact upon the universities for centuries thereafter."

[62] Walter Friedensburg, *Urkunden der Universität Wittenberg*, 2 vols. (Magdeburg, 1926), 34–5 (Nr. 23); hereafter, UUW I, 34–5 (Nr. 23).

[63] See Ernest G. Schwiebert, "The Reformation and Theological Education at Wittenberg," *The Springfielder*, vol. 28 (1964): 9–43. Schwiebert maintains that there were three Luthers: the scholastic (1509), the embryonic reformer (1520), and the mature theologian (1535). For research on Luther's scholastic roots, see Heiko A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought*, trans. Paul Nyhus (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 1966); and Bengt Hägglund, *Theologie Und Philosophie Bei Luther Und in der Occamistischen Tradition Luthers Stellung Zur Theorie von der Doppelten Wahrheit* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1955).

as he continued to lecture on the *Sentences* between 1509 and 1511,[64] the seeds of the

Reformation were beginning to sprout from his regular reading of the Bible. In 1510 Martin

Pollich of Mellerstadt, humanist scholar and first rector of the university, wrote of Luther that

"there is such great power of genius in this man that tomorrow he will completely change the

vulgar kind of doctrine that has been passed down and reigned in the schools."[65]

The Reformation, like humanism, was an anti-scholastic program. While the *studia*

humanitatis had had a tremendous influence on the liberal arts faculty from the beginning, the

Reformation did not take shape until the same structural changes were beginning to take place in

the theological faculty. The impetus came in the early fall of 1517. A few weeks before Luther

posted his famous *Ninety-five Theses against Indulgences*, he circulated ninety-seven theses

under the title, *Disputation against Scholastic Theology*. In this disputation, Luther takes the

scholastics to task by drawing a fast distinction between the simplicity of faith (Scripture) and

the infinite complexity of logic (Aristotle): "In vain does one fashion a logic of faith, a

substitution brought about without regard for limit and measure" (Thesis 46).[66] Syllogistic forms

are not valid when applied to terms having to do with God (Thesis 47). This does not mean that

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[64] Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985–93), 1:93.

[65] Melchoir Adam, *Vitae Germanorum Theologorum* (Frankfurt: Jonas Rosas, 1653), 104: "tantam esse vim ingenii in hoc vire: ut plane praesagiat mutarum esse vulgare doctrinae genus; quod tunc in scholis tradebatur and regnabat." See also Jean Henri Merle d'Aubigné, *History Of The Great Reformation Of The Sixteenth Century* (London: D. Walther, 1843), 200–201. Where d'Aubigné gets his elaborate translation of Mellerstadt's letter is unknown. He cites Adam, page 104, to say: "This monk . . . will put all the doctors to the rout. He will introduce a new kind of doctrine, and will reform the whole church. He builds upon the word of Christ, and no one in this world can either resist or overthrow that word, though it should be attacked with all the weapons of philosophers, Sophists, Scotists, Albertists, and Thomists."

[66] The nominalist doctrine of substitution was the quintessence of scholastic subversion of theology to the rules of logic. According to Ockam, for instance, everything had a mental substitute, and these substitutions were themselves the (limitless) measure of understanding everything, including matters of revelation. See William of Ockam, *Ordinatio*, *prolog*., *quaest*. 3, and Gabriel Biel, *Sentences*, *quaest*. 9, who maintained that theology did not have a single subject of science (see above, footnote 60), "but as many subjects as there are" (*sed tot, quot sunt res*), one may draw theological conclusions from them. See Meisner, *PhS* 3:151.

the doctrine of the trinity, for instance, is illogical (Thesis 48), but simply that logical syllogisms cannot prove it; otherwise, such a mystery would not be an object of faith (Thesis 49). Luther goes on to assert that Aristotle and theology are mutually incompatible: "Briefly, the whole Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light. This is in opposition to the scholastics" (Thesis 50).[67]

Over the course of the following years, as the reformer sharpened his wits on the theology of St. Paul, he became aware that a Reformation was going to entail a total overhaul of the theological faculty. He wrote to his Erfurt teacher, Jodocus Trutvetter, on May 9, 1518: "I believe that it is simply impossible to reform the church, if the canons, the decretals, scholastic theology, philosophy, logic, as they are now taught are not eliminated from the ground up and other studies established."[68] In keeping with the ideals of humanism outlined by Philipp Melanchthon in his 1518 inaugural speech, *De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis*, the liberal arts faculty had removed every trace of scholasticism by 1520.[69] In the theological faculty, too, Luther's biblical theology had broken the scholastic mold. Around 1519 Lombard's *Sentences* were no longer required for the *baccalaureus biblicus* because they proved to be a distraction from studying the Bible. Gradually the disputation itself, which had been such a powerful instrument for propagating Luther's evangelical discovery between 1517 and 1521, came under suspicion and was all but completely eliminated by 1525.[70] Thus the Reformation rolled

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[67] Martin Luther, "Disputation against Scholastic Theology," *LW* 31, 9–17; here, 12.

[68] In his open letter to the German nobility, written in 1520, Luther encourages the princes throughout Germany to follow the lead of Wittenberg's reforms: "I believe that there is no work more worthy of pope or emperor than a thorough reform of the universities. And on the other hand, nothing could be more devilish or disasterous than unreformed universities" (*LW* 44, 202).

[69] Spitz, "The Impact of the Reformation," 17. See *Corpus Reformatorum, Melanchthon Opera* (CR), ed. Bretschneider and Bindseil, 28 vols., 1833–60; 11:15–25.

[70] In 1521, under the influence of the anti-intellectual decan, Andreas von Karlstadt, the frequency of the theological disputation had been reduced to just twice per year, and by 1525 the disputation was no longer used for

forward—at Wittenberg, Basel, Tübingen, and Leipzig—in proportion to the degree that scholastic theology diminished.

Equally as important as the elimination of scholastic theology were the "other studies," to use Luther's phrase in his letter to Trutvetter, that the reformers established in its place. Here was the practical problem of the Reformation. It must be remembered that while the logical magisterium of scholastic theology may well have been "without regard for limit and measure," the medieval university itself had to cope with real time and space limitations. The speculative theology they pursued depended on what scholarly undertakings they deemed most important and, therefore, wrote into their curriculum. What texts should (and should not) be reflected upon? Lombard did not intend for his *Sentences* to replace the Bible as the textual basis of theological reflection any more than Thomas sought to make his *Summa Theologici* the quintessential expression of ecclesiastical dogma,[71] but these were the inevitable results of the scholastic commentary tradition. An object in motion wants to stay in motion.

The statutes of 1533, drafted by Melanchthon, compensated for Lombard's absence by formalizing two important changes to the theological curriculum: first, in preparation for the *baccalaureus biblicus* candidates were required to demonstrate a basic grasp of Christian doctrine by interpreting various parts of Romans and recalling the *sedes doctrinae* before proceeding to the next step. Second, in fulfillment of the *baccalaureus sententiarius* candidates were expected to familiarize themselves completely with the entire corpus of Paul's epistles, as

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examination and graduation purposes. Although it is impossible to confirm the record, it is likely that the disputationes ordinariae (Zirkulardisputation) was discontinued as well. See Nieden, *Erfindung des Theologen: Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalierung* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 54.

[71] In fact, in comparison to a revelation from God he received while celebrating the Mass, he counted his entire (unfinished) Summa to be "as so much straw." See Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater, eds., *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, vol. 1. *January, February, March* (London: Burns and Oates, 1956), 511.

well as the psalms and the prophets.[72] These curricular substitutions reflected the theological education Melanchthon himself had received from the beginning. Instead of disputing on the *Sentences*, he wrote his own theses, in which he argued for Luther's doctrine of justification against scholastic errors. He defended them on September 9, 1519.[73] Likewise, in preparation for his *baccalaureus sententiarius*, a degree he refused to accept, he devoted himself to interpreting Paul's letter to the Romans. These studies led to the *Chief Points or Topics of Theology*, which, in turn, formed the basis of his celebrated *Commonplaces*, or *Loci Communes*, of 1521.[74]

In the *Loci Communes* Melanchthon applied the anti-scholastic method of topical invention, outlined by Rudolph Agricola in his *De inventione dialectica* (published in 1515), to the Bible. By employing the "*methodus Pauli*," or the topics he discovered in Paul's letter to the Romans (Sin, Law, Gospel, Grace, etc.),[75] he aimed to show his students "what they should especially look for in the Scriptures."[76] Rather than foisting a fourfold interpretation onto every passage, as one finds in the medieval glosses, Melanchthon restored the text to its natural habitat,

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[72] *UUW*, I, 156.

[73] *Liber decanorum. Das Dekanatsbuch der theologischen Fakultat zu Wittenberg*, ed. Johannes Ficker (Halle/Saale 1923), 22, in Schwiebert, "The Reformation and Theological Education," 19.

[74] Martin Luther, upon reading this 1521 edition, considered it "…worthy not only of immortality but also of the Church's canon" (*LW* 33:16; *WA* 18:601). See also Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, vol. 1, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1979), 40. He writes: "Many people still remember Luther's private words, in which he often affirmed that this one book of Melanchthon's contains more solid doctrine than any book written from the time of the apostles until now."

[75] Melanchthon's "methodus" resembled that of Desiderius Erasmus*, Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram Theologicam per Erasmum Roterodamum, ex accurate autoris recognitione* (Basel: 1520), in Erasmus von Rotterdam: *Ausgewählte Schriften* 8 vols. Edited by Werner Welzig (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft, 1967), 3:117–495. See Timothy Wengert, "The Rhetorical Paul: Philip Melanchthon's Interpretation of the Pauline Epistles," in *A Companion to Paul in the Reformation*, ed. R. Ward Holder (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 134–36.

[76] Melanchthon writes by way of introduction: "I here present the chief topics of Christian doctrine, so that the youth may know what they should especially look for in the Scriptures and so that they may realize how obscenely those have strayed in all things theological who have handed down to us Aristotelian sophistries instead of the teaching of Christ." in Preus, 20.

as it were, and cultivated its original philological condition, i.e., the *sensus literalis*. By keeping

his own commentary to a minimum he hoped to maximize the study of Scripture and permit the

source of divine wisdom to speak for itself. He explains in his conclusion:

> You now have the most common topics of theology. You may seek a more exact
> account of them from the Scriptures. We are content to have shown what you should
> look for. Therefore, I think that I have done well in treating such things more briefly
> than I should have, lest by my misplaced diligence I call anyone away from the
> Scriptures and to my own arguments. For when it comes to sacred matters I think that
> the commentaries of men should be avoided like the plague, since the pure teaching
> of the Spirit can be drawn only from the Scriptures. For who has expressed the Spirit
> of God with more accuracy than the Spirit himself?[77]

Thus Melanchthon arrested the influence of "*isti scholastici*"[78] and made a permanent end

of the medieval commentary tradition. It its place, as he had planned, St. Paul became the "new

Lombard" and his letter to the Romans the new theological "textbook."[79] However, over the

course of his life Melanchthon gradually expanded his *Loci*—it went through four editions

(1521, 1535, 1543, 1559) and picked up much of Aristotle's terminology along the way—until it

became the normative textbook of evangelical theology. Meanwhile, the disputation (*disputatio*

ordinaria), which had been abandoned between 1525 and 1533, was again found useful "for

exercising the minds of the youth" (*ad exercitanda ingenia adolescentum*),[80] reintroduced to the

weekly routine, and required of each member of the theological faculty.[81] Moreover, since

universities had often held on to Aristotle, there may well have been some concern to keep up, or

at least cope, with the universities and their graduates. By 1536, with every hint of scholasticism

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[77] Melanchthon, *Commonplaces*, 192–93. The Latin demostrative adjective, "isti," conveys contempt for that brand of theologian produced in the universities in those days.

[78] *CR* 21, 85.

[79] *CR* 21:49.

[80] See *WA TR* 4, 191–92; in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 58n100.

[81] Heinich Boehmer, *Der junge Luther* (Stuttgart: F. R. Koehler, 1971), 270.

purged from the university, the reformers were now dedicating the same energy they had previously invested in discovering the gospel to proving and defending their exegetical conclusions. No sooner was the Reformation complete than a new rational substructure—some call it "scholastic"—was beginning to take shape.

Scholasticism in Orthodox Perspective

That Melanchthon had, in spite of himself, become something of a new Lombard for the church of the Reformation, and his *Loci* the new *Sentences*, is suggested by the fact that Martin Chemnitz, "prince of the theologians of the Augsburg Confession,"[82] produced his own *Loci Theologici* in the form of a commentary on Melanchthon's 1543 edition. This thoroughly researched and perceptively written opus is the consequence of a series of lectures Chemnitz gave on the *Loci Communes* at Wittenberg and later in Brunswick from 1554 to 1555. Published posthumously by Polycarp Leyser (1552–1610) in 1591, Chemnitz's *Loci* anticipated the appearance of several other textbooks in the next generation that were arranged in the same manner and bore the same title.[83] The *Loci* thus represent an ongoing commentary tradition that reflected the author's own personal theological studies[84] and served as a topical index for students seeking a deeper understanding of the current theological issues. In his prefatory

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[82] Heinrich Schmidt, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1899), 665.

[83] See, especially, Matthias Haffenreffer (1561–1619), *Loci Theologici, Sive Compendium Theologiae* (Tübingen, 1600); Leonhard Hutter (1563–1613), *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum ex Scriptura Sacra et Libro Concordiae Collectum*; (Wittenberg, 1610); and John Gerhard (1582–1637), *Loci Theologici* (Jena, 1610–1622).

[84] See "An Autobiography of Martin Kemnitz," *Theological Quarterly* 3 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1899), 472–87; here, 482. Chemnitz outlines his method of theological study beginning with a careful study of the Bible in the original languages with the goal of answering questions that had previously puzzled him. When he felt ready he turned to the early theologians of the church, whose writings he read slowly and carefully. Then he turned to current theological concerns, again reading slowly while painstakingly making copious notes.

comments, "On the Use and Value of Theological Topics," Chemnitz clarifies the purpose of this

commentary tradition. While Luther purified the doctrine of the church and restored its apostolic

purity, his writings were scattered all over the place and lacked orderly sequence. Melanchthon

had accomplished this "necessary and useful" task in his 1521 *Loci*, and his later expansions

were just as necessary in "showing the order of the parts of doctrine" and "pointing out the

beginnings and the progress of certain controversies, etc."[85]

By organizing Luther's genius and providing a handy guide to the theology of the

Reformation,[86] Melanchthon added an essential historical dimension to the study of theology.

Meanwhile, as new theological controversies called for additional explanations, Chemnitz's *Loci*

now recommended itself with the same purpose.[87] "For in the case of everything," he explains in

his *Prelection*, "we must show the beginning, the progress or development of the matter, and the

purpose or end. And this should not be done sparingly, but as the ancients said, generously and

clearly."[88] Such an in-depth analysis of the theological context required not only a thorough

study of the Greek and Latin fathers, a feat well attested to in all of his writings, but a reading of

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[85] Chemnitz, *Loci*, 40.

[86] Luther himself interpreted the matter the same way. He writes in his preface to Justus Jonas' German translation of Melanchthon's Colossians commentary: "Ich bin dazu geboren, das ich mit den rotten und teuffeln mus krigen und zu felde liegen, darumb meiner bücher viel stürmlich und kriegisch sind. Ich mus die kötze und stemme ausrotten, dornen und hecken weg hawen, die pfützen ausfullen und bin der grobe waldrechter, der die ban brechen und zurichten mus. Aber M. Philipps ferret seuberlich und still daher, bawet und pflanzet, sehet und begeust mit lust, nach dem Gott yhm gegeben seine gaben reichlich." *WA* 30/II, 68–69.

[87] In his Dedication, Wittenberg professor and later Dresden court preacher, Polycarp Leyser (1552–1610), explains the practical nature of Chemnitz's *Loci*: "For this reason the Loci Communes themselves, because of new controversies which have arisen either because of additional points or because of ambiguities in language since the time when they were written, have been in need of some additional comments which will take the inexperienced by the hand and instruct them, so that in their innocence and brashness they are not seduced by those who are seeking to twist certain theological points away form the analogy of faith and into some alien meaning" (Chemnitz, *Loci*, 23).

[88] Chemnitz, *Loci*, 25.

scholastic theology as well.[89] According to Chemnitz, the scholastic theologians had "departed so far from the fountains that their little rivulets or ruts only poured filth and garbage into the church."[90] It now was necessary to set the record straight, clean up the filth, and where possible, purify those scholastic terms "which the monks and other unlearned and godless men have corrupted."[91] Perhaps nothing more useful has been written to that effect than Chemnitz's own writings against the Jesuits, including his *Theologia Jesuitorum Praecipua Capita* (1562) and his *Examen Concilii Tridentini* (1565);[92] yet, despite their utter clarity and devastating analyses, these writings stirred the Jesuit hive and roused its theological ranks to greater pursuits.[93]

After Chemnitz's death two scholarly developments in the Jesuit camp brought significant changes to the polemical scene and honed the orthodox perspective on scholasticism. The first was Robert Bellarmine's *De controversiis christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos* (1581–1593). This orderly and relatively balanced examination of the current religious controversies, the first of its kind from the Jesuit perspective, revitalized the old scholastic

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[89] In his autobiography, Chemnitz reports that it was Lombard who originally piqued his interest in the church fathers. "Having no other books [during his brief stay in Salfeld], I read the *Magister Sententiarium*, and it was thus I began to take a liking to the writings of antiquity." Chemnitz, "Autobiography," 481.

[90] Chemnitz, *Loci*, 40.

[91] See "Dedication" by Polycarp Leyser (1552–1610) and two of Martin's ten children, Martin Chemnitz Jr. and Paul Chemnitz, in Chemnitz, 21–22: "This work will commend itself. And it is certain that he has not merely imitated those writers who in the past wrote about the Master of the Sentences, men whose only desire was to say something new, so that whoever brought in the most foreign material was considered the most learned. . . . But our author has gathered necessary and useful material and explained it clearly and accurately, not on the basis of its Scriptural context alone but also on the basis of the continuous consensus of the ancient orthodox church (which by his constant reading and study he has come to know and understand intimately and clearly).

[92] Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971).

[93] The Society of Jesus was an extremely efficient order of the Catholic Church founded by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1550), which was granted papal sanction in 1540. Also known as the "Jesuits," they dominated the theological proceedings of the Council of Trent (1545–1563) under the direction of their most capable scholar, Diego Andrada de Payva (1528–1575). Andrada was Chemnitz's most formidable foe. On the Jesuits, see John W. O'Malley, *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to Present* (Lanham, MD and London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

methods and stimulated their anti-Protestant polemics.[94] Bellarmine was particularly astute in exposing where the "heretics" espoused theological opinions that appeared inconsistent with their own theoretical presuppositions.[95] The second development came in the form of Spanish philosopher, Francesco Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae* (1597).[96] In this enormously influential work Suárez systematized Aristotle's metaphysics in a way that previous authors had not done. For instance, Thomas Aquinas's *De ente et essentia* and other such *opuscula* made merely passing reference to metaphysical doctrines. Likewise, commentaries on Aristotle's texts had minimal pedagogical value because they adhered to the digressive argumentation of the philosopher himself. By collecting Aristotle's metaphysical doctrines into a coherent system, Suárez furnished a thorough exposition of the subject that was accurate, teachable, and applicable to the current controversies.[97] Theologians now had smoother recourse to Aristotle, and not merely to choice passages processed through the scholastic mill. Due in large part to these new and powerful instruments, the Jesuits were ushering a "second scholasticism" across the threshold of the seventeenth century.

As the Lutheran schoolmen of the first quarter of the seventeenth century continued to develop the course of study promoted by Melanchthon and Chemnitz they, too, urged their

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[94] Robert Bellarmine, De controversiis christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos (1581–1592), *Roberti Cardinalis Bellarmini Opera Omnia. Editio prima iuxta Venetam MDCCXII*, vol. 4 (Neapel, 1858). The first volume treats of the Word of God, of Christ, and of the pope; the second of the authority of ecumentical councils, and of the Church, whether militant, expectant, or triumphant; the third of the sacraments; and the fourth of grace, free will, justification, and good works.

[95] See, for instance, Schubert, *Das Ende der Sünde: Anthropologie und Erbsünde zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2002), 48–53.

[96] Francesco Suárez, *Metaphysicarum disputationum, in quibus et universa naturalis theologia ordinate traditur, et quaestiones omnes ad duodecim Aristotelis libros pertinentes accurate disputantur*, vols. 25 and 26, in *R. P. Francisci Suárez e societate Jesu, Opera omnia*, ed. André Michel and Charles Berton (Paris: Ludovicum Vivès, 1856-1861). .

[97] See John P. Doyle, *Introduction to On Beings of Reason (De Entibus Rationis), Metaphysical Disputation LIV* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press 1995), 8.

students to make a careful reading of the scholastics, and with increased determination, in order to countermand the mounting influence of the Jesuits. In the fifth part of his *Methodus Studii Theologii* (1617), John Gerhard (1582–1637)[98] insisted that these "scholastics," referring to his Catholic foes, could not be opposed with any success unless the following rules were followed:

First, nobody should read the scholastics without first comparing them with a thorough and accurate understanding of the theology of Scripture. Second, one needs to be versed in the readings of the Greek and Latin fathers.[99] Third, the scholastics should be divided into different classes since they are not all from the same era, authority, or integrity. Gerhard suggest the following historical division: the first phase began around the millennium and lasted until 1220. It was epitomized by the *Sentences* and Lombard, their master. The second phase began around 1220 and lasted until 1330. It embraced those scholastic theologians who disputed on the articles of faith from the principles of philosophy and found their chief representative in Thomas Aquinas. The third phase began in 1330 and lasted until 1517 at which time Luther began the work of the Reformation. During this final stage, the errors of the scholastics had increased significantly and were resting on the authority of papal decretals. Fourth, "[n]obody should dive into that vast, winding, and convoluted sea, but merely drink from the very edge with the firm conviction that the Scriptures alone are the immovable, perfect, and certain rule of our faith."

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[98] In 1635, Michael Walther wrote in a letter to Salomon Glassius: "That heavenly David, Christ Jesus, has from the beginning of the time of a very necessary Reformation seen and nourished more theologians of this sort in the orthodox Church, truly courageous and very learned. Three of them, however, have without any doubt taken first place ahead of all the rest. There is no one who can reach easily their singular gifts and activities, namely, our countrymen [Megaländer] Luther, Chemnitz and Gerhard." Quoted in E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard Dinda and Elmer Hohle (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2001), 98–99.

[99] Compared to Chemnitz, who relied heavily on patristic sources in his arguments against the Catholics, Gerhard considered the church fathers as merely theologians of their time, much like those of his own time, and therefore put most of his effort into exegetical arguments based on Scripture alone. On the Lutheran use of the early church fathers, see Quentin D. Stewart, *Lutheran Patristic Catholicity: The Vincentian Canon and the Consensus Patrum in Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Münster: LIT, 2015).

Fifth, if any useful distinctions or sound arguments should present themselves, they should be referred to their respective *loci* and catalogued accordingly. But obscure, curious, and superstitious questions should be omitted. Sixth, wherever Lombard, Thomas, and others understand certain questions better than the papists of the day, they should be carefully noted and used for the purpose of opposing them. Seventh, and finally, issues in question between Lutherans and papists should be carefully observed because the papists borrow from themselves, and consequently almost nothing will occur to him that another scholastic has not already responded to because of their perpetual urge to contradict.[100]

In the process of making medieval theologians more readable, and their useless terms more useful, Gerhard (and later Lutherans) naturally came to appropriate much of the scholastic language he had salvaged. It simply proved useful, In addition, in an effort to beat the Jesuits with their own weapons, they came to rely on norms of discourse they otherwise might have avoided.[101] Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* (1610–1622), by far the most extensive *Loci* ever written, uses more scholastic terminology than previous Lutheran textbooks.[102] While this is but one quality among others that accounts for its comparative length (another being his development of each topic according to its *usus practicus*), it appears in retrospect that each time he borrowed a coin from the scholastic treasury he was incurring an intellectual debt the next generation felt

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[100] John Gerhard, *Methodus Studii Theologici* (Leipzig: Philipp Fuhrmann, 1654), 312–16.

[101] Ernst Lewalter, *Spanisch-Jesuitische und Deutsch-Lutherische Metaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), 9: "Man hat die Scholastik von den Jesuiten zezipiert, um dies emit ihren eigenen Waffen schlagen zu können." For an alternative view, see Wilhelm Gass, *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik in ihrem Zuzammengang mit der Theologie überhaupt*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1854). Gass's basic argument is that the Lutheran use of metaphysics was a natural corollary of the inevitable, upward development of Protestantism, and the appearance of Suárez's *Diputationes metaphysicae* was merely an incidental phenomenon. For mediating position, as it concerns Gerhard and the Jena theologians, see Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 19–22.

[102] See Preus, *Theology*, 53, 118.

compelled to pay. His modest application of Aristotle's four causes, for instance, gained enough

momentum by the end of the century that in many later Lutheran dogmatic presentations the

arbitrary schema ended up straightjacketing the theological content it was supposed to convey.[103]

Scholars may debate whether and to what degree the Lutheran theologians following

Chemnitz were not too generous in their application of scholastic terms and methods. What is

certain is that they never owned the label "*scholasticus*," or "*scholasticè*," as a description of

their theology, but reserved this term as a negative epithet with which to disparage their

opponents or, which is perhaps the same thing, the fruitless theology of a bygone era from which

they wished to distinguish themselves.[104] Luther was for them a critical point of reference:

"scholastic theology" was by historical definition that which Luther removed from the University

of Wittenberg in 1517. Indeed, those Lutheran theologians who bore the name "orthodox" could

no sooner identify themselves as scholastic than they could intentionally abandon the cause of

the Reformation.

In a farewell dissertation delivered to the theological faculty of Tübingen in August of

1610 the young Balthasar Meisner grasps the historical significance of the concept.[105] He

describes scholastic theology in terms of an "archaic and vicious method" that was "first

presumptuously introduced [*introducta*] by the scholastics, profitably removed [*educta*] from the

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[103] This has been noted espeicially in John König (1619–1664). See his *Theologia Positiva Acroamatica* (Gryphiswaldiae: Joachim Wildius, 1668). See also Buddeus, *Isagoge*, 359, quoted in Schmid, 665: "The author comprehended much in a few words and nervously; but, by an excessive desire of brevity and accuracy, produced a mere skeleton destitute of all sap and blood." It is interesting to note that while Robert Preus's study relies on more practical minded theologians like Gerhard and Abraham Calov in order to represent the era of Lutheran orthodoxy, Rublack favors König in his two volume study of Lutheran Dogmatics. See Carl Heinz Ratschow, *Lutherische Dogmatik zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung*, 2 vols. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1966).

[104] Both Lutherans and Reformed saw themselves as coming in the spirit of the humanism. See Leinsle, *Introduction*, 3.

[105] Meisner, *Dissertatio de antiqua vitiosa*, *Theologicè disputandi, ratione* (Giessen: Nicolaus Hampelius, Typogr. Acad, 1611).

schools by Luther, and unfortunately restored [*reducta*] by the "Jesuwiter."[106] Calling to mind

both the sarcasm of Erasmus's *Folly* and the seriousness of Luther's *Disputation Against*

Scholastic Theology, he exposes the "vanity," "obscurity," and "absurdity" of the scholastic

modus loquendi to probing ridicule. Far from "passing over our divines in silence," as Moria

resolved to do,[107] Meisner takes on past and present scholastic theologians listing the following

six "absurdities"[108] by way of explanation:

First, and most importantly, scholastic theologians argue about sublime matters of the

Christian faith on the basis of foreign and strange principles. Second, they mix philosophy and

theology, and thus "two very distinct sciences into one chaos." Meisner portrays the kind of

theology produced in the Parisian Sorbonne as "a twofold discipline forged of a certain mixture

consisting of divine utterances and philosophical methods like the race of the centaurs."[109] Third,

they employ the most impertinent means, using the most alien sense (*sensus alienissimum*), to

prove their theological conclusions. Meisner recalls Erasmus's allusion to an unnamed

theologian who twisted Habakkuk 3:7, "the skins [tents] of the land of Midian will tremble," into

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[106] Meisner, *Dissertatio*, *A scholasticis primum imprudenter introducta, A Luthero ex scholis utiliter educta, A Jesuwitis infeliciter reducta*. "Jesuwiter" is an ironic onomatopoetic twist of the word "Jesuit." Thus, the "Society of Jesus" becomes the "Society Against Jesus." Meisner appears to drawing on a common polemical treatment of the order's name going back to Chemnitz's *Theology of the Jesuits*. See Meisner's *A Catholic Answer to the Heretical Question of the Society Against Jesus (The Jesuits): "Where were the True and Religion and Church before the Time of Luther?"* trans. Steven Matthews (The Johann Gerhard Institute: 1998).

[107] Desiderius Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, trans. John Wilson (New York: Cosimo, 2010), 44: "But perhaps I had better pass over our divines in silence and not stir this pool or touch this fair but unsavory plant, as a kind of men that are supercilious beyond comparison, and to that too, implacable; lest setting them about my ears, they attack me by troops and force me to a recantation sermon, which if I refuse, they straight pronounce me a heretic."

[108] Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 31–42.

[109] Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 34: "Philosophiam in sacra auditoria magno conatu invexerunt, & ita duas distinctissimas scientias in unum chaos uno quasi coniugio commiscuerunt, unde Moria Erasmiana prudenter dixit: Scholastica Theologia a Parisiensum Sorbona, mixtione quadam, ex divinis eloquiis & Philosophicis rationibus, tanquam ex Centaurorum genere biformis disciplina conflate est." Although Meisner ascribes this phrase to "*Moria Erasmiana*," it is not to be found in Erasmus's Praise of Folly, and is likely Meisner's own.

a reference to the skinning of Bartholomew.[110] Fourth, in order to corroborate a single thesis, they produce almost innumerable arguments with the majority of them only having the appearance of truth. As Seneca writes concerning the reading of many authors: "A multitude of arguments distracts the mind" (*distrahit animum argumentorum multitudo*.)[111] Fifth, many scholastic theologians will argue both sides of the same argument without ever coming to a decision. Again, he cites Erasmus, who calls to mind the confession of more than one theologian who, after reading Scotus's subtle treatment of the Eucharist, suffered such intense mental shock that they could hardly shake off their stammering.[112] Sixth, and finally, they put far too much confidence in human authorities, and in particular, the papal bulls of Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, who sanctioned indulgences for the dead.

The problem was not merely the superficial occurrence of archaic terminology, or even the extent to which the *quaestio* method, followed by long-drawn-out syllogisms, was placed in the service of clarifying theological arguments. The epithet, "scholastic," signified something more sinister and much subtler. Within the "*antiqua vitiosa ratio*" two principles may be observed, which, judged from frequent allusions in Lutheran polemics, may be said to establish a working definition: first, scholasticism amounts to the sheer distraction of extra-biblical authorities that lead simple minds away from the Scriptures to philosophy. Meisner makes an analogy of the Trojan horse. Just as the Greeks stole into Troy through the machinations of a wooden horse, so philosophy came into the schools through the scholastic method. "Thus," he explains, "no sooner

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[110] Erasmus, *Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram Theologiam* [Basil, 1522], 191, in Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 37. See also *Moria* in *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 28:146; 28:486–87.

[111] Seneca, *Epistle 2*, in Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 39.

[112] Erasmus, *Ratio,* 210 in Meisner, *Dissertatio,* 40.

did these [scholastics] venture lawlessly to transport philosophy into the theological citadel than all orthodox faith was shaken and razed to its very foundations."[113] Meisner was not completely opposed to philosophy in the schools, but to what he sees as an *illicit* use in theological arguments. Meisner alleges that Christ and the entire Scriptures were banned from the schools. In their place, they "chanted all things in the Sentences of Lombard and the conclusions and corollaries of the Thomists, Scotists, Ockhamists, and other sects of that kind." While this may be a slight exaggeration of the facts, Meisner is making a practical appeal to his students. For "[Scripture] is not believed by philosophers, but…by fishermen; it is not believed by dialecticians, but by publicans."[114]

Second, scholasticism consists of the degree to which theology is subordinated to philosophy, and specifically to the respective consequences of logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics. Meisner lists several doctrines of the medieval church that came about through deference to philosophical rules: the doctrine of transubstantiation came at the behest of Logic, who requires an essential unity, a substance from a substance, etc. Grace and faith they changed into an infused habit because Ethics insists that every virtue correspond to a habit. The same gives neither punishment nor reward unless every action is preceded by free will. Good works are possible for the natural man, they say, because Politics prescribes that all laws should be established according to human ability.[115] Likewise, the invocation of saints only makes sense because everybody needs the intercession of intermediaries in order to approach a political ruler.

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[113] See Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 34–36. "Ita posteaquam isti Philosophiam illicito ausu in arcem Theologicam transtulerunt, protinus concussa, et ex imis fundamentis diruta est omnis fides orthodoxa" (35).

[114] Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 36: Meisner borrowed these expressions from Chrysotom (*Homil.* 49 *super Math.*) and Ambrose (*Lib. I. de fide et Gratia*).

[115] He cites the Greek: "δεῖ τούς νόμους κατά το δυνατόν τίθεσθαι." Meisner is quoting loosely from Plutarch. See *Vita Solonis*, (Braunschweig: Geoarge Westermann, 1840), 53: "δεῖ δὲ πρὸς το δυνατόν γράφεσθαι τον νόμον."

Physics maintains that the cup should be withheld from the laity because blood always goes together with a body. Metaphysics dictates that since all being is good original sin is merely a privation of the divine image. Illicit subordination is not the craft of Aristotle alone. Apparitions of spirits are figments of Plato, purgatory stems from the fables of Vergil, and exorcism rites build on the incantations of heathen. With these obtrusions in mind, Meisner passionately and colorfully lays out for the Tübingen divines a certain game plan for what would become his life's work of keeping philosophy at bay:

> Therefore whenever we perceive that pagan philosophy is thinking about committing adultery with our faith and theology through the supercilious obtrusion of their canons and axioms, we must immediately gather all of the logical, ethical, physical, and metaphysical paraphernalia of their adulterous plan and, once they have been gathered, cast them out like a harlot's dress [*meretricia περιζώματα*], [saying]: "Away with your wicked things, and keep your little consequences [*consequentiunculas*] to yourself!"[116]

Inasmuch as such an "archaic and vicious method" linked the Jesuits to their medieval fathers, scholasticism remained in orthodox perspective both a historical phenomenon to be studied and a present reality to be contended with—and in both cases, a potential threat to any future biblical theology. But scholasticism, so defined, was not merely an overextended chapter of medieval history, a characteristic of the counter-reformation. An even graver threat to the Lutheran academy at the turn of the seventeenth century than a "second scholasticism" was an encroaching "Protestant scholasticism."[117] This particular brand was what distinguished

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[116] Meisner, *Dissertatio*, 36: "Ita quotiescunque senserimus, gentilem Philosophiam, adulterium cum fide & Theologia nostra meditari, per superciliosam canonum & axiomatum suorum obtrusionem, protinus universas rationis adulterae sarcinulas, Logicas, Ethicas, Physicas, Metaphysicasque colligamus, & collectas tanquam meretricia περιζώματα expellamus: Exi scelesta, & consequentiunculos tuas tibi habeto."

[117] See essays in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, ed. Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark. (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1999). See especially David C. Steinmetz, "The Scholastic Calvin" (16–30) and Donald Sinnema, "The Distinction between Scholastic and Popular: Andreas Hyperius and Reformed Scholasticism" (127–43).

Lutheran orthodoxy from the Reformed. A few months after his Tübingen disputation against scholastic method, he held a series of disputations in Giessen and applied the same anti-scholastic principles against the Reformed. These disputations were distributed into four parts, corresponding to the standard scholastic textbook divisions of "logical, ethical, physical, and metaphysical questions,"[118] and appeared on March 6, 1611, under the title, *Sober Philosophy, that is, a pious consideration of the philosophical questions occurring repeatedly in the theological controversies, which the Calvinists have instigated against the Orthodox.*[119]

Despite the fact that the Reformed found themselves the target of Meisner's critique in Giessen, it is unlikely that a single Reformed theologian would have found anything objectionable in Meisner's Tübingen dissertation when it came off the press in 1611. Not only were they co-heirs with their Lutheran cousins of an anti-scholastic Reformation, they were co-beneficiaries of an Aristotelian renaissance that started blooming in the German universities during the 1590's.[120] Through the combined influence of Paduan philosopher, Jacob Zabarella's *Opera Logica* (1578) and the German edition of Francesco Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae* (Mainz: 1604), these northern Protestants came into possession of a different Aristotle, so to speak, than that of their Jesuit opponents. Suárez furnished a kind of philosophical prolegomenon—Aristotle's "first philosophy"—that was well suited to Protestants wishing to

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[118] Meisner was following the established order of the scholastic textbook tradition. See Eustacius a Santo Paulo, *Summa philosophiae quadripartita de rebus dialecticis, moralibus, physicis, et metaphysicis* (Paris, 1609).

[119] Meisner, *Philosophia Sobria, Hoc est: Pia Consideratio Quaestionum Philosophicarum, In Controversiis Theologicis, quas Calviniani moverunt Orthodoxis, subinde occurrentium* (Giessen, 1611).

[120] See Hans Emil Weber, *Die philosophische Scholastik des deutschen Protestantismus im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie* (1907), 127. By engaging the inner (scientific and logical) machinery of what he calls "philosophical scholasticism in German Protestantism" in terms of its maintains that the context in which "philosophical scholasticism" came to fruition in the German universities of the seventeenth century was chiefly an intra-Protestant, as opposed to counter-Catholic.

examine the metaphysical commitments of their own theology.[121] This highly abstract philosophy went hand in hand with Zabarella's "pure Aristotelianism," that is, an Aristotle who wanted nothing at all to do with theology but simply to clarify the subject of his own philosophy.[122] Since Aristotle's interest lay chiefly in nature, Zabarella, true humanist that he was, never dreamed of imposing the principles of logic intended for natural science (physics) onto supernatural data, to say nothing of biblical revelation. The Protestant schoolmen, both Lutheran and Reformed, took advantage of such an unobtrusive logic as they sought to absolve reformational theology of illegitimate methods and avoid scholastic ditches.

The Reformed had been championing the cause of theological independence from illicit logic for some time before Meisner came on the scene, and were appealing to many of the same anti-scholastic principles as the Lutherans. As early as 1584, before Zabarella's "pure Aristotelianism" had made any significant impact on the German universities, French Reformed theologian, Antoine de LaRoche Chandieu (1534–1591), also known by his Latin name, Antonius Sadeël, severely criticized the medieval "*scholastici*" in his *Locus de Verbo Dei Scripto, Adversus Humanas Traditiones.* Their first error, he maintains, is that "they tend to argue from logical principles and summon their conclusions on that basis." But Aristotle himself requires that each discipline must adhere to its own "way of instruction" (*τρόπῳ παιδείας*):

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[121] Christoph Scheibler (1589–1653) of Jena earned himself the title of the "Protestant Suárez" through his works on metaphysics. See his *Opus Logicum: Quattuor partibus universum hujus artis systema comprehendens* (Marburg, 1634), and *Metaphysica: Duobus Libris Universum huius scientiae Systema comprehendens* (Stoer, 1636). Likewise, Rudolph Goclenius was the Reformed philosopher par excellence who coined the Greek neologism "ontologia" to describe a "scientia de ente seu transcendentibus." See Rudolph Goclenius, "Abstract," in *Lexicon philosophicum quo tanquam clave philosophiae fores aperiuntur* (Frankfurt: Petrus Musculus & Ruperus Pistorius, 1613), 16, in Lukas Novák, *Suárez's Metaphysics in its Historical and Systematic Context* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 140.

[122] Through his interaction with Aristotle's Posterior Analytics, Zabarella developed the regressus method by which one reasons from "known effects" to "unknown causes" in order to establish the principles that govern a particular science. See Risse, *Die Logik der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1964), 1:12.

theology ought to employ theological, which is to say, biblical, principles rather than wandering

to another art of demonstration and thus violating the philosopher's logical prohibition of a

"transition from one kind to another" (μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος).[123] It may appear strange that

the same Chandieu who insists on arguing from biblical principles in express opposition to

scholastic methods should five years later subtitle his tract, *On the Spiritual Eating…in the*

Lord's Supper, with the description "*A Theological and Scholastic Treatment*."[124]

On the one hand, one should not read too much into his use of "*scholastic*." Chandieu does

not have in mind a restrictive sense of scholastic abuses, something Protestants commonly reject,

but rather that meaning intended by the 1559 *Statutes of the Genevan Academy* (probably written

by Calvin). There, young students are referred to as "*scholastici*" and advised to avoid "positions

that are curious and sophistic, or containing false doctrine."[125] According to Richard Muller,

such a positive reference to "scholastic" as one finds in Calvin's Geneva indicated an effort to

reform the schools on the model of Renaissance humanism.[126] The implication here is no

different from Melanchthon's description of the church in terms of a "scholarly society" (*coetus*

scholasticus) in his 1546 draft of the *Laws of the Wittenberg Academy*. This was a core principle

of the Reformation: the church depended on excellent and well-governed schools, as custodians,

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[123] Antonius Sadeël, *Locus de Verbo Dei Scripto, Adversus Humanas Traditiones* (1584), 8–9: "Primus error quem videntur Scholastici in suis disputationibus admittere, is est, quod solent ex principiis logicis disputare, atque inde arcessere suas conclusiones…. At nos de Theologia ex principiis Theologicis disputandum esse, ex ipsa Theologia didicimus, et ita faciendum esse vel ex ipso τρόπῳ παιδείας affirmamus, qui vetat μεταβαίνειν εἰς ἄλλο γένος, & vagari extra artem illius scientiae, de qua disserendum susceperis." Aristotle used this phrase, μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος, in his *Posterior Analytics* (1.7, 75) to underscore the fundamental flaw of logical reasoning.

[124] Sadeël, *De Spirituali Manducatione Corporis Christi et Spirituali potu Sanginis ipsius in sacra coena Domini: Theologica et Scholastica Tractatio* (Geneva: Jean le Preux, 1590).

[125] Richard Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 29–30. According to Muller, the adjective, "scholasticus" referred to "things, attributes, and persons associated with the school [*schola*]" (30). See also W. Stanford Reid, "Calvin and the Founding of the Academy of Geneva," *Westminster Theological Journal* 18 (1955): 22–33.

[126] Muller, *After Calvin,* 30.

for the continual purification of doctrine and the furtherance of the Reformation.[127] To that

extent "scholastic" is equivalent to "reformed" in a strictly academic sense.

On the other hand, scholasticism reflects a comprehensive and aggressive effort on the part

of Reformed ecclesiastics, academics, and politicians alike to improve the conditions of church,

school, and society. Richard Muller writes in his *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological

Terms*: "The goal of this [scholastic] method, the dogmatic or doctrinal intention of this

theology, was to provide the church with 'right teaching,' literally, 'orthodoxy.'" While the

precise method chosen to guide Reformed theology is not essentially wedded to its creed, it is

certainly shaped by the goal it serves. In his Dedication to Elector Frederick of the Palatinate,

Chandieu pledges his sole intention in submitting this "theological and scholastic treatment" is to

remain true to the "Reformata ac verè Orthodoxa Ecclesia."[128]A definition of Reformed

scholasticism, therefore, depends on a definition of Reformed orthodoxy.[129]

Reformed orthodoxy, like Lutheran orthodoxy, indicates agreement with the church

catholic, but it is also specified by confessional identity or interdenominational consensus.

Hence, for Chandieu, "Reformata" is "verè Orthodoxa." William Bucanus, theologian at

Lausanne from 1591 to 1603, captures this denominational significance in the title of his 1602

publication of *Theological Institutes, or an analysis of the topics of the Christian religion

explained from God's Word and the orthodox consensus of the most excellent theologians*.[130]

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[127] Melanchthon, *Academiae Wittenbergensis Leges*, 1546, in CR 10, 1005: "Idea enim et initio coetus scholastici in Ecclesia fuerunt, ut et custodies essent primae et purae doctrinae, et essent testes, a quibus propagate essent doctrinae." See also *Loci* (1543), in CR 21, 835.

[128] Sadeël, "Dedication to Elector Frederick of the Palatinate," in *De Spirituali Manducatione*, 7: "Sed tantum voluimus hac ratione testatum esse, nos ei doctrinae subscribere quae vestra celsitudini ex verbo Dei tradita est, & quam Reformata ac verè Orthodoxa Ecclesia profitetur."

[129] Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 8.

[130] William Bucanus, *Institutiones theologicae, seu locorum Christianae religionis ex Dei verbo et*

However, since Reformed orthodoxy lacked a single binding definition of faith like the Book of

Concord, but adhered to a number of local confessions (*Confessio Gallicana, Belgica, Bohemica,*

Helvetica, etc.), it is impossible to speak of the kind of creedal consensus one sees in the case of

Lutheran orthodoxy. What, then, was the basis of this Reformed consensus? Oliver Fatio

suggests that:

> despite its decentralized structure, Reformed orthodoxy indicates a certain unity due
> to the fact that its first professors at the academies were students of Calvin and Beza
> and that their followers within the Reformed world remained in very close spiritual
> and sometimes also familiar contact with each other, and in this way guaranteed the
> purity of the "right tradition."[131]

However, being "Reformed orthodox" was more than identifying with the theological

heritage of Calvin. It was being committed to the proposal that further reformation was needed—

and, indeed, more than that undertaken by the Lutherans—in order to complete the work that

Luther and Calvin had merely begun. In this sense, "Reformed scholasticism"[132] was not a

"second scholasticism" as much as a "second reformation."[133] While "second reformation"

typically refers to the conversion of Lutheran German princes to the Reformed religion and the

liturgical reforms associated with it,[134] one must look beyond the court dramas and ceremonial

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praestantissimorum theologorum orthodoxo consensus expositorum analysis (Geneva, 1602). Bucanus pulls
together excerpts from various Reformed theologians to illustrate a doctrinal consensus among Reformed
theologians. See Oliver Fatio, "Orthodoxie II: Reformierte Orthodoxie," in TRE 25:489.

[131] TRE 25:488: "Gleichwohl weist die reformierte Orthodoxie trotz ihrer dezentralen Struktur eine gewissen
Einheitlichkeit auf, die der Tatsache zu danken ist, dass die ersten Professoren an den Akademien Schüler von
Calvin oder Beza waren und dass ihre Nachfolger innerhalb der reformierten Welt untereinander in sehr enger
geistiger und manchmal auch familiärer Verbindung standen und auf diese Weise die Reinheit der "rechten
Tradition" garantierten."

[132] See John Patrick Donnelly, *Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace*. Vol.
18 of Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, ed. Heiko Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 49. See also pages
202 and 205, where he speaks of "Reformed scholasticism"

[133] This term, "second reformation, has gained much attention in recent scholarship. See Harm Klueting,
"Problems of the Term and Concept "Second Reformation." Memories of a 1980s Debate," in *Confessionalization
in Europe, 1555–1700. Essays in honor and memory of Bodo Nischan*. ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand et
al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 37–49.

[134] Such liturgical reforms included the "fractio panis" and the removal "Catholic idols" (vestments, candles,

purgings to the universities and schools for the theological underpinnings of these developments. It was in the schools that the Reformed schoolmen forged the philosophical foundations for further reformation, fostered their orthodox consensus, and thus found themselves qualifying as "scholastic" according the Lutheran definition.

In reality, the Reformed had a rather ambivalent attitude towards scholasticism from the beginning.[135] Despite the anti-scholastic consensus that Lutherans and Reformed shared in principle, further reformation necessitated a reach back to the medieval universities in order to overcome a temporary suspension of scholastic continuity inflicted by their sixteenth century forerunners. In view of both its medieval origin and its contemporary applicability, the newfangled Protestant scholasticism was really no different from the old.[136] What began in sincere exegetical reflection, in the spirit of reformation, was giving way to philosophical norms. The *Philosophia sobria* was a veritable documentary of Reformed scholasticism from the Lutheran perspective. There, Meisner picks up on both aspects of the Reformed scholasticism— its medieval heritage and its contemporary application—and objects that "the Reformed are guilty of the same crimes as the scholastics. Indeed, for shame, their own writings, which are clearly more replete with logical axioms than with biblical demonstrations, testify against them."[137]

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alters). See Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity in Late Reformation Germany," in *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 147.

[135] Peter Vermigli (1500–1562), a contemporary of John Calvin (1509–1564), used the term "scholastic" as a negative description of the illicit method of medieval Catholicism, but he also considered himself aligned with the same scholastic theologians on many points. See Luca Bashera, "Aristotle and Scholasticism," in *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli*, ed. Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, and Frank A. James, III (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 152. See also Peter Vermigli, *Dialogus de utroque in Christo natura* (Zurich, 1561).

[136] Muller, *Dictionary*, 8: "This method is rightly called scholastic both in view of its roots in medieval scholasticism and in view of its intention to provide an adequate technical theology for schools—seminaries and universities."

[137] Meisner, *Philosophia sobria*, I, 41–42: "Sed o utinam non ipse & Calviniani reliqui eiusdem cum

Meisner certainly takes advantage of the Zabarella's "pure" logic in order to unravel his opponents' theological arguments, but his main objective is to clarify the danger of its abuse. A philosophical standard so abstract that it is able to transcend biblical particulars, and therefore exclude the discipline of theology altogether, is also broad enough to embrace all disciplines, including theology. Bartholomew Keckermann (c. 1572–1608), perhaps the most brilliant logician in the Reformed camp at the turn of the seventeen century, had masterfully weaved Zabarellan and Ramist methods into a kind of eclectic, goal-oriented logic that was particularly suited to Reformed orthodoxy.[138] Meisner insisted that such logic does not serve theology but is pursued for its own sake. It follows the rules of syllogism and accommodates "other instruments of reasoning according to probability," but ultimately it fails to demonstrate the truth. In that case, Meisner argues, "logic is not the servant, but the master, the mistress, not the maidservant, and therefore it does not constitute a use, but an abuse."[139] According to the Lutheran definition, scholasticism was inimical to orthodoxy. It was not the use of logic, or merely engaging the "synchronic standards of science," that qualified such method as "scholastic" in their view, but its abuse, or rather, logic placed in the service of corrupting orthodox teaching.[140]

Scholasticis rei essent criminis! Verum, proh dolor, contrarium scripta ipsorum testantur, quae profectò magis referta sunt axiomatibus Logicis, quam demonstrationibus Biblicis."

[138] See Howard Hotson, *Johann Heinrich Alsted 1588–1638: Between Renaissance, Reformation, and Universal Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 33. The Ramist method effectually reduced metaphysics to rhetoric. See Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univeristy Press, 1958). See also Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and its German Ramifications* 1543–1630 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Such "commonplace learning" was aggressive, eclectic, and unhinged to Aristotlean criteria of truth.

[139] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:40–41: "Quando verò Logicus non inservit Theologo, sed ipse sibi res Theologicas tractandas sumit, easque sub regulas artis suae restringere & in angustum contorquere molitur, quando ad veritatem oppugnandam regulas consequentiarum & alia probabiliter ratiocinandi instrumenta accommodat, tùm Logica non ministra est, sed magistra, hera, non ancilla, ideoque non in usu, sed abusu constituta."

[140] See Henry Eyster Jacobs, "Scholasticism in the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (New York: Scribner, 1899), 434–35. Jacobs aptly summarizes the problem of scholastic subordination from the Lutheran orthodox perspective: "The method per se cannot be vicious, as sound logic always must keep within its own boundaries. It became false, when logic, as a science that has only to do with the natural, and with the supernatural

None of this is to suggest that Lutheranism was immune to philosophical abuse. Quite the opposite, the Lutheran schoolmen acutely felt the threat of scholasticism against which they were constantly on a critical line of defense. What is any theologian to do when he has said too much and, in the name of semantic consistency, understanding turns around to collect its debt? Theologians become so anxious about the coherence of their doctrinal statements that they spin themselves into an Arachnean web of logical inferences that have less to do with the Scriptures they purport to interpret than with their own patterns of thinking—and their insatiable desire to negotiate their mounting debt. The sheer force of academic circumstance presented a false option to every faith seeking understanding: whatever mode of theological discourse one chooses, one has chosen philosophically. As may be seen in the case of the Tübingen theologians, who insisted on a philosophically consistent view of the ubiquity of Christ's human nature, or the Helmstedt theologians, and particularly Cornelius Martini, who demanded that all theological discourse must adhere to the form of a syllogism, scholasticism was a blight on the Lutheran university as well. A century after the Reformation commenced, in a funeral oration for Leonhard Hutter, Meisner lamented the encroachment of scholastic theology on the universities of the Reformation:

> What a shame! Academic affairs have returned to the point that it is thought by some that scholastic theology should be brought back, and by that I mean that theology which abounds in perplexing questions and difficult verbiage, the theology which Luther and his faithful supporters removed from the schools with such great pains."[141]

The Lutheran Reformation began in the university, left its permanent stamp on the

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only so far as it has been brought, by revelation, within the sphere of natural apprehension, undertakes not only to be the test of the supernatural, but to determine all of its relations."

[141] Meisner, *Oratio Parentalis De Vita et Obitu Leonhardi Hutteri* (Wittenberg: John Gorman, 1617), 25: "En proh dolor! eo res academicae redierunt, ut a quibusdam revocanda censeatur theologia scholastic, illa nimirum theologia, quae perplexis quaestionibus et spinosis verbis abundant, quam Lutherus fidique ejus parastatae tantis laboribus e scholis eliminarunt."

university, and, in turn, adopted the academic form of the university. It only makes sense that the same Reformation would be preserved in the university in defiance of various shades of scholasticism being generated at the same time. This latter phase, which may be portrayed as a normative preservation of the magisterial Reformation, was the historical province of Lutheran orthodoxy. By the Leucoria's centennial, now with Lombard long gone and Aristotle back in a new and potent form, the Wittenberg theologians had serious choices to make concerning the subject of their discipline.

Lutheran Practical Theology

Theory or Practice?

Which is theology: theory or practice? Is it both? Neither? Scholastic theologians first entertained this either-or question during the thirteenth century while theological studies at the Parisian Sorbonne were moving away from Platonic and Augustinian to Aristotelian thought forms. Most propaedeutic questions concerning the nature and character of theology, especially as they pertain to the status of theology as a university discipline, were abandoned by the Protestant reformers, but resurrected by Catholic and Protestant schoolmen towards the close of the sixteenth century. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the historical development of theological prolegomena in the merging wakes of the Reformation and the northern Aristotelian renaissance—this will be discussed in chapter seven—the present purpose is to investigate the origin of this option between theory and practice, its scholastic significance, Luther's conception of practical theology, and the complexity of "practice" in seventeenth century Lutheran orthodoxy. Will the option prove to be a real problem and divide, or will it be a false or misguided dilemma?

It should be clarified at the outset that these questions concerning the nature of theology are

not properly speaking theological questions. Nowhere does the word "theology" appear in the Bible. Plato mentions "*θεολογία*" as a subset of mythology to indicate "stories about the gods."[142] Likewise, Aristotle uses the verb, "*θεολογέω*," to mean, "discourse on the gods" and refers to its agent as "*θεόλογος*," or "one who discourses on the gods."[143] The Church fathers used the term, "theology," as the functional equivalent of various biblical terms, including "wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:18 *σοφία*), "godliness" (1 Tim. 2:10: *θεοσέβεια*), and "piety" (1 Tim. 3:16: *εὐσέβεια*). Perhaps the most complete biblical description of what is commonly meant by "theology" throughout church history is comprehended in the phrase, "knowledge of the truth according to godliness" (Titus 1:1: *ἐπίγνωσις ἀληθείας τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν*).[144] Theologians have traditionally spoken in a very general sense of a double theology: one theoretical and another practical. The former entails "correct understanding," and the latter denotes "piety" and "worship."[145] But the sense implied here has to do with the aptitude required for being a theologian. St. Paul says a servant of the Lord must be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2: *διδακτικόν*). What does such an aptitude consist of? To be specific, what kind of aptitude is required of a candidate for the *licentia ubique docendi* at the University of Paris or of a "doctor of the universal church" in the thirteenth century?[146] To

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[142] *De Republica,* 2, 379a5. See Gregory Vlastas, "Theology and Philosophy in Early Greek Thought" *Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1952): 9–123.

[143] *De Metaphysica*, 983b 28, 1091a 34.

[144] The word, "theology," was used by Plato (De Republica, 1) and Aristotle (Metaphysica X, 6). However, one may find biblical synonyms such as "godliness" (1 Tim. 2:10: θεοσέβεια), or better, "knowledge of the truth according to godliness" (Titus 1:1: ἐπίγνωσις ἀληθείας τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν).

[145] See Meisner, *PhS*, 1:12: "Atque hoc est, quòd prisci olim Patres *duplicem* fecerunt Theologiam, *Theoreticam & Practicam:* per hanc Dei cultum, per illam accuratam Dei cognitionem intellexerunt; hanc θεοσέβειαν & pietatem, illam θεολογίαν specialiter indigitarunt, quemadmodum nonnihil patet ex *lib.* 10. Aug. *de Civ. Dei, c.* 1." See Lactantius, *Institutes,* 3 c. 29: "Omnis sapientia hominis in hoc est, ut Deum cognoscet et colat." and 4 c. 4: "Sed sapientia praecedit, religio sequitur, quia prius est Deum scire, consequens colere, ita in duobus nominibus una vis est."

[146] In 1213, the Pope granted the right to the University of Paris to issue the doctoral degree.

answer this biblical question, the university theologians turned to Aristotle.

The distinction between theory and practice has its roots in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the philosopher uses the illustration of a geometrician and a carpenter who are looking at the same right angle. Whereas the geometrician looks for the essence of the angle (ὃ δὲ τί ἐστιν ἢ ποῖόν τι) because he is a student of truth (ἀληθής), the carpenter is content with a mere approximation of the angle because it satisfies the purpose of his work (χρησίμη πρὸς τὸ ἔργον) [147] The former is involved in theory, the latter in practice. In this context, Aristotle takes up the discussion of what mental habits (ἕξεις), or "intellectual virtues," the soul must cultivate in order to arrive at these respective ends. Theory, which concerns things that are necessary, unchanging, and eternal, aims to perfect the intellect through the cultivation of "wisdom" (σοφία). This pursuit is exercised through the disciplines of logic, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics. Practice, which deals with contingent matters having to do with leading a good life, is associated with ethics and politics and aims to perfect the will through the cultivation of prudence (φρόνησις). [148]

In an effort to establish theology as the "*regina disciplinarum*" amidst the new philosophical learning at Paris,[149] scholastic theologians pursued the either-or question with great

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[147] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I, c. 7: 1098a 29–42.

[148] Aristotle speaks of five *habitus intellectuales,* σοφία νοῦς ἐπιςήμη, φρόνησις καὶ τέχνη, *sapientia, intelligentia, scientia, prudentia & ars*. See Ethics 6, cap. 3. While Aristotle lists five "intellectual virtues," namely, wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, prudence, and art (or skill), the first three are concerned with theory, and therefore may be sublated to wisdom; whereas skill belongs to art of production as in poetry.

[149] According to Thomas Aquinas, theology was the "*regina disciplinarum*," subordinate only to the "*scientia Dei et beatorum*" (ST I.1.1.c., I.1.5.ad 2). Boethius de Daca (480–524) had discovered the benefit of Aristotle's ethics for the training of the Christian mind long before the influx of Aristotelian philosophy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Boethius, *De Summo Bono*, in N. J. Green-Pedersen (ed.), *Opera*, Vol. VI/2, 369–77 (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1976): 369–70: "Praeterea, cum intellectus humani una sit potentia speculativa et alia practica, quod apparet ex hoc quod homo quorundam est speculativus quorum non est activus, ut aeternorum, et quorundam etiam est activus secundum regimen intellectus per quod operatur medium eligibile in omnibus actionibus humanis, ex hoc scimus has duas potentias intellectuales in genere esse in homine."

enthusiasm.[150] The question and its implications are perhaps best illustrated through a comparison of the Dominican, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and the English Franciscan, John Duns Scotus (1266–1308). Thomas took theology to be "knowledge" (*scientia*), and ran with the idea that it is "more speculative than practical because its principles concern divine things rather than human actions."[151] Against Thomas, Scotus maintained that theology is a "practical knowledge" (*scientia practica*) because it is "ordered" to the purpose of salvation.[152] Neither theologian imagined theology could be something derived from the principles of nature, but asserted its supernatural origin in conscious defiance of Pelagianism.[153] Still, the difference did not have to do so much with the subject of theology, or what exists in the mind of God, as it came down to the anthropological question of what is the highest human achievement possible. What human characteristic perfects the soul? The most plausible answer to this, Aristotle's question, determined what kind of science theology was, whether theoretical or practical. Thomas builds his argument on the premise that man's "proper and natural operation is to understand."[154] Since "man is ordained for a perfect understanding of God," and his eternal

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[150] Leinsle, "Scholastik I," 262: "Theologie muss sich als beweisende Wissenschaft . . . nach aristotelischen Prinzipien und dem Muster anderer Universitätsdisziplinen ausweisen."

[151] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, part 1, ques. 1, artic. 2: "Sacram doctrinam vel Theologiam esse scientiam." ques. 4: "[Theologia] est speculativa, quam practica; quia principalis agit de rebus divinis, quam de actibus humanis.*" See Meisner, *PhS* 3:450; Gerhard, "Proemium," in *Loci Communes Theologici* (Jena: 1610-1622), ed. Eduard Preuss (Berlin: 1863–1885), 1:2–3.

[152] John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in Lib. I Sententiarum*, *prol. 1 sent. qu. 4*, in *Opera Omnia* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1968), 1:111–75.

[153] Augustine, "De peccatorum meritis et remissione libri III," in PL 44:109) and "De spiritu et litera," in PL 44:201–46.. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006). 1, 1, a2 distinguishes "inter scientias quae prodedunt ex principliis notis lumine naturalis scientiae atque scientiae, quae procedunt ex principliis notis lumine superioris scientiae." Likewise, Scotus (*Ordinatio*, prol. 3, q. 1–3) states that "our theology" (to be distinguished from that of the angels and blessed) is drawn from the Scriptures: "Igitur theologia nostra de facto non est nisi de his quae continentur in Scriptura, et de his quae possunt elicit ex eis." See *Opera Omnia,* vol. 1 (Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 2013), 138. See Alexander Hales, p. 1. q. 2, membr. 3. art 2: "Deus per creaturas cognoscitur ut per speculum, per verbum ut per lucem."

[154] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2.3.25. Understanding, he goes on to explain, is also his purpose. See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2.76.9. "In the nature of every cause there is contained a principle sufficient for the natural

blessedness consists in such knowledge of truth, it is only reasonable that theology should be considered a theoretical endeavor.[155] Duns Scotus operates with a different anthropology. For him, the will is the higher and nobler faculty, far superior to understanding. Unlike the intellect, the will does not depend on anything outside of itself—no *a priori*, no necessity—but is always free to direct its thoughts and actions towards the good through works of love.[156] The greatest human achievement, then, is not in contemplation, but in practice "sufficiently ordering the understanding to a knowledge of what is right."[157]

As subtle as this scholastic difference may appear, it was more than a formal distinction of mere propaedeutic significance. An ethical choice between theoretical and practical had material implications for doctrinal theology and personal salvation.[158] If the theologian should cast his choice with "theoretical" then one should expect the doctrine of salvation (the route to eternal blessedness) to mirror the existing laws of (meta)physics and the philosophical means (analogous to physics) necessary for gaining a perfect understanding of God. Hence, Thomas reinforced the teaching of an "infused habit of grace" (*gratia gratum faciens*) with the Aristotelian doctrine of motion: divine grace *moves* the human will to interior action (*gratia operans*), so that it is able to

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operation of that cause."

[155] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1, 1, a4. See also Boethius, *De Summo Bono*, 370: "Summum autem bonum quod est homini possibile secundum potentiam intellectus speculativam est cognitio veri et delectatio in eodem."

[156] Scotus, *Reportatio* II, d. 25 (Vivès 23:118a) quoted in Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Dun Scotus: An Introduction* (Washington DC: The Catholic University Press, 2004): 169: "Because the will alone is capable of self-determination, then nothing created other than it can be the total cause of the act of willing." See also *Lectura* II, d. 25, n. 70 (ed. Vat. 19:253–254, quoted in Ingham, *Scotus*, 166: "[N]othing outside of the will is the cause of the will's choice."

[157] Ingham, *Scotus*, 222.

[158] Leinsle, "Scholastic I," 362–63: "Die neuentdeckte Profane Weltsicht des Aristoteles stellt traditionelle Legitimationen theologischen Wissens in Frage, zwingt die Theologie aber zugleich zur Übernahme aristotelisch-metaphysischer und naturphilosophischer Denkformen (z.B. Akt und Potenz, material et forma, Bewegungslehre). Aristotelische Metaphysik und Ethik warden zu Grundvoraussetzungen theologischen Denkens, die auch die Inhalte der systematischen Theologie pragen (z.B. Gottesbeweise, Sakramentenlehre, Tugendethick)."

will what is good, and to exterior action (*gratia cooperans*), so that it is able to accomplish what is good.[159] According to Thomas good works that make use of grace are worthy of divine acceptance, and God rewards them with more justifying grace to continue the process and progress because they conform to previously existing standards of "good" in the mind of God.[160]

If, on the other hand, theology is practical one should expect the way of salvation (*via salutis*) to follow the standards of ethics and other purpose-driven disciplines (politics and economics) having to do with contingent matters and every-day life. Scotus rejected the idea of a passive will that is susceptible to natural causality. He opted instead for an analogy to the current laws of economics. God is perfectly free according to his *potestas absoluta* to do whatever he wants; there is no binding ontological necessity that causes him to reward human works according to their inherent merit. Good works are good not because God knows them to be good before they are done, but simply because he *wills* them to be done. The reason God accepts human works as "good works" is because he has graciously established a *potestas ordinata* in which he obligates himself not to deny grace to those who do what is in them (*facientibus quod in se est*). The *via moderna*, and especially the English Franciscan, William of Ockham (1287–1347) and Gabriel Biel (c. 1420–1495), extended Scotus's political analogy of an "ordained power" describing it in terms of a "covenant" (*pactum*), or, a token of God's good will.[161] In other words, God necessarily rewards them who do what they are able to do by nature—even

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[159] Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 107.

[160] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1, 1, a4. See also Boethius, *De Summo Bono*, 370.

[161] See McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 87–88: "Just as in today's economic system, paper money has a much greater ascribed value than its inherent value on account of the covenant on the part of the issuing agency or bank to pay the bearer the equivalent sum in gold upon request, so in the Middle Ages the king appears to have been regarded as entitled to issue 'token' coinage, often made of lead, which had a negligible inherent value, but which would be redeemed at its full ascribed value at a later date." See also W.J. Courtenay, "The King and the Leaden Coin. The Economic Background of Sine Qua Non Causality," in *Traditio* 28 (1972): 185–209.

love God above all things.[162]

While this is not the place to go into the medieval debate between the "two ways," the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna*,[163] a few remarks are in order. The impetus for the nominalist school and its radical epistemology, according to which universals were a mere figment of the rational faculty, was none other than Dun Scotus. Ockham's and Biel's rejection of universals, which corresponded to the practical orientation of the Franciscan school in general, was more or less an extension of Scotus's doctrine of the primacy of the will.[164] Hence, in a certain respect—and the reformers certainly spoke this way—the "two ways" are represented by Thomas and Scotus, the Dominican and the Franciscan, the intellectualist and the voluntarist, the geometrician and the carpenter. While Aristotle's other writings and teachings having to do with human nature certainly provided the mechanics for presenting the subject, the question of the nature and character of theology began and ended with Aristotle's *Ethics*. As became evident in the Reformation, both ways held to a "pure" and morally neutral human nature (*naturalia*); both asked which faculty, whether the mind or the will, has the most potential to dispose the soul to supernatural grace; and both promised a blessed end to those who do what they are able to do.

Luther's Practical Theology

Luther appears not to have taken the scholastic dilemma very seriously. His choice of

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[162] See KW, 121–22.

[163] Thomas and Scotus, representing the *via antiqua*, believed in the existence of "universals," i.e., "humanity," while Ockham and Biel, representing the *via moderna*, argued that universals were not real, but were merely abstractions constructed by the mind. The simplest way to break down the question of universals is as follows: Thomas believed that universals exist *before* we experience them through particular things, Scotus maintained that they exist *in* particulars, and Ockham taught that they are created by the mind *after* experience with particulars by means of organizing them according to their qualities into groups.

[164] Leinsle explains that "Ockham aligned himself with the practical orientation of Franciscan theology." See Leinsle, *Introduction*, 223.

"practical," which fortuitously aligned him with Dun Scotus and the *via moderna*, while it may have reflected the influence of Gabriel Biel on his theological vocabulary, was really nothing more than a choice for a lack of better terms, and besides, what would have been expected of him given the education that shaped him.[165] His initial attempts to define theology as a particular undertaking, and the nature of being a theologian, were completely opposed to the views endorsed by the theological faculties of his time. Nonetheless, he is certain to distinguish himself primarily from Scotus and Biel who gave primacy to the will and practical philosophy. In his *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* he attacks the notion that the human will is "free to choose between either of two opposites" (Thesis 5). It is completely powerless to "conform to correct precept" (Thesis 6) or "strive toward whatever is declared good" (Thesis 10). Contrary to the rudimentary assumptions of philosophy, a person does not become good by doing good; just the opposite, people do good because they have been made good (Thesis 40). Convinced that the doctrine of free will has its source in Aristotle's *Ethics*, Luther regards this book as "the worst enemy of grace" (Thesis 41). It contradicts catholic doctrine (Thesis 42), sabotages the entire theological enterprise, and makes it impossible for anybody following its principles to become a theologian (Theses 43 and 44).[166]

A theology unchained to the precepts of Aristotle's *Ethics* contradicted everything that the universities called "theology" and compromises their very integrity as religious institutions. "What else are the universities," Luther asks in his *Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (1520), "but places where loose living is practiced, where little is taught of the Holy

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[165] See *WATR,* 1:72. See also Johannes Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1961), 6.

[166] *LW* 31:9–12. See C. Stange, "Die ältesten ethischen Disputationen Luther," *Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus* (Leipzig, 1904), 1:35–50. Stange discusses the breakthrough of Pauline theology in *Luther in Die Anfänge der Theologie Luthers* (Berlin, 1957). Reinhard Schwarz presents a detailed analysis of Luther's opposition to scholasticism in *Fides, spes und caritas beim jungen Luther* (Berlin, 1962).

Scriptures and the Christian faith, and where only the blind, heathen teacher Aristotle rules far

more than Christ?" He suggests that Aristotle's "best books," and especially his *Physics*,

Metaphysics, *Concerning the Soul*, and *Ethics*, which "boast about nature," should be discarded

completely. But the worst book of all is his *Ethics* because it "flatly opposes divine grace and all

Christian virtues." Arguing from his experience as a professional theologian, Luther makes a

passionate appeal to the noble patrons of the Reformation:

> Away with such books! Keep them away from Christians. No one can accuse me of
> overstating the case, or of condemning what I do not understand. Dear friend, I know
> what I am talking about. I know my Aristotle as well as you or the likes of you. I
> have lectured on him and been lectured on him, and I understand him better than St.
> Thomas or Duns Scotus did. I can boast about this without pride and if necessary, I
> can prove it. It makes no difference to me that so many great minds have devoted
> their labor to him for so many centuries. Such objections do not disturb me as once
> they did, for it is plain as day that other errors have remained for even more centuries
> in the world and in the universities.[167]

The theology that Luther would put in place of scholastic theology, and which Lutherans

have henceforth designated as "practical theology" went by several names and descriptions

through the course of Luther's theological development. In the first place, it was a "German

theology," namely, a theology that came in the way of ordinary Christian experience outside the

university. More specifically, it was the title of a little book called *Theologia deutsch*. Luther's

pre-reformational engagement with the concepts of bound will and the inferiority of university

theology, which characterize his early disputations of 1517 and 1518, represent his careful

reading and deep appreciation of this mystical tract. Luther issued two publications of *Theologia*

deutsch (also known as the *Frankfurter*)—an incomplete version in 1516 and a complete edition

in 1518. In his preface to the 1518 edition he claims: "no book except the Bible and St.

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[167] *LW* 44:200–2. However, Luther is willing to retain Aristotle's Logic, Rhetoric, and Poetics "for training young people to speak and to preach properly" (202).

Augustine has come to my attention from which I have learned more about God, Christ, man, and all things." Although it was new to the university, Luther was confident to say that his German theology was not new. It did not originate with the Germans but was simply neglected by the universities for many years "with the result that the holy Word of God has not only been laid under the bench but has almost been destroyed by dust and filth." Nonetheless, he finds the label "German" to be appropriate:

> But some may say, as in the past, that we are German theologians. We shall let that stand. I thank God that I hear and find my God in the German tongue, whereas I, and they with me, previously did not find him either in the Latin, the Greek, or the Hebrew tongue. God grant that this little book will become better known. Then we shall find that German theologians are without a doubt the best theologians. Amen.[168]

Despite the appearance of "outright national overtones,"[169] Luther's point is well taken: that theology is best and most beneficial to the church that is able to be written, preached, learned, and taken to heart by ordinary Christians. Luther had discovered in the *Theologia deutsch* an *imitative* theology. It was a message that could be reproduced in actual human experience, and not simply through reference to the principles of a closed scientific system or through mechanical observation of the sacraments. Indeed, his primary use of mystical theology was for its fundamental insight regarding the nature of penance, which he captured in the title of his 1516 printing: "A spiritual, noble booklet on the correct distinction and understanding of what the new and old person is. What Adam's child and God's child is. How Adam must die in us and Christian arise."[170] Volker Leppin links the words of the title to the contents of chapters 15 and

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[168] *LW* 31: 75–76.

[169] Volker Leppin, "Luther's Roots in Monastic-Mystical Piety," *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 57.

[170] *WA* 1.153, in Leppin, 57: "Ein geistlich, edles Buchlein von rechter underscheid und vorstand, was der alt und neu mensche sei. Was Adams und was Gottes kind sei. Und wie Adam inn uns sterben unnd Christus ersteen soll."

16 of the book itself, where the death of Adam and the resurrection of Christ are said to take place in the Christian through the renunciation of sin and conveyed through the German verb, "bussen" (to do penance).[171] It is no coincidence that Luther's *Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* from October 31, 1517 stressed the same idea of a life of continuous inward repentance.[172]

The superior type of theology that Luther discovered (and was continuing to discover) in his native tongue did not exclude consideration of the university, but was intended for its enhancement. "Our theology," he explained in a letter to John Lang in May 1517, was fast becoming the theology of "our university."[173] In April 1518, before an audience of Augustinian theologians in Heidelberg, he expounded his new theological orientation in terms of a "theology of the cross."[174] This theology was to be distinguished from a "theology of glory," the prevailing university theology, or, as he describes it in his *Letter to the German Nobility*, "what the book of Maccabees calls *gymnasia epheborum et graecae gloriae.*"[175] Theologians who speculate about the "invisible things of God" in deference to the principles of nature do not deserve to be called

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[171] *Franckforter*, 91,28. 32; 92, 35, in Leppin, "Luther's Roots," 57. Leppin infers: "When this is read together with the title page, which simply stresses the process of dying, it becomes clear that at the centre of Luther's struggle with mysticism during this time was something of a penitential process-with profound existential dimension and with little to do with sacramental performance."

[172] *LW* 31:25; *WA* 1:223: The first three theses read: "1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" [Matt. 4:17], he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. 2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy. 3. Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortifications of the flesh."

[173] Luther to John Lang, May 18, 1517, in Martin Luther, *The Letters of Martin Luther*, translated by Margaret A. Currie (London: Macmillan, 1908), 15: "Our theology and that of St. Augustine, by the grace of God, is making rapid progress in our university. Aristotle is continuing to fall from his throne, and his end is only a matter of time..."

[174] *LW* 31:40. See also *Operationes in Psalmos* 1519–1521 on Psalm 6: "CRUX sola est nostra theologia" (*WA* 5:176).

[175] 2 Maccabees 4:9, in *LW* 44:200.

theologians (Thesis 19). The real theologians are those who comprehend "the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross" (Thesis 20).[176] However developed or underdeveloped Luther's evangelical insight was in the spring of 1518, it may be said that the Reformation, well underway, was being generated by a new dichotomy between two mutually discordant university approaches: the speculative way of glory and the experiential way of the cross.[177]

It is with this distinction in mind that Luther's "practical theology" comes into focus. In his table talks between December 14, 1531 and January 22, 1532 the reformer reiterates his theology of the cross in a manner reflecting a much deeper reading of the Scriptures: "*Vera theologia est practica, et fundamenta eius est Christus, cuius mors fide apprehenditur.*"[178] He sets this definition in opposition to "speculative theology," or rather, the prevailing scholastic reading of the Scriptures, which "belongs in hell with the devil" (*die gehort in die Hell zum Teuffel*). Luther would have realized a way to unite his soul with God, and he even tried his luck with a reading of St. Bonaventure (1221–1274), the part-mystic, part-scholastic Franciscan influence on Duns Scotus, but he found his suggestion of a (Neo-Platonic) union of mind and will to be completely unsatisfying.[179] In the question of the soul's ascent to God, he discovered, the speculative

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[176] *LW* 31:40.

[177] In his marginal notes of John Tauler's sermons, Luther notes contrasts a "doctrinal wisdom" (*sapientia doctrinalis*) and an "experiential wisdom" (*sapientia experimentalis*), and suggests that the latter comes from mysticism. See *WA* 9:98. See also Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 2008), 28–32.

[178] *WA TR* 1, 72–73: "Die wahre rechtschaffene Theologia stehet in der Practiken, Brauch und Ubung, und ihr Fundament und Grundfest ist Christus, dass man sein Leiden, Sterben und Auferstehung mit dem Glauben ergreife."

[179] *WA TR* 1:72: "Speculativa scientia theologorum est simpliciter vana. Bonauenturam ea de re legi, aber er hett mich schir toll gemacht, quod cupiebam sentire unionem Dei cum anima mea (de qua nugatur) unione intellectus et voluntatis." See Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God; The Tree of Life; The Life of St. Francis*, edited and transtlated by Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 53–68, 110–16, in Patrick V. Reid, *Readings in Western Religious Thought, II. The Middle Ages Through the Reformation* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), 235–41.

theologian aims to control the enterprise by doing what is within. The practical theologian, on the other hand, despairs utterly of everything within, both mind and will, building instead on the foundation of Christ. Speculative theology says: "Whoever does good and is pious will fare well in the end." Practical theology says: "Whoever fears and trusts God will fare well in the end."[180] Speculative theology is a theology of achievement; it follows human thoughts insofar as they can be grasped with the five senses. Practical theology, on the contrary, is a theology of imitation; it follows the example of David, who acknowledged his sins and said: "*Miserere mei, Deus*."[181]

What Luther regards as practical theology does not depend on the Aristotelian distinction between theory and practice, although it does not necessarily exclude it either. A theology that is genuinely "practical" (*practica*) embraces what is "truly speculative" (*vera speculative*), which is to say: "Believe in Christ and do what you ought in your vocation."[182] Theology, according to Luther, consists in believing and doing, but primarily believing. In his *Operationes in Psalmos* of 1519, in his interpretation of Psalm 1:1, Luther approves St. Hillary's explanation that "the wicked" refers to one "who thinks badly concerning God" (*qui male de deo sentit*). "Indeed," Luther avers, "when dealing with what is pious and impious, we are not dealing with morals, but with opinions, that is, the source of morals." He concludes: "For whoever is orthodox towards God cannot [help] but to do good works and furnish good morals."[183]

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[180] *WA TR* 1, 72–73: "Aber alle, die es heutiges Tages nicht mit uns halten und unsere Lehre nicht fur sich haben, die machen ihnen nur eine speculativam Theologiam, da sie sich nach der Vernunft und wie sie von Sachen speculiren, richten; den sie können aus den Gedanken nicht kommen: wer Guts thut und fromm ist, dem gehets wol. Aber es heisset nicht also, sondern: wer Gott fürchtet und vertrauet, dem gehets zu letzt wol."

[181] See Luther, *WA TR* 1, Nr. 153: "David non sic facit, sed agnoscit peccatum et dicit: Miserere mei, Deus*."* See also Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt*, 18–19.

[182] According to Veit Dietrich, Luther remarked in the fall of 1533. See *WA TR*, 1, 644, 302–3: "Das ist aber die *rechte speculativa*, ja viel mehr practica Theologia, als gläube an Christum und thue, was du schüldig bist zu thun in deinem Berufe." "Hoc autem est *vera speculativa*, quae plus est practica: Crede in Christum et fac, quod debes."

[183] Luther, *Operationes in Psalmos*. 1519–1521, in *WA* 5, 28: "'Impius,' qui hebreice 'rascha' dicitur,

The cognitive nature of theology does not consist of theorizing over abstract verities in the

scholastic way, but of a knowledge gained through the practice of penance. Luther offers his

most accurate description of "theology" in his 1532 *Enarratio* on Psalm 51. Here, the example of

David holds forth "the chief locus of our theology, without which it is impossible to understand

Holy Scripture."[184] David's repentance involves a "twofold cognition" on the part of the

theologian: recognition of sin and recognition of grace. He explains: "These two parts David sets

forth before us in this prayer as in a beautiful picture for us to look at."[185] His most vivid

description of theology with respect to its proper subject (*subjectum*) is as follows:

> This is the twofold theological knowledge which David teaches in this psalm, so that
> the content of the psalm is the theological knowledge of man and also the theological
> knowledge of God. Let no one, therefore, ponder the Divine Majesty, what God has
> done and how mighty He is; or think of man as the master of his property, the way
> the lawyer does, or of his health, the way the physician does. But let him think of man
> as sinner. The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and
> God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner. Whatever is asked or discussed in
> theology outside this subject, is error and poison…[186]

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rectissime apud S. Hilarium is dicitur, qui male de deo sentit. Impietas enim proprie vitium incredulitatis est et corde perpetrator, sed varie et inconstater est translatum. Tu ergo haec duo semper contraria habeto, fidem dei et impietatem sicut legem dei et consilium hominum. Nam quando de pietate et impietate agimus, non de moribus, sed de opinionibus agimus, hoc est de fontibus morum. Qui enim orthodox in deum est, non potest nisi bona facere, bonos mores prestare.

[184] Luther, *Enarratio*, Psalm 51:7–8, in *WA* 40/2:385, 9–10: "in hoc psalmo et est principalis locus nostrae Theologiae, sine quo impossible est, sacram scripturam intelligere." Everything Luther writes in his Enarratio of 1538 is an expansion upon a comment he made at table in 1532 (*WA TR* 2:140–41): "Unus est articulus et una regula theologiae, et qui hunc articulum et hanc regulam non tenet, non est theologus, scilicet vera fides vel fiducia in Christum. In hunc articulum omnes alii fluunt et refluunt, et sine illo alii nihil sunt."

[185] *LW* 12: 305; *Enarratio Psalmi LI*. 1532, in *WA* 40, 2, 317–18: "Sunt autem in vera Poenitentia duo, cognitio peccati et cognitio gratiae, seu, ut notioribus appellationibus utamur, timor Dei et fiducia misericordiae. Has duas partes David in hac oration ceu in illustri picture spectandas proponit."

[186] *LW* 12:311–12*; Enarratio Psalmi LI*. 1532, *WA* 40/2:327–28: "Ergo necessaria haec Theologica cognition est, ut homo se cognoscat, hoc est, ut sciat, sentiat et experiatur, quod sit reus peccati et addictus morti, Deinde etiam, ut contrarium sciat et experiatur, quod Deus sit iustificator et redemptor talis hominis, qui sic se cognoscit. . . . Hae sunt istae duae Theologiae cognitiones, quas David in hoc Psalmo tradit, ut sit argumentum Psalmi de cognitione hominis Theologica et de cognitione Dei etiam Theologica, Ne quis de Maiestate cogitet, quid fecerit Deus et quam potens sit, Item ne quis cogitet de homine suarum rerum domino, sicut Iureconsultus, aut de homine aegro, sicut Medicus, sed de homine peccante. Nam Theologiae proprium subjectum est homo peccati reus ac perditus et Deus iustificans ac salvator hominis peccatoris. Quicquid extra hoc subiectum in Theologia quaeritur aut disputatur, est error et venenum."

Having distinguished between two contradictory ways of theology and the twofold cognition of theology proper, Luther does not neglect the question of how one becomes such a theologian. Such a personal and experiential theology is not cultivated through the habituation of "intellectual virtues," but from Christian experience. In his "Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings, 1539,"[187] he delineates "the way taught by holy King David" in Psalm 119: *oratio*, *meditatio*, *tentatio*.[188] In each part, he directs his readers to "David's rules" and encourages them to follow his example:

> *Oratio*: Thus you see how David keeps praying in the above-mentioned Psalm, "Teach me, Lord instruct me, lead me, show me," [Psalm 119:26] and many more words like these….

> *Meditatio*: Thus you see in this same Psalm how David constantly boasts that he will talk, meditate, speak, sing, hear, read, by day and night and always, about nothing except God's Word and commandments….

> *Tentatio*: Thus you see how David, in the Psalm mentioned, complains so often about all kinds of enemies, arrogant princes or tyrants, false spirits and factions, whom he must tolerate because he meditates, that is, because he is occupied with God's Word…[189]

The consequence of presenting David as the premier teacher and taking his example as the quintessence of theology and of becoming a theologian was that Luther *failed* to qualify as scholastic, which, it must be remembered, was synonymous with "orthodox" in the minds of his scholastic opponents. Every educated critique of Luther's theology (faith producing works) rested to a certain degree on the reformer's inability to fulfill the standard theory-practice continuum.[190] Moreover, defying the scholastic spectrum, Luther opened up a Pandora's box of

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[187] *LW* 34:279–88.

[188] *LW* 34:285.

[189] *LW* 34: 285–87.

[190] For example, propositions 152–157, 187, 189, 191, 192, 194, 199–203, and 367 from Johann Eck's 404 Theses roundly condemn Luther's position on faith and works.

metaphysical and ethical questions that needed to be settled by the Formula of Concord.[191]

"Practice" in Orthodox Perspective

What did Lutheran orthodoxy understand by practical theology? According to Martin

Chemnitz, the theologian is simultaneously involved in both theory and practice as two aspects

of the same subject. The word "theory" he understands "in consideration of the orderly sequence

and distinction of the members or parts in the whole body of doctrine, as the study of dialectics

teaches definitions and differences and discerns false relationships from correct ones." The

objective of orthodoxy was to get the matter right, and to organize and develop the subject as

succinctly as possible. Such a task involves dialectic and logic and "requires training by good

teachers." However, he continues, "the feeling for this has to do with the experience of pious

men in the use of the doctrine, in repentance, fear, faith, prayer, and their own private

devotions." The latter "aspect of the subject" can only be grasped through the practice of piety"

(*praxis pietatis*).[192] For Chemnitz, these were two sides of the same coin: theory refers to the

potential application of doctrine and practice to the actual appropriation of doctrine through

Christian experience. And being coin of the Lutheran realm, this does not disqualify it from

being a university discipline too. With this distinction he seems to be following the lead of

Master Philipp, in his consideration of "*eruditio et pietas*."[193] Chemnitz clearly understands

theology as a theology of David, in which the entire body of doctrine is comprehended in

repentance. This is how parish education ought to be, doctrine accommodated to use.

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[191] See especially the Majoristic and Antinomian controversies over the necessity of good works, the Flacian controversy over the nature of original sin, and the metaphysical difficulties involved in asserting the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper in Charles Arand, Robert Kolb, and James Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012),, 191–253.

[192] Martin Chemnitz, "Prelection," in *Loci Theologici*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989), 1:25.

[193] CR 13:647v.

And because nearly the entire summary of Christian doctrine is comprehended in these points (of what repentance is), preachers should be diligent not to preach in generalities, but always to arrange the material according to these parts: sin; God's wrath and punishment of sin; contrition, remorse, anxiety of conscience, etc.; the resolve to abandon and avoid sin; the person of Christ; His office and merit; God's grace; the forgiveness of sin; faith, the good fruits of faith, such as the good resolve to do better, good works, patience in suffering, etc. This is done so that in the sermons the teaching may always have its application or accommodation to use, as the doctrine should be used in the best way (Chemnitz, *Church Order*, 21).

In the Dedication of his *Sacred Meditations*, written in 1606, John Gerhard offers what may be considered a manifesto of practical orthodoxy. It contains the seeds of the mature Lutheran definition of theology that embraces the subject as a university discipline, an ecclesiastical function, and an individual *praxis pietatis*. While he does not have a succinct definition, as he and Meisner would later develop, and only gradually, between 1611 and 1625, he provides an organic link between Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy by suggesting that a theologian is a practitioner, who, similar to a physician, is involved in putting theory into practice:

> [B]y means of my study of theology, I am able to gather that, as is true in medicine, the best theology is practical doctrine and, in like manner, that those who contend that the end of theology is speculation, namely, a number of those among the scholastics, are in no way correct in so thinking. Although it is true that not only practical application but also believing and hoping is proposed in this heavenly philosophy, that does not nevertheless make that which is said to be less practical unimportant, for a physician is also occupied with theory of some sorts, yet it is not for that reason a theoretical discipline, since this itself flows from practical concerns.[194]

The theological situation in Germany became extremely complex towards the turn of the

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[194] John Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, trans. Wade Johnston (Saginaw, MI: Magdeburg Press, 2008).

seventeenth century. The re-introduction of Aristotle to the universities complemented a pervasive fixation on method during the seventeenth century. This was the age of Descartes. The idea was that if one could only perfect one's method, the desired outcome would naturally fall into place. Added to the leisurely Aristotelian renaissance at the German university and the increasing confidence in the scientific method was the intensification of legal pressure to articulate one's religious position in the empire. In order to accommodate the rapid growth of universities, *schole* was all but abandoned, and devotion to religious truth gave way to the dialectical means by which the competing religions could be established in the empire. One final factor that lent complexity to the development of post-Reformation academic theology was the lingering influence of the *devotio moderna*[195] mixed with the baroque spirit of German piety. Their emphasis on inward renewal did not always complement the intellectual pursuit of doctrine, and sometimes even presented an obstacle to the application of dogma both in the pulpit and in the classroom. These intertwining developments generated semantic difficulties when it came to articulating the "practical" side of theology. This was not only the case with modern historians looking back, but also for those practicing theology at the turn of the seventeenth century.

In her study of *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frommigkeit bei Martin Moller* (1547-1606), Elke Axmacher notes that a single, univocal definition of theological "*praxis*" may not be said to have existed at the turn of the seventeenth century. She discerns three different aspects of "praxis" or "practical" as the term was used in the early seventeenth century.[196] The

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[195] See *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418), a work that is often attributed to Thomas a Kempis (c. 1380–1471). Kempis belonged to the Brothers of the Common Life. While the brother houses and monasteries were dissolved in Protestant territories, the printing press made the *Imitation of Christ* enduring.

[196] See Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frommigkeit bei Martin Moller* (1547-1606) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 233–38. Axmacher does not purport to conduct an investigation of the history of the concept, but rather its semantic range and usage.

first is a "scientific-theoretical" use, and it is called practical on the order of academic disciplines. What kind of discipline is theology? The Paduan school of neo-Aristotelian philosophy, and specifically Jacob Zabarella who developed Aristotle's demonstrative logic in his *Posterior Analytics*, sharpened the distinction between two kinds of method for application in the academic disciplines. The one was called the "synthetic method," or the *ordo speculativa*, and was used for applying the traditional theoretical disciplines. The other was called the "analytic method," or the *ordo resolutiva*, and was used to teach the practical disciplines. Theology is a *practical* discipline because it employs the *ordo resolutivus*, whereby the whole of doctrine is resolved to its parts as a body to its members. However, in opposition to the Reformed philosopher, Bartholemew Keckermann (c.1571-1608), who envisioned theology as a "religious prudence" for *coming* to salvation, Meisner and (to a lesser extent) John Gerhard, followed by later Lutheran orthodoxy, defined theology as a "God-given practical aptitude," analogous to the practice of medicine, for *leading others* to salvation.[197] Here "praxis" focuses on the person himself, or rather, his aptitude, and the method he skillfully applies to a purpose *outside of* himself. Just as a physician applies medicine not for himself but for the benefit of *another* and for the healing of that person's body, a theologian applies the word of God not to himself but to *another* for the salvation of that person's soul. This scientific-theoretical aspect of *praxis* accords with the strictest Aristotelian distinction as it was being implemented at the most prestigious German universities, and especially Helmstedt, Jena, and Wittenberg, where the highest quality of academic theology was to be found.

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[197] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:137–206; Gerhard, *Loci*, ed. Preuss (Leipzig, 1885), 8b. See also Kenneth Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung: Das theologische Disputationswesen an der Universität Wittenberg zwischen 1570 und 1710* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 64–66; and Marcel Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen: Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 189–216.

The second aspect Axmacher identified may be called "*homiletical*" and asks the question of whether the doctrine being applied is itself useful and, if so, to what extent? This is the question of the preacher and the university professor alike. It does not focus on the aptitude or skill of the person applying the teaching, but on the actual appropriation of the doctrine by the person being taught (the *auditor*). Chemnitz and Melanchthon clearly have this sense of "practice" in mind when they distinguish the using of doctrine (*usus doctrinae*) from the orderly arrangement (*ordo*) of the same. Along these lines, "practical" will serve to differentiate among various kinds of theological discourse. Compared to a disputation or disquisition or any tightly arranged polemical work, however much these may be considered practical in that "scientific-theoretical" aspect, this "homiletical" sense embraces such "practical" sources as sermons, devotional tracts, catechetical manuals, etc.[198] The same aspect ultimately led to a debate between Lutheran theologians and Reformed and Socinian theologians over the extent to which this or that article of Christian doctrine was fundamental. For the Lutheran theologian, this is ultimately to ask: is it *teachable*?[199] This important discussion over the *usus doctrinae* called for further study of the epistemological and anthropological foundations of theology as it focuses on the aptitude of the student (sinful, regenerate) to *assent* to what is being taught.[200]

The third aspect, observed by Axmacher in seventeenth century Lutheran vocabulary is an "ethical-religious" use of the term "praxis." This may be juxtaposed with the former

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[198] See also Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:216 on difference between exegetical, dogmatic, polemical, and practical theology.

[199] See Muller, *Reformed Dogmatics*. 1:123 on "central dogmas." On fundamental articles, see also Hans Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie* vol. 1, Der Kampf um die Herrschaft im protestantischen Deutschland (Leipzig: Deichert, 1928).

[200] See Kenneth Appold, "Abraham on the Usefulness of Doctrine. Blueprints for a Theological Mind," in *Hermeneutica Sacra*: Studien zur Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, ed. Torbjörn Johansson, Robert Kolb, and Johann Anselm Steiger (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 295–312.

(comparatively) theoretical consideration of that particular anthropological coordinate at which the true teaching is effectually appropriated. True *fiducia*, or confidence, in God's mercy is a special faith by which an individual is personally justified. This is not an idle historical knowledge or mere intellectual agreement (*assent*) to correct doctrine, but a real and living trust in the gospel that is deeply rooted on the *inside* and necessarily shows itself in a life of good works on the *outside*. Johann Arndt, preacher in Anhalt, is the name typically associated with the (unofficial) school of "*praxis pietatis*" that is closely tied to, but not identical with, the *devotio moderna* of the previous century. Axmacher writes:

> For Arndt the *praxis* of faith . . . subsists in Christian ethics, which arises solely from faith. These ethics are nothing else than the visible, demonstrable side of faith itself, which is invisible and hidden. Faith and life have a *correlative* relationship to each other.[201]

As with Luther's "orthodoxy towards God," so Lutheran orthodoxy considered faith and piety together in an interdependent relationship. Gerhard is explicit: "One lives poorly when he does not believe well concerning God: but, indeed, he believes unprofitably, when he does not live well: true faith is not on the inside if works are not apparent on the outside."[202] Markus Matthias rightly observes that to Lutheran orthodoxy at end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, "piety" was not of a purely subjective-ethical sort as envisioned by modern theologians,[203] but is always tied to a faith that is being nourished by the preaching of God's

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[201] Axmacher, *Praxis Evangelicum*, 237: "Für Arndt besteht die Praxis des Glaubens ebenso wie für Moller in den christlichen Tugenden, die alein aus dem Glauben entspringen. Diese Tugenden sind nichts anderes als die sichtbare, erweisbare Seite des an sich unsichtbaren und verborgenen Glaubens selbst. Glaube und Leben verhalten sich *korrelativ* zueinander."

[202] Gerhard, "Dedicatio," in *Meditationes sacrae,* A 4–5: "Male vivitur, ubi de Deo non bene creditur: sed vicissim inutiliter creditur, ubi non bene vivitur: vera fides non est interius, ubi opera non apparent exterius."

[203] See Winfried Zeller, "Lutherische Lebenszeugen. Gestalten und Gestalt lutherischer Frömmigkeit," in *Evangelisches und orthodoxes Christentum in Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung*, ed. Ernst Benz and Leo A. Zander (Hamburg, 1952): 180–202, 242–55.

word and the administration of the sacraments.[204]

Conclusion: Meisner's Challenge

Perhaps more than any other theologian of his time, Balthasar Meisner was keenly aware of

the warped complexity of the old scholastic trap. Throughout his theological career, he was being

tossed back and forth between the Scylla of theory and the Charybdis of practice. In the

Dedication to his *Sacred Meditations*, addressed to the electoral counselors of Brandenstein in

1621, Meisner laments the false dilemma imposed on theologians between truth and piety,

between polemics and piety. He writes:

> Satan prepares a noose on both sides, in theory and in practice: if we strive
> theoretically for the truth against the Weigelians and other fanatics, then we are
> blamed for impiety. If we strive practically in due moderation for piety, then we are
> accused of wanting to establish a new Weigelian sect. . . . But we do not want the
> enemy to have his way; we should be determined in both respects: in struggling
> against false doctrine, no matter how much they accuse us of impiety, as well as in
> awakening the devotion of the inner man, regardless of how much anyone should on
> that account drag us into the suspicion of heresy.[205]

The false distinction came down to this: either all theological discourse must adhere

without qualification to the purest method and the strictest form of logical demonstration, or one

must be content with a lowest-common-denominator religion that embraces teachings contrary to

the Scriptures and the doctrinal consensus of the Formula of Concord. Meisner knew that

contending with the first option meant borrowing more trouble from his adversaries—both Jesuit

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[204] Markus Matthias, "Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?" in *Frömmigkeit oder Theologie? Johann Arndt und die "Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*. Studien zur Kirchengeschichte Niedersachsens, ed. Hans Otte and Hans Schneider (Göttingen: Vandenheock & Ruprecht, 2007), 27–43.

[205] Meisner, *Meditationes Festivitatum*, "Preface,"):( ):( ):(1b: "In utroque insidias struit Satanas, sive in Theoria versemur, sive in praxi Theologica. Nam quando agimus theoreticos, & pro veritate pugnamus contra Weigelianos, aliosque fanaticos; mox nominatur Patroni Impietatis: Quando ad Praxin pergimus, & debido zelo pietatem inculcamus, mox in suspicionem trahimur novae sectae Weigelianismi. . . . Verum non gratificemur hosti, sed in utroque simus strenui, oppugnando vana dogmata, si maximè nobis objicatur impietatis patrocinium; & excitando ad seriam devotionem interioris hominis, sie maximè nos propterea trahant aliqui in suspicionem haeresews." See also Tholuck, *Geist*, 76.

polemicists and Protestant philosophers—who aimed to triangulate the Lutheran party into espousing an epistemology and anthropology that obviated the doctrinal consensus of the Formula of Concord. Contending with the second option would have been to accept a religious foundation that depreciated those theoretical distinctions in the Formula of Concord, which its adherents had asserted in the face of the Calvinist "second reformation." Here, then, is the scholastic dilemma: is your theology true and exact, or is it merely good enough but conducive to good living? These appear to be irreducible modes of thinking: is it possible to pursue the truth and actually accomplish something at the same time?

A theology that stands or falls with its scholastic character depends for its orthodoxy on the perfection of that character, and the scholastic method threatens to usurp the normative features of orthodoxy. This was what made Meisner tick as a philosopher and theologian. When "nothing is held for true unless it squares with philosophical conclusions," he warns, "philosophy, both theoretical and practical, is made the norm of theological controversies."[206] Philosophy is only useful when it is subjected to theology. When theology is master, it becomes practical—oriented to saving souls and nurturing faith and good works. Maintaining the hegemony of theology over all academic disciplines is the function of orthodoxy. Meisner attempts to preserve Luther's anti-scholastic theology, even making the "synchronic standards of science" to serve that end, while at the same time resisting the scholastic threat of making philosophy normative. His three-volume *Philosophia sobria* (1611–1623) documents an effort to pull all aspects of "practice" into an all-embracing, succinct definition of "theology" consisting of a single sentence. He works

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[206] Meisner, *PhS* 1:41–42: "Utilis est Philosoph. utraque & Theoretica, & Practica, si subiiciatur, non praeficiatur Theologiae. Fit hoc, quando principia philosophica constituuntur norma controversiarum Theologicarum, quando nihil pro vero habetur, nisi quod ad conclusiones quadrat philosophicas, id quod in usu positum habuerunt Philosophi gentiles de quibus Cyprianus scribit: Omne quicquid à rationibus suis devium videtur, sapientes huius seculi ad dementiam referunt, & à veritate reputant alienum. Abusus hic est, non usus philosophiae, ideoque à tali vanitate meritò abstinendum."

through this semantic labyrinth anxiously, at times even appearing to think out loud, as he

modifies his definition of "practical" in an effort to refine and improve his theology concept. The

part he played at the University of Wittenberg as a pedagogical innovator, combined with his

tireless struggle to detoxify scholastic philosophy, strengthen the case that Lutheran university

theology was indeed "eminently practical."

CHAPTER THREE

BALTHASAR MEISNER AND THE RISE OF WITTENBERG ORTHODOXY

Hie solte nw deutsche Nation, Bischoff vnd Fürsten, sich auch für Christen leut halten.[1]

Introduction

From the day Balthasar Meisner began his studies at Wittenberg in the fall of 1602, the university, in its hundredth year, was in its second state of ascendancy. (The first was in the 1510s and 1520s with Luther and Melanchthon at the helm of the Reformation.) After decades of legal strife over the inheritance of the Reformation, the university had carved out for itself a relatively secure position in the empire and become a powerful vehicle for promoting the Lutheran religion in Germany. Wittenberg's history is often recounted elsewhere, but there is place here for a brief biography of Balthasar Meisner. The present chapter then will explore the world in which the man thrived as a scholar and professional theologian particularly by assessing the political and cultural exchange between Dresden and Wittenberg. How did the confessionalization of Saxony leading up to Meisner's tenure at Wittenberg influence the *practice* of university theology during the first quarter of the seventeenth century? Were university theologians merely cogs in a social disciplinary machine, or did they serve an independent religious function? To what extent were Wittenberg theological goals commensurate with Saxon political interests?

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[1] Martin Luther, *An den christilichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520, *WA* 6:458.

The Life of Balthasar Meisner in Brief

Balthasar Meisner, a pious and gifted Wittenberg theologian, belonged to a privileged circle of highborn Lutheran ecclesiastics and statesmen. He was born on February 3, 1587 in Dresden, the capital city of Electoral Saxony, where seven years earlier the Book of Concord was first printed "with the privilege of his electoral grace of Saxony."[2] His father, also named Balthasar Meisner, was city preacher (Stadtprediger) and archdeacon (Archidekanon) of the famous Frauenkirche[3] in Dresden and held this position for forty years (1583–1623).[4] His mother, Anna, was the daughter of Franziskus Crantz, the court minister and intimate friend of Elector Christian II. Throughout his life Meisner associated with the most influential people in Germany, not least of whom was Matthias Hoë from Hoënegg, the court preacher and trusted advisor to Elector John George I. His privileged sphere extended as well to his happy marriage with Magdalena, the daughter of Ludwig Person, professor of law at Wittenberg and prominent member of the electoral Saxon council. However, in addition to the close friendships with the most important theologians of his day, it was his extraordinary industry, and the genius with which he adorned the University of Wittenberg during his short life, that distinguish Meisner as a theologian particularly suited for his time.[5]

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[2] *Concordia. Christliche Widerholete einmütige Bekentnüs nachbenanter Churfürsten, Fürsten und Stende Augspurgischer Confession* (Dresden, 1580), cover page.

[3] That church, then called the "Kirche zur lieben Frawen," would later be constructed in its current classical baroque style by George Bähr and George Friedrich Winckler between 1726 and 1743, and then reconstructed after its destruction in 1945.

[4] For a biography of Balthasar Meisner, Sr., see Aegidius Strauch, *Christliche Leichpredigt/ Bey dem Begräbnüß Des . . . Herrn M. Balthasar Meißners/ Stadtpredigers zu Dreßden : Welcher Anno 1623 den 1 Maii ... entschlaffen/ und den 7 hernach . . . bestattet worden* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1624), 24–40.

[5] See Jacob Martini, *Christlicher Leichsermon Uber den schönen Spruch S. Pauli 2. Timoth. 4. Ich hab einen guten Kampff gekämpffet etc.* (Wittenberg: Solomon Auerbachs S. Erben, 1627). Appended to Martini's funeral sermon (1–32) are eulogies by Jacob Martini (33–48), George Wecker (49–58), and August Buchner (59–61). See also Gottlieb Spitzel, *Templum Honoris Reseratum* (Augsburg, 1673): 60–67; August Tholuck. *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im Verlaufe des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Friedrich und Andreas Parther, 1852), 14–37; Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen der lutherischen Kirche aus allen Ständen vor und während der Zeit des*

Meisner's parents recognized their son's native talent when he was quite young and mustered the means to provide him with a first rate education. They enrolled him at the reputable city school in Dresden while supplementing his schooling through a private tutor at home. From early on he "burned with the greatest passion for knowledge" and was "anxiously occupied with good books."[6] The boy possessed such a gentle soul and singular genius that, when the other boys his age were still learning to read Vergil's *Aeneid* and had only begun to form their Latin sentences with due elegance, Balthasar Meisner was well on his way to the university to sharpen his wits on the subtler arts of philosophy.[7] In the fall of 1602, at the age of fifteen, Meisner matriculated at the University of Wittenberg. Supported by an electoral stipend, he boarded in the home of Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603), who may be regarded as the father of Wittenberg orthodoxy for his successful role in establishing the Formula of Concord as the standard of doctrine in Saxony. During that first year Hunnius was Meisner's mentor and main theological influence. Besides attending theological lectures, Meisner studied philosophy under Jacob Martini (1570–1647), who had assumed the chair of logic that same year. In two years Meisner completed his studies in the liberal arts, and on March 27, 1604, he graduated with a master's degree in philosophy.

Over the next few years Meisner would make a name for himself both as a philosophical lecturer and as a respondent to theological disputations under Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616), the

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dreißigjährigen Krieges. (Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben, 1859), 202–9. The only monograph to date dedicated to Balthasar Meisner is Walter Sparn, *Wiederkehr der Metaphysik: Die ontologische Frage in der Theologie des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Calwer Theologische Studien 4, 1976).

[6] Spitzel, *Templum*, 61.

[7] George Wecker, *Programma in funere Magnifici Academiae huius Rectoris, Viri, Plur. Reverendi, Clarissimi & Excellentissimi, Domini, Balthasari Meisneri, SS. Theol. Doctoris & Profess. eximii, de Ecclesia Christi optime meriti* (Wittenberg, 1627), 52.

great systematizer of the Book of Concord, and Friedrich Balduin (1575–1627), a skilled interpreter of the letters of St. Paul and the reputed father of Lutheran casuistry (theological ethics).[8] His focus on theological anthropology gained him a solid theological foundation for treating ethical problems from a theological perspective.[9] He was also influenced early on by Salomon Gesner (1559–1605), by far the most important advocate of metaphysics on the theological faculty.[10] On May 1, 1608, Meisner was made adjunct of the philosophical faculty and retained the right to lecture on every philosophical discipline at the university.[11]

The following year Meisner embarked on an academic journey to three of the most important Lutheran universities in Germany.[12] For his scholarly zeal during those years and his grasp of Lutheran doctrine his name grew in proportion to the affection he received from his professors and comrades. It was during these years abroad that he gained a reputation as a theologian and preacher. Supported by an electoral stipend of 90 guldens, Meisner left Wittenberg on March 23, 1609, and arrived at the University of Strasbourg on April 11. There he participated in theological disputations under the respected theologian, John Pappus (1549-1610), whose vigorous adherence to the Formula of Concord a generation earlier had won the

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[8] See Benjamin T. G. Mayes, *Counsel and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning after the Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 16, footnote 12: "Friedrich Balduin is commonly called the first Lutheran casurist due to his posthumous book of 1628, *De casibus conscientiae*." See also Johann Georg Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta litterariis adnotationibvs instrvcta* (Jena: svmtv vidvae Croeckerianae, 1758), 2:1127–28.

[9] On October 25, 1605, Meisner responded to Friedrich Balduin, *De Peccato Originis* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1605); and then on February 15, 1606, he responded to Balduin's *De Articulis Smalcaldis. Disputatio XII: De Peccatis Actualibus* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1609).

[10] Martini, *Leichsermon*, 34–52.

[11] Heinz Kathe, *Die Wittenberger Philosophische Fakultät 1501–1817* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002), 217–18; 455–70.

[12] See Tholuck, *Geist*, 17. In those days it was common for students to branch out and attend foreign universities.

University of Strasbourg to the cause of Lutheran orthodoxy.[13] In October of that same year

Meisner went to Basel and then Tübingen, at that time a "volcano" of polemical-dogmatic

theology,[14] where he gained the acquaintance of the practical-minded Matthias Haffenreffer

(1561-1619). From Tübingen he went on to Giessen for the duration, and longest stretch, of his

iter academicum. There he came under the influence of his life-long friend and confidant, "the

reverend and most excellent man," Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627).[15] Mentzer was also the

esteemed teacher of John Gerhard, who would soon prove himself the greatest dogmatician of

the early seventeenth century. Meisner's early years at Wittenberg overlapped with Gerhard's,

and the two theologians enjoyed a very close relationship. They wrote to each other in the

informal "du," and by the affectionate title, "*amicus meus honorandus*."[16] With the exception of

the high court preacher, Hoe von Hoenegg, whose affection for the young theologian never

diminished in the least, the most diligent of Meisner's correspondences came from the hand of

his dear friend Gerhard.[17]

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[13] See Richard Otto Zoepffel, "Pappus, Johannes," in *Algemeine Deutsche Biographie*, (Leipzig: Duncker and Humbolt, 1887): 25:16–164.

[14] Tholuck, *Geist*, 50.

[15] See Wecker, *Programma*, 53. According to Wecker, the young scholar so captivated his older friend by his brilliance—the two were virtually inseparable for the duration of Meisner's seven-month visit—that, had Meisner decided to stay at Giessen, Mentzer would have permitted it.

[16] Meisner, *Phil. sobr.* II, 526: "D. Gerhardus, A*micus meum singulariter honorandus*." Gerhard, Loci V, 5: "D. Meisner, amicus noster honorandus."

[17] Tholuck, *Geist* 26: "Der fleissigste der Korrespondenten ist der ihm mit Zärtlichkeit zugethane Oberhofprediger in Dresden und der vortreffliche J. Gerhard. Gegen keinen seiner Freunde geht diesem stets gemessenen und vorsichtigen Manne so das Herz auf, wie wenn er an seinen Meisner schreibt. An Einer Universität zusammenzuwürken—einen sehnlicheren Wunsch kennen beide nicht und doch—sollte er ihnen nicht erfüllt werden, da die fünfmalige Berufung Gerhards nach Wittenberg an der Weigerung seiner Fürsten scheiterte." See also Fischer, *Vita Gerhardi* (Leipzig: Joh. Christophorum Coernerum, 1723); Hans Leube, *Die Reformideen in der deutschen lutherischen Kirche zur Zeit der Orthodoxie* (Leipzig: Verlag von Dörffling und Franke, 1924), 39; Weber, *Der Einfluss der protestantischen Schulphilosophie auf die orthodox-lutherische Dogmatik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1908); see especially "Grundlegung: Das Verhältnis von Vernunft und Offenbarung in der lutherischen Orthodoxie," 19, 98; and Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 19.

Upon the untimely death of Henry Welsten in 1611, and by the mediation of his father and Hoë, Meisner was recalled to Wittenberg to assume the chair of ethics and politics. The intention was not for him to remain on the philosophical faculty, however. He was already slated to teach theology, and to that end, on November 22, 1611, he was awarded the degree of *licentia docendi*, which authorized him to hold public disputations in theology. This provision made it clear that his appointment to the ethics chair was meant as a transitional post en route to the higher faculty. On January 21, 1612, Meisner was promoted to doctor of theology and, again, through the influence of his wealthy friend from Hoënegg, assumed the theological professorship vacated by John Förster in 1613.[18] Thus, at the unusually young age of twenty-six, he "mounted the theological cathedral" (theologica cathedra *conscendit*), and was nominated that same year to serve as pastor of the castle church of Wittenberg. In a stirring sermon, later published under the title, "The Faint Sighs of King David from the Fifty-first Psalm, verses 11–15, Meisner compares his own call and promotion to that of Jeremiah's call in Jeremiah 1:4-8, where God assures the hesitant and unqualified youth of the certainty of his call:

> Beloved in the Lord, it is fitting for me to recall this beautiful and thought provoking history at the start of this sermon. For it is now known to your Christian love how I, an unworthy man, by a singular act of God's mercy, first upon the nomination of this laudable university, and then upon the most gracious confirmation of our exalted government, have recently been called and certified against my own will to the theological profession and thus also to the holy ministry and preaching office in this Castle Church.[19]

> He relates his own personal experience to Jeremiah's situation both in consideration of his

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[18] Kathe, *Philosophische Fakiultät*, 217.

[19] Meisner, *König Davids Seuffzerlein aus dem 51. Psalm v. 11–15* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1614), 7: "Dieser schönen und nachdencklichen Histori / Geliebte im HERREN / erjnnere ich mich nicht unbillig im anfang dieser meiner jtztigen Predigt. Dann es nunmehr E. Christlichen Liebe bekandt / wie aus sonderlicher schickung Gottes auf vorhergehende *Nomination* dieser löblichen *Universitet*, unnd erfolgete gnädigste *Confirmation* unserer hohen Obrigkeit ich unwürdiger wider mein verhoffen zur *Theologischen Profeßion*, und also auch zum heiligen *ministerio* und Predigtamt in dieser Schloßkirchen unlängst beruffen und bestetiget worden bin."

own weakness (*propriam imbecillitatem*) and on account of God's grace and mercy (*divinam*

benignitatem). The cause of his nomination and confirmation as theological professor and pastor,

he explains, is undoubtedly the will and work of God. He continues:

> Since the heavenly House Father is strong in the weak and powerful in those who
> have no strength, and this suffices for a comfort to all those who have been regularly
> called to the holy preaching office, though being still in their youth, they should think
> that God speaks to them from heaven as He did to dear Jeremiah, and says to them:
> "Say not that I am too young: but you should go where I am sending you, and you
> should preach whatever I command you."[20]

Despite his modest posture and professed reservations, Meisner's swift promotion to the

theological faculty was to be expected. Not only did his interest lie from the very beginning

chiefly in the controversial theological issues of the day. He had already achieved international

fame as a first rate theologian through the publication of his *Philosophia sobria* (*Sober*

philosophy, that is, a pious examination of philosophical questions in theological controversies)

in 1611, and the Giessen faculty had released a glowing recommendation praising his

extraordinary work.[21] With his *Philosophia sobria* Meisner had begun to accomplish in literary

form what would become his overall practical objective, namely, to carry out his role as

university professor and administrator in the service of Lutheran orthodox theology.[22] His tenure

in the theological faculty overlapped that of other theologians of good reputation and character,

including his teachers, Friedrich Balduin and Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628), classmate Nicholas

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[20] Meisner, *Seuffzerlein*, 8–13: "Weil dann dem also / weil der Himlische Haußvater in den schwachen mächtig / und in den unvermögenen kräfftig ist / als gereicht dis billig zu einen Trost allen den jenigen / welche rechtmessiger weise zum heiligen predigtampt / wiewol noch in ihrer Jugend / beruffen werden / also daß sie gedencken sollen / Gott rede sie noch gleichsam vom Himmel an / wie den lieben Jeremiam / unnd spreche zu ihnen: Sage nicht / ich bin zu Jung / Sondern du solt gehen / wohin ich dich sende / und predigen / was ich dich heisse."

[21] Several verses from his teachers, Mentzer, Christoph Scheibler (1589–1653), and Caspar Finck (1578–1631), may be found beneath his epigram. See Martini, *Leichsermon* 36, 38, 52.

[22] Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 251–52.

Hunnius (1585–1643), and also briefly his philosophy professor, Jacob Martini, who was promoted in 1623. Meisner's administrative responsibilities, which he took up at the age of twenty-eight, included serving as dean of the theological faculty seven times, rector of the university three winter terms (1614, 1620, 1626), and member of the Wittenberg consistory in 1624. In addition to writing over two hundred theological disputations,[23] he lectured on various books of the Bible, trained his students in homiletics, and assumed the post of Latin preacher to foreign students.[24]

Meisner was well known for his outstanding industry, skill, and prudence.[25] Throughout his life, he worked harder than everyone around him, excelling in every task, even holding disputations on Sundays.[26] While serving his third term as *rector magnificus* at the age of 39, Meisner died a victim of his own work ethic on December 29, 1626. He left behind his wife of fifteen years, Magdalena, who was then with child, along with four surviving children. Jacob Martini preached his funeral sermon on January 2, 1627, on the text of 2 Timothy 4: "I have fought the good fight."

The significance of Meisner's life and career was that he put his sweat and blood into a cause greater than himself—something that came before him and would last for nearly a century after he died. He was part of that great university that became the first among many reformed universities and set the pace of the Lutheran Reformation. He was also part of an emerging

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[23] Meisner's most important disputations over the course of his fifteen years as a Wittenberg professor dealt with the subjects of anthropology (1612–1615), sacraments (1620), Christology (1624), Scripture (1623–1625), prolegomena (1625), and religion (1625–1626). Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung: Das theologische Disputationswesen an der Universität Wittenberg zwischen 1570 und 1710* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 72–98.

[24] Tholuck, *Geist*, 32.

[25] Wecker, *Programma*, 53: "In omnibus officii partibus egregium specimen prudencia, industria, et singularis dexteritatis semper edidit."

[26] Tholuck, *Geist*, 18.

religious culture that rode the rising tide of Wittenberg orthodoxy. By tracing the church-political culture of the University of Wittenberg between 1520 and 1626 in terms of a "normative Reformation," it is possible to clarify the significance of Meisner's role in the shaping of the theological profession and the rise of Wittenberg orthodoxy.

The Policy of Lutheran Confessionalization

In 1555, the Peace of Augsburg recognized the Lutheran religion in those territories of the Holy Roman Empire whose prince was also a Lutheran.[27] This religious settlement brought a temporary end of the military conflicts between Catholics and Lutherans, but it also prompted new and fierce debates over the question of Martin Luther's heritage. As theologians struggled to agree on a precise definition of "Lutheran" and secure the legal terms for its existence, magistrates, named *summus episcopus*, were forced to play a more prominent role in the direction of the Lutheran churches.[28] When, in 1580, the Book of Concord staked out the religious boundaries of Lutheranism, dynastic and territorial claims were codified in theological terms.[29] At the same time, and in the same spirit of competition, Catholic and Reformed estates followed the same pattern of development. Present scholarship has named this development "confessionalization." Heinz Schilling argues that confessionalization and "social disciplining" comprised two sides of the same coin. In a top-down effort to manage the daily lives of the

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[27] On the Peace of Augsburg, see Gerhard Pfeiffer, "Augsburger Religionsfriede, in TRE 4: 639–54; Martin Heckel, "Politischer Frieden und geistliche Freiheit im Ringen um die Wahrheit: zur Historiographie des Augsburger Friedens von 1555." *Historische Zeitschrift* 282 (2006): 391–425.

[28] Hartmut Lehmann, "Lutheranism in the Seventeenth Century," writes: "While no leader appeared on the scene who would have been able to reunite Luther's obstinate spiritual children, the sovereigns ruling in the territories which had decided to subscribe to Luther's exposition of the Christian faith in the Treaty of Augsburg in 1555 increasingly took control of the Lutheran churches" (57).

[29] See Lehmann, "Lutheranism in the Seventeenth Century," 57. Lehmann calls it a "compromise formula," that was "more the result of political pressure than a sign of theological insight or restored theological harmony."

populace, the early modern state procured the administration efforts of the clergy to reinforce and extend its own civil administration.[30] In short, the theory goes, the clergy became agents of the state. According to Hartmut Lehmann, the "policy" of Lutheran confessionalization rested on three principles: (1) As an integral part of the state, the clergy was expected to propagate the Lutheran faith as well as the political aims of the prince. (2) Nearly every aspect of religious life was legislated through detailed church orders imposed from the top down. (3) A guild of loyal and well-trained pastors was crucial to implement the prince's ordinances. As legal guardians of the church, moreover, princes would defend their theologians (Frederick had done this for Luther), but they also depended on the expertise of their university theologians.[31] In exchange, pastors received the backing of the state as the princes guaranteed priviledge and support. The church benefitted, but princes got the better of the deal, and some would question how earnestly they took theology—or so the proponents of confessionalization wonder.

Lehmann's proposal of a "policy of confessionalization" certainly has its merits. There is no denying that the Saxon electors from Frederick III (1463–1525) to John George (1585–1656) used the Reformation of their religious institutions, the theological expertise of their university theologians, and the doctrinal consensus they spent their lives achieving as instruments of their own government. But what does this mean? What is the significance of saying religious life

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[30] Heinz Schilling, "Confessional Europe," in *Handbook of European History 1400–1600*, ed. T. A. Brady, H. A. Oberman and J. D.Tracey (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 641–881. Schilling explains that the state "acquired new jurisdictions, notably over marriage and family, the schools and education, and poor relief and social welfare." He continues: "The term 'social discipline' as label for the early modern shaping of human behavior and thinking was introduced by Gerhard Oestreich to designate the incorporation of individuals and social groups into a homogeneous association of subjects, plus the stripping away of regional and particular interests in favor of a "common good" defined by the state. By a long process, begun in the late Middle Ages, the prince and his officials came to define the meaning of "the common good" (661). For more on the concept of "social disciplining," see also Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State* (Cambridge, 1982); Winfried Schulze, "Gerhard Oestreichs Begriff 'Sozialdisziplinierung in der Fruen Neuzeit,'" in *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 14 (1987): 265–302; and Robert van Krieken, "Social Discipline and State Formation: Weber and Oestreich on the historical sociology of subjectivity," *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 17 (1990): 3–28.

[31] Lehmann, "Lutheranism," 59.

ordered from the top down as opposed to—what?—from the bottom up? Certainly they are not

suggesting that the Reformation was disorderly grassroots movement? The confessionalization

paradigm does not purport to account for either differences or similarities between the political

aims of the prince and the theological interests of the university theologians, to say nothing of

the practical-religious motivations of pastors and parishes. The age of confessionalism, like the

Reformation itself, was both entirely political and entirely theological. It will therefore be

expedient to review a century of symbiotic motivations between Wittenberg and Saxony from

the "normative Reformation" following the Diet of Speyer in 1526 and the rise of orthodoxy

culminating in the death of Balthasar Meisner in 1626.

Wittenberg: From Reformation to Lutheran Orthodoxy

"Wildwuchs" and Normative Reformation: 1520–1548

Due primarily to the inherent tentative authority of the emperor's position, compounded by

significant challenges on both hands—the Turks to the east and war with France to the west—

Charles V was unable to enforce the Edict of Worms of 1521, which otherwise would have

thoroughly suppressed Luther's evangelical theology. But since a *de facto* Reformation was

already underway—and rapidly—the Diet of Speyer in 1526 temporarily allowed *de facto* the

ancient right of "*cuius regio, eius religio*" to the German estates, a principle to be established

legally and finally in 1555. Thus, it was not until Elector John of Saxony was able to assert the

legal right of reforming the religious and educational institutions of his Ernestine lands in order

to fortify and propagate the evangelical doctrine that one may speak of a "Reformation" in a

more territorial fashion beyond the reforms that already were taking place in the university

itself.[32] So before 1526, that is, before evangelical theology became a matter of the state, evangelical preaching was rather haphazard (or natural) and came from several unrelated points of view. To mention only the well-known cases of independent spirits and radical reformers around Luther's own age, whose sermons were still "unnormed" by the magisterial Reformation, Thomas Müntzer (1489–1561), Caspar Schwenkfeld (1489–1561), the father of "spiritualism," Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531), and Andreas Karl von Bodenstein (1486–1541) were not nearly as cooperative with the civil authorities as Luther was.[33] Franz Lau describes the early years leading up to the visitations of Saxony, Thuringia, and neighboring lands beginning in 1524, as a transition from "wild growth" ("Wildwuchs") to an "orderly evangelical church." The collective experience of the Peasants War (1524–1525) made it abundantly clear that an anti-authoritarian Reformation could no longer be permitted to spread like weeds, uncultivated, unnormed, and unordered. The urgency of the situation necessitated the establishment of well-defined church orders and the clarification of doctrine to serve as the basis for preaching.[34]

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[32] Luther himself used "reformation" for curricular change at Wittenberg, while what today is considered the reformation outside of the university was then called "preaching of the Gospel." See Lewis W. Spitz, "The Impact of the Reformation on the Universities," in *Lectures from the University of Copenhagen Symposium*, ed. Leif Grane (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 9–31.

[33] Franz Lau, "Reformationsgeschichte bis 1532," in Franz Lau and Ernst Bitzer, *Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte: Ein Handbuch: Reformationsgeschichte Deutschlands bis 1555*, ed. Kurt Dietrich Schmidt and Ernst Wolf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), 33: "To view as 'Lutheran' the many preachers and writers of the period before 1525 would be very rash. Naturally they all preached the 'Word of God' and felt themselves to be with little or no qualification in solidarity with Luther."

[34] Lau, "Reformationsgeschichte," 33: "Die im Bauernkrieg gesammelten Erfahrungen machten es aber unmöglich, die reformatorische Bewegung einfach wild weiterwachsen zu lassen. Es wurde notwendig, Sicherungen gegen antiautoritäre Ausbrüche zu schaffen und klarzustellen, daß die von Luther u.a. im Bauernkrieg vertretenen Grundsätze (Obrigkeitsgehorsam) Geltung behielten." For an alternative perspective on the consolidation of the reformation before 1525, see Bernd Moeller, "Was wurde in der Frühneuzeit der Reformation in den deutschen Städten gepredigt?" in *ARG* 75 (1984): 176–93. Basing his study on summaries of sermons found in pamphlets Moeller disagrees with Lau's thesis of disagreement and posits the idea of a "narrowing" of a fundamental theological and programmatic consensus among preachers of the early reformation. For a good review of both theses see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "What Was Preached in German Cities in the Early Years of the Reformation? *Wildwuchs* Versus Lutheran Unity," in *The Process of Change in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of Miram Usher Chrisman*, ed. P. N. Bebb, S. Marshall (Athens, Ohio, 1998), 81–96. Karant-Nunn concludes that Lau's thesis of a "rapid and disorderly grown of the evangelical movement" is fundamentally correct.

As early as August 1520 Luther's open letter to the German nobility had provided the princes with a theological rationale for asserting their temporal authority over the spiritual estate.[35] However, an adequate form of administration to take the place of the old did not yet match the princes' aggressive repossession of church lands during the 1520s. Luther had hoped, even expected, that the gospel would prompt bishops and othes to institute reform moved by the evangelical message. There would be no need to worry about administration. It would come— but when it did not, then something needed to be done. A spirit of discontent and defiance was mounting among the German people. Attendance in schools formerly administered by the church decreased dramatically; enrollment in the university, and especially in theological studies, was in rapid decline. Moreover, Luther's outlaw status caused some to have second thoughts. It was imperative that the princes recovered some kind of structure that would compensate for the abolition of canon law, the Roman hierarchy, the canonical orders, etc. In 1524, Luther published a tract, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools"[36] in which he urges magistrates to take responsibility for the education of their Christian subjects, and thus to cultivate the treasures of the Reformation. He writes:

> Now that God has today so graciously bestowed upon us an abundance of arts, scholars, and books, it is time to reap and gather in the best as well as we can, and lay up treasure in order to preserve for the future something from these years of jubilee, and not lose this bountiful harvest.[37]

The task that Martin Luther laid on the magistrates was in reality a shared responsibility between state and university. Members of the theological faculty were charged with drafting the reforms. By 1526 Luther had drafted his *German Mass and Order of Service*, which he

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[35] *LW* 44:115–217.

[36] *LW* 45:347–78.

[37] *LW* 45:377.

commended not as compulsory law but for discretionary use in accordance with Christian liberty when and where the circumstances allowed.[38] Nevertheless, the proposed reforms in Saxony and other Lutheran territories did assume legal significance as they began to materialize through ongoing government-mandated visitations conducted between 1524 and 1545. The Saxon Visitations, directed by the Wittenberg theological faculty, revealed the needs of the people and proposed specific measures for filling them. The shared objective of theologian and prince was the clarification of the Reformation itself through careful explanation of scriptural teaching and the building up of an educated clergy. When Luther encountered the "miserable and deplorable conditions"[39] of the Saxon estates in 1528, he became convinced that what the people lacked above all was doctrine, that is, Christian education and pastoral care. "The common people," he observes in the preface of his Small Catechism, "have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching."[40] Therefore, in addition to removing unqualified pastors, Luther filled the emergency with a *Small Catechism* for the fathers of every German home and a *Large Catechism* to guide the pastors' teaching.[41]

Since the superintendents could only enforce the recommended standards of pastoral education for as long as the visitations were in progress, it became necessary to establish a central authority with constitutional prerogatives, or a consistory, to make them permanent.[42] In

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[38] "The German Mass and Order of Service" (1526), trans. Augustus Steimle, rev. Ulrich S. Leupold, in *LW* 53:51.

[39] "The Preface of Dr. Martin Luther," in KW, 347.

[40] Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Mühlenberg, 1959), 338.

[41] See Charles P. Arand, Robert Kolb, and James A. Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 65–74.

[42] C. A. H. Burkhardt, *Geschichte der sächsichen Kirchen und Schulvisitationen von 1524 bis 1545* (Leipzig:

1537 the task of drafting a consistorial constitution (Landeskirchenrecht) fell chiefly to Justus

Jonas (1493–1555), former professor of law at Erfurt (until 1518) and dean of the theological

faculty at Wittenberg from 1523 to 1533.[43] With the Edict of Worms hanging over Lutheranism,

with spiritualists touting immediate revelation and insight—who needs theology classes?—and

with humanism making inroads at other universities, Wittenberg lost a bit of its frontrunner

status, and a significant decrease in enrollment came during those years. That, compounded with

the removal of unqualified pastors required by the visitations, underscored the elector's duties

regarding theological education and renewed his interest in granting stipends to offset student

costs and encourage enrollment.[44] Thus, despite the university's waning reputation during the

turbulent twenties, the visitations indicated a certain course for the young university with a

renewed vision and purpose: it was to be an outpost of evangelical teaching and training of

pastors.[45]

Melanchthon was charged with heading up the curricular reforms for the Saxon

universities, both Wittenberg and Leipzig. The purpose of excellent education, Melanchthon

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Friedrich Wilhelm Grunow, 1879), 200–1: "Es war klar, dass zur Bekämpfung der eben hervorgehobenen Missstände der lutherischen Kirche Eines fehlte, eine Centralaufsichtsbehörde mit richterlichen Befugnissen. Denn die Superintendenturen konnten bei weitem nicht ihren aufgaben gerecht warden, zumal die Visitatoren in ihrem Aufsichtsrechte beschränkt waren, sobald die Visitationen ihr Ende erreicht hatte."

[43] See Heiner Lück, "Justus Jonas als Jurist und Mitbegründer des Wittenberger Konsistoriums," in Irene Dingel, ed., *Justus Jonas (1493–1555) und seine Bedeutung für die Wittenberger Reformation,* Leucorea-Studien zur Geschichte der Reformation und der Lutherischen Orthodoxie, ed., Udo Sträter und Günther Wartenberg (Leipzig: Evangelischer Verlagsanstalt, 2009): 145–62. See also E. Sehling, *Kursächsische Kirchenordnung von 1580, in Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Emil Sehling (Göttingen: Institut für Evangelisches Kirchenrecht der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, 1860–1928).

[44] To compensate for the lack of servants in church and school, the elector designated two-thirds of the stipends to provide for students of philosophy and theology, whereas one-third was designated for students of law and medicine. See Burkhardt, *Geschichte*, 206.

[45] Burkhardt, *Geschichte*, 205: "Es war eine nothwendige Folge, dass auch die Universität Wittenberg unter diesem Zuge der Zeit zu leiden und an ihrem jungen Ruhme zu verlieren im Begriff stand. In dem Maasse, als Wittenberg sich als die Beschützerin der lutherischen Lehre erwies, stellte sie sich hauptsächlich zur Aufgabe, das Studium der Theologie zu fördern, um die Strömung der Zeit zu begegnen."

asserts in an oration from 1531, is "for the giving of advice for the state, for teaching in the churches, and for upholding the doctrine of religion." How is this to be done? He continues: "You will not be able to excel in any of these without perfect doctrine, and perfect doctrine is not granted to anyone without the lower disciplines."[46] In exchange for the inestimable service of theologians to their magistrates, all princes and cities should support and sponsor schools.[47] According to Markus Wriedt, Melanchthon's pedagogical reforms aimed at three objectives: (1) to expand knowledge of Scripture as God's revelation and will, which includes the practical transformation wrought by his commandments; (2) to form a new generation [Nachwuchs] that will perpetuate the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the church for the enhancement of Christian doctrine and the establishment of Christ's kingdom; and (3) to provide not only the church but also secular authorities and institutions with loyal and effective servants who will help to establish, improve and nurture an evangelical society.[48] Thus were the theological faculty and the lower faculties unified, and the university and state inter-reliant, in

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[46] Philip Melanchthon, *Philip Melanchthon: Orations on Philosophy and Education*, ed. Sachiko Kusukawa, trans. Christine F. Salazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6.

[47] See Melanchthon's declared speech to students and magistrates in Leipzig from 1543, "On the Necessary Connection between the School and the Ministry of the Gospel." *De necessaria coniunctione scholarum cum ministerio evangelii*: CR 11:600–18, quoted in Markus Wriedt, "*Pietas et Eruditio*: Zur theologischen Begründung der bildungsreformerischen Ansätze bei Philipp Melanchthon unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Ekklesiologie," in *Dona Melanchthoniana: Festgabe für Heinz Scheible zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Johanna Loehr (Stüttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005), 514–15: "Defendant scholasticum ordinem Principes et civitates, alant, protegant, munificentia sua sublevent, vel potius extollant. Hic vero Principes et civitates colat, augeat, ornet, celebret. Hic subministret et aulis et Senatui ac praetorio, atque in primis Ecclesiis bonos, utiles doctrina et pietatis conspicuos ministros."

[48] Wriedt, "*Pietas et Eruditio*," 516: "Insgesamt dient die Pflege der Wissenschaft im allgeneinen und der Theologie im besonderen einem dreifachen Ziel: Sie fördert erstens die Erkenntnis der Schrift als Gottes Offenbarung, die Kundgabe seines Willens und die lebenspraktische Umsetzung seines schöpferischen Gebotes. Zweitens wird durch theologische Ausbildung geeigneter Nachwuchs geformt, der die Verbreitung der evangelischen Botschaft verantwortlich leistet, die Kirche im Auftrage Gottes und unter seiner Verheißung leitet und damit schließlich der Durchsetzung der wahren christlichen Lehre und somit letztlich des Reiches Gottes und der Herrschaft Christi dient. Drittens werden durch die obrigkeitlich geförderte Ausbildung etlicher christlicher—und damit getreuer—Untertanen nicht allein die Kirche, sondern auch die politische Gemeinschaft und ihre Einrichtungen unterstützt und im Blick auf ein evangelisches Gemeinwesen ausgebaut."

the cause of Reformation.

The policy of confessionalization in the seventeenth century, as delineated by Lehmann above, resembled in many ways the civil disciplinary initiatives mandated by Luther in 1520, sponsored by Frederick in 1532, sanctioned through Jonas in 1536, and implemented by the *praeceptor Germaniae* since 1531. The actual role played by the visitors and consistory reflected Melanchthon's conception of the *usus legis civilis* in his *Loci Communes* of 1535 and 1543. There he coordinates two statements of St. Paul concerning the civil law: it is a curb to constrain the wicked (1 Tim. 1:9) and a pedagogue for leading people to Christ (Gal. 3:24). Beyond ordaining laws, penalties, and "human calamities," Melanchthon argues, the magistrate must see to the institution of doctrine![49] The civil law, like the law of nature,[50] serves the gospel. And yet, while such "discipline" (civil obedience and effectual pedagogy) does not merit justification before God,[51] a Christian people will not remain in Germany unless the gospel is clearly taught and diligently learned. All Wittenberg reformers shared this sentiment, and that is precisely what made the Lutheran Reformation unique among other reform proposals that had gone before. It is here, moreover, at the nexus of doctrinal consensus and its indispensible civil and pedagogical

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[49] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* (1535) under "*De usu legis divinae…*" in CR 21:406: "Primum est civile, videlicet, ut coherceat omnes homines disciplina quadam. De hoc officio loquitur Paulus, cum ait [1 Tim. 1:9]: Lex est iniustis posita; id est, Deus coherceri vult etiam impios, ne externa delicta committant. Et ad hanc disciplinam ordinavit magistratus, legem, doctrinam [!], poenas, calamitates humanas. Huc pertinent etiam dictum Pauli [Gal. 3:24]: Lex est paedagogus in Christum. Magna autem laus est disciplinae, quod vocat eam paedagogiam in Christum; quia institutio, bona assuefactio et disciplina invitant ad audiendum et discendum Evangelium. Hae magnae laudes ingenia moderata incitare debent, ut disciplinam non aspernentur." See also CR 21:388, 405; in Mathias Schmoeckel, *Das Recht der Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 24–38; and Melanchthon, *Loci communes, 1543,* translated by J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 73.

[50] Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1995, 174. Kusukawa shows how Melanchthon's natural philosophy (*Initiae doctrinae physicae, 1549*) was designed particularly for the advancement of Lutheran theology. As the law serves as a pedagogue, so Melanchthon's natural theology leads the people to Jesus.

[51] See Melanchthon, *Loci communes, 1543*, 73: "It is very important that we remember these uses for the discipline of the Law, and yet not devise the errors of those who have taught that this discipline merits the forgiveness of sins or that it is without sin and is the fulfilling of the Law or the righteousness which avails before God." See also Wriedt, "*Pietas et Eruditio*," 517.

structure, where continuity between Reformation and orthodoxy comes into view.

Divergence of Doctrine and Discipline: 1546–1574

In July of 1546, just a few months after Luther's death, Emperor Charles V seized the long awaited opportunity to strike down the German Reformation with military force. He defeated the Smalcaldic League in April 1547 and subdued the two Protestant powerhouses, Margrave Philip of Hesse and Elector John Frederick of Saxony. On May 15, 1548, he imposed a temporary settlement, known as the Augsburg Interim, to remain in force until a church council could reach a final decision. The emperor's solution would have permitted reforms such as the marriage of priests and communion in two kinds, but it also required a return to the Roman church in matters of doctrine and practice. After a significant number of Lutheran pastors and theologians refused to submit to the interim, and many paid the price, Melanchthon sent a mediating settlement to the Saxon Assembly that met in Leipzig in December of 1548. This proposal, later known as the "Leipzig Interim," was better, but "better" is a relative term. It conceded crucial aspects of the doctrine of justification, including "*sola fide*," and indicated that in the case of ceremonies the Saxon churches were willing to compromise on non-essentials, or "adiaphora," such as candles, vestments, and holy days.[52]

The Leipzig Interim was never enforced, nor even adopted by the Landstag. Yet, a willingness on the part of Melanchthon and the Wittenberg theological faculty to bend on doctrine in the face of persecution produced a split in the Lutheran camp between the "Gnesio-lutherans," who regarded themselves loyal to Luther, and the Adiaphorists, or "Philippists," who

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[52] See "The Leipzig Interim," in *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and James Nestingen (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 183–96.

supported Melanchthon's mediating efforts.[53] The two sides represented, respectively, the two most significant features of the normative Reformation: Luther's unalterable theological principles, on the one hand, and Melanchthon's civil "discipline," on the other hand. These qualities did not appear to exclude each other until the new political situation in Saxony forced a decision to be made for or against Wittenberg. The long struggle to reunite the anti-Wittenberg party with the pro-Wittenberg party, which led to a real theological consensus in the Formula of Concord, reached its zenith in the rise of Wittenberg orthodoxy.

Although Luther did not live to make his case in the face of immanent imperial conquest, to his dying day he certainly had not retreated from his case made twenty-seven years earlier as he stood before the same emperor at Worms and appealed to a conscience bound to Scripture.[54] He often stated his conviction that unity of faith and peace of conscience are necessary, even if they are preserved at the expense of political union and temporal peace.[55] Melanchthon, too, had championed the cause of the Christian conscience in his many writings on the chief article of justification through faith; however, when the possibility of losing the tangible institutions of the Reformation was staring him in the face, he was sure to keep his options open. Temporary

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[53] See GUW, 250–345. The Gnesio-lutherans thought that Melanchthon was by nature quick to cede the argument. However, given the beating the LUtherans had taken, leaving them no real ground for negotionation, it could also be that Melanchthon was trying to salvage what he had, or that he was a boxer on the ropes, hoping to last the found, and perhaps regroup. For sure, the Interim was not well liked and neither was Melanchthon.

[54] See Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1950), 180. Luther said: "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason - I do not accept the authority of peoples and councils, for they have contradicted each other - my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen."

[55] Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 318–22. In response to Philip of Hesse's proposal for a union between the Lutherans, Swiss, and Strassburgers, Luther declared in a letter: "We cannot in conscience approve such a league inasmuch as bloodshed or other disaster may be the outcome, and we may find ourselves so involved that we cannot withdraw even though we would. Better be ten times dead than that our consciences should be burdened with the insufferable weight of such disaster and that our gospel should be the cause of bloodshed, when we ought rather to be as sheep for the slaughter and not avenge or defend ourselves" (318–19).

compromise, Melanchthon believed, meant the survival of those fundamental structures of

ecclesiastical government; and the university, above all, ensured the viability of the

Reformation.[56] Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575), representing the Gnesio-lutherans,

disagreed completely.[57] In a treatise published in 1548 he argues: "It would certainly be better

that the school were closed not one, but many years than that we, by avoiding confession,

extremely weaken our own religion as well as strengthen the one opposed to it." He continues:

> As for myself, I do not doubt that, if only the theologians had been steadfast, the
> Wittenberg School would have been today much firmer than it is... Even a thousand
> Wittenberg schools ought certainly not to be valued so highly by pious men that, in
> order to preserve them unimpaired, they would rather suffer the world to be deprived
> of the light of the Gospel.[58]

This no-compromise principle, epitomized in the maxim "*nihil est adiaphoron in casu*

confessionis et scandali," was affirmed in 1577 by a majority of German pastors in Article X of

the Formula of Concord.[59] Melanchthon, too, conceded the argument shortly before his death,[60]

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[56] Dingel, "The Culture of Conflict in the Controversies Leading to the Formula of Concord (1580)," in Robert Kolb, ed, *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 24. See also Irene Dingel, "Philip Melanchthon and the Establishment of Confessional Norms," LQ 20 (2006), 146–69.

[57] Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Von etlichen Artikeln der Christlichen Lehr, und von seinem Leben, und enlich auch von den Adiaphorischen Handlungen, wider die falschen Geticht der Adiaphoristen* (Jena: Thomas Rebart, 1559). Flacius, *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen, Darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erkleret wird, widder die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen. Item ein brieff des ehrwirdigen Herrn D. Joannis Epini superintendenten zu Hamburg, auch von diesem handel an Illyricum geschrieben* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger), 1550.

[58] Schlüsselburg, *Haereticorum Catalogus*, in *Quo Incredulorum Adiaphoristarum, et fugitivorum Interimistarum errores, apostasiae, collusiones cum Antichristo Romano, et argumenta, repetuntur et refutantur ...* (Frankfurt: Knopffius Saurius, 1599), 13:231–32, quoted in Bente, "*Historical Introductions*," in *Concordia Triglott* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 232: "Certe non tanti mille Wittenbergenses scholae piis esse debent, ut propter earum incolumitatem velint pati orbem terrarum Evangelii luce privari."

[59] This doctrine found its clearest expression in the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X. See KW, 635–40. At the heart of the question was the widespread conviction that "the clear expression of the faith in the public arena is of paramount importance, and it dare not be sold for the pottage of temporal safety and security." See Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 183.

[60] Melanchthon wrote in a letter to the Saxon pastors on January 17, 1557: "I was drawn into the insidious deliberations of the courts. Therefore, if in any way I have either fallen or been too weak, I ask forgiveness of God and of the Church, and I shall submit to the judgments of the Church." See CR 9, 61; quoted in Friedrich Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," *Concordia Triglott* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 112. In the Formula Consensus of 1557 and the Frankfurt Recess of

but by that time the damage had already been done. The adiaphoristic controversy was merely

the beginning of a series of theological controversies that would ravage the German territories

for the next twenty years. Those theologians who remained staunchly opposed to Wittenberg

rallied around the theological faculty of the newly established University of Jena (established

1558) in Ducal Saxony.[61]

The most significant controversy after Luther's death concerned the precise mode in which

Jesus' body and blood were present in the Lord's Supper. The late-Reformation debate initially

revolved around the *Consensus Tigurinus*, drafted by John Calvin for the Zurich theologians in

1549. Joachim Westphal, pastor in Hamburg, considered Calvin's treatment of the Lord's Supper

an abandonment of Luther and a capitulation to Zwingli.[62] The political ramifications of drawing

such a clear distinction between Luther and Calvin would soon be felt in the Diet of Augsburg of

1555, which included the Lutherans and excluded the Calvinists from imperial protection, but the

political lines had already been drawn as early as 1529. The second Diet of Speyer in 1529 had

stripped evangelical princes of the *ius reformandi* granted them by the first Diet of Speyer in

1526. In hopes of hammering out a doctrinal consensus between Wittenberg and the Swiss

theologians on the issue of the Lord's Supper, and thus forge a Protestant league in defiance of

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1558, he conceded the argument his adversaries had been making over the past decade. The Formula Consensus reads: "With the help of God we retain, and shall retain, the entire doctrine of justification, agreeing with the Augsburg Confession and with the confessions which were published in the church of Hamburg against the book called Interim. Nor do we want any corruptions or ambiguities to be mixed with it; and we desire most earnestly that the true doctrine in all its articles be set forth, as far as possible, in identical and proper forms of speech, and that ambitious innovations be avoided" (CR 9:369), quoted in Bente, "Historical Introductions," 112. Likewise, in the Frankfurt Recess he maintains: "Where the true Christian doctrine of the holy Gospel is polluted or persecuted, there the adiaphora as well as other ceremonies are detrimental and injurious." (CR 9:501), quoted in Bente, "Historical Introductions," 112.

[61] Theodore E. Schmauk and C. Theodore Benze, *The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 597.

[62] Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 233.

the emperor, Margrave Philip of Hesse and Elector John Frederick of Saxony arranged a meeting

at Marburg in October 1529. It was then and there, as Luther refused the right hand of fellowship

to Zwingli and the Swiss reformers over a single point of doctrine,[63] that the political union so

sorely desired by the German princes became an imminent impossibility.

At Marburg it is possible to glimpse the practical consequences of a conscience bound to

biblical authority. Yet, Luther's specific claim of an oral eating of Christ's true body and blood

in the Lord's Supper, based on a straightforward and literal interpretation of Jesus' words, "This

is my body," had a theoretical significance too. Some "fanatics," also regarded as "spiritualists,"

including Karlstadt and Oecolampadius, based their opinion of a mere spiritual eating on the

principle that Christ's human nature was limited to a heavenly place far away from the church on

earth.[64] Others, including Zwingli, maintained that the flesh profited nothing beyond serving as a

historic reminder of the Upper Room and the events that followed. In reply, Luther felt

compelled to disclose the Christological implications of their position—and he revealed his own

in the process.[65] From the biblical teaching that Christ's humanity is divine (Col. 2:9, John 14:9,

Heb. 6:6, etc.) he extrapolated the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's body. He had already

stated his arguments conclusively in his *Great Confession on the Lord's Supper* in 1528,[66] and

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[63] For select versions of the Marburg Colloquy proceedings, see *LW* 38:5–89. See also Herman Sasse, *This is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959).

[64] Luther, "That These Words of Christ, This is My Body," Etc., Still Stand Firm Agaisnt the Fanatics," 1527, *LW* 37: 46–47: Luther characterizes their position as follows: "Don't you see that heaven, where Christ is seated in his glory, is high above, and the earth where his Supper is observed is here, far below? How can a body be seated so high in glory and at the same time be here below, allowing itself to be profaned and taken by hands, mouth, and belly, as if it were a fried sausage? Would this be consistent with the majesty of God and the glory of heaven?"

[65] On the relationship between the Lord's Supper and its implications for Christology in historical context, see the monumental study by Johannes Hund, *Das Wort ward Fleisch. Eine systematisch-theologische Untersuchung zur Debatte um die Wittenberger Christologie und Abendmahllehre in den Jahren 1567 bis 1574* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

[66] *LW* 37:60–61: "Now if [God] has found the way whereby his own divine nature can be wholly and entirely

he later clarified his position in scholastic language in his 1540 *Disputation On the Divinity and Humanity of Christ*.[67] Luther's theological argument indicated another difference in orientation between Luther and Melanchthon that would affect future university and state relations. While Luther was accustomed to asserting the thing-in-itself, doggedly and with seeming reckless abandon, Melanchthon feverishly avoided metaphysical questions concerning "modes of the incarnation," etc., and devoted his attention instead to the distinct *benefit*—the endgame—of a given topic.[68] Hence, no less than political significance, Luther's doctrine had outright metaphysical implications that ultimately resisted the capacity of the *Praeceptor's* pedagogy.

After Melanchthon's death in 1560, the Philippists continued to elaborate their master's spiritual-beneficial interpretation of the Lord's Supper to the same degree that their Gnesio-lutheran counterpart radicalized the metaphysical implications of Luther's view. John Brenz (1499–1570), reformer of Schwäbisch Hall and personal advisor to Duke Ulrich of Württemberg (1487–1550, 1498), was the most prolific and influential advocate of Luther's strict Christology.[69] Having begun to articulate the Christological significance of the Lord's Supper in

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in all creatures and in every single individual being, more deeply, more inwardly, more present than the creature is to itself, and yet on the other hand may and can be circumscribed nowhere and in no being, so that he actually embraces all things and is in all, but no one being circumscribes him and is in him—should not this same God also know some way whereby his body could be wholly and completely present in many places at the same time, and yet none of these places could be where he is?" On the basis of Hebrews 6:6, "They crucify the *Son of God* on their own account," Luther says: "For the Son of God truly is crucified for us, that is, this *person* who is God" (211). See also *WA* 11:450; quoted in Sasse, *This is my Body*, 84–85. Luther says at the Marburg Colloquy: "It is enough for me to know that the word which I hear and the body which I take are truly those of my Lord and God. . . . The body which you take and the word which you hear are his who holds in his hands the entire world and who is everywhere."

[67] *WA* 39/2:92–121. Luther writes: "*Humanitas coniuncta cum divinitate adoratur*." (106).

[68] Philip Melanchthon, *Commonplaces: Loci Communes*, trans. Christian Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 24: "[T]o know Christ is to know his benefits."

[69] G. Bossert, "Brenz," *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, ed. Albert Hauck, 3rd ed. Vol. 3, (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1897), 376–88.

1526 through his discussions with Oecolampadius,[70] he continued to explain the personal union of Christ in terms of a *genus majestaticum*, according to which Christ's divine attributes are communicated to his human nature by virtue of the personal union. They published their position in the Confessio Virtembergica of 1552.[71]

Following the conversion of Elector Frederick III and the transformation of his Palatinate lands to the Calvinist religion, the Heidelberg theologians, led by Zacharius Ursinus (1534–1583), became the fiercest opponents of Würtemberg Christology. Jacob Andreae (1528–1590), a close disciple of Brenz, led the Lutheran counterattack agasint the Heidelberg theologians. It was at a meeting with the Heidelberg professors at Maulbronn in April of 1564 that the Lutheran Christology was denounced as "ubiquity."[72] This doctrine of ubiquity, i.e., that the body of Christ is "*per se ubique praesentem*," which would eventually find its way into the Formula of Concord in 1577,[73] was most distasteful to many an enlightened prince, including Elector August of Saxony. Meanwhile, as long as electoral Saxony stood behind the Wittenberg faculty in opposition to the Gnesio-lutheran faction at Jena, the spiritualizing position of Melanchthon's followers at Wittenberg was provided legitimacy. In 1571, August certified the *Corpus doctrinae christianae* of 1560 and thus sharpened the antagonism against Ducal Saxony.[74] When tension

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[70] Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 239.

[71] They issued their statement as the *Confessio Virtembergica*, 1552. See *Confessio Virtembergica, 1552: Das Würtemberische Bekenntnis*, ed. Martin Brecht (Holzgerlingen: Hänssler, 1999; cited in Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 238–39.

[72] Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 240. See also E. Bizer, *Studien zur Geschichte des Abendmahlstreits im 16. Jahrhundert* (Gutersloh, 1940), 335–52; Jörg Bauer, "Ubiquität," in TRE 24 (2002): 224–41.

[73] See KW, 617. See also S. D. Paulson, *Lutheran Theology* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 99.

[74] Sie Marcel Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 99. On the relationship between Ernestine and Alberstine Saxony along religious lines, see Paul Tschackert, *Die Entstehung der lutherischen und der reformierten Kirchenlehre samt ihren innerprotestantischen Gegensätzen* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 544–49.

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between the Saxon houses finally abated after the death of Duke John William (1530–1572), the

Philippists and the electoral Saxon government continued to stand together in opposition to

Würtemberger ubiquitism.[75]

Overcoming this tension between Würtemberg and Wittenberg, between "Luther" and

"Melanchthon," as it were, would be a critical phase in the pre-history of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Representing the Würtembergers, Jacob Andreae played a consummate role in the building of

concord among the evangelical churches of Germany. And yet, although he was able to enlist the

political support of Elector Ludwig of the Palatinate in 1576, the electors of Saxony and

Brandenburg, and six other princes for the Formula of Concord,[76] it was not until Württemberg

theology made its permanent stamp on the traditional Protestant powerhouses, Hesse and

Saxony, that Lutheran orthodoxy—potent in doctrine and discipline—came into its own right.

The only missing ingredient of Wittenberg orthodoxy as of 1574 was Wittenberg, the premier

institution of the normative Reformation, and, most importantly, a realignment of the elector's

and theologians' interests.

The Rise of Wittenberg Orthodoxy: 1574–1606

Thanks to Elector Maurice of Saxony, who had first backed Charles in order to become

elector, but later had a change of heart and lead the Protestant forces of the Schmalcaldic League

to victory against the emperor in 1552,[77] Electoral Saxony recovered possession of its *ius*

reformandi, and three years later the Peace of Augsburg officially granted legal protection to all

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[75] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 99.

[76] Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 275.

[77] After his signing of the Capitulation of Wittenberg on May 19, 1547, John Friedrich was subjected to rather rigorous confinement until he was finally released from prison in 1552. Meanwhile, Maurice had become the new Saxon Elector in 1547.

princes who adhered to the Augsburg Confession. Maurice's successor, his brother, August, wishing to retain his electoral prerogative, was equally as determined to assert his right of reform as he was to deny it to the Calvinists, who were excluded under the same provisions. Without acknowledging the apparent rift between Luther and Melanchthon, August was devoted to Luther's legacy, and he cherished the Lutheran consensus of the Augsburg Confession.[78] He therefore resented the suggestion on the part of his Gnesio-lutheran adversaries, and in particular, the Württemburgers, that his professors were secret followers of John Calvin, or "Crypto-Calvinists."[79] Thus, embarking on a domestic campaign to affirm the status of his religion, he turned to his Wittenberg theological faculty for clarification.

When, however, it became apparent to the elector that his Wittenberg theologians were indeed holding to various spiritualizing views of the Lord's Supper that were expressly rejected by Luther, August summoned his theologians to Torgau in 1574 and required them to sign a statement on the Lord's Supper that unambiguously eliminated the spiritualizing view of Calvin and his followers. Their resusal to sign the Torgau Articles, confirmed him in his suspisions that he was being deceived by his most trusted theological advisors. He deposed the entire theological faculty, but his faculty replacements—Paul Krell, Martin Oberndörfer the Younger, Caspar Eberhard, and John Habermann—met with such resistance from the students that they

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[78] See Nieden, *Erfindung*, 99: "In den Auseinandersetzungen wurden die beiden Wittenberger Reformatoren Luther und Melanchthon zu sich einander immer mehr ausschliessenden Autoritätspolen auf die sich 'Philippisten' und 'Gnesiolutheraner' beriefen. Kursachsen war durch die Universität Wittenberg in diese Konflikte von Anfang an involviert und sollte schliesslich nach der Überwindung des mitteldeutschen Philippismus geradezu eine Führungsrolle im Konsolidierungsprozess des originären Luthertums übernehmen."

[79] Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 241. On the term "Crypto-Calvinists" as it applies to Wittenberg under the reign of August, see Theodor Mahlmann, "Melanchthon als Vorläufer des Wittenberger Kryptocalvinismus," *Melanchthon-Schriften der Stadt Bretten* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2005), 9:173–230. See also Irene Dingel, ed., *Controversia et Confessio: Theologische Kontroversen 1548–1577/80. Kritische Auswahledition*, vol. 8: *Die Debatte um die Wittenberger Abendmahlslehre und Christologie, 1570–1574* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 3–15.

ended up resigning their positions.[80]

The key to the elector's success lay in a confessional consolidation based on a real and verifiable theological consensus. The events at Torgau made it obvious that, despite having the elector's unwavering support against the Württemberg theologians, the Wittenberg faculty was unable to generate a consensus. They identified with Melanchthon, who in August's mind had been inextricably linked to Luther and the Augsburg Confession,[81] but in reality these men represented a curious mixture of Erasmian-humanism comparable to what might have been found at the University of Strassburg. The elector was coming to the question with theological-political concerns, while his theologicans, being united by non-theological concerns, were unable to produce a united position on the matter of the Lord's Supper.[82] It is not surprising, then, that the elector, zealous to retain his constitutional right, looked elsewhere in order to strengthen his position. Erst Koch shows in his essay, "Der kursächsische Philippismus und seine Krise in den 1560er und 1570er Jahren," that the incidents from 1574 did not result in any radical shifts from the usual religious-political course of Saxony. These changes came first when August made his

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[80] So seriously did August take this betrayal and malfeasance that in early 1574 he had three of his prominent advisors imprisoned: Christian Schütz, one of his court preachers; Johannes Stössel, his superintendent in Prina; Caspar Peucer, Melanchthon's son-in-law, August's court physician, and the baptismal sponsor of the elector's youngest child; and his chancellor, George Cracow. The punishment recommended by a committee of the Saxon estates was too lenient in August's estimation. Stössel and Crocow died in prison. Peucer and Schütz were released more than a decade later. See Arand, *Lutheran Confessions*, 245–48; Nieden, *Erfindung*, 99–100; and Kenneth Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung*, 19.

[81] The measures taken by August did not reflect a negative view of Melanchthon, nor did he minimize his authority in any way, but he opposed the Philippists solely on the basis of their departure from Luther. See Nieden, *Erfindung*, 100.

[82] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 99: "Theologen, Räte, Ärzte, Schüler Melanchthons waren oder doch—von aussen betrachtet—ihm als geistig wesensverwandt erschienen, hielten in verschiedenen theologischen Fragen, vor allem in der Abendmahlsfrage, an 'melanchthonischen' Positionen fest, die sie aber womöglich eher aus humanistisch-erasmianischen Grundüberzeugungen heraus teilten als aus einer speziellen Prägung durch den 'Praeceptor Germaniae.'" See Ernst Koch, "Der kursächsische Philippismus und seine Krise in den 1560er und 1570er Jahren," in *Die Reformierte Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland: das Problem der "Zweiten Reformation:"* Wissenschaftliches Symposion des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1985, edited by Heinz Schilling (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Gerd Mohn, 1986), 67–73.

peace with Württemberg.[83]

In 1574 August began to make inquiries in Württemberg, which, under Dukes Christoph and Ludwig, had risen to "a recognized Lutheran hegemony in the German southwest."[84] In 1576, he was able to secure the expertise of Jacob Andreae, provost, professor, and university chancellor at the University of Tübingen, in the hopes of rehabilitating his own schools. Andreae arrived in Leipzig in late 1576 and then in Wittenberg in early 1577. In April of 1577 he held an inaugural speech on the renewal of theological studies in which he repeatedly returned to the theme of theological consensus. This is what accounted for the success of the Reformation, and this is what was required for its continuance. His speech, *Oratio de instauratione studii theologici, in Academia Witebergensi,* may be regarded as the manifesto of Wittenberg orthodoxy.[85] In addition to the disputation, which builds voluntary assent to the theological propositions upon which consensus is built, Andreae emphasized the activity of preaching as a crucial part of the theological curriculum. Theological skill and doctrinal agreement requires more than the memorization of a list of truths; each person must appropriate the consensus

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[83] Koch, "Der kursächsische Philippismus, 76.

[84] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 100: "Die Religionspolitik erhielt noch einmal mehr Gewicht und trug nun unzweideutig die Handschrift des Kurfürsten selbst. Ziel war dabei nicht nur eine 'innere' kursächsische Konsolidierung im Sinne eines unverfälscht lutherischen Bekenntnisses, sondern zugleich auch die 'äussere' konfessionelle Konsensus' liess der Kurfürst nach geeigneten Kräften in Württemberg anfragen, einem Territorium, das unter den Herzögen Christoph und Ludwig zu einer anerkannten lutherischen Vormacht im deutschen Südwesten aufgestiegen war. " On the confesions politics of the dukes of Württemberg, see Manfred Rudersdorf, "Tübingen als Modell? Die Bedeutung Württembergs für die Vorgeschichte der kursächsischen Universitätsreform von 1580," in *Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik. Studien zur deutschen Universitätsgeschichte. Festschrift für Eike Wolgast zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Armin Kohnle and Frank Engehausen (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001), 67–85.

[85] Jacob Andreae, *Oratio de instauratione studii theologici, in Academia Witebergensi, ad eam puritatem Doctrinae coelestis, in qua, vivente D. Luthero, Doctores Sacrarum Literarum pie consenserunt, recitata Witegergae 25. Aprilis Anno 1577* (Wittenberg, 1577). See Kenneth Appold, "Academic Life," 81: "Andreae repeatedly sounded one and the same theme: the time had come for Lutherans to reach consensus. It was the sanctus consensus of Luther and his colleagues that made the Reformation effective, and now, after a period of "perturbation," a new era of consensus was begging to dawn." See also Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung*, 15–25; Theodor Pressel, "Die fünf Jahre des Dr. Jakob Andreä in Chursachsen," in *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie* 22, (Gotha, 1877), 1–64, 207–64.

individually through personal experience and practice.[86] In this context, Andreae asserts, in

anticipation of later orthodox expansions of the concept of "theology," that "all theology is

practical" ("*universa Theologia practica est*").[87]

The elector did his part by drafting a university order for Wittenberg and Leipzig in 1580

that was partially modeled after the "Grosse Württembergische Kirchenordung" drafted in 1559.

It was enforced shortly before the publication of the Book of Concord in Dresden.[88] Among the

decrees from the Order of 1580 were:

- All members of the university faculty shall subscribe the Formula of Concord of 1577 (*Ordnung 1580*, ccclix).
- The chancelor shall be appointed for life, and he shall come from the theological faculty; overseeing the rector, he sees to the purity of doctrine and reports straight to the elector if need be (*Ordnung 1580*, ccclxxi).[89]

- Twelve *disputationes ordinareiae* (public disputations) shall take place in the theological faculty each year (*Ordnung 1580*, ccclxxxv).

- The disputation shall take the form of a syllogism (*Ordnung 1580*, ccclxxxvii).

Andreae did not go to Wittenberg to solicit signatures for the Formula of Concord, but to

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[86] Appold, "Academic Life," 81–82. For a through summary of Andreae's plan of theological study, see Nieden, *Erfindung*, 100–8.

[87] Andreae, *Oratio*, E1ᵛ, cited in Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 21. Appold explains: "Nach Andreae soll der Theologiestudent durch Vorlesung, Predigten seiner Lehrer u. Disputationen so ausgebildet werden, dass er eine wirksame pastorale Tätigkeit ausüben könne."

[88] Emil Sehling, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts*, Institut für Evangelisches Kirchenrecht (Leipzig, O. R. Reisland, 1902), 1:359, in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 109: "Des durchlauchtigsten, hochgebornen fürsten und herrn, herrn Augusten, herzogen zu Sachsen u.s.w. Ordnung, wie es in seiner churf. g. landen, bey den kirchen, mit der lehr und ceremonien, dessgleichen in derselben beyden universiteten, consistorien, fürsten und partikular schulen, visitation, synodis, und was solchem allem mehr anhanget, gehalten werden sol. Die Universitätsverordnung wurde von Sehling nicht aufgenommen."

[89] A vestige of medieval practice, the chancellor was a local bishop whom the king appointed to exercise legal jurisdiction over the faculty and students of the university. He came from outside the university, but was under the jurisdiction of the church. This gave the university its legal status and also some freedom from the state. He was essentially a combination of academic dean and dean of students. Typically, however, universities were self-administered by a "rector," or chief administrator, who came from the faculty and was elected on a semester basis. See Appold, "Academic Life," 71–72.

build consensus, an eminently practical endeavor. Nonetheless, the obligatory form of the

disputation and its increase in frequency from four to twelve times per year were intended to

serve the elector and the theologian quite the same. Besides guarding against self-teaching and

the forming of private opinions, as was the case with recently deposed faculty, the syllogistic

requirement should ensure simplicity of argumentation, cutting down on theological jargon, and

thus make theological arguments easier to discern and discourse easier to control from the

outside.[90] Neither Andreae nor August were under the impression that right believing could be

forced through institutional control and civil discipline. It can only be built. A Lutheran theology

that would be serviceable to the confessionalization of Saxony depended on a university

structure that prepared the people to embrace voluntarily what they first understood, and hence,

"from pure understanding comes binding doctrine."[91]

As promising as August's and Andreae's proposal appeared at the time, and despite the

legal standing the Book of Concord achieved shortly thereafter, their plans proved to be too big.

The *Order* of 1580 was unable to account for the complexity of university life; theological

professors lacked the proficiency required, and both professors and students refused to comply.

Not long after the *Order* was enforced, Andreae was run out of town on grounds of "tyranny."

When the Erasmian-humanist leaning Christian I inherited the electoral Saxon crown in 1586, he

swiftly changed the course his father had established for the university and had a new university

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[90] Appold remarks, *Orthodoxie*, 33: "Sowohl Andreae als auch August zeigen hier betrachtliches Interesse an Detail. Sie lehnen jegliche "sophisterei" und "spekulation" ab und schreiben stets schlichtheit der Argumentation vor. Lediglich das logische Mittel der *forma syllogismi* soll die Argumente strukturieren. Auch dei Begründungspraxis wird strikt geregelt. Allein die Heilige Schrift dürfe als Autorität in Frage kommen und die Materie bestimmen." This is in accord with Walter Sparn, "Die Krise der Frömmigkeit und ihr Reflex im nachreformatorischen Luthertum," in Hans-Christoph Rublack, ed., *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland* (SVRG 197) (Gütersloh: Gerd-Mohn, 1992),,78–82. See also Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 23–30.

[91] Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 35, quoting Andreae, *Oratio*: "Aus reiner Erkenntnis erfolgt verbidliche Lehre: "*Qua res, vinculo Spiritus Sancti eo arctius, animos coniunget.*"

order drafted in 1588.[92] In place of the confessional-doctrinaire approach of his father, Christian I

adopted a social-disciplinary model that stressed ethical renewal and reformation of life.[93] He

therefore lifted the obligation to subscribe the Formula of Concord and limited the subscription

requirement to the "Augsburg Confession" He reduced the frequency of disputations from twelve

to four times per year.[94] The function of the disputation was reinterpreted in accordance with

Melanchthon's ideal of building understanding and eloquence.[95] Polemics were discouraged and

forbidden.[96] The excessive powers of the chancellor were aboleshed, term limits imposed, and

the leadership of the university restored to the rector and four deans.[97] Christian reinstated

theologians with Reformed sympathies, and the state of affairs returned to that of the days prior

to 1574.

Andreae's initial attempt to fuse theological consensus and confessional politics ended in

administrative failure. However, his labor was not in vain. Nor was this the last attempt on the

part of the Württemberg theologians to lutheranize a significant German territorial power. In

1576, Tübingen theologian, Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603), was recommended to the University

of Marburg with the task of restoring Lutheranism in Calvinist-leaning Hesse. Although Hunnius

did not succeed in achieving the religious-political consensus that was hoped for, but rather

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[92] *Liber decanorum. Das Dekanatsbuch der theologischen Fakultat zu Wittenberg,* ed. Johannes Ficker (Halle/Saale, 1923),161–76; UUW I, 555–68 (Nr. 449).

[93] See Nieden, *Erfindung*, 111–12.

[94] UUW I, 558–559; *Liber decanorum* 164–65, cited in Appold, 36.

[95] UUW I, 561; *Liber decanorum*, 168.

[96] UUW I, 567; *Liber. decanorum.* 174; in Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 38: "So wollen vnd ordnen wir, do hinführo die professores sich still vnd eingezogen erzeygenn, von den streittigen hendeln nicht ergerlich disputiren, sich nach Gottswort zu der Augspurgischen Confession, derselben Apologia, vnd der nach Trient vff das daselbst gehalttene Concilium gefertigten Repetition, Auch den Lehrschrifften Lutheri vnd Philippi bekennen, vnd darüber nichts moviren, das sie hierbey gelassen vnd mitt der Subscription nicht belegett werden sollen."

[97] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 112.

caused a split between Upper and Lower Hesse, his efforts to defend the doctrine of ubiquity, culminating in his influential work, *De persona Christi*, accomplished more than any other theologian, and certainly more than any prince, during the years leading up to and following the Formula of Concord to form a strong Lutheran religious culture in central Germany.[98]

When Christain I died unexpectedly in 1591, the electoral government was administered by his brother, Friederich Wilhelm of Ducal Saxony acting as viceroy for his eight-year-old nephew, Christian II. The Saxon duke, an ardent supporter of Lutheran Concordia, had already begun to put his own Ernestine house in order and now, once again, reversed the course of the elector's universities. He released his late brother's theologians and restacked the Wittenberg faculty with Schwabian theologians who were committed to the Formula of Concord, including Aegidius Hunnius, Polycarp Leyser I (1552–1610), Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616), and David Runge (1564–1604).[99] Upon Hunnius's arrival at Wittenberg in 1592, he was appointed to a visitation committee devoted to purging Calvinism from Saxony. At the request of Frederick Wilhelm, he drafted the *Visitation Articles in the Entire Electorate of Saxony*.[100] Due to the legal standing of the Hunnius's Visitation Articles, the Calvinist factor was permanently extinguished from Saxony before the sixteenth century came to a close. With Hunnius's relocation to Wittenberg, moreover, it is possible to speak of the rise of Wittenberg orthodoxy.[101]

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[98] See Markus Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession: Der Beitrag von Ägidius Hunnius (1550-1603) zur Entstehung einer lutherischen Religionskultur* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004).

[99] GUW, 347–49, Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 40; Nieden, *Erfindung*, 112–13.

[100] Anno Christi 1592 in Electoratu et Provinciis superioris Saxoniæ publicati, et Judicibus Con istoriorum, Superintendentibus, Ministris ecclesiarum et scholarum, nec non Administratoribus bonorum ecclesiasticorum, quin et ipsis Patronis et Collatoribus ad subscribendum et servandum propositi et demandati (1592); German translation: Visitation-Artikel in gantzen Churkreis Sachsen (1593). The "Visitation Articles" appear in *Corp. juris eccles. Saxonici* (Dresden, 1773), 256. See *Libri symbolici Ecclesiae Evangelicae sive Concordia*, ed. Karl August von Hase (Leipzig: Klinkhardt, 1857), 862–66.

[101] See Preus, *Theology*, I, 50: "Now began that long and glorious reign of orthodoxy at that famous university."

With such a turn of events, one would have expected Christian II either to restore the

University Order of 1580 or at least to draft one of his own that coordinated with his

confessional agenda. However, despite the urging of the new theological faculty to restore the

former privileges, and especially the requirement to subscribe the Formula of Concord,[102] the

young elector changed none of the provisions his father had established for the university when

he took over the government in 1602. The final draft of the *University Order* of 1606 for

Wittenberg and Leipzig include only a few suggestions concerning teaching materials and

matters of discipline, but it did not address any of the pertinent changes initiated in 1588, and

besides, the *Order* of 1606 was never formally put into legislation. During the entire age of

orthodoxy, the Wittenberg professors conducted their affairs under the formal governance of a

"Crypto-Calvinist" *Order*.[103] The reasons for this unexpected lack of development are not

conclusive from any available statements from the elector himself, but one may venture a few

conjectures.

The 1606 *Order* reflected a changed situation in which there was less need for the state to

apply the pressure of confessionalization on its schools.[104] What had taken place in that

generation between 1577 and 1606 that accounts for this change? To begin, unlike the Saxon

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[102] Friedensburg, UUW I, 602–3 (Nr. 493), in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 113: The theologians were particularly vexed that "die subscriptio libri Concordiae abgeschaffet und die herrliche streitschriften Lutheri zu vorschub unreiner Calvinischer lehr, deren fortpflanzung ettliche hierunder gesucht, ausgesetzet und allein seiner lehrschriften gedacht worden ist." Hence, "...als bitten E. f. g. wir undertheniгst, dieselbe geruhe…*per definitivam sententiam* gnedigst zu erkleren, das churfurst Augusti ordnung durch vielgedachte *reformationem electoris Christiani* nicht abgethan, sondern nochmals (zuvoraus was das religionwesen betrifft) wir samptlich an dieselbe geweiset sein sollen."

[103] See Nieden, *Erfindung*, 112–13: "Damit blieb die Ordnung aus der 'reformierten' Zeit der Leucorea auch während der Hochphase der lutherischen Orthodoxie in Geltung." See also Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 41.

[104] See Nieden, *Erfindung*, 112. It is evident to Nieden that, by the time Christian II took over the government, "zugleich begann der Konfessionalisierungsdruck seitens des Staates auf die Hochschulen nachzulassen."

court prior to Andreae's arrival in 1576/1577, Christian II and his court were well advised theologically. In 1594, Polycarp Leyser I, a former theological professor at Wittenberg, was appointed as Saxon court preacher in Dresden. In this capacity, serving primarily as the local pastor of the noble family and members of the Dresden court, Leyser had a tremendous spiritual influence on the young elector.[105] With Leyser, moreover, the position of court preacher began to take on an unprecedented role in the affairs of the Saxon state and matters of civil discipline. Much of the administrative power the 1580 *Order* had invested in the university chancellor had shifted to the court preacher by the turn of the seventeenth century. Why make a political deputy of a theologian in Wittenberg, when the elector could depend on a resident theologian from his own court? Thus, acting as consistorial counselor, court scholar, and liaison between Dresden and Wittenberg, Leyser was responsible for drafting the *University Order* of 1606. According to Wolfgang Sommer, not even the most important and influential orthodox theologians on the Wittenberg faculty came close to the Saxon court preacher in commanding respect and influence.[106]

The administrative responsibilities of the court preacher grew in proportion to the level of trust that existed between the pastor and his stately parishioner. Depending on how well their personalities meshed, the court preacher had free access to the elector and served him as chief

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[105] In addition to regular services, the court preacher held a public service at the beginning of public proceedings, including the opening and closing of the senate (Landtag), memorial days, ovations at the commencement of promotion ceremonies for new government officials, and funerals. Thus, the court preacher was afforded ample opportunity to learn and discuss the political and religious life of the territorial state. See Wolfgang Sommer, *Politik, Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Luthertum der Frühen Neuzeit: Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte*, ed. Adolf Martin Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 77–78. "Die Hoftheologen der Frühen Neuzeit kommen ämtergeschichtlich von dem mitteralterlichen "capellanus" bzw. Dem "caplanus aulicus" her." See R. von Thadden, *Die brandenburgisch-preußischen Hofprediger* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1959), 9, cited in in Sommer, *Politik, Theologie und Frömmigkeit*, 77.

[106] Sommer, *Politik, Theologie und Frömmigkeit*, 78: "In Kursachsen gewannen sie darüber hinaus nicht nur kirchlich, bzw. kirchenpolitisch, sondern auch theologisch maßstäblichen Einfluß." See also Wolfgang Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger in Dresden: Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte und Verkundigung im Kurfürstentum Sachsen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 137–65.

counselor on political affairs. Never was this relationship more intimate than in the case of

Matthias Hoe von Hoenegg (1580–1645), an Austrian born noble, Wittenberg doctor of theology

(1602), brilliant Lutheran polemicist, and (now with a new title) "high court preacher" to his

highness, John George of Saxony (1585–1656). Serving as the elector's chief advisor with quasi-

episcopal rights from 1613 until his death in 1645, his illustrious career nearly spanned the

Thirty Years War. His many sermons, advisory opinions (Gutachten), and polemical writings

made for effective propaganda and exerted a tremendous amount of influence on public opinion,

on the theologians of Saxony, and expecially on John George with whom his relationship has

been compared to that of prophet to king in the Old Testament.[107] It would be very difficult to

overstate the role of this court preacher in defining the interface between Saxon confessional

politics (confessionalization) and normative university theology (Lutheran orthodoxy).

The loosening of political reins, reflected in the lack of constraints enforced upon

Wittenberg in 1606, did not diminish the university's role in effecting confessional

consolidation. When Hunnius arrived in 1591, he led with the very consensus that Andreae was

trying to gain through his curricular reforms. Only now, with the elector in Dresden and the

professor in Wittenberg, crown and gown were able to work together without working on top of

each other. Lutheran orthodoxy flourished in large part due to the theological-political alliance

that Hunnius and the Wittenberg theologians were able to win through the Saxon Visitations of

1592. Yet, as Markus Matthias maintains, "[such] confessionalization is the consequence of

confession building, which can be rightly acknowledged in its historical significance only when

one engages the religious questions of the time."[108] The "Religionskultur" that grew up in Hesse

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[107] Sommer, *Hofprediger*, 137–39.

[108] Markus Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession: Der Beitrag von Ägidius Hunnius (1550–1603) zur Entstehung einer lutherischen Religionskultur*, Leucoreastudien zur Geschichte der Reformation und der

during the 1580s and in Saxony during the 1590s was more the result of Hunnius's theoretical–

theological labors than any political successes.[109] At any rate, between the time of Christian I's

death (1591) and the *University Order* of Christian II in 1606, a bourgeoning Lutheran culture

made for a unique political situation in Electoral Saxony that was favorable to Lutheran

academic life. The demand for university theologians was greater than ever before. By the turn

of the seventeenth century, a noble class of theological elite had emerged in the German

hierarchy, perhaps as a natural consequence of the normative Reformation,[110] with faculty posts

often reserved for sons of previous theologians.[111] Meanwhile, the Saxon court had full

confidence in the University of Wittenberg, and in the theological faculty in particular, to

provide the academic discipline required for raising the next generation of pastors and

theologians.

Lutherischen Orthodoxie, ed. Udo Sträter and Günter Wartenberg (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004), 326: "Schließlich, Konfessionalisierung ist die Folge von Konfessionsbildung, die in ihrer historischen Bedeutung nur recht erkannt wird, wenn man sich auf die religiöse Fragen der Zeit einläßt."

[109] Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession*, 326: "Die sich in der Theologie aussprechende Religionskultur geht weit über eine Explikation von Bekenntnisschriften hinaus. Der sich in diesen niederschlagende politische Konfessionalismus bietet je nach Konstellation einen der theologischen Konzeptionsalisierung förderlichen oder hinderlichen Rahmen." Matthias's conception of "Religionskultur" ought to be distinguished from Thomas Kaufmann's "Konfessionskultur." See Thomas Kaufmann, *Dreißigjähriger Krieg und Westfählischer Friede: kirchengeschichtliche Studien zur lutherischen Konfessionskultur* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 7. See also Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession*, 21: "Kauffmann versteht unter Konfessionskultur näherhin 'den Formungsprozeß einer bestimmten, bekenntnisgebundenen Auslegungsgestalt des christlichen Glaubens in die vielfältigen lebensweltlichen Ausprägungen und Kontexte hinein, in denen der allenthalben wirksame Kirchenglaube präsent war."

[110] See Burkhard, *Geschichte*, 204–7. Such a hereditary succession of university posts reflected a major concern of the normative reformation and one of the chief reasons for the provision of stipends, namely, to provide for the families of pastors.

[111] Appold, "Academic Life," 74–75. Thus, for instance, Polycarp Leyser I, theologian and court preacher, was merely the first of a long line of theologians, including: his son, Polycarp Leyser II (1586–1633), a theologian in Tübingen and superintendent in Leipzig; great-grandson, Polycarp Leyser III (1656–1725), high court preacher in Celle; and his great-great-grandson, Polycarp Leyser IV (1690–1728), professor of history at the University of Helmstedt. Nicholas Hunnius (1585–1643), son of Aegidius, began his studies at Wittenberg when he was just fifteen years old, and was eventually called to the chair vacated by Hutter in 1617, despite the fact that his elder colleague, Jacob Martini, who later joined the theological faculty, was being primed for the same position."

Meisner's Contribution to Wittenberg Orthodoxy

The Idea of an Orthodox University: 1602–1617

Balthasar Meisner began his studies at Wittenberg in 1602, a year of great expectations for that famous university now in its one-hundredth year. Later that same year, as the young Christian II took over the government of his Albertine estates, the university was standing at the verge of two parallel and complementary developments: the theological surge of Lutheran orthodoxy and the philosophical current of late-renaissance Aristotelianism. Jacob Martini (1570–1649),[112] who had studied philosophy at Helmstedt from 1590 to 1593, began to introduce Zabarella's logic to a university that had already borne the stamp of Aegidius Hunnius and Leonhard Hutter, to mention only the most imposing theologians of Schwabian stock who had been exercising considerable influence over that school for the greater part of a decade. Two years after Meisner earned his master's degree under Martini and begun his theological studies under Hutter and Friedrich Balduin, Christian II ordered that, in the theological curriculum, Melanchthon's *loci* should be replaced by Hutter's *Compendium Theologiae*,[113] a topical summary of the normative theology of the Book of Concord of 1580. Never had the University of Wittenberg seen such consensus as existed in 1602 since Luther was still on the faculty.

The Wittenberg centennial jubilee, which took place that fall, provided a symbol of academic prowess and political strength as it afforded the theologians an occasion to tell the story of Wittenberg's Reformation while simultaneously promoting its current confessional agenda. Festal speeches featured eschatological themes and creative reiterations of biblical

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[112] Walter Sparn, "Martini, Jakob," in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (Herzberg, 1993), 5:944–46.

[113] GUW, 473, 504. Hutter's *Compendium*, which organizes and explains the theology of the Book of Concord more simply and concisely than any previous work of is kind, was extremely instrumental in shaping the mind of Lutheran orthodoxy.

redemption stories in which the university itself figured prominently in a continuous salvation-

historical narrative. Aegidius Hunnius, addressing his prince, the acting elector, Friedrich

Wilhelm, as both "*serenissimi Ducis Electoris*," and "*Rector scholae…magnificentissime*,"

describes the history of Wittenberg as a deliverance from "Babylonian captivity" (papal

tyranny), and he draws special attention to Luther's revelation of the Antichrist as the historical

fulfillment of Revelation 14 and 18. In this connection he lauds that extraordinary institution,

"whose fame is not confined to the limits of Saxony, or to the borders of Germany, or to the

boundaries of Europe, but extends to the entire Christian world, and reaches even as far as the

stars of heaven."[114] Likewise, the dean of the philosophical faculty, Laurentius Rhodoman, boasts

of Wittenberg's superior status among all other schools in the world. The Leucorea is the sun

from which all other German universities draw their light. Its kingdom extends to Asia, Africa,

and America. If the Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, Assyrians, and Celts could boast of their priests

and sages, the "*doctores*" of Wittenberg trumped them all. Indeed, all other evangelical

universities are indebted to Wittenberg for their Reformations. [115]

The centennial celebrations of 1602 served as an effective arm of propaganda for the Saxon

court. By far the most momentous jubilee took place, with all manner of political pomp, in the

electoral court in Dresden the fall of 1617 in commemoration of the Lutheran Reformation. Hoe

von Hoenegg, the high court preacher (Oberhofprediger), was the organizer of the festival, and

the church music was entrusted to Heinrich Schütz, the court music director (Hofkapellmeister)

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[114] Aegidius Hunnius, *Oratio habita in seculari festo natalitio academiae Witebergensis 1602 . . . in qua praedicantur beneficia Dei in hanc scholam collata, cum primis vero beneficium repurgatae doctrinae evangelicae* (Wittenberg: Muller, 1602), B, 1b: "ut ejus fama non Saxoniae limitibus, non Germaniae terminus, non Europae finibus clauderetur, sed universum Christianoru orbem pervagatur, imo ad astra coelorum usque pertingeret."

[115] Laurentius Rhodoman, *Oratio secularis, publice habita Witebergae, in solenni 64 Magistrorum creatione, in Acta Jubilaei Academiae Witebergensis celebrati Anno 1602*, part 10 (Wittenberg, 1603), in Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 165–66.

in Dresden.[116] "God is famous in Saxony, his name is great in Germany; his tent is in in Dresden, and his dwelling is in many places."[117] So declares Hoe, drawing on Psalm 76, in the presence of his prince, Elector John George. As fifteen years earlier, only with more eschatological intensity, more adulation of Dr. Luther, the "fourth angel of Revelation," and more vitriol against the Roman Antichrist, the preacher waxes eloquent with salvation-historical and apocalyptic motifs. One gains the impression from the court preacher's sermons that these were the last days. Indeed, the entire Bible was pointing to this hour. Wolfgang Sommer weighs the significance of Hoe's sermons:

> The sermons of the high court preacher, Hoe of Hoenegg at the jubilee festival of 1617 are a particularly characteristic example of the self-reflection of orthodox Lutheranism in electoral Saxony both internally and externally in a time of increasing religious-political tension.[118]

Yet, as effective as Hoe's sermons were for the enhancement of Saxon confessional identity, the plan for such a widespread jubilee, along with the suggestion of reserving October 31, 1517, the day Luther posted his ninety-five theses, as "Reformation Day," came not from the elector's court—as though to advance his own political interests—but from the Wittenberg

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[116] See Wolfgang Herbst, "Das religiöse und das politische Gewissen: Bemerkungen zu den Festpredigten anläßlich der Einhundertjahrfeier der Reformation im Kurfürstentum Sachsen," in *Hermeneutica Sacra: Studien zur Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Torbjörn Johansson, Robet Kolb, and Johann Anselm Steiger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 25. The events were so spectacular and spirited in their veneration of Martin Luther and festive defiance of the Pope that one church historian, Christian Gerber, has even suggested that this single event may have been a chief cause of the Thirty Years War. See Christian Gerber, *Historie Der Kirchen=Ceremonien in Sachsen; Nach ihrer Beschaffenheit in möglichster Kürtze mit Anführung vieler Moralien* (Dresden: Raphael Christian Sauereßig, 1732), 224.

[117] Parasceve ad Solennitatem JUBILAEAM EVANGELICAM Das ist: Christliche und aus Gotes Wort genommene Anleitung/ wie das instehende Evangelische Jubelfest/ recht und nützlich sole begangen (Leipzig: Abraham Lamberg und Caspar Klosemans, 1617), 38, quoted in Herbst, "Das religiöse und das politische Gewissen," 26: "Gott ist in Sachsen bekandt/ in Deutschland ist sein Name herrlich/ zu Dreßden ist sein Gezelt / vnd seine Wohnung an vielen Orten."

[118] Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger*, 146: "Die Predigten des Oberhofpredigers Hoe von Hoenegg zum Reformationsjubiläumsfest 1617 sind ein besonders charakteristisches Beispiel für die Selbstbesinnung des orthodoxen Luthertums in Kursachsen nach innen wie nach außen in einer Zeit wachsender religionspolitischer Spannung."

theological faculty.[119] Beginning on Sunday, October 26, in preparation for the festival, and

concluding on November 2, each member of the theological faculty—Friedrich Balduin,

Nicolaus Hunnius, Wolfgang Franz, and Balthasar Meisner—took turns preaching at the

Stadtkirche in Wittenberg.[120] On October 31, in what was the only sermon appointed for that day,

Meisner preached a vespers sermon on the basis of Psalm 76.[121] He explains by way of

introduction that just as Noah gave thanks after being rescued from the flood (Genesis 8), Josiah

upon discovering the lost book of the Bible after the days of idolatry (2 Kings 23), and Judas

Maccabee after his reconquest and purification of the temple (1 Maccabees 4), so it was fitting

for all Lutherans to hold a jubilee celebrating God's deliverence from the papacy. Meisner boasts

of the richness of God's grace towards the House of Judah and acknowledges the treasures he

has conveyed to his church through his servant, Martin Luther. He writes:

> But God has shown and proven to us the same blessings out of pure grace and mercy
> over the past century. For as through the faithful service of Dr. Luther, a Salem, a tent
> and dwelling of the Lord, has been erected right here as well, that is, where we were
> embroiled in controversies and skirmishes; where we were accosted with many flying
> arrows; where we have seen sword and shield, and conflict; where indulgence
> mongers commenced to chide, the inquisitors to chafe, the popes to banish, the
> worldly princes to tyrannize and persecute.[122]

Meisner's vespers sermon reads like a historical treatise with the history of Judah serving

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[119] See Herbst, "Das religiöse und das politische Gewissen," 27: "Es war bis dahin nirgends üblich gewesen, den 31. Oktober als Reformationsfesttag zu feiern." See also Friedrich Loofs, *Die Jahrhundertfeier der Reformation an den Universitäten Wittenberg und Halle 1617, 1717 und 1817*, in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Kircheneschichte der Provinz Sachsen* 14 (Magdeburg, 1917), 5.

[120] Friedrich Balduin, Wolfgang Franz, Nicolaus Hunnius, Balthasar Meisner, *Christliche, Evangelische Lutherische Jubel Predigten, Auff das Erste, hohe Lutherische Jubelfest* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1618).

[121] Balduin, *Jubel Predigten*, 124–80.

[122] Balduin, *Jubel Predigten,* 159: "Es hat aber Gott der Herr dergleichen wolthat in den verflossenen 100 jahren aus lauter Gnad und Barmherzigkeit auch uns gezeiget und erwiesen. Denn als durch den trewen Dienst D. Luthers / allhier auch ein Salem / ein Gezelt unnd Wohnung dem Herrn wurde auffgericht / ich meine / da giengs an ein streiten unnd scharmützeln / da kamen viel Pfeile geflogen / da sahe man Schildt und Schwert / und Streit / da huben an die Ablaßkrämer zu schelten / die *Inquisitores* zu toben / die Päpste zu verbannen / die Weltlichen Fürsten zu tyrannisiren und zu verfolgen."

as a backdrop against which to cultivate the polemical hotspots of the age, repudiate the Catholic

foe, and vindicate the centennial cause of Lutheranism.[123] Thus, similar to his colleagues'

approach, he recites the history of salvation with special reference to the university itself. For

instance, in a sermon preached on the following day, Meisner lists the "seven beautiful treasures"

mentioned in Psalm 87 and ascribes each of them to "our Wittenberg" and "the Christian

Reformed Church." Commenting on Luther's translation of verse two, "Herrliche Dinge werden

in dir gepredigt, du Stadt Gottes," he declares:

> Our Wittenberg, too, has been elected to the City of God, the spiritual Jerusalem has
> been rebuilt, glorious things have begun to be preached, God has been rightly known
> again, the gospel is heard in many different languages, so that the text suffers no
> harm when we ascribe these beautiful privileges of Zion and Jerusalem to our
> Reformed Church…[124]

These festal portrayals of Wittenberg in uniquely salvation-historical terms were not

merely sentimental themes of anniversarial circumstance, but corresponded to the way the

Wittenberg theologians actually viewed themselves, their precious theological consensus, and the

integrity of the university itself. If the church of the Reformation should have taken on a

scholarly character—Melanchthon described it as a "*coetus scholasticus*"[125]—Meisner, by

contrast, pointed up the churchly character of the university. Of course, there was nothing special

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[123] Tholuck, *Geist*, 82: "Sie sind ansprechend durch Vertiefung in die Schrift und kunstlose biblische Einfachheit, aber wie sehr vermisst man bei dieser Gelegenheit den Vergleich der verderbten Gegenwart mit dem bessern Anfange und der Hoheit der Aufgabe. Wieder und wieder sprechen die Redner so, als ob es nur darauf ankäme, die objektiven Schätze der Kirche zu rühmen—ein Mangel, der sich indess nicht allein in diesen Wittenbergischen Jubelpredigten des ersten Reformationsfestes findet, sondern auch sonst bei Männern, denen es nicht bloss um die Reinheit des Lehrbegriffs zu thun war."

[124] Balduin, *Jubel Predigten*, 261–309, 268: "Da ist auch unser Wittenberg zur Stadt Gottes erwehlet / da ist das geistliche Jerusalem wiederumb erbauet worden / da hat man angehoben herrliche ding zu predigen / man hat Gott recht wiederumb erkennen lernen / man hat das heilige Evangelium in allerley Sprachen gehöret / daß also dem Text keine gewalt geschicht / wann wir ie schönen Privilegia Zions und Jerusalems auf unsere Reformierten Kirchen ziehen …"

[125] CR 21:835; and, similarly, CR 23:598.

about the formal structure of the seventeenth century university with its medieval hierarchy: the three higher faculties of theology, law, and medicine were built upon the lower philosophical faculty in which the seven liberal arts were taught. What made an orthodox Lutheran university unique in comparison to others was that its faculties worked together, each serving its own special function, leading to a single practical goal—the eternal salvation of sinful human beings.

In an academic speech from 1615, shortly after completing his first term as university rector, Meisner outlines his idea of an orthodoxy university using the image of Noah's ark (Genesis 6–8).[126] If the sinful world should be compared to the flood, then the university is like Noah's ark, and the *rector academicus* is Noah himself. This is significant because the ark, which had traditionally been taken as a type of the New Testament church, now included the university itself with special reference to its salvific role.[127] The rector preserved the integrity of the university by maintaining peace, discipline, and order. Following the pattern of instructions God gave to Noah, Meisner assigns the philosophical faculty, as "the necessary basis of the higher faculties," to the bottom of the ship. The philosopher's task, propaedeutic in nature, is to reinforce the essense of all knowledge. The lower deck is ascribed to medicine where the physicians are entrusted with caring for the physical health of everything that lives. The middle deck belongs to the lawyers, who are charged with the equitable distribution of food and goods. Finally, the theological faculty occupies the upper deck where the window lies open for all to see; for it is only through the light of God's Word ("*per scripturam*") that every person's task

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[126] Meisner, *Orationes duae, prior, de Arca Noachi, cum qua comparatur Academia; posterior, de Cherubinis, quibus Studiosi debent esse similes* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1622), 1–65.

[127] Seeing the ark in the school is apparantly a Lutheran tradition. About the same time, the rectors of the Collegium Elizabethanum in Breslau had described the ark as a school in which God taught Noah and Noah in turn taught his family. See Robert Rosin, "Replanting Eden: the Elizabethanum as God's Garden," in *The Harvest of Humanism in Central Europe: Essays in honor of Lewis Spitz*, ed. Manfred P. Fleischer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 109–37.

becomes visible.[128]

The theological faculty had precedence over the lower faculties, not because it officiously arrogated this status to itself, but by virtue of people simply thinking this way, with the university's God-given design and constitution. For the university to achieve its practical-soteriological objective Meisner considered it essential that each faculty do its assigned part and stay within its boundaries. By thus fulfilling its normative role, that is, by shedding light, purpose, and clarity on every part of the university, the theological faculty exercised an immense influence over the studies of the lower faculty, which in turn offered foundational subjects—rhetoric, logic, physics, ethics—in order to prepare for theological studies.[129] Meisner affirms two years later in a funeral oration for Leonhard Hutter: "I consider all matters certain as long as they are based not on reason but on revelation: demonstrations proceed not from grammar, but from Scriptures."[130] Theology, for its part, is the "*regina disciplinorum*," the "head among other members of the body." As "defensor" of the heavenly doctrine, therefore, and custodian of the Christian faith, a theologian must be especially equipped for a "Wächteramt."[131]

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[128] Meisner, *Orationes duae*, 48; in Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 250–52.

[129] See Jörg Baur and Walter Sparn, "Lutherische Orthodoxie," in *Evangelisch Kirchenlexikon*, 956, in Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 139–40.

[130] Meisner, *Oratio parentalis de vita et obitu Leonharti Hutteri in qua nonnulla de Theologiae praestantia et studio ejus recte adornando breviter inserentur* (Wittenberg, 1617), 15: "Certa dixi omnia, siquidem non ratione nititur Theologia, sed revelation: demonstrations profert non γραμμικάς, sed γραφικάς." See also Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 238–39. Whether Meisner's contrast of grammar and Scripture is a veiled jab at Melanchthon, who regarded himself as a mere "grammarian," as opposed to a theologian, is not certain. See George Wilson, Philip Melanchthon, 1497–1560 (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1897), 121, who quotes Melanchthon thus: "Why have I, born for my Greek studies, for the humble pursuits of the grammarian, been set thus in the high places of theological passions and war."

[131] Meisner, *Oratio parentalis*, 15; in Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 238–40. On the conception of "Wächteramt" at Wittenberg and other universities, see Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 340: "Die Fakultätenhierarchie fusste nach Ansicht der lutherischen orthodoxie darauf, dass 'die Organisation und die Kontrolle von Wissenschaft noch als Sache der Disziplin' gilt, 'die mit dem ewigen Heil des Menschen befasst ist." Here, see also Bauer, "Lutherische Orthodoxie," 956.

Meisner's Idea of a Theologian: 1625

Meisner's idea of an orthodox university corresponds to his proposals for forming a theologian and pastor. What kind of aptitude must a theologian foster in order to take over such a noble responsibility as this Wächteramt requires, and thus to take the wheel of the university in hand? How must theology be taught and learned in order to cultivate such an aptitude? According to Meisner, the theological aptitude, or *habitus*, though given by God (θεόσδοτος),[132] does not come without diligent study and practice. In order to facilitate a theological competence, the pastor-in-training must learn to *demonstrate* the truth of the Bible, and thus build assent and understanding of the subject matter, so that he might re-examine it and explain it to the next generation of pastors and theologians. Meisner outlines his plan for theological study in a series of disputations, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputationes*, between March 16 and June 29, 1625. He recommends that all theological learning, both propodeutic and exegetical-dogmatic, operates in unison with other university disciplines to form the theological aptitude (*habitus practicus*) necessary for producing pastors.[133]

Meisner's proposals differ from those of Melanchthon in that, following the tradition of Jacob Andreae, Meisner aims to form theological competence along explicitly confessional lines. Moreover, he sought to determine the status of theology from a disciplinary point of view against the background of the burgeoning neo-Aristotelianism. One may therefore speak of two complementary objectives in Meisner's proposal for theological education. First, in harmony with the political agenda of the Saxon prince, his disputations supplement his idea of a university

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[132] Meisner, *PhS* 3:191: "Theologia est habitus θεόσδοτος practicus, in mente Theologi existens, eumque dirigens, ut homines lapsos, per veram religionem, perducat ad aeternam beatitudinem."

[133] Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputationes,* 10 Disputations (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1625).

in the age of confessionalism. Second, corresponding to the soteriological goal of the forward-

moving university, he borrows Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics (2,1 1103a 23–1103b 7.):

scopus, *medium*, *via*.[134] According to Meisner, the ultimate goal, the "*finis practicus*," of

theological study is:

> eternal salvation, which is nothing other than the beatific vision, enjoyment and
> veneration of God, not merely in contemplation, but in action consisting of actual
> glorification, veneration, and worship. It is serves the purpose of leading human
> beings and moving them towards salvation, which takes place through the audible
> preaching of the Word and the visible administration and government of the
> church.[135]

The "target" (*scopus*) Meisner has in mind here is the inner disposition required for the

pious and capable student to carry out his task. Thus he encourages hard work, judicious time

management, regular attendance of lectures, and frequent preaching. Most importantly, the goal

of theological study is to inculcate in the student the practice of piety. Such a target puts the

entire interprise into perspective by establishing what kind of a person ought to pursue such

studies in the first place: a student should have solid recommendations, a good work ethic, a

good reputation, and ability. The "means" (*media*) of theological study Meisner understands to

be every other auxiliary discipline (*adminicula*) the university offers in support of the theological

task, including philological and philosophical (arts), juridicial, and medicinal studies.[136] The

means of theological education, therefore, are essentially the vital functions of the lower

faculties, previously outlined in his rhetorical description of Noah's ark as a type of university;

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[134] Meisner, "Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputatio I, B3, 2, in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 195n119:"Primum caput μεθοδολογικόν iterum constat & absolvitur tribus potißimum membris. Membrum primum est de Requisitis generalibus studiosi Theologiae. 2. de Adminiculis. 3. de Ratione ipsa studij Theologici. In omni actione nostra tria solent conspici. 1. Scopus. 2. Medium. 3. Via & methodicus processus."

[135] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 195: "omniaque illa confert & transfert ad finem practicum, qui est salus aeternae, quae est nil aliud, quam beata visio, fruitio & veneratio Dei, non in nuda contemplation, sed potius in actione, in actuosa glorificatione, veneration & cultu consistens. Subordinatus est perducere & promovere homines ad salutem quod fit verbi audibilis praedicatione & visibilis administratione, & gubernatione Ecclesiae."

[136] Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputatio* II, A2, 2–A3, 2; in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 196.

only now he offered a detailed plan for implementing them. While meeting the requirements of the "*adminicula*" corresponded to the necessary completion of academic degrees (a masters in philosophy was standard requirement for promotion to theological studies), they continually formed the necessary basis and provided the actual traction for higher knowledge. Under "way and methodical process" (*via et methodicus processus*), Meisner discusses the content itself, or the curriculum, of his proposed theological studies. What subjects are able to form theological competence, and how ought they to be implemented in order to facilitate the practice and application of such competence? Following the earlier porposals of his senior colleagues, Wolfgang Förster and Leonhard Hutter,[137] he assumes the division of "exoteric" (*lectio generalis*) and "acroamatic" (*lectio specialis*), between "a less accurate reading without a commentary" and a "more accurate reading with a commentary" (*lectio minus accurata et sine commentario*).[138]

Exoteric studies, which took place first, included a thorough reading of the Confessions and Luther's 1534 German Bible. Students were expected to dedicate at least one hour per day to reading the Bible. During biblical lectures, both public and private, they should take careful notes on the core passages of each chapter of Scripture, and especially those major chapters comprising knowledge of major historical or doctrinal significance, carefully and patiently committing chapter summaries and *sedes doctrinae* to memory. In addition to intensive participation in course lectures on Scripture and the Lutheran confessions, each student must take part in lectures on dogmatics, here again, commiting the "*canones*" (definitions, distinctions, and

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[137] See John Förster, *Consilium de Studio Theologico rite instituendo & absolvendo* (1608–1613), 418, cited in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 167; and Leonhard Hutter, *Consilium de studio theologico rectè inchoando feliciterque continuando* (1610–1616), 399–400, in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 175.

[138] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 198–209.

summaries) of dogmatics to memory. For general study, Meisner recommends the standard

Compendium of the Tübingen theologian, Matthias Haffenreffer (1561–1619); the *Institutiones*

Catecheticae of Konrad Dietrich (1575–1639),[139] and Balthasar Menzter's commentary on the

Augsburg Confession.[140] Although Meisner generally follows many of the suggestions found in

John Gerhard's *Method of Theological Study* (1620), his proposal for the study of history marks

a significant departure. While Gerhard recommends postponing the study of history until the fifth

year,[141] Meisner maintained that it was important to incorporate church history into the first

semester of study for purposes of diversion and convalescence (*recreatio*), to instill an

understanding of oneself in salvation history, and to inculcate an ethical self-awareness.[142]

    After a student has gotten a handle on the fundamentals of theological education, he must

proceed to acroamatic studies in order to gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the

Bible, confessions, dogmatic textbooks, and historical sources. Meisner advises his students to

read their Latin Bibles two or three times throughout the course of their theological studies. To

assist with an intensive exegetical study of the various books of the Bible, he provides a rather

extensive bibliography of the best commentaries as well as the methodical works of Erasmus,

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[139] Conrad Dietrich, *Institutiones catecheticae e Lutheri Catechesi depromptae variisque notis logicis et theologicis . . . illustratae* (Giessen, 1604).

[140] Balthasar Menzter, E*xegesis Augustanae Confessionis, cujus articuli XXI. breviter & succincte explicantur . . . illustrantur* (Gießen, 1613).

[141] John Gerhard, *Methodus studii theologiae* (Jena, 1620), 236; see also Wilhelm Gass, *Geschichte der protestantischen Dogmatik in ihrem Zuzammengang mit der Theologie überhaupt*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1854), 1:227.

[142] See Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disptutatio* 3:14a, quoted in Nieden, 202: "Nam antequam ad pleniorum ac solidiorem dictae Historiae pertractionem accessus fieri queat; id ex illis rudimentis commode habebitur, ut Historia Sacra magis dilucida fiat: Promissionis divinae de Ecclesia contra portas inferorum semper duratura, veritas appareat: Exempla virtumum compensatarum ac vitiorum punitorum plurima innotescant: Atque ex his tandem omnibus honesta mentis oblectatio ac recreatio sufficienter suppetat. Fructus videlicet suscepti laboris sat eximius."

Hyperius, Alsted, and Gerhard,[143] who in his opinion are the most dependable hermeneutical guides for understanding the natural sense (*sensus literalis*) of Scripture. Leaning on Gerhard's *Methodus*, Meisner recommends that his students assemble two blank page folio journals—one for the Old Testament and another for the New Testament—for listing and elucidating key passages and marginal notes from their Bibles under their respective topic headings.[144] Again, alluding to the ethical orientation gained through of a careful study of history, he highlights the church fathers, the history of the interpretation of Scrpture, and the historical development of the Augsburg Confession. He adds that their training in history should include a thorough knowledge of the "decisions" (*concilia*, Ratschläge), and especially faculty decisions dealing with matters of casuistry: conscience, marriage, rites, and church government.[145]

Meisner continues to stress the importance of organizing domestic-private studies and, following the tradition of Förster and Hutter, encourages the method of excerpting passages and insights from Scripture and organizing them according to the topics. This all serves the overall goal of perpetuating the theological profession through the teaching of new teachers. Meisner himself personally benefited from private studies[146] and even offered his own "Brief Instruction

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[143] Desiderius Erasmus, *Ratio seu compendium verae theologiae* (1519); Gerhard Andreas Hyperius, *Methodus theologiae s. praecipuorum christianae religionis locorum communium* (Basel, 1566); Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Methodus SS. Theologiae in VI Libros Tributa* (Offenbach, 1611); Gerhard, *Methodus* (see above).

[144] Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputatio* 4:B1, 2–B2, 2, in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 204–5. See Gerhard, *Methodus*, 159.

[145] See *Consiliorum Theologicorum Decas . . . Das ist / . . . Theolischer Bedencken / Bericht / oder Antwort / auff mancherley . . . zutragende Fäll / und vorfallende Fragen / oder Handlungen gerichtet / und mehrern Theils vor vielen Jaren gestellet: Durch ettliche Hochgelehrte und vortreffliche Theologos . . . Nun aber . . . zusammen getragen/ und zum Truck befördert/ Durch Felixen Bidembach*, ed. Johann Moritz Bidembach (Tübingen 1605–1621), in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 208. See Benjamin Mayes, *Council and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning after the Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

[146] Tholuck, *Geist*, 14. In a letter dated from 1604, Friedrich Balduin congratulates Meisner for his diligence in the study of Holy Scripture and the methodical books of Aegidius Hunnius. Balduin then goes on to recommend Martin Chemnitz's *Loci Theologici* and *Examination of the Council of Trent*. See Tholuck, 16: "Du thust gut daran, dass Du Dich ausser der Lesung der heiligen SChrift auch mit den methodisch geschriebenen Büchern von Hunnius vertraut machst, die in Hinsicht auf Deutlichkeit, Gründlichkeit und geschickte Darstellung nichts zu wünschen

on Reading the Bible and the *Loci Communes*" in March of 1614.[147] However, one may also observe in Meisner an important shift away from an emphasis on self-study to public participation in lectures and disputations. In addition to their own individual exegetical and excerpting exercises, students should regularly assemble themselves in small groups (*Collegia Biblica*) in order to compare and discuss exegetical notes and practice winning each other to their understanding. As Meisner says: "Nobody is satisfied with knowing alone, and many eyes see better than one."[148] Of course, as Marcel Nieden explains, all such public exerises serve to reinforce one's own private learning. He explains:

> Much more explicitly than Förster and Hütter, Meisner was able to connect the domestic-private study, conceived in such a way, with academic lectures and church services. Obviously, what he detested was the free, independent study of theological literature. Self-didacticism was indirectly discouraged: the students should as attend as many public lectures and disputations as possible, but above all the church services of the professors, in order to reinforce the contents of their domestic-private studies.[149]

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lassen, denen Du noch nicht bloss des Chemnitz loci sondern auch sein *examen concilii Tridentini*, welches nicht bloss ein Kompendium sondern ein Kodex gründlicher Theologie, hinzufügen musst."

[147] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 189n95: "Bereits im ersten Jahr nach seinem Eintritt in die Wittenberger Theologische Fakultät gab Balthasar Meisner seinen Studenten in einer kurzen Rede einige Hinweise zu den beiden wichtigsten häuslich-privaten Studienakten, dem Bibellesen und dem Exzerpieren nach der Loci-Methode. Die Rede, im März 1614 gehalten und ursprünglich nur für Wittenberger Studenten bestimmt, erschien wohl erstmal posthum 1635, und zwar im Rahmen der ersten Auflage des Hülsemannschen Sammelwerks 'Methodus concionandi,' S. 435–448, unter dem Titel: 'Brevis Instructio de Lectione Biblica & Locis Communibus.'"

[148] Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disptutatio* 4:C1, 1: "Nemo solus satis sapit, & oculi plus vident, quàm oculus." Nieden, *Erfindung*, 206.

[149] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 203: "Viel deutlicher als Förster und Hütter möchte Meisner das solchermaßen konzipierte häuslich-privat Studium mit dem Besuch akademischer Lehrveranstaltungen und Gottesdienste verbunden sehen. Sichtlich perhorresziert ist das freie, eigenständige Studium der theologischen Literatur. Vor Autodidaktismus wird indirect gewarnt: Die Studenten sollen möglichst häufig öffentliche Vorlesungen und Disputationen besuchen, insbesondere auch die Gottesdiesnte der Professoren, um die Inhalte der häuslich-privaten Studien weiter zu vertiefen…" Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disptutatio* I, C2, 2, in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 203: "Vi hujus theorematis, Theologiae studiosus concionum debet esse frequens auditor… Deinde quoque lectionum Theologicarum diligens debet esse auscultator. Viva enim vox praeceptorum efficacior ac penetrantior est multi librorum, diutiusque solet inhaerere." Also Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disptutatio* III, I1, 1–2, in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 203: "Cùm enim privatae nostrae meditations vel ad Scripturae intelligentiam, vel ad Locorum Theologicorum scientiam referantur: Conveniens sanè est & utile, ad geminum istum scopum auscultationem quoque publicam dirigi. Ita enim occasio habebitur commodissima tùm Locos Scripturae difficiliores intelligendi, tùm Doctoris de Quaestione aliqua traditam Explicationem cum Compendio anteà probè cognito

Meisner was convinced that it was impossibile to become a "*theologus accuratus*" without regular participation in public university activities. This explains why so talented a theologian as Meisner did not produce a "*Loci Theologici*" in the tradition of Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, and John Gerhard but instead dedicated most of his energy to the classroom and pulpit, and especially to disputations. He surpassed his colleagues in that regard, compiling as many as 219 disputations during his short career (between 1611 and 1626).[150] Such lofty expectations of a theologian portended the professionalization and bureaucratization that would characterize theology as a "theological *Wissenschaft*" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet, for Meisner in his day, as for Andreae in his, the training of parish pastors took precedence over all other academic concerns. The target and *scopus* of Meisner's *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputatio* served the *finis practicus* of the university structure itself—to lead sinners to salvation. So confident was he in the capabilities of "the theologian" and the superiority of the theology faculty that on one occasion when a request came from Königsberg for an opinion on whether a professor, named Weiss, who refused to sign the Formula of Concord, should be permitted to serve on the theological faculty, Meisner suggested that he be offered a professorship on the philosophical faculty instead.[151]

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conferendi, atque sic penum Theologicae Cognitiones instructiorem reddendi."

[150] See Ewald Horn, "Die Disputationen und Promotionen an den deutschen Universitäten vornehmlich seit dem 16. Jahrhundert, Mit einem Anhang enthaltend ein Verzeichnis aller ehemaligen und gegenwärtigen deutschen Universitäten," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* Beiheft 11 (Leipzig, 1893), 51–72; Georg Kaufmann, "Zur Geschichte der akademischen Grade und Disputationen," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 11, (Leipzig, 1894), 221; in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 189, footnote 96. See also Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disptutatio* V, A2, 1–2; Nieden, *Erfindung*, 209: "Trotz der ausführlichen Anweisungen zur Einrichtung der privaten Studienpraxis ware es nach Meisner kurzschlüssig zu meinen, das Theologiestudium ließe sich im Wesentlichen autodidaktisch bewältigen. Ein regelmäßiger Besuch von Vorlesungen, von Disputationen und Redeübungen, wie sie an der Universität angeboten werden, ist vielmehr zum Erreichen eines vertieften theologischen Wissens unverzichtbar."

[151] See Meisner, EM, 2:75; in Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen*, 205. Meisner's letter, dating to 1615, was written to Johann Behm with the suggestion, "ob man ihn vielleicht als Prof. phil. anstellen wolle."

In keeping with the spirit of Andreae's "Speech on the Renewal of Theological Studies" (1577) and Elector August's *Order* of 1580, Meisner's idea of a theologian, and particularly his stress on the public nature of theological study, served the interests of the state. While private learning is much more difficult to control, disputations furnished a clear and demonstrable position that could be censored or used to censor competing positions.[152] Such public consensus and professional skill went hand in hand with the government's ability to control, and thus served the elector's statist ambitions. However, Meisner's externalization of theological studies may not be reduced to a sheer policy of social discipline. In one respect, Meisner was indeed an agent of the state. Like many reputable theologians, he served on the Saxon consistory, the elector's primary instrument of supervision, and issued many faculty opinions with an extensive correspondence that extended as far as Iceland.[153] Yet, what Kenneth Appold notes in regard to university thoelogians in general was certainly the case with Meisner: he was also a theologian and scholar drawing on a rich tradition and a strong network of scholars within and without the confessional boundaries; to that extent, he operated in "a kind of 'parallel world' of the mind that had little to do with confessionalization."[154]

Meisner's Pia Desideria: 1626

However much Meisner may have functioned as an agent of the state, or flourished in a "parallel world" of transconfessional scholarship, his pious intentions for the church, which

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[152] Nieden, *Erfindung*, 194. See also Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 64: "Meisner hatte an der Leucorea damit erstmals ein konsequent auf die pastorale Praxis hin ausgerichtetes Theologieverständnis vorgetragen. . . . Denn, wie gesehen hatte Andreae—als Agent Staatliche Interesses an einer konfessionelle Werte und Normen multiplizierenden, propagierenden Geistlichkeit—bereits 1577 in seiner Instaruationsrede ein Ausbildungskonzept vertreten, das vor allem an den beruflichen Tätigkeiten des Gemeindepfarrers orientiert war."

[153] Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen*, 202.

[154] Appold, "Academic Life," 92–93. In the case of Meisner this may be seen in the fact that of the four theologians Meisner recommends for their hermeneutical method—Erasmus, Hyperius, Alsted, and Gerhard—only his friend, Gerhard, fell within the boundaries of Lutheranism.

called for the involvement of both ecclesiastical and political estates, are a matter of public record. Shortly before he died, on December 29, 1626, Meisner dictated to his company, presumably around his deathbed, the chief concerns that rested on his heart. Apparently, Meisner had intended to express these very concerns in the form of a lecture on the theoretical and practical defects in the church, but he did not live long enough to make that happen. In 1679 Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705) was able to obtain Meisner's syllabus, to which he attached his own preface, and saw it published under the title: *The Pious Desires of Balthasar Meisner, disclosed and delineated by the same shortly before his blessed death, and likewise his Theological Counsel, concerning the removing of certain defects in the churches of the Evangelicals.*[155]

As the title indicates, Meisner had perceived many defects during his short life in church and society, and felt obliged to call on pastors and princes alike to reform their respective domains. He divides his counsel into three categories: (1) theoretical defects, (2) practical defects, and (3) political defects. A few examples will suffice to reveal Meisner's outlook on academy, church, and political order based on his own personal experience as a Wittenberg theologian. His category of "theoretical defects" (*defectus ministerii theoretici*), which reflect his experience as a professor, includes a lack of a correct Latin translation of Scripture, careful

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[155] Meisner, *Balthasari Meisneri Pia Desideria, Paulo ante beatum obitum ab ipso manifestata et delineata, ac in simul Consilia Theologica, de quibusdam Defectibus in & ab Ecclesiis Evangelicorum tollendis* (Frankfurt am Main, 1679). See also Tholuck, *Geist*, 95–96. When a document outlining the contents of Meisner's lecture came into the hands of Christian Gross (1601–1673), pastor of the Nicolaikirche and instructor in the gymnasium in Stettin, and later Superintendent of eastern Pommerania, he included them as an appendix to a speech he himself had given in Stettin around 1642. Later, in the conclusion of a disputation he held in Stettin in 1670, he referenced the lecture with the conjecture that it was Meisner who had written it. See Christian Groß, *Sylloge Distinctionum Theologicarum, in Articulos Fidei Christianae olim Juventuti Studiosae in Illustri Gymnasio Stetinensi praelecta*, 2d ed. (Stetini: Rhete, 1670). When Spener published the text nine years later with the indication that Meisner was in fact the author, he indicates that the senior and colleague of the editor also testified that it was Meisner who dictated these notes from his head shortly before he died.

annotations on every book of the Bible, a complete commentary of the entire Bible from the church fathers, a short tract on what every Christian needs to know for salvation,[156] and a little book that cautions against the prevalent sins of the day; too much intensity and acrimony in theological controversies, and too much emphasis on secondary questions (*questiones secundariae*) and non-fundamental articles (*non funamentales*), "whence arise distractions from the chief article, hatred, and hostility."[157]

Under "practical defects" (*defectus practici*) Meisner gives a glimpse into various problems in the church and parish. He notes the impious and scandalous lives of "most" (*plerorumque*) of the pastors; too many financial cares among the clergy; a lack of coming together (*conventuum*) and mutual conversation of Christians; a lack of church-disciplinary agencies, staffed by both clergy and jurists, consisting of "observers" (*observatores*) who report on those living an immoral life, so that they might be either fined or temporarily suspended from the Lord's Supper (thus requiring a cooperation of church and state police); solemn fasts should be observed on occasion; too many pastors concentrated in single places, which tends to result in a loss of respect for the pastoral office; a lack of missionary zeal among the Jews, Turks, and Heathen; many pastors are unqualified for their office due to lack of meditation and devotion and due to distractions from their pastoral duties; and a general lack of interest in improving the moral condition of the people.[158] He also calls on the magistrates to give their attention to "political

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[156] Nicolas Hunnius had indeed fulfilled this desire. See Nicolas Hunnius, *Kurzer Inhalt dessen, was ein Christ von göttlichen und geistlichen Dingen zu wissen und zu glauben bedürftig aus Gottes Wort gefaßt* (Wittenberg, 1625). Whether Meisner was aware of this tract is difficult to say. If he was indeed aware of it, this would suggest either that his dictation of Pia Desideria took place more than a year prior to his death or that he was thinking of something different from what Hunnius had actually produced.

[157] Meisner, *Pia Desideria*, 17–19.

[158] Meisner, *Pia Desideria*, 19–21.

defects" (*defectus ordinis politici*) including too much taxation, too much pomp and lavish living among the nobility, monopolies, lack of schools, excessively lavish weddings, etc.[159]

That Meisner should have uttered such "pious desires" at the close of his life stands as a lasting testimony to the kind of dedication that characterized his entire life. Meisner was a forward-thinking, practical theologian with an integrated understanding of the three public estates: theologian, pastor, and prince. His list of theoretical defects presupposes the existence of a theological estate and ascribes to its various responsibilities that conform to his idea of an orthodox university and the making of theologians and pastors. An intersection of theoretical and practical defects may be seen in an academic overemphasis on non-fundamentals, on the one hand, and local distractions from parish duties, on the other hand. Both estates should focus on the same fundamentals rather than be distracted by foreign arts. It has already been discussed how theological and political interests overlapped, for instance, in the cultivation of theological competence and the staffing of the consistory. What is particularly noteworthy is how the practical and political realms overlap. Meisner presupposes an interface of church and state in terms of repsonsibilities pertaining to church discipline and education. A church-disciplinary agency staffed by theologians and lawyers, such as he proposed, would necessariliy require the cooperation of church and state "police,"[160] requiring a situation not entirely different from Calvin's Geneva. At the same time, the state is admonished to manage its finances more faithfully in order that it may endow schools for the Christian instruction of the youth. Thus, in Meisner's vision, not only did pastors and princes depend on each other, but the political order

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[159] Meisner, *Pia Desideria*, 21–22.

[160] Tholuck, *Geist*, 96.

was also a function of orthodoxy.[161]

From his ealiest days as a professor of moral philosophy, Meisner showed interest in the practical interface between theology and politics. In October of 1611, upon his promotion to the philosophical faculty and one month before earning his *licentiatus* to teach theology, Meisner delivered his "Inaugural Speech on General Practical Impediments" which he later dedicated to Leonhard Köppel, chief counselor of the Electoral Saxon Consistory.[162] Meisner speaks about two kinds of impediments to salvation. The first are natural impediments (*impedimenta naturalia*), and they stem from "the propensity to evil in which we are all born" (*proclivitas ad malum, in qua omnes nascimur*). The second kind are moral impediments (*impedimenta moralia*), or impediments that are "acquired and contracted from experience" (*acquisita quae consuetudine contrahuntur*). Concerning natural impediments, which require the proper application of law and gospel, nothing more can be done of a political nature than for the consistory to license competent pastors. However, the category of moral impediments, which deals with external and civil virtues, is the shared prerogative of ecclesiastical and municipal discipline. Indeed, it requires the same kind of discipline, or pedagogical use of the law, comprehended in Melanchthon's *usus legis civilis* and underlying the creation of the consistory.

Orthodoxy, as Meisner conceived it, was not the lone task of a theological guild, but required the interest and legal backing of the Christian state. Theologians expected princes and

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[161] It a message to the reader appended to Meisner's syllabus, it is suggested that perhaps the reason Meisner did not elaborate on his political defects was because it either was not necessary or it was partially dangerous. However, it seems likely that they were thus easy enough to understand as they were written. See Meisner, *Pia Desideria*, 22: "Forte quod vel non necessarium vel periculosum partim judicavit B. autor, inprimis quosdam Politicos: intellectu itaque faciles indicare, procul dubio sufficere visum est."

[162] Meisner, *Oratio Inauguralis, De Generalibus Impedimentis Practicis: Sub Initium Praelectionum Ethicarum Wittebergae* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1612). Meisner's address begins: "Magnifico & Amplissimo Viro, Leonharto Cöppelio, Consiliario Electorali Saxonico, supreme Consistrorii Assensori praecipuo, Et Reipub. Pirnensis Syndico dignissimo."

pastors to do their part, fulfill their God-given vocations in service of the same goal. Indeed, where all things are subordinated to the objective of leading sinful human beings to salvation, there is a necessary overlap of normative theology and social disciplining. Indeed, Lutherans had been saying this since Luther's 1520 treatise to the German nobility. And the model of a ruling authority caring for the spiritual good is even older—a history that reaches as far as Emperor Otto and with a model of David and Solomon in the Old Testament. Neither were Levites, but both were kings, indeed "shepherds," and guardians of the right religion.

Conclusion: Confessionalization or Heilsgeschichte?

Much of the difficulty in understanding seventeenth century Lutheranism comes from viewing the period more as a transition—from Reformation to enlightenment, from confession (Augsburg Confession) to politics (Peace of Westphalia), from a universal church to territorial churches—and less as a continuation, or intensification, of the unique realities that ushered in the Reformation in the first place.[163] Granted, scholars do not like to think of their era as transitional, just bridging one age to something better. And people of Meisner's day are no exception. But according to the confessionalization thesis, Lutheran orthodoxy was a mere function of modernization, and university theologians were agents of the state. But, as may be seen in the case of Balthasar Meisner, Lutheran orthodoxy was an enhancement of those very aspects— external discipline, the training of pastors, and emphasis on theological competence—that distinguished the magisterial Reformation from wildgrowth and fanaticism. The Reformation was a normative development—no less normative than Lutheran orthodoxy—to the extent that it asserted its biblical confession in defiance of papal tyranny and replaced the old orders with a

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[163] See C. George Fry, "Three Lutheran Fathers of the 17th Century," CJ (July 1979): 133–34.

disciplinary structure of its own. While the *ius reformandi*, granted in 1555, certainly accelerated this process, the Saxon elector had little success with this confessionalization "policy" until he was able to depend on his university theologians to work out an actual consensus. As a general rule, the accretion of state control over ecclesiastical estates and privileges was proportionate to theologians' ability to clarify church doctrine.

The University of Wittenberg took center stage in this century-long struggle, involving theologians and princes, to define the doctrine of the Reformation, to codify and grab hold to teach it, and assert its consensus. Nonetheless, university theologians and the civil magistrates worked in concert towards the same goal: salvation of souls. As complicated as the history of church and state is, and knowing that the princes had certainly been operating on a continuum of secularization since the Middle Ages, theological and political interests converged precisely where the university was concerned. The Wittenberg theologians were not mere propagadists of salvation-historical stereotypes but were quite aware of the political realities in play. Meisner's idea of a university, with all of its theoretical reinforcements, and his systematic proposals for theological studies served an altogether spiritual goal that was also useful to the political order. Kenneth Appold summarizes this point very nicely:

> In addition to dealing with theology as a practical science, the systems themselves had a highly pragmatic focus: they were designed to teach theologians how to lead persons toward salvation. These systems were tools of Christianization. To that extent, they nicely met princely expectations of a science with tangible benefit to society, in this case producing more effective pastors. In the academic culture whose main themes were sounded by nearly every ruler since Fredrick the Wise founded the University of Wittenberg in 1502, being "practical" was also being "politically correct."[164]

Since the beginning of the Reformation the Saxon elector aimed to reform institutions in

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[164] Appold, "Academic Life," 94–95.

proportion to the university's ability to clarify its theological position. Wittenberg was no less politically correct—it was no less an institution of reform—in 1602 than it was in 1502. Yet however much Meisner's practical, goal-oriented theology comported happily with the elector's policies, it was not by any means interchangeable with social disciplining. Indeed, he also saw it as his responsibility to keep the prince pious, and in that sense, Meisner was a prince's theologian in equal measure as the elector was a theologian's prince.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEATI MITES: MEISNER'S POLEMICS AND PASTORAL CONCERN

"Contra fidei est nihil prorsus tolerare, nemini cedere." [1]

Introduction

The history of Lutheran orthodoxy has been written chiefly from the perspective of its

religious controversies. [2] This should come as no surprise. A noble class of theologians born and

bred in a "culture of conflict," [3] who found their "ethical orientation" in a meticulous study of the

current controversies, [4] was naturally disposed to public conflict. Where the legal rights of a

powerful German prince depended on a clear articulation of a certain doctrinal stance, polemics

were par for the course. However, polemics served pastoral concerns too. Without the kind of

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[1] Martin Luther, *In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas commentarius, ex praelectione D.M. Lutheri collectus* (1535), *WA* 40 II, 48.

[2] Georg Walch, *Historische und theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche* (Stuttgart: F. Frommann (G. Holzboog), 1733) is a veritable index to a century of controversy.

[3] See Irene Dingel, "The Culture of Conflict in the Controversies Leading up tot he Formula of Concord (1548–1580)," in *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675*, ed. Robert Kolb (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 15–64. See also Dingel, *Concordia controversa: Die öffentlichen Diskussionen um das lutherische Konkordienwerk am Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus), 1996. For a good explanation of the benefits of polemics and its origins in the practice of disputation in the university and subsequent transformation as it moved into the vernacular, see Dingel: "Zwischen Disputation und Polemik. 'Streitkultur' in den nachinterimistischen Kontroversen," in Henning P. Jürgens and Thomas Weller, *Streitkultur und Öffentlichkeit im Konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 17–29; "Pruning the Vines, Plowing Up the Vineyard: The Sixteenth-Century Culture of Controversy," *The Reformation as Christianization. Essays on Scott Hendrix's Christianization Thesis,* ed. Anna Marie Johnson and John A. Maxfield (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 397–408; and "Streitkulture und Kontroversschrifttum im späten 16. Jahrhundert. Versuch einer methodischen Standortbestimmung," in *Kommunikation und Transfer im Christentum der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Irene Dingel and Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele (Mainz: Zabern, 2007), 95–111.

[4] See *Consiliorum Theologicorum Decas . . . Das ist / . . . Theologischer Bedencken / Bericht / oder Antwort / auff mancherley . . . zutragende Fäll / und vorfallende Fragen / oder Handlungen gerichtet / und mehrern Theils vor vielen Jaren gestellet: Durch ettliche Hochgelehrte und vortreffliche Theologos . . . Nun aber…zusammen getragen/ und zum Truck befördert*, ed. Johann Moritz Bidembach (Tübingen 1605–1621), cited in Nieden, *Erfindung*, 208.

clarity required to fulfill political demands, the common people risked straying into uncertain

territories and were forced to question the ground of their own personal faith. It was imperative

for theologians to fulfill their vocation and disclose the issues involved, the *status controversiae*,

and thus to explain what, if anything, the doctrine had to do with the people's eternal welfare.

Lutheran orthodox polemics originated in part from a need to clarify the Lutheran position—

especially to the faithful living within the confessional boundaries. Using Meisner as a

representative of the first quarter of seventeenth-century Wittenberg orthodoxy, the present

chapter will focus on the controversies that took place between Lutheran theologians and their

religious adversaries (Catholic, Reformed, and Socinian) outside the boundaries of orthodoxy. In

an effort to set the stage, as it were, and assess the polemical situation, it will first ask what cards

were dealt these Wittenberg divines. It will then explore how Meisner played those cards and

fulfilled his theological vocation with due modesty, simplicity, and clarity.

The Polemical Stage

By the time Balthasar Meisner arrived at Wittenberg and took up his duties as a professor

of theology, the religious boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire had been drawn fast, and the

confessional walls were built securely upon the foundation of the Augsburg Confession. At that

time all religious parties were lodged in a theological gridlock, and rapprochement was not in the

cards. At the Colloquy of Montbéliard in 1586, that kind of strict Lutheranism associated with

Jacob Andreae in Würtemberg met the austere Calvinism of Theodore Beza in Geneva.[5] The

Lord's Supper, the person of Christ, images (altars and ceremonies), Baptism, and Election were

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[5] For a first hand account of the Colloquy of Montbéliard, see Jakob Andreae and Theodore Beza, *Lutheranism vs. Calvinism: The Classic Debate at the Colloquy of Montbéliard 1586*, trans. Clinton J. Armstrong, ed. Jeffrey Mallinson (St. Louis: Concordia, 2017). See also Jill Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbéliard: Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 49.

the topics of discussion. Despite Andreae's hope that a colloquy could have brought an end to "hurling false accusations back and forth,"[6] the colloquy accomplished the exact opposite. No agreement was reached on such basic questions as: Who called the colloquy? What was actually said? What was finally agreed upon? In the end, the colloquy frustrated understanding, deepened hostility between the two parties, and produced more theologoumenal fodder, which led to more controversy.[7]

The Regensburg Colloquy of 1601 had similar consequences. In a last-ditch effort to forge an agreement between the Catholics and Lutherans, particularly on the question of religious authority, Duke Maximilian of Bavaria and Margrave Philipp Ludwig of the Palatinate arranged a meeting between the Ingolstadt theologians and a medley of Protestant theologians from the Palatinate, Saxony, Ansbach, and Württemberg. Both sides—the Jesuits were led by Jacob Gretser, and Aegidius Hunnius headed the Lutherans camp—were strengthened in their divergent positions. Rome was inclined to assert papal infallibility, while the Lutherans refined their treatment of Scripture as a dogmatic *locus*. Regensburg officially ended all hopes for mutual understanding between Lutherans and Rome.[8]

The colloquies signaled a complete breakdown of theological conversation. Both Beza, the Calvinist, and Getser, the Jesuit, had attempted to force a scholastic mode of disputation on their

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[6] See Raitt, *Colloquy of Montbéliard*, 49.

[7] Raitt, *Colloquy of Montbéliard*, 49, 160. See *Jacob Andreae, Acta colloquii Montis Belligartensis: Quod habitum est Anno Christi 1586* (Tübingen: George Gruppenback, 1587). Compare its response: Theodore Beza, *Ad Acta colloquii Montisbelgardensis Tubingae edita, Theodori Bezae Responsio* (Geneva: Joannes le Preux, 1587).

[8] Aegidius Hunnius, *Acta colloquii Ratisbon. de norma doctrinae cath. et controversiarum religionis judice, Monachii* (Wittenberg, 1602), 4. See also Wolfgang Herbst, *Das Regensburger Religionsgespräch von 1601 geschichtlich dargestellt und dogmengeschichtlich beleuchtet* (Gütersloh, 1928); Kenneth Appold, "Abraham Calov and the 'Usefulness' of Doctrine. Blueprints for a Theological Mind," in *Hermeneutica Sacra: Studien zur Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Torbjörn Johansson, Robert Kolb, and Johann Anselm Steiger (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 295–301.

Lutheran *colluctores*, but neither Andreae nor Hunnius honored their opponents' expectations that they use the syllogism as the exclusive form of disputation. Scripture does not require it, they maintained, and besides, such an artificial restraint tips the advantage of discourse to the opponents, whose unbiblical opinions were predicated upon a rejection of Scripture's inherent clarity and efficacy.[9] Lutherans favored the dialectical method they had inherited from Melanchthon, as one finds in the disputed articles in Formula of Concord, with its fourfold division: define, distinguish, connect arguments correctly, and refute falsely connected arguments.[10] As theological conversation became increasingly difficult, the fourth division was amplified, some may say disproportionately, and polemical theology developed into a highly technical science with a distinct apologetic significance.[11]

Disputations were often translated into German so that they could be easily converted to sermons and tracts for the common people. Such polemical tracts were circulated far and wide in hopes of encouraging Lutherans within and without the confessional boundaries, that is, with and without political support, to hold the course, remain true to their confession, and resist the lure of false religions. Even tracts written in Latin were intended for the instruction of parish pastors as

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[9] See Andreae, *Acta colloquii Montis Belligartensis*, 98. After repeated demands to form a syllogism, "*Fac syllogismum*," Andreas responds: "Dictorum Scripturae germana sententia non Syllogismo probanda, sed ex scriptura demonstrada est." See also Hunnius, *Acta colloquii Ratisbon,* 4: "Collucutores argumenta syllogismo, vel alia in logicis probata argumentandi forma includant, und so fordert Gretser auch mehreremal auf scholastice, dialectice zu disputiren." See also Meisner, *Oratio parentalis de vita et obitu Leonharti Hutteri in qua nonnulla de Theologiae praestantia et studio ejus recte adornando breviter inserentur* (Wittenberg, 1617), 15: "*Certa dixi omnia, siquidem non ratione nititur Theologia, sed revelation: demonstrations profert non γραμμικάς, sed γραφικάς.*"

[10] Melanchthon, "Preface," *Loci Praecipui Theologici* (1559), CR 21:603–7; quoted in Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 1:78.

[11] Preus, *Theology*, 1:34–35. Preus describes the kind of polemical theology that emerges in the latter half of the seventeenth century. "A carefully worked out polemic theology develops—a calm, careful analysis of every influence that threatens Lutheran doctrine on each *locus*, and an elaborate, Biblically based defense of the Lutheran position. Dogmatics becomes *theologia didactico-polemica*, the didactic side consisting of a systematic, thetical arrangement of the Biblical material pertaining to each *locus*, and the polemic side dealing with the problems of terminology, Biblical interpretation, and historical development as these factors impinge on each dogmatic *locus*."

they fought to apply the fundamentals of doctrine to the issues of the day.[12] Such polemical writings had a practical bent, though often consisting of an oversimplification of the controversies. Although disputations typically focused on one point of controversy at a time, it was common practice to reduce given positions *ad absurdum* to their logical conclusions, intentionally blur distinctions between their featured opponents and other anti-Augustana factions, and thus lump them together into a generic mass of damnable error.[13]

The arrival of the Socinian catechism (Rackow Catechism) at the University of Wittenberg in May of 1608 modified the field of polemics by revealing a religious alternative far beyond the pale of orthodoxy.[14] Also called "Photinians," "new Arians," and "the Polish Brethren," the Socinians, so named because they followed the teachings of Faustus Socinus (1539–1604), came from Anabaptist roots and settled in the regions of Siebenbürgen (Transylvania) and Poland. There, having the appearance of having a confessional identity, they became known for their rejection of Nicene theology, the trinity, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, and other essentials of the Christian religion. The faculty opinion, written primarily by Friedrich Balduin (1575-1627) and released in 1619, indicates that they were contending with a completely new

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[12] In a very through, catechetical manner, Aegidius Hunnius discusses the fundamental distinction between the law and the gospel and fells three opponents with one swoop—the Catholics, Antinomians (among the Lutherans), and Calvinists: *Articuli Christianae Religionis, De Lege Et Evangelio: Ex Scripturae sacrae fundamentis extructi, & forma Quaestionum ac Responsionum pertractati*; *Confutatis Etiam Pontificiorum, Antinomorum, Calvinianorum, aliorumq[ue] novatorum erroribus, &, quibus eos palliant, rationibus & argumentis* (Wittenberg: Raab, 1607); Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 138–39.

[13] Robert Preus, *Theology*, 1:33, observes: "Theologians sometimes purposely misunderstood the position of their adversaries. Particularly annoying to us today was the general practice among theologians of pressing the arguments of their adversaries to their logical but absurd conclusions."

[14] Valentin Schmalz, *Catechismus der gemeine derer leute die da im Königreich Poln: . . . affirmiren und bekennen das niemand anders denn nur allein der Vater unsers herrn Jesu Christi* (Rackow, 1608). The standard study of the Wittenberg controntation with Socinian theology is Theodor Wotschke, "Wittenberg und die Unitarier Polens, I," in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 14 (1917): 123–42; and II, in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 15 (1918): 66–88. See also Olaf Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik im Streit: Berichte von Calovs antisozinianischen Feldzügen*, (Ph.D. diss., Universität Göttingen), 2008.

religious dimension.[15] Nevertheless, the Photinian phenomenon played into the Lutheran polemical strategy by offering further opportunity to refute their traditional opponents' arguments, often employing slippery slope arguments, in terms of blanket rejections of the Christian fundamentals.[16]

Regardless of the category of error or the severity of attack, the battle lines were drawn, for the sake of ease and simplicity, along the perimeter of the Augsburg Confession. In this way, theologians were able to clarify the prince's right of reform under the provisions of the Peace of Augsburg, but also to streamline controversies for the benefit of the greater public. Hans Leube explains:

> As the chief confessional writing of Lutheranism the Augustana was expounded in many works; it formed the subject of many academic disputations; and many clergymen preached on its articles—in short, it remained the foundation for the learned and popular disputes with Catholic, Calvinist, and Socinian opponents.[17]

Due to the strong political undercurrents in seventeenth century polemics, the Calvinists qualified as the paramount external threat to Lutheranism—even greater than the Catholics. Since they were excluded from the negotiations in Augsburg, the Calvinists had always found themselves in a precarious position. To secure their place in the empire, it was necessary for

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[15] Friedrich Balduin, *Aussführliche unnd gründliche Widerlegung des deutzschen arianischen catechismi* (Wittenberg, Paul Helwig, 1619). See Balduin's "Vorrede an den Christlichen Leser," (:) iiii, in which he describes the 1608 publication of the Rackow Catechism as "ein ganzes nagel newes *corpus doctrinae* . . . darinnen dein einiger punct Christlicher Lehre wie die von der Apostel zeiten an bis hieher in der Dirchen Gottes geführet worden…"

[16] See, for instance, Meisner, *Disputatio Inauguralis De Fidei Iustificantis 1. Appellationibus. 2. Partibus. 3. Causa efficiente. 4. Objecto. & 5. Subjecto: Photinianorum & Pontificiorum erroribus opposita* (Wittenberg, 1613). Balduin, *Disputatio Logica de Theologiae Photinianae Consensu cum Calviniana, Natura et Argumentis quibus ex Scripturis contra S.S. Trinitatem pugnat* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1618).

[17] Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 39: "Die Augustana als die hervorragendste Bekenntnisschrift des Luthertums wurde in vielen Werken ausgelegt, sie bildete den Gegenstand vieler akademischer Disputationen, über ihre Artikel predigte mancher lutherische Geistliche—kurz, sie blieb die Grundlage für die gelehrte und volkstümliche Auseinandersetzung mit den katholischen, kalvinistischen und sozianischen Gegnern."

them to minimize the significance of the doctrinal distinctions that had separated the two Protestant confessions over the past two generations. Their chief objective was to prove themselves as adherents to Luther and the Augsburg Confession, and they made remarkable headway in this effort through the publication of the *Heidelberg Catechism* in 1564.[18] Meanwhile, Lutheran opposition to Calvinism revealed a rather defensive posture, which can only be grasped when one considers the success of the Calvinist "second reformation," which had been planted successfully in the Palatinate (1560), in Hesse-Kassel (1605), and in Brandenburg (1613).[19]

In their capacity as ministers to both state and church, the Wittenberg theologians were extremely concerned with what they perceived to be disingenuous offers of peace. The Calvinists began with an appeal to tolerance, but what they truly desired, and accomplished, was to overthrow the Lutheran religion and reign without a rival.[20] In a Gutachten to Christian II from 1607, Polycarp Leyser I stated his belief that while the Catholics had purely political objectives, the Calvinists were not content with mere political gains, but continued to push forward, using the instrument of the press, until they had converted Lutherans of various territories to their religion.[21] Polycarp Leyser II (1586–1633), who spent his formative years in the Dresden court,

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[18] Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 39: "Die konfessionelle Polemik ihrer Theologen ließ es sich dabei nicht entgehen, nachzuweisen, daß die Kalvinisten sich mit Unrecht als Augsburgische Konfessionsverwandte ausgaben."

[19] Philipp Nicolai, the famous Lutheran pastor from Hamburg, vents his own frustration: "Every bookstore is filled with their polemical writings against us!" Quoted in Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 101.

[20] Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 102–4. See also Leonhard Hutter, *Calvinista Aulico-Politicus: Das ist Eigentliche Entdeckung, vnd gründliche widerlegung, etlicher Calvinische[n] Politischen Rathschlege, durch welche Johann von Münster . . . die leidige . . . Calvinisterey fortzuplantzen . . . sich eben starck bemühet* (Helwig, 1613); and John Gerhard, *Loci theologici*, ed. Johann Friedrich Cotta, 14 (1776), 217.

[21] Philipp Nicolai, *FriedBietung der Theologen in der Churfürstlichen Pfaltz an alle Lutherische Kirchen: mit trewhertziger Antwort zu hochnöthiger Wegräumung aller Friedshindernissen unnd Christlicher Befürderung deß gütlichen Vertrags heylsamlich durchleutert unnd erörtert* (Ohr, 1607); cited in Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 104.

shared his father's views in the next generation. In a letter to Meisner, his childhood friend, he

lists three reasons why Calvinists posed a greater threat than Catholics: (1) their errors appear

more severe than those of the papists; (2) the sheer number of their teachings that deviate from

Scripture surpass those of the papists; and (3) they have no stable principles, and thus digress

from the Lutheran position more significantly than the papists.[22]

Although Leyser II's position may appear a little extreme, his third observation hits upon a

critical difference between the two religions regarding the nature of Reformation. While the

Lutherans interpret the Reformation in terms of fixed dogma resting on eternal principles, the

Reformed view it as a progressive evolutionary movement.[23] This was especially the case in

Brandenburg, where Elector John Sigismund's public conversion to Calvinism on Christmas

Day, 1613, suggested that true Reformation entailed moving beyond the trappings of Catholic

superstition, beyond the "exorcism, altars, crucifixes, pictures, chasubles, mass vestments, capes,

candles, etc."[24]

In any event, the Leyers' anti-Calvinist opinions were consistent with the Saxon elector's

pro-imperialist policy, which may be illustrated by the events surrounding the 1617 centennial

celebration of the Reformation. When two Calvinist electors, John Sigismund of Brandenburg

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[22] Meisner, EM, 2:111, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 122.

[23] See Bodo Nischan, "Reformation or Deformation? Lutheran and Reformed Views of Martin Luther in Brandenburg's "Second Reformation," in Bodo Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1999), 203–15. See especially, pages 205–207, where Nischan, quoting Brian Gerrish, "Calvin on Luther," in *Interpreters of Luther*, ed. Jaroslav Pelekan (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 84, writes: "Calvin saw the reformation as 'plainly a continuing reformation . . . as defined by "progress" (*profectus*) and "movement" (*promoveri*). Yet it is still movement from a fixed point, at which stands the extraordinary figure of Martin Luther, God's chosen pioneer.'"

[24] Erinnerungsschrifft etlicher vom Adel und Städten / An den Durchleuchtigsten Hochgebornenen Fürsten unnd Herrn /Herrn Johann Georgen / Fürsten zu Anhalt / Graven zu Ascenien/Herrn zu Zerbst un Bernburg. Sampt darauff erfolgten gnediger Verantwortung und erklärung (Amberg, 1597), cited in Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity in Late Reformation Germany," in *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 2:147.

and Friedrich Wilhelm of the Palatinate, came to Dresden in November 1617 in hopes of soliciting John George's support for the Protestant Union, the Saxon elector declined in favor of an alliance with the emperor. Emperor Matthias, King of Hungary and Croatia (since 1608) and Bohemia (since 1611), had recently come from Prague to visit Dresden from August 3 to August 13. Already on August 12, the day before the emperor's departure, John George issued an *Instruction* detailing his plans for the upcoming jubilee festival.[25] Yet, despite the mounting political threat from Rome, the Thirty Years War already on the horizon, and for all the public exuberance and centennial flare displayed in the capital city of Lutheran orthodoxy, with its swollen obsession with Martin Luther, "that highly enlightened man" (FC SD VII, 28), the primary concern of the Wittenberg theological faculty was not to defy the pope, but to halt the progress of Calvinism. Nonetheless, all opponents of orthodoxy were in their polemical scope. As orthodox theologians, called to defend the Augsburg Confession, they could no more shrink from the task of engaging in every kind of public controversy than abandon their post entirely. It remains to be seen how Meisner fulfilled his vocation as a polemical theologian.

Meisner's Modest Approach to Controversy

Meisner was widely respected during his life for his gentle disposition and moderation in controversy. Jesus' words in Matthew 5:5: "Blessed are the meek," ("*Beati Mites*"), which correspond to the initials of his name and befitted his personality, was his moniker.[26] Like every

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[25] See Herbst, "Das religiöse und das politische Gewissen," 26– 28: "Der sächsische Kurfürst sollte von ihnen dazu bewegt werden, dem Bündnis der protestantischen Länder gegen Kaiser und Papst beizutreten. Das ist nicht gelungen, aber das Ringen um die sächsische Bündnispolitik wird als politisches Problem sichtbar, das . . . seine Schatten auch auf das Reformationsjubiläum und seine zahlreichen Predigten wirft."

[26] See Jacob Martini, *Christlicher Leichsermon Uber den schönen Spruch S. Pauli 2. Timoth. 4. Ich hab einen guten Kampff gekämpffet etc.* (Wittenberg: Solomon Auerbachs S. Erben, 1627).

practical-minded theologian Meisner resented the suggestion that he should have been motivated

by anything less than love of the truth and duty with respect to his vocation as a theologian and

Christian.[27] Although he was far too conscious of the "theoretical defects of the ministry," which

included "too much vehemence and bitterness in the treating of controversies,"[28] to consider

himself a controversialist, inasmuch as he was a theologian tasked with defending the legal

boundaries of Lutheranism recognized by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 and defined by the

Book of Concord of 1580, he was naturally employed in the arena of public controversy.[29]

However, as will be seen, the strong determination and conviction with which Meisner engaged

his opponents went with a gentle spirit and a pastoral heart.

<div align="center">"Jesuwiter" and the Conversion of Jacob Reihing</div>

Meisner published a good deal of tracts against the traditional Catholic foe and dedicated

many disputations to refuting the arguments of the "Jesuwiter," or the "Society Against Jesus."

The earliest theological disputations in which Meisner took part as respondent were dedicated

refuting the various Catholic errors.[30] The first volume of his *Philosophia sobria* took up

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[27] Preus, *Theology,* vol. 1, 33: "Polemics often springs from the highest Christian motives and concerns, from the strong desire to help a brother."

[28] Meisner, *Pia desideria*, 19. Under "DEFECTUS MINISTERII THEORETICI," 17, Meisner includes: "Nimia vehementia & acerbitas in tractandis controversiis."

[29] See Tholuck, *Geist*, 80–81. Meisner's sermons on the Augsburg Confession, preached in the Castle Church in 1618 and after, highlight objective doctrine and the marks of the church. According to Tholuck, these sermons, published in 1630 in commemmoration of the Augsburg Confession under the title, "Spirited and Well-grounded Sermons on the Noble and Precious Book of Augsburg," are lacking in that tender spirit one finds in the devotional literature of Johann Arndt or Philipp Jacob Spener. Instead, the doctrinal controversies ("lehrhafte Auseinandersetzungen") remain the predominant characteristic.

[30] See, for instance, Friedrich Balduin, "De peccatis actualibus," in *Disputationes XXII pro Articulis Smalcaldicis: Quos ut commune Ecclesiarum orthodoxarum Symbolum Concilio exhibendos, beatus Lutherus anno Christiano 1537 conscripsit* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1605); Balduin, *De Peccato Originis Dispvtatio Pvblica / In Academia Wittebergensi sub auspicijs divini Numinis proposita* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1606); Leonhard Hutter, *Dispvtatio Theologica IIII. De Perfectione Scripturæ, Qvod Ea Contineat Omnia, Qvae Ad Fidei Morvmqve Informationem pertinere videntur* (Wittenberg: Schurerus, 1606).

Calvinist errors; however his second and third volumes (1615 and 1623), which comprised the bulk of that work, addressed lexical, logical, ethical, and political problems prevalent among Catholics theologians.[31] The majority of disputations published in his monumental *Anthropologias sacrae* (1612–1615) dealt with the arguments of Robert Bellarmine, the Jesuit king of controversies, whose monumental *de Controversiis* required the kind of competent response that Meisner was apt to provide.[32]

Perhaps the best example of Meisner's theological and polemical wit may be seen in his short tract, "A Catholic Answer to the Heretical Question of the Society Against Jesus (The Jesuits): 'Where Were the True Religion and Church before the Time of Luther?' To all Evangelical Christians under the Oppression of the Papacy (1623).[33] The title contextualizes the question at issue. To begin, there were indeed Lutherans living in regions, where the official legal religion was Catholicism. Although the Reformed were making the greater progress in Germany, the Catholics, too, had experienced resurgence in Bavaria and Austria for quite some time. The University of Ingolstadt had become the Jesuits' headquarters in 1541. From thence they had taken the education of Bavaria into their own hands, and later gained ground in the territories of Baden (1589) and Palatine-Neuburg (1614). While nothing could be done legally for Evangelicals living in Catholic regions, an appeal could be made to their souls and to the

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[31] Meisner, *Philosophia sobria: hoc est: Pia consideratio quaestionum philosophicarum, in controversijs theologicis, quas Calviniani moverunt orthodoxis, subinde occurrentium;* see Meisner, *Secunda pars philosophiae sobriae, in qua problemata lexica et logica, in controversiis papisticis subinde occurrentia, ... discutiuntur* (Wittenberg: Bechtholdus Raabe, 1615); and Meisner, Pars *Tertia Philosophiæ Sobriæ, In qua Problemata Ethica Et Politica, In Controversiis Papisticis subinde occurrentia, studiosè discutiuntur* (Wittenberg: Heiden, 1623).

[32] Meisner, *Anthropologias sacrae* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1612–1615); hereafter, AS. Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) had his *Disputationes de controveriis Christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos* published in Ingolstadt in three volumes between the years 1581 and 1593.

[33] See, for instance, Meisner, *A Catholic Answer to the Heretical Question of the Society Against Jesus (The Jesuits)*: "Where were the True and Religion and Church before the Time of Luther?" translated with introduction and notes by Steven Matthews (The Johann Gerhard Institute: 1998).

truth that transcends political claims. Hence, as his title also indicates, Meisner sets forth the Lutheran Church as the true Catholic Church, while denouncing the Roman Church as "heretical." This is significant when one considers that he had no other objective than to reinforce the uniquely spiritual nature of the evangelical Church even within the visible bounds of Catholicism.

The tract was not the first of its kind but models the basic arguments made by Chemnitz in his *Theology of the Jesuits* (1560).[34] Meisner divides his "Answer" in two parts: first, he argues that the question of the Jesuits is not worthy of answer or consideration since it does nothing for or against one's salvation, and, in any case, every religion or church must be tested against the Holy Scriptures to see whether they are true.[35] He summarizes his argument with the following syllogism:

> Where the Bible remains there is and remains also the true religion, for it is amply written therein.
>
> But the Bible remained and was preserved in the midst of the darkened Papacy.
>
> Therefore also the true Religion remained, preserved in the midst of the Papacy, and was neither entirely lost, nor did it disappear.[36]

In the second part Meisner offers three reasons that clearly and easily demonstrate where the true Church and evangelical religion were prior to Luther. (1) Children were being baptized and therefore becoming faithful members of the true church. (2) Christians on their deathbeds were despairing of their works and coming to rely on Christ alone for salvation. (3) As in the time of Elijah, there were always secret Christians hidden beneath the external form of false

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[34] Martin Chemnitz, *Theologiae Jesuitarum praecipua capia ex quadam ipsorum censura, quae Coloniae anno 1560 edita est, annotata* (Leipzig, 1563).

[35] Meisner, "Answer," 18–19.

[36] Meisner, "Answer," 36–37.

religion. (4) There is ample testimony of martyrs, including Jan Hus (1370–1415) and Girolamo

Savonarola (1452–1498), who were executed by the pope for holding to the true religion.[37]

Meisner was able compose such a simple and candid polemic in 1623 both for the

edification of his own Lutheran brethren and for the proselytizing of Catholics with the

satisfaction of knowing that his previous efforts at persuasion had met with some success. The

most celebrated Catholic convert to Lutheranism was a certain Ingolstadt theologian named

Jacob Reihing (1579–1613). In November of 1613 he was appointed court preacher to the

apostate Count Wolfgang Wilhelm of the Palatinate-Neuburg, who had secretly converted to

Catholicism in July of that same year. After the count had made his conversion public in May of

1614, Reihing gave his best effort to justify the prince's action.[38] Beginning with his homily at

the occasion of the count's confirmation, he continued to preach afternoon sermons on the true

marks of the church in the court. His basic thoughts form the contents of a well-known tract,

published in Cologne in 1615, entitled, "The Walls of the Holy City."[39] Reihing proposed twelve

arguments, corresponding to the twelve precious stones of Revelation 21:19–20 that adorn the

foundation of Jerusalem. The following arguments allegedly proved that the walls of Rome were

indestructible:

(1)   Jasper: The Catholic religion is shown to be true by the false accusations that
        are leveled against it.
(2)   Sapphire: Only Rome has an unambiguous magisterial interpretation of
        Scripture that has passed the test of time.
(3)   Chalcedony: Rome is the only religion that celebrates its apostolic origin.
(4)   Emerald: Rome acknowledges and defends the primacy and supreme power of

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[37] Meisner, "Answer," 39–47.

[38] C. F. W. Walther, "Der bekehrte Jesuit," *Der Lutheraner,* 1, no. 15 (March 22, 1845), 60; Theodor Schott, "Reihing, Jacob," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 27 (1888), 698–700. Wolfgang Wilhelm did not introduce the counter-reformation in his land until after the death of his father, Philipp Ludwig on August 12, 1614.

[39] Jacob Reihing, *Muri civitatis sanctae, hoc est religionis catholicae fundamenta XII, quibus insistens ser. princeps Wolfgangus Wilhelmus Comes Palatinus Rheni . . . in civitatem sanctam, hoc est ecclesiam catholicam faustum pedem intulit* (Coloniae Agrippinae: Kinckius, 1615).

St. Peter.

(5)   Sardonyx: Rome claims a continuous succession from St. Peter.
(6)   Carnelian: The councils support the Catholic Church, not the Lutherans.
(7)   Chrysalides: Rome has the consensus of the fathers.
(8)   Beryl: Rome encourages true sanctity of life confirmed by miracles.
(9)   Topaz: Only Rome is called "Catholic."
(10)   Chrysoprase: Rome is united in faith.
(11)   Jacinth: Rome has 1500 years of faithful witnesses known all over the world.
(12)   Amethyst: Rome is founded on public, not private, teachings.

Later that same year, Meisner issued a tract answering Reihing's arguments one-by-one under the title, "The Walls of Roman Babylon."[40] He leads his "demolition" with the observation that the *fundamenta* of the Catholic religion are "ἄγραφα," not founded on the Holy Writ but on secondary sources.[41] Condensing each of Reihing's twelve "walls" to the form of a syllogism, one by one, he exposes their integral weakness—i.e., a lack of Scriptural support—as though dangling before his opponent the challenge to answer his scriptural arguments on the basis of Scripture rather than appeal to human authorities. Though Reihing offered no direct response to Meisner's polemic, it appears that he bit the professor's hook. He accepted the challenge in the form of a refutation of Hoe's "Little Evangelical Handbook Against the Papacy" from 1603[42] with the express intention to rely on Scripture as his primary source. In the preface of his "Catholic Handbook Against the Supposedly Evangelical Little Handbook of Matthias Hoe," written in 1620, he describes the nature of his book: "I have worked fastidiously in every point of contention in the first place to explain the Catholic doctrine in each and every article, and

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[40] Balthasar Meisner, *Muri Babylonis Romanae: hoc est conflicta religionis papisticae fundamenta XII. à Jesuwita quodam nuper explicata, sub titulo, Muri Civitatis Sanctae, quorum demolitionem,succinctis thesibus comprehensam* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1615).

[41] Meisner, *Muri Babylonis Romanae*, A3, 1–3.

[42] Mathias Hoe, *Evangelisches Handbüchlein Wider das Pabstthum, Darinnen gründlich dargethan wird, daß der lutherische Glaube recht catholisch; der Päbstler Lehre aber irrig und wider das helle Wort Gottes sey (1603)* (Grosse, 1718).

especially to prove them from the Holy Scriptures."[43]

Reihing's project signaled a devastating turn of events on the Catholic side. Through his careful study of Scripture as his chief source—this was in itself a near abandonment, albeit tentatively, of Catholic procedure—he became persuaded of the Lutheran teaching of Scripture alone and eagerly embraced the Lutheran faith later that same year. On January 5, 1621, in the face of a thoroughgoing interrogation of evangelicals by Count Wolfgang Wilhelm, Reihing fled to Stuttgart "to gain safe conduct and to put his conscience at rest."[44] He became a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on November 23, and in 1622 he joined the theological faculty of the University of Tübingen.[45] In 1626, shortly before Meisner's death, Reihing published his "Retraction and Thorough Refutation of his Falsely Called Catholic Handbook. In his dedication to John George of Saxony, he tenders his "*mea culpa*" thanking his "electoral serenity" for his gracious patrimony, for receiving his *Retractation*, and for his forgiveness for having written against "the universally truly-ancient-Catholic, Christian Evangelical Church." He expresses his regret for writing against the doctrine and teachers of the Lutheran church, "but especially against the most honorable Dr. Hoe and Dr. Balthasar Meisner, your high court preacher and professor at your praiseworthy University of Wittenberg, respectively, both excellent theologians and now my dear brothers in Christ."[46]

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[43] Reihing, *Catholisches Handbuch wider das vermeindte evangelische Handbüchlein Matthiae Hoe* (Neuberg: Lorenz Dannhauser, 1620), "Vorrede an den Günstigen Leser," 3: "hab ich mich beflissen in allen strittigen Puncten / von einem artickel zum anderen / die Catholische lehr zuvorderst zu erklären / und fürnemblich auß H. Schrifft zu beweisen."

[44] Schott, "Reihing," 700: "[Reihing entfloh] aus Neuburg nach Hochstädt zu der evangelischen Mutter des Herzogs und von dort über Ulm nach Stuttgart, um daselbst sicher Geleit zu erlangen und sein Gewissen zur Ruhe zu setzen."

[45] Walther, "Der bekehrte Jesuit," 60.

[46] Jacob Reihing, *Retractation, und gründtliche Widerlegung, seines falschgenandten Catholischen Handbuchs: Welches er vor disem, zu Newburg an der Thonaw, als damaln Jesuit, vnd Fürstlicher Pfältzischer Hoffprediger, wider Herrn D. Matthiae Hoe, Chursächischen Ober Hoffpredigers, &c. Evangelisches Handbüchlein*

With his mention of Hoe and Meisner by name, Reihing testifies to the effectiveness of the

Lutheran arguments. His willingness and ability to state his opponent's position, in syllogistic

form, to his opponent's satisfaction set the kind of pattern that could not be overlooked. Indeed,

Reihing expected nothing less from his new Catholic foes, and especially those who would

question the sincerity of his conversion, than the due care and moderation with which Meisner

had treated him. He declares: "If any one of the adversaries desires to examine and judge this

book on the basis of God's Word, let him do so with good order and due moderation … I am not

opposed to it, and from such a man I will expect it."[47] Over and above the restraint shown his

opponents, a quality never attributed to Hoe, Meisner's ability to work hand in hand with the

high court preacher revealed to the public a united Saxon-Lutheran position in the face of the

manifold Jesuit claims that the Lutheran house was divided.[48]

(Tübingen: Werlin, 1626),):(vi, 1–vii, 1: "Wann dann nun / Gnädigster Chur=Fürst / und Herr / nicht allein der hochlöbliche Eyfer / so wie erst angeregt / Ewer Chur=Fürstliche Religion ungeenderter Augspurgischen Confession / und dem gemeinen Evanglischen wesen / wie jederzeit / also noch tragen / sondern auch Dero hohe Chur=Fürstliche Gnaden / und Sonderbare Wolthaten mir allbereit im Werck mehr fählig gnädigst erzeigt also beschaffen / daß mir hierdurch erwünschte gelegenheit gleichsam an die Hand gegeben / durch dise unterthänigste compellation, und dedication, bey Ewer Chur=Fürstl. Durchleuchtigkeit / umb gnädigstes Patricionium, und Schutz [keeping] gegenwertiger Revocation, Retractation, und Refutation-Schrift / (neben verhoffer Christlichen wilfährigen Nachlassung dessen / so vor disem wider die allgemeine recht=alt=Catholische Christliche Evangelische Kirch / dero Lehr / und Lehrer / in specie aber / und insonderheit wider mehr ehrngemelten D. Hoe / unnd D. Balthasar Meisnern / Ewer Chur=Fürstlichen Durchleuchtigkeit respectivè Ober=Hoffpredigern / und Professorn bey Dero löblichen Universität zu Witeberg / beede vornemme Thoelogen / und an jetzo meine in Christo geehrte Herren Brüder / von mir geschriben worden/) in underthönigkeit anzusuchen / und zuversichtlichen zuerlangen / so dann zugleich auch gegen Ewer Chur=Fürstlichen Durchleuchtigkeit / meine schuldige unterthönigste Danckbarkeit nur in ettwas wenigs zu demonstriren…"

[47] Reihing, *Retractation*,):( ):( ):(viia: "Wo nun einer / oder der ander von den Widersachern Lust hat dises Buch auß Gottes Wort zu examinieren, und zuurtheilen / also daß er mit gutter Ordnung / und gebührender Moderation, . . . ohne lectern / . . . argument gegen Argument geradsetz / oder aufflöse / dadurch das Papstum zuretten / und unsere Christlich Religion zuwiderlegen / ist mir solches nicht zuwider / und will deß Manns erwarten."

[48] See Robert Bellarmine, *De controversiis* (Naples: Giuliano, 1857), 2:75. Bellarmine frequently argues to the effect that whereas the unity of the Roman church is visible, an alleged Protestant unity in doctrine amounted to visible division. Consider also Reihing's tenth (chrysoprase) and twelfth (amethyst) arguments in *Muri civitatis sanctae* (above).

"Second Reformation" in Brandenburg

Meisner's anti-Calvinist writings were typical of what was coming off the presses in Wittenberg during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and it reflected the sense of urgency that permeated Lutheran orthodox polemics in general. This urgency became particularly pronounced in the wake of the conversion of Elector John Sigismund of Brandenburg to Calvinism—an incident of particular concern to Saxon diplomats given the current surge of Hollenzollern power in the empire. On Christmas Day 1613 Sigismund publicized his conversion by participating in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in accordance with the Reformed custom of breaking the bread during the consecration. This action signified what was on Sigismund's heart: he was convinced that another reformation was needed in Berlin. While Luther had taken his generation a great way, he believed that the reformer "still had remained deeply stuck in the darkness of the papacy . . . and therefore had not been able to extricate himself completely from all human teachings."[49] According to Bodo Nischan, this conviction was motivated partly in reaction to the conservatism of the Brandenburg reformation, which took place later than that of other German territories, and partly in defiance of the Book of Concord, and especially its doctrine of ubiquity, which he perceived as too rigid.[50]

Despite the new religious orientation of Sigismund and his court, however, his wife, Duchess Anna, the princess of Prussia,[51] and the vast majority of his Brandenburg subjects

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[49] "Erklerung die Religion betreffendt/ an die versamblete Landstende zu Berlin, 6 April 1614," UB Göttingen, Cod. MS. hist. 189. I: fol. 47, cited in Bodo Nischan, "Reformation or Deformation? Lutheran and Reformed Views of Martin Luther in Brandenburg's "Second Reformation," in Bodo Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1999), 210.

[50] Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists*, 211. Drawing on Johannes Bergius, *Das die Wort Christi noch veste stehen* (Berlin, 1624), 204–38, Nischan explains (211): "Ubiquity was like a poison that destroyed the gospel message. It was a first step toward Catholic transubstantiation and amounted to a return to 'magical consecration' and the 'papal mass.'"

[51] Since Duke Albert Frederick of Prussia died without male issue, Anna's marriage to John Sigismund resulted in the accession of the Dutchy of Prussia to Brandenburg and the creation of Brandenburg-Prussia.

remained staunch supporters of the Lutheran faith. The situation in Brandenburg reinvigorated

the resolve on the part of Wittenberg theologians to vindicate the theology of Concord, and it

also underscored the need to influence the Lutheran laity in Calvinist territories. Leonhard

Hutter, for instance, spent the last years of his life clarifying the origin and development of the

Formula of Concord, defending Luther's authority against the pretense of further reformation in

Brandenburg, and demonstrating the doctrinal consensus that existed between Luther and his

orthodox Lutheran posterity.[52] But equally as important as the clarification of doctrinal

propositions was the practical question of how to reach the people through the pulpits. It is

simply impossible for the common person to grasp the details of every dogmatic argument

without careful explanation. Unless it could be shown how the individual's eternal welfare was

at stake, such wrangling over terms and distinctions served only to confuse the uneducated

Christian. What does the difference between Lutheranism and Calvinism have to do with

personal salvation?[53]

Hence, besides his speculative and philosophical disputations dedicated to grappling with

the abstract side of Reformed theology, Meisner recognized it as his vocational duty to simplify

theological arguments for the sake of the less cultivated. But in serving this purpose he does not

sacrifice characteristic lucidity and point. In his *Theological Disputation on the Fleeing of

Calvinism* held on September 2, 1614, Meisner confirms the foundation upon which every

Christian should flee Calvinism: "because its principle, which is rational speculation, is

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[52] See Leonhart Hutter, *Concordia concors de origine et progressu Formulae Concordiae* (Wittenberg, 1614).

[53] See Hans Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 138–39. Nikolas Hunnius wrote such a book for the instruction of laymen: "Kurzer Inhalt dessen, was ein Christ von göttlichen und geistlichen Dingen zu wissen und zu glauben bedürftig aus Gottes Wort gefaßt" (Wittenberg, 1625). See also August Tholuck, "Die lutheriche Lehre von Fundamentalartikeln des christlichen Glaubens," in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christlichen Leben*, ed. R. F. Th. Schneider (Berlin: Wiegandt & Grieben, 1850), 69–78; 98–104.

uncertain."[54] He maintains that the operation of this principle, this "ungewissen grundt," affects every sector of life. Every estate should be gravely concerned because it makes heretics of theologians and engenders false doctrine in the church; it produces epicureans among the laity and false security in society; it turns politicians into tyrants and incites violence in the political sphere. The disputation expounds the urgency of the problem so proficiently that is was promptly translated into German with the title "A Christian Instruction to Guard against the Calvinist Doctrine" and disseminated throughout Brandenburg.[55] That Meisner had hit his target in Brandenburg is evident from the swift response issued by Karl Sachse (1558-1616), the court preacher in Berlin, in the form of an analysis and refutation of Meisner's "Instruction" dedicated to John Sigismund.[56]

In the same context, in order simplify and clarify the menace of Calvinism to the Lutheran populace living under the Calvinist regime in Brandenburg, Meisner made the case that false prophets could be recognized not only by their doctrine but also by the ceremonies they used in church.[57] Such a proposition should not be relegated to a mere polemical argument in the face of Calvinist regime expansion; it was a theme he frequently brings out in his devotional writings as

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[54] Meisner, *Disputatio Theologica De Calvinismo Fugiendo, Ob Principium Ejus Incertum, Quod Est Rationis Speculatio* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1614).

[55] Meisner, *Ein Christlicher Unterricht/ Das man sich vor der Calvinischen Lehre hüten solle/ weil sie auff einen ungewissen Grundt/ nemlich/ auff der blinden Vernunfft Sinnen und Gedancken erbawet ist* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1615).

[56] Karl Sachse, Analysis Und Aufflösung des Unterrichts D. Balthasaris Meisneri, von vermeidung der Calvinischen Lehre/ weil sie auff einen ungewissen grundt/ nemblich auff der blinden vernunfft sinnen und gedancken sol erbawet sein : In welcher aufflösung / Die schwere beschüldigungen Augenscheinlich abgelehnet: Die Warheit auß dem rechten grunde klehrlich verthediget: Und Gegentheils einwürffe richtig beantwortet werden (Berlin: Guth, 1616).

[57] See Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity in Late Reformation Germany," in *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Bruce Gorden (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), 1:145: "Liturgy and ritual thus had become much more than merely an indifferent matter for Lutherans in the late Reformation; they clearly were regarded as marks of confessional identity."

well. The question comes down to an abuse of Christian liberty: "For heretics are in the habit of always using unique and strange church rites under the pretext . . . of Christian liberty."[58] In his "Collections of adiaphora that are opposed to the Calvinists," written in 1620, Meisner offers a comprehensive treatment of the question concerning the relationship between evangelical freedom and the use of ceremonies.[59] The principle Meisner propounds is an expansion of the adiaphoristic principle explained in the Formula of Concord (FC X). The term, "adiaphoron," refers to a practice that is neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture, and is therefore "free" or "indifferent." There are indeed ceremonies that are not essential to the faith—they are "doctrines of men"—but they are nevertheless permissible to Christians for use in the church.[60] The Formula states:

> Therefore, we believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every time and place has the right, power, and authority to change, reduce, or expand such practices [adiaphora] according to circumstances in an orderly and appropriate manner, without frivolity or offense, as seems most useful, beneficial, and best for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the building up of the church. Paul teaches how one may yield and make concessions to the weak in faith in such external matters of indifference."[61]

However, as soon as it is claimed that such external matters are a condition for salvation, the Christian is obligated to reject them and abolish them as detrimental to true worship, for "*Nihil est adiaphoron in casu confesssionis et scandali*" (SD X, 9). Here also was the problem regarding further reformation in Germany. The Calvinists, whose principle of reform was

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[58] Meisner, *Meditationes Sacrae, oder Geistliche Andancten / uber die Evangelien der Jährlichen Sonn- und Festtagen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1659), 403, quoted in Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity," 145.

[59] Meisner, *Collegii Adiaphoristicum, in quo Controversiae circa Andiaphora inter nos & Calvinianos agitat, perspicuè tractantur, veritasque orthodoxa defenditur* (Wittenberg: John Borckard, 1663).

[60] Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Lutheran Worship in 17th-Century Lutheranism*, trans. Henry Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 49.

[61] FC SD X, 9, in KW, 637.

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progressive, had a more radical interpretation of the matter. John Calvin argues in his "La Forme d'Administrer le Baptesme" that the very fact that some matters are indeed within our freedom warrants all the more reason for removing them when they become instruments for idolatry.[62] The implication, then, is that the Lutherans remain suffused in Roman idolatry until they rid themselves of sundry medieval practices. That was the Reformed take on adiaphora. The Lutherans had a different understanding. Among "adiaphoristica," or "legitimate rites," Meisner considers the use of images in church (Disputation 3), the making of the sign of the cross at the mention of Jesus (Disputation 4), the rite of exorcism attached to baptism (Disputation 5), the practice of private communion (Disputation 7), and the use of the historic lectionary (Disputation 11).[63]

Under the question of whether Lutherans should and can yield to the Calvinists in the use of adiaphora (*num Calviniani in usu Adiaphororum cedere possimus ac debeamus?*), Meisner outlines three criteria for determining whether and to what extent various ceremonies ought to be numbered among "adiaphora" and therefore retained per SD 10. Adiaphora should: (1) make for adornment and beautification (*Ad decorum faciant*); (2) assist in the establishment of good order (*Ordinem bonum adjuvant*); and (3) serve edification (*Aedificationi inserviant*).[64] Furthermore, says Meisner,

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[62] John Calvin, "La Forme d'Administrer le Baptesme," in *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta*, ed. P. Parth and D. Scheuner, 5 vols. (Münich: Kaiser, 1926–62), 2:38; in Nischan, "Ritual and Protestant Identity," 147: "Premierement, ce qui ne nous est point commandé de Dieu, est nostre liberté. . . . Par plus forte raison, ce qui ne sert que à scandaliser, et est comme instrument d'idolatrie et de faulses opinions, ne doit ester nullement toleré."

[63] Interestingly, while Meisner discusses the *fractio panis* in his eighth disputation, he urges latitude with respect to those churches where the breaking of bread is a standing tradition. While the Calvinists use the practice as a demonstration that the host cannot be the body of Christ, for the body of Christ cannot be broken, it predates the Calvinist use, and Meisner does not consider it as belonging to the class of adiaphora. See Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum, in quo Controversiae circa Andiaphora inter nos & Calvinianos agitat, perspicuè tractantur, veritasque orthodoxa defenditur* (Wittenberg: John Borckard, 1663), 155.

[64] Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum*, 13–15.

we exclude from the number of the adiaphora and legitimate rites every opinion whose observance nourishes vice, namely, that (1) worship is *per se* and immediately pleasing to God, (2) it is meritorious or uniquely efficacious, (3) it is absolutely necessary.[65]

These points are in keeping with the Augsburg Confession and reflect the central article of justification, which teaches that faith is obtained without merits and without "services of God instituted by men" (CA XXVIII, 52). Meisner freely admits that Lutheran ceremonies are human traditions introduced by human authority. However, contrary to the arguments manufactured by the adversaries, their retention by no means suggests that God commands them, that they are necessary, or that "some kind of divine worship" (*cultum aliquem divinum*) should be attached to them.[66] Lutherans may not concede the Calvinist removal of old rites because, contrary to the Calvinist claim, the very nature of adiaphora being an "indifferent and middle thing" (*indifferens et media*), stipulates that they *may* be retained in gospel freedom (Gal. 5:1, Col. 2:16, 1 Cor. 7:23); the use of ceremonies belongs to the public nature of the Christian confession (2 Cor. 6:14, Mat. 10:33); Scripture gives the general mandate that things should be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:26, 40); new rites introduced in such a context and in spite of the reasons put forth by the Lutherans produce offenses and jeopardize the faith (Matt. 18:7); Calvinist innovations are contrary to the practice of the primitive church; and their arguments, being vain and indefensible, must at any rate be refuted "in order to keep the nature of adiaphora intact,

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[65] Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum*, 15 "Ex numero igitur Adiaphorum & rituum legitimorum proscribimus omnes, quorum observatio sequentia alit vitia, opinionem scilicet *1. Cultus per se & immediatè Deo placentis. 2. Meriti & singularis efficaciae. 3. Absolute necesitatis.*

[66] Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum*, 31: "Ceremonias, quarum in Ecclesiis Lutheranis usus est, *traditiones* esse *humanas* ultrò largimur, idque quia in eas humana autoritate introductae sunt, pro quibus, si tanquam pro divinis & absolutè necessariis Ecclesiae nostrae pugnarent, iisque cultum aliquem divinum affingerent, meritò inculcata Scripturae dicta eas damnarent, quibus non quidem omnes traditiones humanae rejiciuntur, sed eae, quae partim manifesta impietate laborant, partim cultum divinum & necessariam observantiam exigent: quae vitia, cùm à nostris ritibus absint, insignem in citandis illis dictis ἐλέγχου ἄγνοιαν produnt adversarii."

Christian freedom unharmed, and the truth unshaken."[67] The overarching theme of Meisner's

work is that Reformed ceremonial innovations amount to a legal imposition of new orders

contrary to the spirit of Christian freedom and undermine the foundation of faith.[68]

Meisner did not oppose the Calvinists in print only, but also in daring feats of action. No

sooner had Sigismund publicized his conversion to Calvinism in December of 1613 than Meisner

travelled to the electoral Palace in Berlin, at the behest of Electress Anna, in order to console her

in her unhappy state.[69] It was, in fact, on December 25, the very day the elector celebrated his

conversion in the Domkirche, that Meisner preached his first Christmas sermon to the electress

and her ladies in waiting. The theological faculty had granted Anna's request to permit Meisner's

leave on the condition that the professor, who was then serving as rector, would not suffer any

insult or defamation. Nor was Sigismund entirely opposed to Anna's desire to have a Lutheran

preacher, although he was not bargaining on such a luminary as Meisner. Tholuck explains the

situation:

> Although the patient elector permitted her to have her own Lutheran court preacher,
> she had not been able to resist the desire to buttress herself with such a famous
> preacher from the evangelical Zion as Meisner at the very Christmas celebration
> where her husband's fall was supposed to take place.[70]

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[67] Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum*, 19–24: "ut natura adiaphorum integra, libertas Christiana salva, et veritas inconcussa maneat."

[68] Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum*, 236: "Non immeritò jam aliquis quaerat, Num in eo Lutheranorum dogmata à Calvinianis saltem distent, ita ut in Ceremoniis ejusmodi quidem non convenient, interim in fundamento fidei, maximisque & gravissimis verae fidei articulis consentient." See also Meisner, *Meditationes Sacrae Dominicali, Epistola* (Wittenberg: Heyden, 1622),):(6: "In rebus autem adiaphoris semper respiciendum est ad fratres infirmos, ne illi offendantur, juxta Pauli monitum Rom. 14 v. 14. Quare uti ritus novi sine urgente causa non sunt invehendi, sic veteres quibus jam ad sueti sunt Christiani, multò munus abrogari debent, nisi evidenter id postulet, quale nihil ab adversariis allegari potest."

[69] Nischan, *Prince, People and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 1994, 167; Tholuck, *Geist*, 117–18.

[70] Tholuck, *Geist*, 118: "Obwohl der duldsame Churfürst ihr ihre eigenen lutherischen Hofprediger zu behalten gestattet hatte, so hatte sie doch dem Verlangen nicht widerstehen können, durch einen so berühmten Prediger aus dem evangelischen Zion wie Meisner gerade an demselben Weihnachtsfest sich stärken zu lassen, wo

However, Elector John Geoge of Saxony had not given his official approval to Meisner's journey and was quite unaware that it had taken place until it already had. When he received report of his theologian's excursion, he was enraged. The last thing he needed was to borrow trouble with his political rival to the north. He vented his frustration in a letter to Heinrich Höpfner (1582–1642), then professor of logic in Leipzig: "If Meisner were the elector, and I were Meisner, I would not have taken such a journey without his foreknowledge."[71] But Hoe, Meisner's close friend and the elector's truest counselor, intervened and smoothed things over by explaining the urgency of the young theologian's expedition.[72]

Immediately after Sigismund's death on December 23, 1619, Meisner traveled back to Berlin to console the elector's mourning widow. On this occasion, although he had the permission of his Saxon elector, he ran into trouble with the Brandenburg authorities. After having preached three sermons between January 14 and January 19 in the Brandenburg Castle, the privy counselors alleged that Meisner "had sneaked in to cause disturbance and sedition."[73] While the young Elector Wilhelm Georg was away on a trip to Prussia the governor of Putlitz warned Meisner that if he did not leave the capital at once he would be removed by force.[74] Following his disgraceful expulsion from Brandenburg, Meisner traveled to Jüterbog, a town

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der Abfall ihres Gemahls stattfinden sollte.

[71] Meisner, EM, 2:195, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 118. Hoe writes to Meisner: "Wie mir berichtet wird, so hat der Churfürst, als er von Deiner Reise hörte, den Ausspruch gethan "'Wenn Meisner Churfürst wäre und ich Meisner, wollte ich ohne sein Vorwissen solche Reise nicht gethan haben.'"

[72] Nischan, *Prince*, 167. See also Meisner, EM 2:195, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 118. Hoe writes rather soothingly to his friend: "Deine Berliner Reise hat mich nicht im mindesten verletzt, geschweige dass ich dadurch so aufgeregt worden, wie Du schreibst. –Blosse Erdichtung ist es, dass der Brief eines Deiner Kollegen mich erzürnt habe. Ich bekenne, dass es mir Leid gethan, dass aus enem Irrthum, der weder durch Dich noch durch Euer Kollegium verschuldet war, Deine Absicht dem Churfürsten nicht angezeigt worden. Bloss deshalb ist der Fürst etwas verletzt gewesen."

[73] Nischan, *Prince*, 167.

[74] Tholuck, *Geist*, 119–20.

forty miles southwest of Berlin, where he met Sibylla, the Saxon Electress, who was on her own way to Berlin to visit Anna. Meisner joined her voyage and served as her court preacher as they made their way (back) to the Brandenburg castle.[75]

The interpretations of these events in Berlin are significant to the historiography of Lutheran orthodoxy. Had Meisner embarked on this journey in order to comfort the electress within, as he purported, or to vindicate her without, and thus stir up the people? Historians have generally favored the latter interpretation, basing their accounts of the incidents on the dubious report of Abraham Scultetus (1566–1625), court preacher to the Palatinate Elector, Frederick V, whose interest in planting a Calvinist reformation in Brandenburg was no secret. Sculetus reports that Meisner had made such a public spectacle through his sermons at Cöln on the Spree (south side of Berlin) that the people began to revolt.[76] Such accounts reveal the extent to which it is possible to reduce a scenario to pure political intrigue, as though touching on controversial theological issues necessarily constituted some kind of diplomatic treachery. Referencing Daniel Heinrich Hering's *Beiträge zur Geschichte der reformirten Kirche* (1784), Tholuck remarks:

> When you read this entire course of events, that is, according to Hering's report, it certainly appears as though, in this case, this otherwise so moderate a man had become guilty of brazen recklessness in his polemic out of sheer hatred of Calvinism. But, as Hering himself admits, he was unable to obtain Meisner's sermons, which later appeared in print.[77]

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[75] Tholuck, *Geist*, 120.

[76] *Vita Sculteti*, in *Scrinium antiquarium, sive miscellanea Groningana nova: ad historiam reformationis ecclesiasticam praecipue spectantia*, 8 vols., ed. Daniel Gerdes (Spandaw, 1748–1765), 7 268. Likewise, Tholuck references the following accounts: Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1:117; Daniel Heinrich Hering, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der reformirten Kirche* (1784), 1:9. See also Hering, *Historische Nachricht von dem ersten Anfang der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche in Brandenburg und Preußen* (Halle, 1778); Karl Adolph Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen* (Breslau: Graß Barth & Co., 1821), 6:90; and G. A. H. Stenzel, *Geschichte des Preuss. Staats.* 5 vols. (Hamburg: 1830/54), 1:425. See Tholuck, *Geist*, 120.

[77] Tholuck, 120–21: "Liest man diesen ganzen Hergang, namentlich nach Herings Berichte, so scheint es allerdings, als müsse der bei allem Hasse des Calvinismus in seiner Polemik sonst so gemässigte Mann in diesem Falle sich grober Leidenschaftlichkeit schuldig gemacht haben. Wie Hering indess selbst gesteht, hat er sich nicht

Defenses of Meisner, his honest intentions in coming to Brandenburg, and his conduct in the palace can be found in the account of Johann Behm, "Calvinist Welcome,"[78] based on Meisner's own recollection of the events in a letter, which he related a year later in the preface to his printed sermons. Apparently, Meisner was well aware of the charges being levied against him. In order to set the record straight, therefore, and dispel the rumor that he had come to Berlin to instigate sedition, he had his sermons published on April 12, 1620, under title: "Seven Sermons on Diverse Biblical Texts."[79] He believed that as soon as his opponents took the occasion to read his sermons they would cease to slander him.[80] A brief look at Meisner's sermons will reveal what the Berliners had heard from Meisner's mouth on the day before the governor banished him from the city. The event took place in response to his third sermon preached on January 19 on the text of Isaiah 9:6: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given."[81] He asks: "Who are those for whom this Child was born and this Son given? Who may actually accept this Christ-gift and be comforted?" He reminds his hearers of what Calvin teaches in his *Institutes*, and what Beza shamelessly repeated at the Colloquy of Montbéliard,

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die später im Druck erschienenen Meisnerschen Predigten zu verschaffen gewusst."

[78] See Johann Behm, *Calvinischer Willkomm, welcher Herrn Balthsari Meisnero, der Heiligen Schrift Doctori, berümbten Wittenbergischen Professori, zu Berlin oder Cöln an der Spree, newlicher Zeit ist eingeschenckt und fürgesetzt worden / Allen fromm Recht Lutherischen Christen zur nothwendigen Nachricht publicieret* (Königsberg, 1620).

[79] Meisner, *Sieben Predigten / Uber Unterschiedene Biblische Text / Theils auff dem Churfürstl. Brandenb. Schloss/ theils auff Der Reise gehalten/ Und in den Druck verfertiget* (Wittenberg: John Richters Erben, 1620).

[80] See Meisner, *Sieben Predigten*, "Preface,"):(, viia: "Ob nun zwar solche schlechte Predigten in den druck zugeben ich mir niemals fürgenommen/ Jedoch weil die Calvinistische bezüchtigune eben starck gewesen/ als hab ich für eine notturfft zu sein erachtet/ die verrichtete *sermones* offentlich drucken zu lassen/ damit auch die wiedersacher selbige lesen/ und wol zusehen möchten/ Ob dan so viel unwarheiten darinnen zu befinden seind/ wie der Calvinische Geist fürgegeben/ Hoffe auch/ ein theil werde schamrot werden/ dz sie so geschwind verfahren und geurtheilet haben von den/ dz sie selber nit gehöret/ sondern felschlich von andern ist erzehlet und verlestert worden."

[81] Meisner, *Sieben Predigten*, 101–49.

namely, that it is intolerable to say that Christ died for the sins of those who are damned.[82] He

then turns a pastor's heart to his congregation, instructing them on how to respond to the

Calvinist error, and comforting them with simple syllogisms that disclose the Lutheran doctrine

of universal grace:

> Therefore seal this saying in your heart. Should a Calvinist try to persuade you that
> Christ was born for just a few people, only for the sake of the elect, then answer him:
> "By no means does he act in this way. A Child is born to us men. I am also a man.
> Therefore, I comfort myself with His birth. Christ has come to seek and save what
> was lost. I also was lost by nature. Therefore He has come for my sake too. Christ is
> the atonement for the sins of the whole world. I am also now a poor sinner in the
> world; therefore He will be an atonement for all of my sins as well."[83]

Meisner was scheduled to preach his fourth sermon two days later on the second half of the

same verse, "and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," with which he would

propound the rich Christology of the Lutheran confessions. However, he explains in the sermon

title:

> This sermon was supposed to have taken place in the Electoral-Brandenburg Palace
> but was forbidden because of the bitterness of the Calvinist spirit, and now its
> printing and reading must be allowed against his will since he did not wish to permit
> its being preached and heard at that time.[84]

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[82] Meisner, *Sieben Predigten*, 142–43: "Hier entstehet als bald eine Frage/ Wer doch die jenigen sein/ welchen dis Kind geboren/ und dieser Sohn gegeben? Wer sich solches Christgeschenks eigentlich anzunehmen unnd zugetrösten habe? . . . Also lehret *Calvinus* hin und wider in seinen *Institutionibus*/ deme folget auch *Beza*/ welcher im *Colloguio* zu Mompelgard ohne schew gesaget/ Es sey ihm eine unertregliche rede/ das Christus auch vor der jenigen Sünde/ welche verdampt werden/ warhafftig solle gestorben sein."

[83] Meisner, *Sieben Predigten*, 147–48: "So schleuss demnach dis Sprüchlein in dein Hertz hinein. Wil dich ein Calvinist bereden/ Christus sey wenig Menschen/ nur der ausserwehlten halber geboren/ so antworte ihm. . . . Mit nichten verhelt sichs also/ Ein Kind ist uns Menschen geboren/ Ich bin auch ein Mensch./ drumb getröste ich mich seiner Geburt. Christus ist kommen zu suchen unnd Selig zu machen/ das verloren ist/ Ich bin von natur auch verlohren gewest. Drumb wird er auch meinet halben kommen sein/ Christus ist die versöhnung für der gantzen Welt Sünde/ Ich bin auch in die Welt nun ein armer Sünder/ drumb wird er auch eine versöhnung sein für alle meine Missethat."

[84] Meisner, *Sieben Predigten*, 150: "Diese Predigt hat zwar auff dem Churf. Brand. Schloss den 21. *Januarij* sollen gehalten werden/ ist aber aus bitterlichkeit des Calvinistischen Geistes verboten worden/ welcher nun wider seinen willen das drucken und lesen verstatten mus/ ob er schon das halten und hören damals nicht nachlassen

The Lutherans were very sensitive to the question of who initiated the religious conflicts in Germany. They were convinced that is was the Calvinists. They were the ones who had launched those fighting words, insinuating that the Lutherans were "flesh eaters, blood-drinkers, blood-suckers, cannibals, God-swallowers, Capernaites,"[85] etc. They were the ones who introduced new ceremonies with the presumption that the Lutherans were still submerged in papal superstition. Meisner, for one, being humble and meek, clearly resented the implication that he had engaged in unnecessary polemics. In fact, to some he came across as too sensitive to the charge, which is to say, he made some of his Lutheran companions look bad for their own lack of polemical restraint. When later that year Meisner subtitled an anti-Calvinist tract, "without bitterness and personal attacks," his friend, Polycarp Leyser II, demanded an explanation:

> Why these words on the title? Either they have the Calvinist sense in which they wish to be treated by us, or the orthodox [sense]; if the latter then the opponents will be satisfied; if the former then, I fear, some of us will take the opportunity to render an unfavorable verdict on such writings as are written with a warmer zeal, since many of our own demand an all-too-mild treatment of the opponents.[86]

Leyser II was alluding to another issue, which concerned an intramural argument over the propriety of excessive polemics. Yet, despite their sometimes negative campaigning, or rather, thanks to Meisner's polemicizing over the comfort of the gospel, the Reformed aristocrats had little success in reforming the Lutheran population in Brandenburg; at the very least, they

wollen."

[85] Leonhard Hutter, *Irenicum vere christianum: Sive De Synodo Et Unione Evangelicorum Non-Fucata Concilianda* (Wittenberg: Paul Helvig, 1616), 15; in Leube, *Kalvinismus und Luthertum*, 105–6: "An non σαρκοφάγων, αἱματοπότων, sanguisugarum, anthropophagorum, Deivororum, Capernaitarum, Tyestarum, Cyclopum et nescio quibus alliis horrendes denominationibus in conspectu totius ecclesiae insignire nos cousueverunt."

[86] Meisner, EM, I:635, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 121–22: "Wozu diese Worte auf dem Titel? Entweder haben sie den calvinistischen Sinn, in welchem jene von uns behandelt zu seyn wünschen, oder den orthodoxen. Wenn das letztere, so wird den Gegnern damit nicht Genüge geschehen; wenn das erstere, so fürchte ich, dass Manche der Unsrigen davon Gelegenheit nehmen werden, über Schriften, welche mit wärmerem Eifer geschrieben sind, ein ungünstiges Urtheil zu fällen, da Viele von den Unsrigen eine allzumilde Behandlung der Gegner verlangen."

remained just as committed to Luther's Reformation as before Meisner came on the scene.[87]

The Socinian Provocation

On May 1, 1608, the same day Meisner was made an adjunct of the philosophical faculty and obtained his *licentia docendi philosophici*, the German Socinian, Valentin Schmalz (1572–1622), dedicated the German translation of the Rakow Catechism to the theological faculty of Wittenberg University.[88] Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628), the first to take up the provocation, opened a series of disputations on the articles of the Augsburg Confession (twelve disputations in 1609 on AC I–X; twelve disputations in 1610 on AC XI–XXI; and seven more on the second half of the AC in 1611).[89] Schmalz did not respond until 1614. By then, Meisner, who had recently ascended to the theology faculty, had joined the fray and was working more diligently than the rest of his colleagues to obtain the necessary Socinian sources. This proved to be an extremely difficult task, but his success on that score enabled him to propose a series of disputations in 1614. Since the young professor had ascertained an accurate statement of Socinian doctrine, he was able to take them on directly—something Franz was unable to do five years earlier. In fact, Meisner seems to have brought such clarity to their position that his dissertations appear to have been forbidden by the elector for fear that they would serve to popularize Socinian writings.[90]

Whether Meisner's proposal of a dissertation series should be credited with rousing interest in Socinianism among the students, or whether this came coincidentally from unitarians living

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[87] Nischan, *Prince*, 168.

[88] Wotschke, "Wittenberg I," 133.

[89] Wotschke, "Wittenberg I," 136; Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 175.

[90] Wotschke, "Wittenberg I," 142; Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 177.

privately within the walls of Wittenberg, it is certain that students from Rakow and Krakow had

already been requesting Socinian writings since before 1614.[91] By expediting their efforts,

however, Meisner accomplished more than he had intended; more than giving clarity, which was

his aim, his successful acquisition of sources stirred the Socinian pot and initiated a firestorm of

Socinian polemics that would endure for the remainder of the seventeenth century. The

controversy with the Socinians became inevitable when, in November 1615, a zealous unitarian

from Nürnberg, named John Vogel, came to Wittenberg to win Socinian converts among the

students. On November 8 he took part as the respondent to the seventh of Jacob Martini's

disputations against "Blasphemies of the Jews Concerning the Messiah."[92] Vogel boasts in a

letter that Professors Franz and Martini were disappointed to learn that due to his persuasive

response and impressive display of knowledge of Jewish messianic teachings, one student

defected to the Socinian persuasion, and serious doubt was raised in others.[93] On November 19,

Meisner received a letter from Johann Schröder, pastor of the Lorenzkirche in Nürnberg, in

which he pleaded for a Wittenberg response to Vogel's public attack on the Lutheran articles of

faith.[94] The theological faculty finally issued an official response to the Rakow Catechism by the

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[91] Albert Grauer wrote in a letter to Meisner dated January 6, 1614, cited in Wotschke, "Wittenberg I," 142: "Libri illorum iamiam leguntur a multis etiam iunioribus." Another portion of the letter is cited in Theodor Wotschke, "Wittenberg und die Unitarier Polens. II.," 65: "Nuper mihi relatum ex vestra academia quosdam studiosos Rakoviam et Cracoviam per tabellarium scripsisse et libros photinianos inde petisse. An non propter iuniores disputandum, ut illis scrupuli forsan iniecti eximerentur? Certe controversia non est adeo exigui momenti, ut quibusdam placet. Non raro argumenta illorum affirmantia et negantia aliquid in recessu habent, quod accuratam indaginem requireit, ut solide excutiantur. Sed procul dubio dnn. collegae tui alias et graviores sui consilii rationes habeant, quae quia me latent, absit, ut temere illis contradicam. Meam exponere volui mentem."

[92] Jacob Martini, *Disputatio VII: De Messia probans contra Judaeos Jesum Christum esse verum Messiam. In academia Witteberensi praeposita praeside dn. Jacobo Martini respondent Johanne Vorgelio Noribergensi ad diem 8. Novembris* (Wittenberg: 1615), 79–88.

[93] See Gustav Georg Zeltner, *Historia Crypto-Socinismi Altorfinae quondam academiae infesti arcana* (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1729), 400, in Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 69.

[94] Meisner, EM, November 19, 1615, cited in Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 69: "Superioribus meis literis, quas Schwaegertinus noster, academiae vestrae studiosus, exhibere debuit, significabam in collegio vestro, nisi me fama fefellit, versari quondam Noribergensem Vogelium, inclyti senatus nostri stipendiarium, qui in eam vocatus sit

end of 1618.[95]

The nature of the Socinian provocation, the chief issues involved, and their basic intentions towards the Wittenberg theologians became apparent in large part through Friedrich Balduin's "Logical Disputation Concerning the Theological Consensus between the Photinians and Calvinists," which he held on December 11, 1618.[96] Basing his critique on the influential book, "Instruction of the Chief Points of the Christian Religion," written by Christoph Ostorodt (d. 1611), close friend and amanuensis to Faustus Socinus,[97] Balduin discloses the Socinian objective: they desired a union between Lutherans and Socinians.[98] Such unity would consist of agreement on the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. Such doctrine, says Ostorodt in his short disquisition on Scripture, must be explicitly stated in Scripture and thus immediately within the grasp of human reason and ethics. Only such doctrines conforming to human ability may be regarded as necessary for salvation.[99] Ostorodt maintains that God would be unjust "if it were not within a person's ability to understand and apprehend divine things revealed to him by God through external means."[100] Olaf Reese summarizes Schmalz's thought in the Rakow Catechism:

suspicionem, ac si photinianorum recentium erroribus fuerit implicates. Quad de causa a R. T. D., illum ut observaret, petii. Crevit interea suspicio illa, cui non ita pridem magna facta est accession per epistolam quandam dn. D. Graweri, qua ipsum antehac acriter apud Jenenses photinianismum defendisse scribit."

[95] See *Consilia theologica Witebergensia* I, 661–763, in Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 72–73.

[96]Friedrich Balduin, *Disputatio Logica de Theologiae Photinianae Consensu cum Calviniana, Natura et Argumentis quibus ex Scripturis contra S.S. Trinitatem pugnat* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1618).

[97] Christoph Ostorodt, *Vnterrichtung von den vornemsten Hauptpuncten der Christlichen Religion: in welcher begriffen ist fast die gantze Confession oder Bekentnis der Gemeinen im Königreich Polen, Grossfürstenthumb Littawen, und anderen zu der Kron Polen gehörenden Landschafften* (Rackow: Sebastian Sternatzki, 1612).

[98] Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 77; Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 180.

[99] Ostorodt, *Unterrichtung*, 6–12. Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 184: "*facilis et perspicua in iis quae ad salutem prorsus sunt necessaria.*"

[100] Ostorodt, *Unterrichtung*, 9: "Welche offenbarung wenn sie vorhanden ist / so kan der mensch nicht allein die Göttliche sachen verstehen und begreiffen / sondern er wird auch drumb gestrafft warden / wo er sie nicht begreifft: wie aus dem ort Pauli / welcher erst erkläret worden / bezeuget wird: welchs den nich geschehen könt / sintemal Gott gerecht ist / woe s nicht in des menschen macht were / göttliche sachen / wenn sie ihm eusserlicher weie von Gott offenbaret warden / zuverstehen und zubegreiffen." See discussion in Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*,

"The foundations (*fundamenta et principia*) of the Christian religion require only simple assent (*simplicem assensum*) and can be readily understood."[101] Thus, by implication, the Lutherans sin by demanding assent not to Scripture alone but to a system of mere inferences from Scripture. While there are certainly doctrinal differences between the Lutherans and Socinian, these differences do not touch on doctrines that are necessary for salvation, and therefore must not stand in the way of union.[102]

The Lutherans needed to clarify two matters: first, what is the nature of a fundamental doctrine? Second, he considered it necessary to prove the ethical implications of those doctrines, which distinguished them from the Socinians. Balduin distinguishes between three Scriptural "*fundamenta*" that are opposed to the Socinian principle of pure reason: (1) the foundation or principle of our cognition (*Est fundamentum ac principium nostrae cognitionis*), that is, the foundation of the prophets and apostles (Eph. 2:20), the written Word of God; (2) the foundation of our salvation (*fundamentum nostrae salutis*), which is God himself, one in essence and triune in persons (John 17:3), and Christ our cornerstone (1 Cor. 3:11); and (3) the foundation of our eternal predestination (*fundamentum nostrae praedestinationis aeternae*).[103]

In 1619 Meisner extended Balduin's discussion through the publication of his own *Brief*

184.

[101] Schmalz, *Praefatio Refutationis,* cited in Hans Werner Gensichen, *Die Wittenberger antisozinianische Polemik. Ein Beitrag zur Auseinandersetzung von Reformation und Humanismu* (Ph.D. diss, Göttingen, 1942), 6, n31, in Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 184–85. "ex ipsis sacris litteris earundem interpretationem petendam esse docemus adeoque ex ore magistri Spiritus Sancti toti petemus."

[102] Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 180.

[103] Balduin, *De Theologiae Photinianae Consensu*, 33: "Fundamenta omnia destruit, ac evertit, ut merito possimus conqueri cum Daviid ex Psal. 11,3. fundamenta destruunt [Photiniani principiis rationis], quid faciet justus? In scripturis autem triplicis potissimum sit mentio fundamenti. 1. *Est fundamentum ac principium nostrae cognitionis,* quod vocatur fundamentum Prophetarum ac Apostolorum Eph. 2,20. Estqu; scriptum Dei verbum. 2. *Fundamentum nostrae salutis,* quod est Deus ipse, unus essentia, & trinus personis Johan. 17.vers.3. & Christus 1. Corinth. 3.11, qui propterea angularis saepe lapis appellatur. Psal. 118.22. 1 Pet.2.6.7. 3. *Fundamentum nostrae praedestinationis aeternae* 2. Tim. 2.vers.19."

Consideration of Photinian Theology.[104] He wrote this treatise in response to the unionistic

overtures expressed by Socinus in 1599 in a book bearing the title: *That Evangelicals Should be*

Totally United with the Association of Those they Falsely Call Arian and Ebionite.[105] Meisner

summarizes the argument of this "seductive little book" in the following syllogism: In any

religion (1) there are teachings of such a kind that if anybody endorses them they can hardly be

free from vices or sins; (2) some things are conceded that are opposed to Christ's

commandments; (3) the less one is acquainted with the way of salvation, and grasps it with

certainty, the more errors are fostered that obstruct it; (4) nobody who aspires to the kingdom of

heaven should be content with resting completely in a religion in which many things are

unknown, but are nonetheless worthy of understanding. But the religion of the Evangelicals fits

these descriptions. Therefore, nobody should be content with that religion or completely rest in

it.[106] Meisner structures his lengthy and painstaking examination according to the five lines of

inquiry found in Socinus' book:

(1) Whether it is necessary to remain without sin against Evangelical doctrine in order to obtain the kingdom of God.
(2) Whether in the religion of those who are commonly called Evangelicals doctrines and opinions are held which hardly in any way permit the one who holds them to remain without sin.

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[104] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio Theologiae Photinianae, Proutjj eam Faustus Socinus descripsit in libello suasorio, cui titulus: Quod Evangelici omnino deberent se illorum coetui adjugere, qui falso Ariani atque Ebionitae vocentur* (Wittenberg: Heiden, 1619).

[105] See Faustus Socinus, *Quod Evangelici omnino deberent se illorum coetui adjugere, qui falso Ariani atque Ebionitae vocentur* (Rackow: Sebastian Sternacius, 1611), cited in Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 77.

[106] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 6: "In quacunque religione 1. habentur talia dogmata, quibus approbatis, nemo facile a vitiis et peccatis liber esse potest, 2. quaedam conceduntur Christi praeceptis adversantia, 3. errores foventur impedientes, quo minus quis aeternae salutis viam recte aut norit, aut certe teneat, 4. multa ignorantur, quorum cognitio inutilis esse non potest; ista religione nemo, qui ad coeleste regnum aspirat, contentus esse, et in ea prorsus acquiescere debet.

Sed talis est religio Evangelicorum.

Quare illa nemo debet contentus esse, vel in ea prosus

acquiescere."

(3) Whether in the religion of the same Evangelicals any things are conceded that oppose the commandments of Christ.
(4) Whether there are many errors in the doctrine of the Evangelicals that may easily obscure and impede the way of eternal salvation.
(5) Whether among them many things are unknown, while many other trifling errors are promoted and defended.[107]

It is evident from the chapter headings that Meisner is dealing with one multifaceted ethical question, indeed, a practical question. Socinus would suggest that for the Lutherans to require agreement on non-fundamentals—articles not conforming to human ability—is itself supremely unethical because it hinders the perfect knowledge of God and Christ, which is absolutely necessary for salvation. However, such human perfection required to enter the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19–21) is not negated through occasional sinning, but rather by habitual sinning; wherefore occasional errors in doctrine do not exclude a person from heaven (chapter one). When, therefore, Lutherans hold certain doctrines, or rather, trifling opinions (chapter five), as necessary for salvation, they themselves are necessarily sinning (chapters two and three) and likely impeding the way of salvation (chapter four). Among such "teachings and opinions" that are both unnecessary for union and necessarily causing the person who holds them to sin are predestination, bound choice, and justification (*satisfactio vicaria*).[108] A few samples of Meisner's line of argumentation from chapters two and four should suffice to show how he fulfilled his vocation as a practical-orthodox theologian.

As for Socinus's claim that the Evangelical doctrine of "absolute election" militates against

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[107] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 8–9: "(1) Num ad regnum Dei possidendum necesse sit, in nullo peccato Evangelicae doctrinae adverso permanere. (2) In eorum, qui Evangelici vulgo appellantur, religione, dogmata et sententias haberi, quae vix ullo modo permittant, ut qui eas tenet, in nullo peccato maneat. (3) In eorundem Evangelicorum religione quaedam concedi, quae cum Christi praeceptis pugnent. (4) In Evangelicorum doctrina non paucos esse errores, qui facile ipsam salutis aeternae viam obscurent, atque impediat. (5) Apud eosdem multa ignorari, et plures alios licet leviores, foveri et propugnari errores."

[108] Socinus, *Quod Evangelici*, 10–23.

zeal for piety, Meisner's first order of priority is to clarify the difference between Lutherans and

Calvinists. Election and reprobation are not absolute, but conditional, to wit, "*in praevisione*

fidei."[109] The Lutheran doctrine properly understood does indeed promote "the practice of our

church" (*Ecclesiae nostrae praxin*), which consists of piety towards God, charity towards

neighbor, and sobriety towards oneself (Titus 2:12). For the same reason the doctrine greatly

discourages every kind of impiety, iniquity, and self-indulgence. Meisner explains:

> When the doctrine of election is explained with competence, it commends such
> virtues and counsels against such vices. For, behold, God elects you by grace; and
> will you not worship, fear, love, and honor him? Your names are written in one book
> with other believers, and you will share in their eternal joy; and will you not sincerely
> love them and attend them with brotherly kindness? You have been elected so that
> you might live a holy life; and will you cling to the world and indulge your appetites?
> Are you not dread to offend your God with your sins, by whom you have been bought
> at such a high price and so generously chosen?[110]

Such rousing words do not strike one as a fierce polemic against an anti-trinitarian sect.

Rather, written in the second person, they come across as a sermon directed at the faithful in

order to move them to a living piety. Such a manner of writing may not be divorced from a

consideration of Meisner's maturing view of theology as a practical discipline, or from his idea

of the centrality of preaching in the academy. Nor has he forgotten the risk associated with

treating heresies to the light of clarification, and that just a few years prior, due to John Vogel's

persuasive arguments, several university students had been entertaining serious doubts

concerning Lutheran teaching. Thus, as Meisner tackles this "seductive little book," one should

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[109] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 50. For a study of the origin of the phrase, "*in praevisione fidei*," and a comparison of the doctrine of election in the Formula of Concord and Lutheran orthodoxy, see Robert Preus, "The Doctrine of Election as Taught by the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians" *Quartalschrift* 55:4 (1958) , 229–61.

[110] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 53: "*Nam Ecce!* Deus ex gratia te elegit, et non coles ipsum, non timebis, non amabis, non celebrabis? Uni libro inscriptus es cum aliis fidelibus, eosque socios habebis aeterni gaudii: et tu illos non sincere diliges, non fraterna benevolentia prosequeris? Electus es, ut sancte vivas, et tu seculo adhaerebis, genio indulgebis, et DEUM tuum, a quo tam care emtus, et tam benigne assumtus es, peccatis offendere non vereberis?"

expect him to personalize his message if for no other reason than to strengthen his students in their faith. He continues to elaborate the distinct comfort of election as the supreme teaching of divine grace.

> Now ponder the mercy of God. Behold, he has elected you from eternity; he has created in time those whom he elected, redeemed those he created, justified those he redeemed, preserved those he justified, glorified those he preserved, which is the end of the election of grace. Rejoice on account of these kindnesses, o faithful soul, and offer the sacrifice of praise to your God, singing with the apostle in Eph. 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, in Christ."[111]

There is a world of difference between an election of grace and the "absolute election" held by the Calvinists. True, says Meisner, the absolute decree of predestination is opposed to zeal of piety and the Holy Scriptures. In setting the record straight, he seizes the opportunity to instruct his fellow Lutherans by citing article XI of the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, where it is affirmed that God's eternal decree "is not to be sought in that secret heavenly place and in the inscrutable counsel of God," which only serves to "arouse and confirm despair in the minds of men."[112] He thus turns to his Calvinist readers, too, as though to drifting evangelical brethren. He admonishes them that Socinus wins the argument, or at least makes a very convincing case, when he appeals to the false doctrine of an absolute decree. He argues that the Calvinists do not have what it takes to respond to these new heretics, nor can they easily convert them for as long

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[111] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 56: "Nam cogita Dei misericordiam, Ecce! ab aeterno te elegit, electum in tempore creavit, creatum redemit, redemtum justificavit, justificavit conservavit, conservatum glorificabit, qui finis est electionis gratuitae. Gaude ob haec beneficia, o fidelis anima, & Deo sacrificium laudis immola, cum Apostolo canens ex Eph. 1v.3: *Benedictus sit Deus & Pater Domini Iesu Christi, qui benedixit nos in omni benedictione spirituali in coelestibus, in Christo*."

[112] FC SD XI, 9, in *Liber Concordia: Libri Symbolici Ecclesiae Evangeliae* (Dresden, 1580), 800, quoted in Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 57–59: "Aeterna electio seu Ordinatio Dei ad vitam aeternam, non nude in arcano illo Coelesti et imperscrutibilis Dei consilio consideranda est. . . . Quare haec nequaquam erit vera et sana sententia, aut legitimus usus doctrinae de aeterna praedestinatione DEI, quibus vel impoenitentia, vel desperatio in hominum mentibus excitatur aut confirmatur."

as they promote this "crude opinion of predestination." And, besides, it puts orthodoxy in a bad

light. He continues:

> And, indeed, on account of this absurd hypothesis of theirs, they bring it about that
> the Lord is blasphemed among the people, so that the entire doctrine of the
> Evangelicals is rendered suspect and many shrink back from the orthodox and
> Christian faith, nor wish to accept it because they hear such profane opinions
> concerning God and his divine decrees.[113]

Compared to the exaggerated claims, common in Lutheran polemics, to the effect that the

Calvinists were guilty of the same errors, and even to the same degree, as the antitrinitarians,

Meisner takes a much more friendly approach. His appeal to the "entire doctrine of the

Evangelicals" and description of the Calvinist teaching as a "crude opinion" and "hypothesis," he

seems to suggest that theirs was an error in inference. While it certainly touched the foundation,

and he makes no allowance for it, Meisner is nevertheless certain that in the case of the Socinians

they are dealing with a completely different kind of foe. Their doctrines not only affected, but

also completely undercut, the foundations of the Christian faith.

Inasmuch as Meisner's orthodoxy pivots on the question of eternal salvation, it is fitting

that the largest part of his *Consideratio* should be dedicated to the fourth question (385 octavo

pages) regarding those Evangelical opinions that (allegedly) have the potential to impede

salvation.[114] According to Socinus, such "errors" include primarily the Lutheran teachings of the

Trinity, the distinction between the Old and New Testaments, Justification, the Lord's Supper,

and Baptism.[115] In response to the claim that these articles are not "fundamental," but altogether

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[113] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 61: "Et sane faciunt, ut propter absurdas istas hypotheses blasphemetur nomen Domini inter populos, ut tota Evangelicorum doctrina reddatur suspecta, ut multi a fide Orthodoxa et Christiana abhorreant, nec illam suscipere velint, quia tam profanas de Deo et decretis divinis sententias audiunt."

[114] See "De erroribus salutem impedimentibus," in Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 247–632.

[115] See Socinus, *Quod Evangelici*, 27–28; Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 249–50**:** "Socinus caput hoc orditur ab extenuatione articulorum fidei fundamentalium, ita scribens pag.27. *Sed jam ostendendum nobis est, in Evangelicorum doctrina errores esse non paucos, qui licet per se ipsi aeternam salutem non adimant, tamen facile*

dispensable, Meisner presents a scientific analysis of fundamental articles ascribing to each of the alleged errors a particular soteriological function in the establishing of the Christian religion. He explains that there are two kinds of principles: fundamental principles and non-fundamental principles. The former must be known and assented to in order for a person to be saved. With respect to the latter, one may err and still be saved.[116] Fundamental principles, furthermore, or articles of faith necessary for salvation, may be considered in two ways. (1) With respect to themselves (*ratione sui*) the aforementioned articles are objectively fundamental (*ab objecto*), because they set forth the causes of our salvation (*caussas salutis nostrae*). The *efficient* cause is the essence and will of God, which includes both his eternal decree and its temporal execution; the *meritorious* cause is the person and work of Christ; the *instrumental* cause is the word and sacraments (God's means) and faith (our means); the *material* cause is man and his *status* of understanding; the *formal* cause is the *modus* of justification; and the *final* cause is the resurrection of the dead, salvation, and eternal life. (2) Considered with respect to us (*ratione nostri*), the same articles are fundamental because it is necessary for us to know them (*a necessitate notitiae*) in order to be saved. Thus, everything that has the nature of establishing and causing (*fundandi et caussandi*) our eternal salvation should be considered fundamental *per se*; and anybody who does not know such causes, or opposes them, is not a believer, and therefore cannot be saved.[117]

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impediunt, quo minus quis recte viam, quae ad eam ducit, cognitam habeat, perq. eam gradiatur. Subnectit autem articulos *de* Deo, Filio Dei, et Spriritu S. *de* discrimine praeceptorum Veteris et Novi Testamenti, unde doctrina Justificationis dependet; *de* Coena Domini, et *de* Baptismo."

[116] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 253.

[117] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 254–55. Meisner summarizes his point: "*Breviter*: Quicunque articulus directe constituit vel explicat caussam quandam salutis nostrae, is fundamentalis est, quia fundamentum, principium et caussa equipollent, et ideo fundamentalis dicitur, quia rationem habet fundandi et caussandi salutem nostram sempiternam, cujus caussas modumque qui ignorat, vel impugnat, is incredulus est, et per consequens, salvari nequit" (254).

While such an analytical treatment of the subject, with its marked reliance on Aristotelian metaphysics, may strike one as tedious, or perhaps impractical, in comparison to his homiletical tack above, it reveals the same concern. Clear distinctions must be made, and they must do more than Balduin's classification of *fundamenta* (cognition, salvation, and election), in order to make the case that correct doctrine and correct understanding—in short, orthodoxy—necessarily concerns the eternal salvation of sinners. Meisner's distinction between fundamental articles *ratione sui* (as objective causes of salvation) and *rationi nostri* (as doctrines that must be known for salvation) is very important for his later conception of the nature of theology and the development of the theological system. Employing an analytical (resolutive, intentional) method as opposed to the traditional synthetic (speculative) order of the *loci*-tradition, the *Systema* was designed to serve a very narrow purpose—to provide the practicing theologian with the necessary doctrine for leading sinful human beings to salvation.[118]

The characteristic lucidity, with which Meisner composed his analysis of Socinian thought, merited a response like no other anti-Socinian writing. Although the Rackow Synod of 1626 had commissioned a certain Peter Morzkowski to respond to several philosophical critiques from Wittenberg, including those of Andreas Keßler (1595–1643) and Jacob Martini,[119] it was not until 1635 Jonas Schlichting (1592–1661) provided a literary response, and this critique was aimed at Meisner's *Consideration*, though the author had been dead for nearly ten years.[120] Walter Reese

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[118] See below, chapter seven.

[119] See Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 76. See also Andreas Keßler, *Logicae Photimanae examen, Seu: Principiorum Logicorum, quae in Photinianorum Scriptis occurrunt, Consideratio* (Wittenberg: Tham, 1624); *Metaphysicae Photinianae Partis Generalis Examen, Seu: Principiorum, Ad Generalem Metaphysicae Partem pertinentium, quae in Photinianorum Scriptis occurrunt, Consideratio* (Wittenberg, Tham, 1627). Jacob Martini, *Disputationes Septem de Vera Iusu Christi Servatoris Nostri Unici Deitate* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1618).

[120] Jonas Schlichting, *Quaestio, num ad regnum Dei possidendum necesse sit in nullo peccato evangelicae doctrinae adverso manere, contra Balthasarem Meisnerum a Jona Szlichtingio a Bukowiec disputata.* (Pauli Sternacii, 1635.) The following year he published a follow-up tract: *Quaestiones duae, una, num in evangelicorum*

considers Schlichting's reasoning for singling out Meisner's *Consideration*:

> It is possible that Meisner's writings qualified as distinctly "orthodox" statements, in which the questions at issue were clarified in a manner that was attractively elementary; perhaps Schlichting also wanted to pick the Lutheran-Socinian controversy back up again at the point where it had left off.[121]

When the Socinians dedicated their catechism to the Wittenberg theologians on May 6, 1608, Schlichting continued to argue the case for union with the Evangelicals. It was in his mind not only possible to come to salvation without pure doctrine, but it was necessary that such a union should take place in order that the Evangelicals might experience rational and ethical enlightenment concerning the way of true salvation. At any rate, when the controversy between the Lutherans and Socinians resurfaced in the 1650s, it was the result of Abraham Calov's (1612–1686) use of anti-Meisner writings as the normative representation of Socinian thought. Schlichting's writings, which mark "the end of the [Socinian] polemics triggered by the Dedication of the Rakow Catechism," set the stage for the debates over metaphysics, the rationality of faith, and the hermeneutical role of reason in the interpretation of the Scriptures.[122]

Conclusion

In the face of total breakdown of theological conversation across confessional boundaries, as was undeniably the case by the turn of the seventeenth century, Lutheran orthodox polemics aimed primarily to build confidence in the less educated Lutheran population. Whether they

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religione dogmata habeantur, quae vix ullo modo permittant, ut qui ea amplectatur, nullo in peccato perseveret, altera, num in eadem religione quaedam concedantur Christi legibus inconcessa, contra Balthasarem Meisnerum a Jona Schlichtingio disputatae (Pauli Sternacii, 1636). See discussion in Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 180–81.

[121] Reese, *Lutherische Metaphysik*, 180–81: "Möglicherweise galten Meisners Schriften als prononciert-'orthodoxe' Äußerungen, in welchen die behandelten Fragen grundlegend-verbindlich erörtert werden; vielleicht wollte Schlichting auch die lutherisch-sozinianische Kontroverse an der Stelle ihres Abbruchs wieder aufnehmen und ab dort aufarbeiten."

[122] Wotschke, "Wittenberg II," 79.

accomplished this objective through a clarification of the *status controversiae* or by means of managing public impressions, their efforts tended to reveal the more-or-less one-dimensional side of Lutheran orthodoxy to the apparent diminution of such innovative features as may be perceived in their scholarship. Hans Leube observes that the sheer number of polemical writings during this age reveal less of their theological erudition than a sense of responsibility ("Verantwortlichkeitsbewußtsein").[123] In other words, they were watchmen, stewards of a Wächteramt, serving a cause greater than them. To secure the perimeters of the Augsburg Confession, lest faithful Lutherans within the fold should defect to false religions without—this was a humble service, and the more faithful they were to their task the more venom and bitterness they often employed. Lutheran polemics was also an inherently practical service. Even where Meisner's arguments became subtler and more involved, as for instance in his *Brief Consideration of Socinian Theology*, his intent was to direct his readers—the Socinians had begun with ethical and practical questions—to the overarching question of how a person is saved eternally. He was in the process of articulating a goal-oriented, and in that sense, practical, theology, a subject that will be explained in greater depth in chapter seven. There is no doubt, however, that in the course of clarifying the practical orientation of theology, Meisner also raised some theoretical problems that would be the focus of some of the more abstract writings of Abraham Calov a generation later.

Balthasar Meisner was as dedicated—perhaps even more dedicated—to polemical theology as his colleagues. He was the first on the Wittenberg faculty to respond to Reihing, and with

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[123] Leube, *Calvinismus und Luthertum*, 42–43: "Die große Zahl der Streitschriften im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie zeugt also nicht von der Gelehrtheit der Theologen dieser Zeit, sondern höchstens von dem Verantwortlichkeitsbewußtsein, mit dem sie alle theologischen Streitigkeiten verfolgten. So glaubten die Professoren ihren Studenten und die Geistlichen ihren Pfarrkindern am besten zu dienen, so glaubten alle Theologen aus Pflichtbewußtsein und Gewissenbedenken handeln zu müssen."

certain success; he was physically on the ground preaching on the day of Sigismund's public conversion, even without John George's permission; he was the first to acquire primary sources of the Socinian position, and his efforts had the most lasting impact on the adversaries. He was so committed to defending the boundaries of the Lutheran religion, both personally and vocationally, that his funeral preacher, Pastor Wallenburger, praised him as: "Meisner, you Joshua of the evangelical Church!"[124] Yet, he was also aware of the danger of going too far and spoiling the positive outcome that might have come from a gentler approach.[125] And he certainly lived up to his mark as "*Beati Mites*." According to one biographer, Gottlieb Spitzel (1639-1691): "There was no place for anger or hatred in his heart; neither his face, nor his expression, nor his color, nor his words, nor his hands, nor his step ever showed a hint of feelings of anger."[126] He was celebrated, even during his life, as a paragon of piety and prudence. John Schmidt, professor in Strasbourg, intimated in a letter to Henry Höpfner in Leipzig: "If the unholy theological controversies of this time should be lifted, there would be no better man to do it than Meisner."[127] Even in controversy, with the genuine intention of building faith and piety in the people, he wanted to be a pastor to the flock.[128]

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[124] Tholuck, *Geist*, 35.

[125] Meisner, *Pia Desideria*, 19: "Nimia vehementia & acerbitas in tractandis controversiis."

[126] Spitzel, *Templum*, 63.

[127] Tholuck, *Geist*, 26-27.

[128] Meisner, *Meditationes Sacrae In Evangelia Dominicalia* (Wittenberg: Heyden, 1622), A4a: "sed popularem potius concionatorum agere." Tholuck's translation in *Geist*, 75: "Ich habe ein Volksprediger seyn wollen."

CHAPTER FIVE

MEISNER'S INTRAMURAL CONFLICTS AND DEVOTIONAL THEOLOGY

Das sehe ich, das derjenige nicht ein Theologe ist, welcher große Dinge weiß und vieles lehrt, sondern der heilig und als ein Gottesgelehrter (theologice) lebt.[1]

Introduction

Before the publication of August Tholuck's *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im Verlaufe des 17. Jahrhunderts* little more was known of orthodox piety than could be gleaned from Gottfried Arnold's *Unparteysche-Kirchen und Ketzerhistorie*.[2] Arnold suggests an irreducible divide between the type of devotional theology generally associated with Johann Arndt (1555–1621) and nearly everything produced by the Wittenberg theologians. What was the relationship between correct doctrine and the practice of Christian piety in the context of Wittenberg orthodoxy? The present chapter will explore the role of normative Lutheran theology in the tradition of Lutheran devotional piety, first, by reviewing the intramural conflicts, of which Meisner was front and center, that placed Wittenberg orthodoxy in a challenging position. Second, it will examine the proposal that there was a crisis of piety around the turn of the seventeenth century. Finally, the chapter will look at Meisner's devotional theology with special consideration of the role of dogmatics in Lutheran devotional theology.

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[1] Martin Luther, *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche schriften*, vol. 4, ed. Johann Georg Walch (St. Louis: Concordia, 1880–1910), 129.

[2] Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie. Vom Anfang des Neuen Testamentes Biß auf das Jahr Christi* 1688 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967).

Intramural Conflicts

Almost as troubling as their opponents outside the boundaries of orthodoxy were the so-called "fanatics" within. Although Luther had used this term, "fanatic" to refer to anybody, including Zwingli and Oecolampadius, who denied the true presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper,[3] Lutheran orthodoxy had in mind Luther's original understanding of "Schwärmgeister," or those who run without a call and claim prophecy apart from the external Word.[4] Especially in the seventeenth century, these preachers without regular calls tended to latch onto versions of Caspar Schwenkfeld's radical teachings (see SD XII), and especially the view that Christ's flesh is of "divine origin."[5] Coming from outside of the universities the fanatics were not theologians in the traditional sense; theirs was a grassroots, homegrown, popular theology—rather like the "Theologia teutsch"—that drew heavily on strands of medieval mysticism.

The genius back in the family tree of seventeenth-century fanaticism was a certain Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541), a Swiss born physician, whom posterity remembers as Paracelsus.[6] A sort of mad scientist in his own right, he was known in his day for his progressive and unorthodox theories of regenerative medicine, which combined principles of alchemy, Cabbalism, and other obscure fields of knowledge.

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[3] Luther originally used the term, "fanatic," to describe the radical reforms of Andreas Karlstadt, Thomas Müntzer, and others who rejected church government and the external means of grace. See Luther's "Letter to the Christians at Strassburg in Opposition to the Fanatic Spirit" (1624), *LW* 40:61–76. However, see also Luther's "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ—against the Fanatics" (1526), *LW* 36:331–61; and "That These Words of Christ, "This is my Body. Etc.," Still Stand Firm against the Fanatics" (1527), *LW* 37:5–150.

[4] See Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets" (1525), *LW* 40:70–223.

[5] The heavenly origin of Christ's flesh corresponds to Schwenckfeld's peculiar understanding of progressive "deification," whereby children of Adam are transformed into children of God. See Caspar Schwenckfeld, *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, 19 vols., ed. Chester David Hartranft (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1907–1961), 7:304.

[6] For a thorough study of Paracelsus and his reception among orthodox Lutherans, see Carlos Gilly, "Theophrastia Sancta: Paracelsianism as a Religion in Conflict with the Established Churches," in *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation, His Ideas and their Transformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 151–86.

However, Paracelsus also disseminated influential theological views based on his personal experiences with the medieval church, his practice of medicine, and his independent theological book learning.[7] Six years after abandoning the "stone church" (Mauerkirche) of Rome, he wrote a little book entitled "On the Hidden Secret of Theology," in which he argued that the pope as well as every other denomination of theologians belonged to the same class; they were all "Mauertheologen." He writes:

> One man seeks the gospel amongst the Papists in Rome, another amongst the Zwinglians, a third one amongst the Lutherans, a fourth one amongst the Anabaptists etc. Do not believe any of these, because it can never be found there. [...] they call each other impostors, and that is true; because that is what they are. That they call each other liars, now that is true; because they lie. That they call each other false Christians, now that is true; because on both sides they are false Christians. That they call each other false prophets, is all true: because God has not sent them to be prophets, but to be destroyers of their own kingdom….[8]

Paracelsus's aim in publishing his theological insights was not to establish a new sect; quite the opposite, it was to challenge the legitimacy of all religious denominations and deny them their reason for existing.[9] The classic example of fanaticism in late-Reformation Lutheranism was associated with a Lutheran pastor from the little Saxon town of Zschopau from 1567 to 1588, named Valentin Weigel (1533–1588).[10] Weigel decried the public ministry of the church as

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[7] See Theophrastus von Hohenheim, *De septem punctis idolatriae christianae* (1525) in *Paracelsus, Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Kurt Goldammer (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1986), 2:3, 26–27.

[8] Paracelsus, *De secretis secretorum theologiae*, in Paracelsus, *Sämtliche Werke* 2;3, 175–76, cited in Gilly, "Theophrastia," 152–53.

[9] Gilly, "Theophrastia," 153.

[10] Valentin Weigel (1533–1588): Next to his "schön Gebetbüchlein" of 1575, his most important work is *Dialogus de Christianismo* of 1584. See Georg Müller: "Weigel, Valentin," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 41 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1896), 472–76; Winfried Zeller, *Die Schriften Valentin Weigels, in Historische Studien* 370 (Berlin, 1940); Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 2:1088–1114; Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und Theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten außer der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, Jena 1733–1736 (Facsimile reprint Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt 1985), IV.2:1024-1090. Walch writes: "Unter den Fanaticis, welche sonderlich in Deutschland bekannt worden, sind die Weigelianer als die Vornehmsten mit anzusehen."

a "dead thing" and urged his hearers to protect their "inner self" from the absolution of the priest:

let the "outer man" carry the yoke, but know that the rite itself is a human fable.[11] For Weigel the

inward life of the Christian before God must be sharply distinguished from the trappings of

external ceremonies and confessional denominations.[12] When asked in earnest why he signed the

Formula of Concord in 1577, he responded:

> I have not subscribed to their doctrine or human books, although I could indeed
> tolerate it, since their intent was upon the apostolic Scriptures, and the same was
> preferred before all human books (as is proper). . . . . God will certainly approve of
> me if I should tell the universities: "You do not know Christ." Whoever runs without
> a call achieves nothing. Therefore do not burden my conscience with this
> subscription.[13]

Although Weigel was known later for vexing against the "monstrous frog cry" resonating

in the chancels of stone churches,[14] he lived a rather quiet life unaffected by public controversy,

and his writings were not made public until after his death. His published writings were quite

influential, however, even raising suspicions among theologians who every so often questioned

the formal statements and decisions of the universities. How the university theologians

responded to its intramural critics depended largely on their ability to clarify what was being

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[11] Weigel, "Parte I. Postillae," 108; see also "Parte II. Postillae," 249–50, 303; in Arnold, *Historie*, 2:1105.

[12] Weigel, "Parte I. Postillae," 171–72, in Arnold, *Historie*, 2:1004. Although Weigel subscribed the Book of Concord of 1580, he later qualified his pledge explaining that he hadn't subscribed its "doctrine (!)," but only its intent to favor the Scriptures above human books. See Weigel, *Christliche Gespräch vom wahren Christenthum*, 39–40, in Arnold, *Historie*, 2:1111. "Es soll kein lehrer so viel bey mir gelten, dass ich auff ihn sterben wolte, wie sich denn etliche so hart hengen an den Pabst, an den Luther, an den Philippum, an den Zwinglium, an den Schwenckfeldt, an den Osiandrum, an den Mahomet, und andere menschen, dass sie sich auch darüber verjagen und tödten lassen. Nein, mir nicht, also, an Jesus Christum henge ich mich, bey den schrifften der Propheten und Aposteln bleib ich biss in den tod."

[13] Weigel, *Christliche. Gespräch*, 39–40; cited in Arnold, *Historie*, 2:1111:. "Nicht ihrer Lehre oder Menschenbüchern habe ich mich unterschrieben, sondern dieweil sie ihren Intent auf die apostolische Schrift, und dieselbige allen Menschenbüchern vorziehen (wie billig), konnte ich das wohl leiden. . . . Gott wird michs wohl heißen, wann ich soll sprechen zu den hohen Schulen: sie kennen Christum nicht. Wer unberufen läuft, richtet nichts aus. Mache mir also gar kein Gewissen mit diesem Unterschreiben."

[14] Weigel, "Parte II. Postillae," 303; in Arnold, *Historie*, 2:1005.

taught—and that according to the standard of the Augsburg Confession, which was not always an easy task. Most fanatics, however, were clandestine preachers, concentrated in cities, where it was possible for their "seditious books" to escape the censorship of theologians.[15]

The fanatics were not the only antagonists of Lutheran orthodoxy living within the confessional boundaries. The University of Helmstedt posed an equal threat in its own way. Unlike the fanatics, however, who were decidedly anti-intellectual and viewed with suspicion by rulers and theologians, Helmstedt was stacked with the most influential humanist philosophers in Germany and, by the turn of the seventeenth century, it boasted a student enrollment that was surpassed only by Wittenberg and Leipzig among all German universities. Furthermore, the university was the pride and joy of its founder, Duke Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1564–1613), whose faithful patronage it had enjoyed since 1576. As a parallel Lutheran confessional culture, distinct from the mainstream Concordia, began to mature in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel during those critical years leading up to the Formula of Concord, Helmstedt developed a rather complex relationship with the Saxon universities. This rivalry between the two realms, between the professors of Helmstedt and Wittenberg, consisted of three overlapping phases.[16]

First, since Julius and his theologians refrained from subscribing the Formula of Concord in 1577 in favor of their own orthodox *Corpus Julianum* (written by Martin Chemnitz), they considered themselves free from Saxon politics, while enjoying the legal privileges of the Peace of Augsburg. The university proved a faithful instrument to Julius in his effort to centralize all

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[15] The Wittenberg minister Nicolas Hunnius responded first in Latin in his *Principia Theologiae Fanaticae, quae Paracelsus genuit atque Weigelius interpolavit* (1618), and later in German in *Christlicher Betrachtung der neuen Paracelsischen und Weigelianischen Theologie* (1622). See Gilly, "Theophrastia," 181.

[16] See Hans-Walter Krumwiede, *Kirchengeschichte Niedersachsens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 182–86.

churches, schools, and civic institutions of his inherited lands under his ducal authority, which meant overcoming resistance to his confessionalizing agenda from the powerful city council of Braunschweig.[17] The theological reason given for their refusal to sign on to the Formula was because they were opposed to the "*modus loquendi*" of the final draft of the Formula, including its operative definition of "abstract terms" and especially its use of "ubiquity" in FC SD VII. Theological opposition to the Book of Concord was intensified under the leadership of Daniel Hoffmann (1538–1611), who rejected the Formula's (Andreae's) alleged admixture of metaphysics with biblical theology.[18] Independence from Dresden Concordism was a key factor in the progressive theological and philosophical developments of the University of Helmstedt.

Second, although the Helmstedt theological faculty was still regarded as orthodox by a good number of Concordists, and had a good reputation in the greater Lutheran world,[19] and despite their isolationist confessional politics, the theological faculty was not able to maintain its dominance, as was ultimately the case in Wittenberg, for very long. With the arrival of John Caselius (1533–1616) and Cornelius Martini (1568–1621) came an intense interest in Aristotle's metaphysics and logic at Helmstedt inspiring students from all over Germany. When Hoffmann opposed the Duke's new philosophy appointments on the ground that theology and philosophy

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[17] Luise Schorn-Schütte, "Lutherische Konfessionalisierung? Das Beispiel Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1589–1613)," in *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland*, ed. Hans-Christoph Rublack (Gütersloh, 1992), 163–94.

[18] See Daniel Hoffmann, *Errores VII Jacobi Andreae* (Helmstedt, 1588). See especially *Errores VI* and *VII*. On the Hoffmann controversy, see M. von Engelhardt, "Der Rahtmannische Streit," *Zeitschrift für Historische Theologie* 18 (1854): 43–131; Heinrich Halverscheid, *Lumen Spiritus prius quam Scriptura intellecta. Hermann Rahtmanns Kritik am lutherischen Schriftprinzip* (Diss. theol. Universität Marburg, 1971); and Johann Anselm Steiger, "'Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn . . . '. Die Auseinandersetzung Johann Gerhards und der lutherischen Orthodoxie mit dem Danziger Pfarrer Hermann Rahtmann und deren abendmahlstheologische und christologische Implikate," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 95 (1998): 338–65.

[19] Chemnitz sent his sons to Helmstedt despite his falling out with Duke Julius, and pastors trained there were frequently placed in territories that were true to the Formula. See Michael J. Halvorson, *Heinrich Heshusius and Confessional Polemic in Early Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 63.

had no common foundation, he became a rallying point for the Braunschweig burgomasters' efforts to resist the prince's confessionalization. Hoffmann was arrested, run out of Helmstedt, and completely discredited among the university students, who ended up siding with the philosophers.[20] This second phase was characterized by a loss of respect on the part of the theological faculty; although they still enjoyed it during the 1580s, this anti-philosophical theology was forced to cede control of the university to Aristotelian philosophy. Since the Wittenberg theologians were committed to the words and phrases of the Formula of Concord, they could not support Hoffmann's position either.[21]

The third phase involved the Helmstedt theologian, Georg Calixt (1586–1656), a student of Caselius and Martini, who became known for his irenic theology that yielded to the university's philosophical hegemony and served the territory's neutralist confessional policy. Calixt first came into conflict with the Wittenberg theologians around 1619 when he began to endorse a view of original sin that deferred to Aristotelian metaphysics but was inconsistent with the orthodox consensus. Furthermore, claiming to operate with Melanchthon's conception of doctrine as a church-historical phenomenon (*doctrina ecclesiae*),[22] he defied Saxon authority by proposing a broad basis of unity that was limited to the consensus of the first five centuries of the church (*consensus quinquesaecularis*). This led to a "syncretistic controversy" that flared up towards the middle of the century involving the Wittenberg faculty and the mediating

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[20] Ian Hunter, *The Secularization of the Confessional State: The Political Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 44.

[21] See Markus Friedrich, *Die Grenzen der Vernunft: Theologie, Philosophie und gelehrte Konflikte am Beispiel des Helmstedter Hofmannstreits und seiner Wirkungen auf das Luthertum um 1600* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 19–141.

[22] On the development of Melanchthon's "*doctrina ecclesiae*" through Georg Calixt to Johann Solomo Semler, see Johannes Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1961), 2.

theologians of Jena.[23]

Meisner's Stance towards Fanatics and Suspects

In the Lutheran polemical tradition it was held that not all heresies were the same, but each had its own genus of error. If the Catholics err through their arrogance and the Reformed through their illicit use of philosophy, then the Anabaptists and fanatics err through their ignorance.[24] Hence, the fanatics, who remained within the walls of orthodoxy, and in spite of them, were not always treated with the same kind of careful analysis as their extramural opponents. Yet, orthodox theologians were every much as vehement in their polemics and held them to the same confessional standards. The trick was making sense of their positions and getting their errors to stick, so to speak, by stating them in terms suitable to university discourse.

Valentin Weigel, the archetypal fanatic, was hardly an educated theologian. It was likely through a lack of understanding and theological education that he endorsed Schwenkfeld's two-flesh theory articulating it in terms of a *manducatio indignorum* in express opposition to the Formula of Concord, where it teaches that the body of Christ is distributed to all and received by all (FC SD VII, 9, BSLK, 976, 2–6). Concerning the Lord's Supper he writes:

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[23] On the syncretistic controversy, see Abraham Calov, *Consensus Repetitus Fidei Vere Lutheranae: In illis Doctrinae capitibus, Quae Contra puram, & invariatam Augustanam Confessionem, aliosque libros symbolicos, in Formula Concordiae comprehensos, scriptis publicis impugnant D. Georgius Calixtus, Professor Helmstadiensis, eiusdemq[ue] complices, In gratiam eorum, qui distantiam D. Calixti, Rintelensium, & aliorum Novatorum a fide Lutherana in Synopsi intueri discupiunt, ob praesentem Ecclesiae necessitatem, seorsim editus* (Witteberg: Johann Burckhard, 1666). See also Theodor Wotschke, "Calovs Historia syncretistica," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 36 (1916): 425–58; and Timothy R. Schmeling, „Slaying the syncretistic chimera: a study of the consensus repetitus in light of confessionalization theory" (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2014).

[24] Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Communes, 2. Persona Christi*, part. 1: "Trias sunt omnium *Haeresewn principia*, 1. αὐθάδεια, vel ambitio, 2. ὀλιγομάθεια, vel imperitia, & tandem, 3. Philosophiae abusio..." cited in Meisner, *Philosophia sobria,* vol. 1 (Wittenberg: Henkel & Rüdinger, 1611), "Proemium," 4. Meisner continues: "Sic ut ergo αὐθάδεια, vel contention de primate, papatum genuit, ὀλιγομάθεια Anabaptistas, aliosque fanaticos produxit: Ita illegitima Philosophiae abusio pregeniem Calvinisticam foetum profectò notium, infelici partu enita est" (4–5).

The opinion is true that one physically eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ through faith, that is, the flesh and blood that was given for us on the cross, not that which is from Adam, from the earth, but from the Holy Spirit in heaven.[25]

It was only possible to address the fanatics if their errors could be articulated (and refuted) on the basis of normative Lutheran teaching. The theologians knew that Paracelsus was the real genius behind the fanatics, and Weigel was only the theological face of the physician. However, theologians would rarely venture into questions of medicine. In a culture of theological clarity, where theology and medicine are completely separate disciplines, it is very difficult to distinguish between a medical metaphor, on the one hand, and a full out endorsement of theophrastic heresy, on the other hand. Besides, there was much to commend in Paracelsus's medical critique of Galen. Paracelsus challenged the hitherto unquestioned methods of Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Galen, in a manner similar to Luther's challenge of scholasticism. In his 1626 disputations on religion, Meisner clarifies the relationship between Paracelsus and Weigelianism:

> Indeed, Paracelsus had not dared, while he was still living, to display his handsome offspring, whom he had brought forth, in the bosom of the church; although it is commonly said that Luther and Melanchthon had, for their part, accomplished no more of a reformation in theology than he had in Galenic and Hippocratic medicine. Thus, Valentin Weigel, using the works of his teacher, Theophrastus, in his most acrimonious *hypersapistes*, in his homilies on the Gospels, his Dialogue on Christianity, his Gnothi Seauton, and his other little books of grain husks (*furfuris libellis*) abundantly reveals to us this mystery of iniquity. Whence it came about that our age began to call fanatical religion "Weigelianism."[26]

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[25] Weigel, "Parte II. Postillae," 112; in Arnold, *Historie* 2:1004: "Die meinung ist die wahrhafftige, dass man Christi fleisch und blut leiblich esse und trincke durch den glauben, das blut und fleisch, das ans creutz für uns gegeben ist, das da nicht aus Adam von der erden ist, sondern von dem heiligen Geist vom himmel."

[26] Balthasar Meisner, *In Systematis theologici partem primam generalem De Religione et ejus articulis . . . Disputatio XVI. De Religione Fanatica* (Wittenberg 1626), a2v, quoted in Gilly, "Theophrastia Sancta," n75: "Non ausus vero fuit Paracelsus dum esset in vivis, bellum suum foetum quem parturiebat, in Ecclesiae sinum promere, quamvis non raro dicere solitus feratur, se aliquando Lutherum et Melanthonem in Theologia non aliter reformaturum, atque fecerit in Medicina Galeno et Hippocrati. Itaque praeceptoris sui Theophrasti opera usus M. Valentinus Weigelius, hypersapistes illius acerrimus, in homiliis suis super Evangelis Dominicalia, in Dialogo de Christianismo, in Gnothi seauton et hujus furfuris libellis aliis hoc mysterium iniquitatis abunde nobis revelavit. Unde factum est, ut Religionem Fanaticam nostra aetas vocare coeperit 'Weigelianam.'" See Weigel, *Gnothi seauton. Nosce te ipsum. Erkenne dich selber O Mensch* (Neustadt, 1618); *Dialogus de Christianismo*, in *Sämtliche*

Few pastors and theologians in the late Reformation regarded themselves as Weigelians,[27] but they were sometimes smoked out of their parishes and posts for overemphasizing the inner man of faith to the exclusion of the sacraments—an emphasis that often came with appeals to heretical schemes dressed in the attire of "Theologia Teutsch." This was certainly the case with that famous and beloved pastor and devotional theologian, Johan Arndt.[28] Although he was educated in medicine Arndt decided to become a pastor instead. He began his ministry in his homeland of Anhalt (1583–1590), but the Calvinist government forced him to leave for refusing to eliminate the exorcism rite from the rite of baptism.[29] Arndt was certainly an enigma. Although he had become a committed adherent of the Formula of Concord through his Strassburg studies, his devotional writings use the kind of vocabulary that reflects his previous studies in medicine. His *Four Books on True Christianity*, which illustrate the mystical union between Christ and the Christian, contain almost no theological jargon, but clearly bear the imprint of Paracelsian influence on his thinking.[30]

The essence of both theology and medicine, says Arndt, consists in "the recognition of each thing from experience / from action and feeling / from the works of truth...because knowledge

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Schriften 4, ed. Alfred Ehrentreich (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996). Meisner's reference to *hypersapistes* is a comparative reference to Erasmus's rejoinder to Luther's Bondage of the Will, which appeared under the title, *Hypersapistes*.

[27] See Gilly, "Theophrastia Sancta," 184–85.

[28] On criticism of Arndt by other Lutherans, see Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

[29] Hans Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt: Studien zu Leben, Werk und Wirkung Johann Arndts* (1555–1621) (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 139–41. Arndt served in Quedlinburg (1590–1599), Braunschweig (1599–1608), Eisleben (1609–1611), and finally as General Superintendent in Celle (1611–1621). On Arndt's refusal to omit the exorcism rite, see Bodo Nischan, "The Exorcism Controversy and Baptism in the Late Reformation," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18 (1987): 31–50.

[30] See Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt*, 111; Edmund Weber, *Johann Arndts Vier Bücher des wahren Christentum als Beitrag zur protestantischen Irenik des 17. Jahrhunderts, Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (Marburg: 1971, 3th ed., Studia Irenica 2, Hildesheim, 1978), 21–35.

and learning flows forth from experience."[31] He elaborates: "Just as God has created the medicines of the body in nature, he has created the medicine for the soul in the Word."[32] Thus Arndt, the "theomedicus," elaborates an experiential, regenerative theology, such as may be found in medieval mystical tracts, and especially *Theologia Teutsch*. Nevertheless, while he certainly drew on Paracelsian themes and used medicine as a literary pattern to teach the "practice of piety" (*praxis pietatis*), it is very difficult to determine whether and to what extent he endorsed his theology.[33] In addition to explicit references to medicine, he also revealed other affinities to Paracelsus and the Weigelians when, echoing Jesus' words in John 4:23, he stressed the nature of true worship as consisting "no longer externally in figurative ceremonies, rules, and compulsion, but internally in Spirit and truth."[34]

Suspicions began to loom over Arndt and the orthodoxy of his *True Christianity*, published between 1605 and 1610, and controversy broke out in 1618 in the ministerium of Danzig. When John Corvinus, also called Rabe, who was head pastor at the St. Mary Church, drove a certain Gaule (sources do not reveal his first name) out of the city on suspicions of Weigelianism. Corvinus, taking his cue from the deposed pastor's own account that he had been following not only Johann Arndt but also Paracelsus, felt justified in associating Arndt with the fanatics and thus accused him of Weigelianism. Thus, before a critical examination could be made of his work, Arndt was reputed guilty by association, along with every other pastor in Danzig who

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[31] Johann Arndt, *Vier Bücher von wahrem Christenthumb*, Book 1 (Jena: Tobias Steinmann, 1907), 388; hereafter, Arndt, WChr I, 388.

[32] Arndt, WChr II, 45: "Gleichwie uns Gott des Leibes Arznei geschaffen in der Natur: also der Seelen Arzenei im Wort."

[33] See Hermann Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit: Johann Arndts "Vier Bücher vom Wahren Christentum" als Programm einer spiritualistisch-hermetischen Theologie in Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Christoph Markschies, Joachim Mehlhausen, und Gerhard Müller, vol. 80/III (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 215.

[34] Arndt, WChr. I, 21.

defended him, including Daniel Diliger, Michael Blanck, and Hermann Rathmann.[35] On May 12,

1620, Corvinus appealed to Wittenberg for a censure of Arndt; instead, the Wittenberg

theological faculty wrote a Gutachten to the Danzig ministerium exonerating Arndt of the charge

of Weigelianism. That same year, Dilger wrote a book defending Arndt and making the case that

his teachings were in line with the unaltered Augsburg Confession, Luther's Smalcald Articles,

and the Formula of Concord.[36]

For the most part, Wittenberg's authority saved Arndt's reputation, and his *True*

Christianity continued to be read with much enthusiasm by orthodox (as well as unorthodox)

pastors and theologians. The hardest-hitting attack against Arndt, however, was yet to come from

the Tübingen theologian, Lukas Osiander the Younger (1571–1638) and was published two years

after Arndt's death under the title, *Theological Consideration and Innocent, Christian*

Recollection of the Manner in which Johann Arndt's so-called True Christianity should be

Viewed and Esteemed.[37] However, its most forceful defense came a year later in the *Rettung* of

Heinrich Varenius (1595–1635), chaplain of Duke August of Braunsweig-Lüneburg.[38]

Meanwhile, suspicions of fanaticism continued to loom in the north and assumed a new form,

with significant theological consequences, in the case of the above-mentioned Danzig pastor,

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[35] Arnold, *Historie*, 3:115.

[36] Daniel Dilger, *Herrn Johannis Arndes . . . Richtige/ und in Gottes Wort wolgegründete Lehre/ in den vier Büchern vom wahren Christenthumb* (Alten Stettin, 1620). Dilger defended Arndt of five categories of error: (1) Word of God, (2) Corruption of man's nature, (3) Repentance, (4) Forensic justification, (5) Drawing on heretics.

[37] The hardest-hitting and most sustained attack against Arndt came from the Tübingen theologian, Lukas Osiander the Younger (1571–1638) and was published two years after Arndt's death under the title, Lukas Osiander II, *Theologisches Bedencken Und Christliche Treuhertzige Erinnerung, welcher Gestalt Johann Arndten genandtes wahres Christenthum . . . anzusehen und zuachten seye* (Tübingen: Dieterich Werlin, 1623).

[38] See Heinrich Varenius, *Christliche, Schrifftmässige, wolgegründete Rettunge der Vier Bücher vom wahren Christenthumb* (Lüneburg: Johann and Heinrich Sternen, 1624). See Johann Anselm Steiger, "Heinrich Varenius' Rettung von Johann Arndts Wahren Christentum," in *Bernhard Varenius (1622–1654)*, ed. Margret Schuchard (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 27–54.

Hermann Rathmann (1585–1628).[39]

On May 11, 1621, one year after his exoneration by the Wittenberg faculty, Johann Arndt

died. That same year, Rathmann published his theological views, which he had been developing

in his sermons for several years. He published them in a tract bearing the title, *Jesu Christi, des*

Königs aller Könige und Herrn aller herrn Gnadenreicht, or abbreviated, *Vom Gnadenreich*

Christi. Rathmann held that the Scriptures are a dead letter (*Buchstaben*) with no inherent

efficacy *per se*; they merely function as a historical witness (*Zeugniss*) or outward sign

(*Wegzeiger*) of an internal spiritual reality. Christ, not the Bible, is the Word. The Holy Spirit,

who once inspired the apostles and now works renewal within the believer, immediately and

independent of Scripture, has the power to convert.[40] In May of 1622 Corvinus reached out to

several theological faculties in an effort to squash Rathmann's teaching, which he condemned as

heretical. He claimed that several Danzig preachers, including Rathmann, had defected to the

Rosicrucians.[41] In the late summer of 1623 the Danzig city council made official requests for

Gutachten from Wittenberg, Jena, Helmstedt, Königsberg, and Rostock. Rostock gave the

desired condemnation, but then issued a more favorable opinion in 1626. Helmstedt ignored the

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[39] Arnold, *Historie*, 3:115–24. See also Christophorus Hartknoch, *Preussischen kirchenhistorie*, Book III, VIII, 812; Johann Georg Walch, *Historie und Theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten der Evangelisch-Luthersischen Kirche* (Jena, 1733–1739; reprinted facsimile: Stuttgart, Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1972–1985), 1:525–31; 4:577–600. Rathmann attended schools in Lübeck, Ratzenburg, and Magdeburg, and studied at Leipzig, Rostock, and Cologne. He came to Danzig in 1612 to serve as deacon, first at the St. Johannis Church and then at the Pfarrkirchen. He later became a pastor at the Catharininenkirchen.

[40] Richard Heinrich Grützmacher, *Wort und Geist* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1902), 220–61; Christoph Hartknoch, *Preussische Kirchen-Historia* (Frankfurt am Main, 1684). See also Arnold, *Historie*, 3:115; Tholuck, *Geist*, 108–9; Preus, *Theology*, 367–68.

[41] The Rosicrucians were a secret order that appeared to flourish in the cities of Kassel and Strassburg towards the beginning of the seventeenth century. Founded by legendary (and likely mythical) Christian Rosenkreutz, the order was commited to mystical, esoteric, and theosophistic teachings. For a basic summary of their teachings, see Magnus Incognito (William Atkinson), *The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians* (London: Advanced Thought Publishing Company, 1918). See also Susanna Aakerman, *Rose Cross over the Baltic: The Spread of Rosicrucianism in Northern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); and Donald R. Dickson, *The Tessera of Antilia: Utopian Brotherhoods & Secret Societies in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

request altogether, and the other universities issued Gutachten, but with relatively mild censures, and refrained from denouncing Rathmann as a heretic.[42] The mildest opinion by far came from the Wittenberg theological faculty in 1625. It acknowledged that many of Rathmann's assertions could indeed be read in a heretical sense, but then prudently suggests a manner in which they might be interpreted as truly orthodox.[43]

Meisner's involvement in the proceedings leading to both faculty opinions—the one that exonerated Arndt of Weigelianism and the one containing a comparatively mild censure against Rathmann—was no doubt a significant factor in Wittenberg's moderate approach.[44] Meisner had a working relationship with Rathmann since as early as 1614, when the latter served as his eastern liaison for obtaining Socinian tracts from Poland.[45] Moreover, it is evident from four letters from Rathmann to Meisner during the time Corvinus was proceeding against Arndt, that he had full confidence in Meisner to handle the accusations against Arndt with due care and diligence.[46] In a letter to Meisner from 1620 the Danzig pastor begins to reveal the nature of his concern, freely, with an appeal to Meisner's well-known piety and meekness:

> Unfortunately, it has indeed come to the point among us that the majority of writings shout "Faith, Faith!" without wanting to hear a thing about what constitutes the marks of true faith and the inner man. . . . When, therefore, God raises up men at the universities and elsewhere who promote the cause of God, they should be thanked for their fruitful labor, rather than scorned and troubled, as is the order of the day in this

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[42] L. Heller, "Rathmann, Hermann, und der Rathmannsche Streit," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische theologie und kirche*, ed. Albert Hauch (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), 12:506–7. For the various faculty decisions, see Georg Dedekenn, *Thesauri Consiliorum et Decisionum, appendix nova* (Jena, 1625) 3:150–388.

[43] Steiger, "*Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn*," 240. See also Dedekken, *Thesauri*, 3:152–70; and Benjamin T. G. Mayes, *Counsel and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning After the Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 147–48.

[44] See Tholuck, *Geist*, 35.

[45] Wotschke, "Wittenberg I," 140–42.

[46] Tholuck, *Geist*, 109–10: "Aus vier Briefen von Rathmann an Meisner ergiebt sich das Vertrauen zu des Wittenberger Theologen freierer Stellung in mehreren unbedenklich vorgetragenen Bedenken." The letters from Rathmann to Meisner can be found in the second volume of Meisner' correspondence, Meisner, EM, 2.

severely diseased age, so rich in opinions, but not in piety; although it is rightfully rejected by all who demand a modest treatment of the neighbor. Since you, too, are among them, I humbly beseech you to make your judgment known concerning these writings written to promote piety.[47]

A modest treatment was not all Rathmann received from his Wittenberg friend, but a theological lesson, a veritable class lecture on the locus of Scripture. The Gutachten addresses itself to six questions: (1) whether the church fathers, Papias, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Lactantius, and others, held that Christ's thousand year reign should be interpreted spiritually or physically; (2) whether Rathmann agrees with Paracelsus and the fanatics on the idea that Christ will establish a physical kingdom and reform the church on earth; (3) whether the Scriptures were a mere witness to the inner word that the prophets and apostles possessed in their hearts; (4) whether a distinction should be made between the external and internal Word in terms of cause and effect or *signum* and *res*; (5) whether Scripture has the power in itself to convert; and (6) whether one has to be converted in order to know the Scriptures, and therefore whether the Holy Spirit is present in the Scriptures or rather in the enlightenment with and around the Scriptures. After carefully stating the question, the faculty examined "Rathmann's explanations and notes" (*M. Rathmanni* Erklährung und *notae*) and concluded with a mild censure. In each case, the theologians stated the orthodox position as clearly as possible and juxtaposed it with the fanatical position. Their statement shows how Rathmann contradicts himself, or at least speaks unclearly; but in the final analysis, in the form of a censure, it presents Rathmann (and the Danzig Council)

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[47] Tholuck, *Geist*, 112: "Dahin ist es ja leider unter uns gekommen, dass der grösste Theil der Schriften Glaube! Glaube! schreit, ohne davon etwas hören zu wollen, welches die Kennzeichen des wahren Glaubens und des neuen Menschen sind. . . . Wenn daher Gott auf den Universitäten und anderwärts Männer erweckt, welche die Sache Gottes fördern, so muss ihnen Dank für ihre fruchtbare Arbeit werden, nicht aber Schmähungen und Verdruss, wie dies in einem so schwer erkrankten, an Meinungen zwar, aber nicht an Frömmigkeit so reichen Zeitalter an der Tagesordnung ist, wiewohl von allen, die eine modeste Behandlung des Nächsten verlangen, mit Recht verworfen wird. Da nun auch Du unter diese gehörst, so bitte ich Dich unterthänigst, Du wollest doch auch über diese zur Beförderung der Frömmigkeit geschriebnen Schriften Dein Urtheil laut werden lassen."

with an opportunity to choose (and assert) the orthodox position. Thus, for instance, under question (4), the Gutachten makes all the necessary dogmatic distinctions—between essence and form (the Word remains essentially the same whether written, preached, or in the heart); between the Scriptural text (*materiale Scripturae*) and its meaning (*formale Scripturae*); and again between its meaning (*sensus*) and its fruit (*fructum*). It then declares that, despite his lack of dogmatic clarity, Rathmann is truly orthodox if he agrees with and intends to heed all of the forgoing distinctions.[48]

When Corvinus received the Wittenberg faculty opinion he responded with a letter to Meisner thanking him for the swift response, and particularly for the censure. Then, after mentioning the enclosed thaler to pay the amanuensis fee, and another four Hungarian ducates for the faculty's time and labor, he extends his appreciation once more before adding the following regret:

> How much I would have wished that in some opinions you had proceeded against him more strongly. What this man writes is what he also means, although he denies the appearance of error. It was with good intention that you dealt with him so leniently; but if you had listened in on his sermons, through which he has not edified, but destroyed, this church, then you would have received him differently."[49]

The upshot of the several Gutachten and censures against Rathmann was that from henceforth Lutheran orthodoxy began to stress the efficacy of the external Word in a way that it had not previously done. Indeed, before the Rathmann controversy Lutheran theology had not felt a tension between a narrow external religion and internal piety. John Gerhard, the orthodox

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[48] Dedekken, *Thesauri*, 3:157–60.

[49] Tholuck, *Geist*, 113–14; here, 114: "Wie wohl ich wünschte, dass Ihr in manchen Meinungen stärker gegen ihn aufgetreten wäret. Was dieser Mensch schreibt, das meint er auch so, wiewohl er den Schein des Irrthums von sich ablehnt. Ihr habt es gewiss in guter Absicht gethan, dass Ihr so glimpflich mit ihm verfahren seid; hättet Ihr aber seine Predigten, durch welche er seit mehr als 3 Jahren diese Kirche nicht erbaut, sondern zerstört hat, mit angehört, so hättet Ihr ihn anders in Empfang genommen."

Jena theologian and disciple of Arndt, laid heavy emphasis on the "internal testimony of the Holy Spirit" as his *Loci Theologici* abundantly testify.[50] When Rathmann appealed to Gerhard, before and after the 1625 censures, Gerhard entered into a lengthy debate with the Danzig pastor sharply distinguishing between his own position and fanatical misrepresentations of the same. According to Robert Preus, this controversy served to unite Lutheran orthodoxy around the teaching of Scripture's inherent efficacy. In the latter half of the century orthodox Lutherans "even maintained that Scripture possesses divine power (*vis*, *efficacia*) prior to and apart from its use (*ante et extra usum*).[51]

As Corvinus started moving against his colleagues in Danzig, suspicions of fanaticism loomed nearly everywhere, but especially in the northern regions. Even highly educated theologians were known to raise the alarm among the strict orthodoxists, especially in Saxony. One significant event concerned a promising Old Testament exegete at the University of Rostock and intimate friend of Balthasar Meisner, named John Tarnov (1586–1629). In a letter to Meisner in 1619, as trouble began to boil in Danzig, Tarnov spelled out his intention to write a commentary on the Minor Prophets with the hope of leading young theologians back to the Word of God and the Scriptures. He regrets to observe that "the Holy Scriptures have unfortunately been neglected almost entirely these days by most in their theological studies," and since they are consumed by such a perverse zeal, "without knowing the theses or having read the Bible, they

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[50] See Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici,* ed. Edward Preuss (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1863), 2:36: "Primum (testimonium) est internum spiritus sancti testimonium, qui ut reddit testimonium Spiritui credentium, quot sint filii Dei Rom. 8. v. 16, ita quoque efficaciter eos convincit, quod in Scripturis vox Patris coelestis contineatur ac solus Deus est idoneus et authenticus testis."

[51] See J. A. Osiander, *Systema Theologicum*, 340.; Hollaz, *Examen*, P. III, S.2, C.1, q.4, 992; Quenstedt, *Systema*, P. I, C. 4, S. 2, q. 16 (I, 246); Calov, *Systema*, I, 711; cited in Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 1:367–68.

are dedicated only to controversies and homiletical exercises."[52] Tarnov was not a theological

lightweight by any means; he was one of the finest exegetes of his day. Nor was he wishing to

obscure points of controversy or water down theological distinctions. Rather, he was putting his

finger on a deficiency in the orthodox dogmatic tradition: rather than adhering to the historical-

grammatical method inherited from the reformers, Lutheran exegesis hardly departed from the

template of the Augsburg Confession, or rather, the disputed articles of the day.[53]

Later that year Tarnov came out with his *Exertationes Biblicae*,[54] in which he felt

compelled to depart from the Lutheran tradition on certain interpretations of individual texts. In

so doing, he went so far as mentioning the names of those celebrated theologians—Luther,

Chemnitz, Hunnius—who, on his reading, had departed from the intended meaning of the

original text (*Urtext*).[55] He believed that his procedure was justified by the history of exegesis.

Just as Christ was required to correct the Pharisees' false reading of messianic texts, and Paul

corrected his fellow apostles' understanding of ceremonial law, so also Luther's German Bible

was an improvement on the Latin vulgate, which was still leading to many errors in the Church

of Rome.[56] And the exegetical reformation must continue. Speaking from one practical-minded

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[52] Meisner, EM 2:337, quoted in Paul Tschackert, "Tarnow, Johann" *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 37 (1894), 397–98: "Ich plane einen Commentar zu den kleinen Propheten, und während ich damit beschäftigt bin, erkläre ich andere biblische Sprüche, ut ita, si fieri possit, ad biblia Deique verbum, extra quae proh dolor! hodie plerique theologiae dant operam, studiosam juventutem reducam, quae nunc maximam partem studio perverso, antequam sciat thesin et biblia legerit, tantum in controversiis et homiliis ab illis bono fine editis, tota est." See also Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen,* 166.

[53] Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen*, 165–71.

[54] Johann Tarnov, *Exercitationes Biblicae : in quibus verus et genuinus sensus locorum scripturae difficilium . . . ex verbo Dei . . . defenditur* (Rostock: Ferber, 1619).

[55] Such difficult passages included, in particular, Romans 8, 9, and 10; Numbers 36:7; 2 Samuel 6:3–4; Micah 5:2; Psalm 110:3; Proverbs 24:16, 25:27; Isaiah 28:19; 1 Samuel 2:25; Isaiah 45:8, 66:7; Jer. 31:22; Isaiah 1:5–6; Exodus 13:9; and Job 37:6.

[56] Johann Tarnov, *Exercitationes*, 2–3: "Lutherus ipse superiori seculo, immane quantum in sua bibliorum versione germanica à veteri latina vulgate innumeris ferè scripturae in lois descrepet, multoque aliter, quam Pontifiii fecerant, in suis operibus interpretatur plurima. Et tamen quis est, qui propterea Christum, Apostolum, Lutherumque

scholar to another, Tarnov anticipated a sympathetic and generous response from Meisner. However, no sooner had the first edition come out than Meisner advised his friend—in the mildest manner—to suppress mention of names so as not to lend credibility to the opposition and fuel their cause against the religion of the Evangelicals.[57] He warns that basic distinctions need to be made between primary and secondary passages in order to support the analogy (articles) of faith. For instance, as Meisner clarifies in the twentieth disputation of his *Sacred Anthropology*, since Luther's words in *de servo abritrio* are directed against Erasmus's Pelagianism, they often have to do with the absolute decree of God (*jure absolute*), which corresponds to what he is able do, without necessarily addressing the ordinate right of God (*jure ordinare*), which is what he actually wills to do. In other words, focusing on secondary passages, looking only at what God is able to do, at the expense of primary passages, which convey what God is graciously disposed to do for Jesus' sake, leaves one with nothing more than an absolute decree, which is the Calvinist reading of Luther. Meisner urges his readers to interpret Luther's teaching of God's decree in view of his Genesis lectures, in which he cautions against such misinterpretations of his *de servo abritrio*.[58]

Tarnov complied with his friend, made most of the necessary changes,[59] and included a

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minus rectè docuisse asserat, qod a placitis ac commentis hominum, majorumque suorum recesserint? nemo, opinor, nisi qui cum ratione velit insanire."

[57] Tholuck, *Geist*, 154–55.

[58] Meisner, AS, 2,:429: "Et hae fuerunt praecipuae Calviniorum objectione, ex quarum solutione et caetera facilè dispelli possunt. Isti nonnulli adiungunt authoritatem *Lutheri*, qui in l. de servo arbit. similiter decretum absolutum videtur statuere. Sed Lutherus semetipsum satis exposuit, in comment. super c. 26 Gen. Loquitur quandoque de jure absoluto, quid possit Deus non ordinare, quid velit. Et opponit totam suam disputationem Pelagionis, liberum arbitrium asserentibus: quod dum impugnat, videtur omnia necessitate et absoluto decreto ascribere: sed aliis in locis luculenter satis mentem suam declaravit."

[59] See for instance, Tarnov's "Parerga," in *Exercitationes*, 9–10. He explains that while Luther speaks rather coarsely and inexactly concerning the doctrine of election in Romans 9, 10, and 11, it must be remembered that election is only secondary to the meaning of those chapters; and besides, Luther has the same intent as the apostle, namely, to build confidence and certainty that we are included in God's grace.

portion of Meisner's friendly censure in what appears to be the next edition published later that same year. In the left margin is written: "*Censura et aprobatio D. B. M.*" This, of course, is a reference to Dr. Balthasar Meisner, whose name, perhaps poetically (?), is not explicitly mentioned, but simply invoked as "*Theologe celeberrima quadam Academia vicina.*"[60] However, in another letter dated May 26, 1619, Tarnov objects that this censure (and his subsequent compliance) would now discredit him as a professor. He appears now to teach one thing in private but another in public, due to fear of reproach, thus confirming suspicions among his adversaries that he has something to hide.[61] To add insult to injury, the Jena faculty and the Saxon Council, under the presidium of Hoe von Hoenegg, issued another censure later that year in which they threatened him with impunity through the Mecklenburg government as long as he refused to suppress the names.[62] This Jena censure came as a big surprise, and served to demoralize the young exegete, especially since he had received written approval of his first edition in a private letter from John Gerhard. Gerhard had warned him ahead of time that he would be censured for his criticisms of the famous Bible interpreters. Yet, he confirms that if the Evangelicals truly want to stand firm against the papists and maintain that the sense of the

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[60] See Johann Tarnov, *Exercitationes*, 104–5. A portion of Meisner's "censure" reads: "Quare in multis non immeritò id desideratur, quod fontes rarò adspiciunt, & delectum in dictis allegandis nullum habent. Magnà omnino hic opus est discretione & prudentià, ut dicta secundaria à primarijs, indirecta à directis, dubia à certis distinguantur. Et optandum foret, ut per singulos fidei articulos dictorum, quae vulgo citantur catervatim, quasi lustratio quaedam institueretur, & quae primò ac principaliter concludant, ostenderentur, de quo fortassis aliò tempore plura."

[61] Meisner, EM, 1:627, quoted in Tholuck, *Geist*, 154–55: "Dass ich dies gethan, dazu hat mich die Böswilligkeit einiger Verleumder getrieben, welche, als sie sahen, dass jene grossen Lichter der Kirche in jenen Punkten von mir dissentirten, dies eine mir vorhielten, wenn ich meiner Erklärung traute, so würde ich mich auch nicht scheuen, die Namen jener grossen Männer zu nennen. Meine bisher bewiesene Bescheidenheit erklärten sie für Furchtsamkeit und zogen mich damit auf, dass ich öffentlich nicht zu sagen wagte, was ich privatim lehrte. Ich hielt nun vor einem Jahre einige Vorlesungen über diesen Gegenstand, worauf dies erfolgte, dass sie nach drei, vier Vorlesungen aus Vorwand oder mit Wahrheit in mich drangen, in öffentlichen Schriften zu zeigen, dass man nicht immer sich bloss von den interpreten abhängig machen solle."

[62] Tholuck, *Geist*, 155. See also "Censuren und Bedenken von theol. Fakultäten und Doktoren zu Wittenberg, Königsberg, Jena, Helmstedt" (Jena, 1625).

original text (*Urtext*) is decisive then nobody may criticize him for what he has done. He adds: "The articles of faith are not in question here, but the interpretation of some passages, and no reasonable person may doubt that the church has granted teachers a certain liberty and that a yoke should not be laid on anybody."[63]

Apparently, Meisner had been in correspondence with Hoe and already discussed the prudence of Tarnov's approach before Gerhard had a chance to discuss its ramifications—and change his mind. In any case, with Gerhard now at the center of the dispute, Paul Tarnov (1562–1633), John Tarnov's uncle, took up his nephew's cause with personal resolve.[64] In a letter to the Jena faculty on April 28, 1622, he claimed that, due to the Saxon censures, his nephew had suffered great loss of reputation in the city. Besides, he added, one must be willing to depart from the fathers on occasion. He goes on to say that among many of those who profess themselves to be orthodox, biblical interpretation relies too much on polemical hotspots, while the rest of the Bible is left untouched. What ultimately concerned Paul Tarnov, however, was that the Saxon theologians had threatened to involve those very princes, "who have vouchsafed us their piety, wisdom, and justice," against pious Christians now declared guilty without a fair hearing.[65]

Given the tone of the argument and the nature of the divide between Paul Tarnov and the

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[63] *Rostocker Etwas von gelehrten Sachen*, Part 5, 659, quoted in Tholuck, 154: **"**Die grosse darin an den Tag gelegte hebräische Sprachkenntniss kann ich nicht genug bewundern. . . . Du wirst zwar sehr angegriffen werden, dass Du einige der berühmtesten Ausleger scharf getadelt hast, aber wenn wir gegen die Papisten feststehen wollen, dass der Sinn nach dem Urtexte entschieden werden muss, so darf Niemand Dein Unternehmen tadeln. . . . Nicht von Glaubensartikeln ist hier die Rede, sondern von den Auslegungen einiger Ausprüche und dass die Kirche den Lehrern eine gewisse Freiheit gestattet und keinem ein Joch aufgelegt werden darf, kann kein Verständiger beweifeln."

[64] That same May, he wrote a letter to Johann Gerhard, complaining about the high-handedness of the Saxon faculties. See Meisner, EM, 1:1191; in Tholuck, *Lebenszeugen*, 166.

[65] Meisner, EM, 1:615, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 158–59.

Saxon theologians, it seems unavoidable to conclude that the tension produced by the controversies surrounding Arndt and Rathmann, taking place at the same time, were in the background. As the older Tarnov's antipathy towards Saxon-political theology increased through the years, he began to pronounce his views in terms similar to Rathmann and reminiscent of Weigel's dichotomy between the external Word and internal faith. In his 1624 rector speech, "Concerning the New Gospel, which is the Cause of all Calamities,"[66] he spoke of a "new gospel" that had inundated the world and misled the people. "The new gospel," he explains, "is a doctrine that teaches how one should obtain the mercy of God the Father, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life through the external divine service." "The old gospel," on the other hand, "is a teaching that shows how a person should obtain the mercy of God the Father, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life through faith in the Lord Christ."[67]

This turn of events placed Gerhard, the most celebrated representative of Lutheran orthodoxy at that time, in a very difficult place. Not only had he given the younger Tarnov his complete support in 1619, only to withdraw it a few months later, but he was soon to be ensnared in a controversy with Rathmann, whose views he had initially regarded as a mere battle over words.[68] The elder Tarnov now used Gerhard's former position against him, even threatening to

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[66] Paul Tarnov, *De novo evangelio quod sit causa omnium calamitatum* (Frankfurt, 1697).

[67] Paul Tarnov, *Rede von dem neuen Evangelio*, trans. Johann Wiegleben (Wernigerode: Michael Anton Struck, 1773), 12, 13, quoted in Jonathan Strom, *Orthodoxy and Reform: The Clergy in Seventeenth Century Rostock* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1999), 91: "Das neue Evangelium . . . ist eine Lehre, welche anweiset, wie man die Barmherzigkeit Gottes des Vaters, die Vergebung der Sünden und das ewige Leben durch den aüßerlichen Gottesdienst erlangen soll. . . . Das alte Evangelium . . . ist eine Lehre, welche zeiget, wie man die Barmherzigkeit Gottes des Vaters, die Vergebung der Sünden und das ewige Seligkeit durch den Glauben an den Hern Christum erlangen soll."

[68] See Tholuck, *Geist*, 109. This report came from Arnold, *Historie*, 3:120. It was regarded as spurious (wrongly) by Gerhard's biographer, who had not read Gerhard's letter to Meisner (see next footnote). See Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *Vita Ioannis Gerhardi: S. Theol. Doct. Et in Academia Ienensi Prof* (Leipzig: Coernerus, 1723), 338–39.

publish large portions of his works that supported Rathmann if he did not agree to drop his case against the Danzig pastor. Thus, Gerhard concluded in a letter to Meisner less than two months before Meisner's death, that the elder Tarnov had joined Rathmann in his campaign against Saxon theology.[69] This northern fusion of anti-Saxon suspects had now caused an unbridgeable divide between Saxony and the Rostock faculty.[70]

Meisner's Challenge from Helmstedt

As resentment brewed in the north, sympathies among pastors and professors in Danzig, Rostock, and Helmstedt began to gel against a Saxon theological elite. Church historian, Ernst Ludwig Theodor Henke, writing from the perspective of the University of Helmstedt, tells the story of an unprecedented "ecclesiastical demagogy" in the constellation of German universities at this time. The "*Congregatio Interpretum Concilii*," consisting of the "Johanine triumvirate" at Jena—John Major, John Himmel, and John Gerhard—and the Wittenberg and Leipzig theologians under the presidium of Hoe of Hoenegg, wished to bind all other universities to its decisions on every religious matter. According to Henke, this was an age in which the majority opinion proved nothing and "the Saxon oligarchy of theologians" ("*Theologenoligarchie*") presumed to "make the church visible" by compelling universal recognition of itself as "the church."[71] This perception explains in part why Georg Calixt, the irenic theologian, gained the sympathy of Paul Tarnov. Both students of John Caselius in Rostock, they felt that the religious

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[69] See Arnold, *Historie*, 3:120: "D. Tarnovius der ältere hat geschieben, ich solte allhier wider Rathmann nichts *puliciren* lassen, wo niht, so ware schon ein grosses buch aus meinen Schriften *colligirt*, daraus zu sehen sey, daß ich bisher das gegenteil gelehrt. Gleich als wenn meine schrifften eine regul kirche wären, und ich nicht den schild Augustini hätte: Nondum motis certaminibus securius locuti sunt. Es scheint, als wenn dieser Tarnovius mit Rathmannen conspirete."

[70] Tholuck, *Geist*, 160.

[71] Ernst Ludwig Theodor Henke, *Georg Calixtus und seine Zeit* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1833), 317–18.

boundaries of the Formula of Concord, and specifically its doctrine of ubiquity, were the cause

of society's ills.[72]

The Helmstedt theologians, free from subscription to the Formula of Concord and duly

oblivious to the Saxon censures, flaunted their freedom in the face of theological hegemony. Yet,

still serving parishes in Lower Saxony were pastors devoted to the banished Prof. Hoffmann, and

especially to Johann Arndt, who had been pastor of the Martinikirche in Braunschweig from

1599 to 1609. They pointed to a different kind of tyranny that prevailed in Helmstedt: namely,

philosophy, which, having loosed the bonds of orthodoxy, now held theology captive to its own

principles. In 1619, around the same time as the controversy over Arndt's orthodoxy began to

flare up in Danzig, John Schröder, pastor in Nürnberg and close friend of John Gerhard, wrote a

letter to Meisner decrying the philosophical arrogance of that was sweeping the University of

Helmstedt. Informing him of the opposition among the Helmstedt theologians to the orthodox

position that original sin is a truly positive quality of the human soul, rather than a mere privation

of created good, as philosophy dictates,[73] he goes on to declare:

> I do not know what kind of spirit that university has, which finds its desire in making
> shaky what was stable. But one cannot marvel that such things take place there,
> where the philosophers have taken the scepter in hand, and where metaphysics, which
> threatens to be the grave of pure theology, is cherished more than is appropriate.[74]

However, the real competition between those two universities at this time did not revolve

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[72] Hoe wrote a letter to Meisner in 1621 in which he stated his mind to withdraw physical support from those those universities. See Meisner, EM, 1:33, cited in Tholuck, *Geist*, 104. See also Henke, *Calixt*, 318; Arnold, *Historie*, 3:120.

[73] Meisner, *Quaestiones Vexatae IV. An peccatum originis formaliter sit aliquid positivi?* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1620).

[74] Meisner, EM, 1:845, quoted in Tholuck, *Geist*, 104: "Ich weiss nicht was jene Universität für einen Geist hat, die ihre Lust darin findet, wankend zu machen, was fest geworden. Doch darf man sich nicht wundern, dass dergleichen da geschieht, wo die Philosophen das Scepter in ihre Hand bekommen, und wo die Metaphysik, welche das Grab der reinen Theologie zu werden droht, mehr als recht ist geliebt wird."

around Calixt and his forthcoming syncretistic views, but around his teacher, Cornelius Martini, the father of Aristotelian metaphysics in Germany. In former days, Martini had led the campaign against Hoffmann and the Ramist school over the relationship between theology and philosophy,[75] and now he picked his battle with Meisner over the necessity of using the perfect form of a syllogism in theological disputations. In the first volume of his *Philosophia Sobria* Meisner had argued (against the Calvinists) that, despite its usefulness, the syllogism was not *necessary* because Scripture nowhere requires it.[76] In 1619, Martini issued a malicious attack against Meisner in his *Analysis of Logic*, in which he argued that unless a theological disputation adheres to the perfect form of a syllogism, it cannot prove anything. On the other hand, he maintained, where logic is mastered the Bible can be grasped in an instant. He suggested that although "the author of *Philosophia Sobria*" was "very learned in other matters" (*doctissimus in altera*), he was completely out of his element when it came to logic. After requesting that his remarks not be taken as an attack on Meisner's person, he proceeds to fill fifteen pages with sarcastic *ad hominem* argumentation.[77] Tholuck describes the polemic as "a cesspool of spiteful suspicions, deliberate contortions, and cruel insults."[78] As Martini's preface suggests, this was more than an academic treatise on the necessity of logic and the inanities of Ramist dialectic. (See chapter 5.) It was one more protest against Saxon pretenses to theological hegemony: it was supremely arrogant to expect learned people to yield themselves to the authority of theology without recourse to formal logical demonstration. In this way, by requiring syllogistic exactitude

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[75] See See E. Schlee, *Der Streit des Daniel Hoffmann über das Verhältnis der Philosophie zur Theologie* (Marburg, 1862); Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff*, 86.

[76] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:377.

[77] Martini, *Analysis*, 114–28.

[78] Tholuck, *Geist*, 57: "Die ganze Polemik ist ein Kloak von gehässigen Verdächtigungen, absichtlichen Verdrehungen und gemeinen Schimpfreden."

in theological demonstration, he sought to weaken many orthodox arguments in support of articles of faith, including original sin. Thus, to use Aristotle's analogy, Martini played the philosophical geometrician to Calixt's theological carpenter.

John Major of Jena was the first to acknowledge that "it is necessary to dampen the fire between the theologians of Wittenberg and Helmstedt, and also what Cornelius Martini has written against Herr Dr. Meisner."[79] Meisner did not wish to enter into the debate, or at least he did not know how to proceed, until he was prevailed upon by a certain Heinrich Julius Strube, pastor in Helmstedt and Martini's father confessor (!).[80] In a letter to Meisner from that same year, Strube denounced Martini as "a swine from the herd of Epicurius" and "a despiser of the Word and of the sacred office." He insisted that, for the sake of his theological faculty, Meisner should "vindicate his reputation," and he admonished the professor of his duty to "stuff the mouth of the Cyclops."[81] He exclaims:

> I call upon God as my witness, how much those slanderous statements hurt me. About three years ago I saw here dictations of that swine, in which were contained open insults of your name, and indeed opposed to the *Philosophia Sobria*. . . . They admit of other errors and are even devoted to Calvinism, Papism, Pelagianism, and Epicurianism. Here it is publicly taught that the Son of God and indeed his divine nature is less than the Father, the descent into hell is dismissed as an matter of opinion (*opinabilis sententia*), the *communicatio majestatis* abnegates the flesh of Christ, the omnipresence [of Christ's flesh] is rejected; and he claims that right reasoning (*recta ratio*) does not oppose the mysteries of faith, and other such abominations.[82]

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[79] Henke, *Calixt*, 318–19: "[E]s sei nöthig zu dämpfen das Feuer so zwischen den Theologen zu Wittenberg und Helmstedt, auch was Cornelius Martini wider Hrn. Dr. Meisner geschrieben."

[80] On Strube, see Henke, *Calixt*, 320.

[81] Tholuck, *Geist*, 59.

[82] Meisner, EM, 1:407, quoted in Tholuck, *Geist*, 59–60: "Unser Cornelius, ein Schwein von der Heerde Epikurs, ein Verächter des Worts und des geistlichen Amts, giebt eine Logik bei uns heraus, worin Dr. Mentzer, dem dieser Teufel bei Weitem sich nicht vergleichen darf, und andre Theologen, obwohl mit Verschweigung des Namens, durchgeheckelt werden. Vorzüglich wird Ew. Excellenz darin verspottet und verhöhnt. . . . Du bedarfst zwar meines Rathes nicht, aber ich möchte Dich veranlassen, im Namen Eurer Fakultät, dich an Euren Churfürsten zu wenden, diese Säule des Reichs und der reinen Lehre, der von unserem Fürsten leicht erlangen wird, dass diesem

Meisner acquiesced to Strube's request, but proceeded with remarkable restraint throughout the dispute. On January 21, 1620, he responded with a disputation entitled, *Vexing Questions*, the first of which was: "Whether one must always debate in the form of a syllogism concerning theological matters?" First he establishes the *status controversiae.* The nature of the problem was as he described in his *Philosophia Sobria*, namely that a theologian was expected to state his theological position, not merely by means of any form, be it an enthymeme or a syllogism, but explicitly by means of the latter, including a major and minor premise followed by a conclusion that necessarily follows from the perfection of the premises. Of course, Martini was not the first to force his theological *collocutor* into a syllogistic stranglehold. Meisner cites the Colloquy of Montbéliard (1586) as the occasion of this problem, particularly where Beza repeatedly demands that Jacob Andreae frame his argument in the form of a syllogism: "*Proba per syllogismum! Fac syllogismum!*" and to which Andreas responded: "The real meaning of Scripture passages are not proved through syllogisms, but demonstrated from Scripture."[83]

Meisner then proceeds to the "problem of the treatise itself," namely, the strict logic of Martini, whom he half-disparagingly designates as "Analyticus" and "Logicus." He assesses his opponent's rules: (1) The syllogism itself, or the true premises in the syllogism, rightly disposed, do not merely give the truth of the conclusion, but demonstrates that which obtains outside of

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Cyklopen das Maul gestopft werde. Ich rufe Gott zum Zeugen an, wie sehr mich jene Verläumdungen schmerzen. Vor etwa drei Jahren habe ich hier Diktate jenes Schweines gesehen, in denen offenbare Beleidigungen Deines Namens enthalten waren, und zwar der philosophia sobria entgegengesetzt. . . . Andrer Irrthümer wollen sie aufdecken und sind selbst dem Calvinismo, Papismo, Pelagianismo und Epicuraeismo ergeben. Hier wird öffentlich gelehrt, dass der Sohn Gottes und zwar seiner göttlichen Natur nach geringer als der Vater, die Höllenfahrt für eine opinabilis sententia ausgegeben, die communicatio majestatis an das Fleisch Christi leugnet, die Allgegenwart verworfen und behauptet, dass die recta ratio mit den Mysterien des Glaubens nicht streite und andre dergleichen Greuel."

[83] Meisner, *Questiones Vexetai, I. An semper in forma syllogistica in rebus theologicis disputandum sit,* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1620), A3b–A4a. See Jacob Andreae, Acta colloquii Montis Belligartensis: Quod habitum est Anno Christi 1586 (Tübingen: George Gruppenback, 1587), 98: "Dictorum Scripturae germana sententia non Syllogismo probanda, sed ex scriptura demonstrada est."

every syllogism. That is to say, syllogistic conclusions are not merely true in form but in reality. (2) Just as in any discipline principles are not proved, but conclusions are deduced from principles; so theologians should not be expected to deduce clear teachings from Scripture or *loci* by means of a syllogism. However, since every controversy involves words and inferences that are either affirmed or denied, they consist of deductions from Scripture, as from a principle, and therefore must adhere to the form of a demonstration. (3) To dispute formally is not only to propound a syllogism in all of its parts, explicitly, in form and manner, omitting no terms or propositions; but even when such an orderly arrangement of its assertions and method of negation is not used, the syllogism continues to be valid. In other words, the legitimacy of any argument depends on its being consistent with (or reducible to) the terms of a syllogism.[84]

On the basis of such "*hypotheses analytici*" Meisner draws the following inference: if it is truly necessary to follow the perfect form of a syllogism, per hypothesis 2, then one may be certain that neither Christ, nor the apostles, nor the theologians of the church had anything to say that was true, since they, too, failed to follow the syllogism. If, however, Martini should suggest, per hypothesis 3, that Christ and the apostles did indeed use the syllogism, when in fact they were merely using an enthymeme, then the "Analyticus" must grapple with the following argument, which appears inescapable from his own hypotheses:

> Every legitimate argument is a syllogism. Every enthymeme is a legitimate argument. Therefore, every enthymeme is a syllogism, which is an absurd conclusion since an enthymeme and a syllogism differ from each other as opposite kinds, and such a great logician should not confuse them.[85]

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[84] Meisner, *Questiones Vexetai, I*, B2a–B2b.

[85] Meisner, *Questiones Vexetai, I*, B3b: "Capiat hoc argumentum: omnis legitima consecutio est syllogismus. Omne Enthymema est legitima consecutio. Omne igitur Enthymema est legitima consecutio. Omne igitur Enthymema est syllogismus: quae conclusio est absurda, siquidem Enthymema et syllogismus tanquam species oppositae inter se differunt, quae tantus Logicus confundere non debebat."

Martini, clearly wounded, issued a passionate and spiteful "response to the first of

Meisner's miserable and vexing questions" in 1621, hence throwing more fuel on the burning

bridge between the two schools.[86] Meisner responded again later that year with a *Brief*

Admonition concerning Master Cornelius Martini . . . his Insults, Unfairness, and Negligence to

Observe his own Rules of Logic.[87] This lengthier treatise is essentially a reduplication of many of

his previous arguments, only with more thoroughness and also repetition. Meisner begins by

diverting the question from himself explaining that the argument did not originate with him, but

with Andreae and Hunnius, who had made it abundantly clear at their respective colloquies that

such a requirement completely undermined the Lutheran biblical point of departure and

subordinated theological discourse to the mandates of reason.[88] He then defends his credentials

showing himself to be a competent philosopher and logician. He cites the approval of the

theological faculty in Giessen, where he initially disputed on the subject, and of Wittenberg, and

particularly John Forster, under whose supervision he was promoted to doctor of theology and

acceded to the theological faculty. Their testimonies and glowing commendations attest to

Meisner's surpassing qualifications both as a logician and as a theologian.[89] Third, he turns to the

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[86] Cornelius Martini, *Responsio ad primam & miserabilem vexatam quaestionem Balthasari Meisneri* (Helmstedt: 1621).

[87] Meisner, *Brevis Admonitio de Magistri Cornelii Martini . . . Maledicentia, Iniquitate et in Logicis suis legibus observandis negligentia* (Wittenberg: Johannes Matthaeus, 1621).

[88] Jakob Andreae, *Acta colloquii; Theodore Beza, Ad Acta colloquii Montisbelgardensis Tubingae edita, Theodori Bezae Responsio* (Geneva: Joannes le Preux, 1587). See also Aegidius Hunnius, *Acta des Colloquii, zwischen den Würtembergischen Theologen und Dr. Jo. Pistorio zu Baden gehalten* (Tübingen, 1590); and *Acta Colloquii Badensis hic Tubinga impresa. Pariter fanofum illud Ratiabomenfe* (1602) 284. Johannes Pistorius II (1546–1608), son of Johannes Pistorius I, the great reformer of Hesse, converted to Catholicism in 1588. He represented the Catholic party at the Colloquy of Baden at the invitation of Margrave Jacob III of Baden, who converted to Catholicism the following year. See, finally, Aegidius Hunnius, Acta colloquii Ratisbon. de norma doctrinae cath. et controversiarum religionis judice, Monachii, 1602. 4. See also Herbst, *Das Regensburger Religionsgespräch von 1601 geschichtlich dargestellt und dogmengeschichtlich beleuchtet* (Gütersloh, 1928).

[89] Meisner, *Brevis Admonitio*, "Testimonium Facultatis Theologica in Academia Giessena," 58–61; "Testimonium Decani Facultatis Theologicae in Acad. Wittebergensi public Programmati insertum, quum Doctoratus collation solemnis intimaretur," 62–65; and "Testimonium inpetitione Licenciae, a Dn. D. Johanne

discussion at hand, revealing several errors in Martini's logic, the impossibility of his position,

and the inconsistency with which he follows the "perfect syllogism" he himself stipulates.[90]

Fourth, and finally, Meisner discusses the negligence with which Martini requires the syllogism.

He concludes in syllogistic form:

> Whoever debates without perfect syllogisms is under the authority of his opponent, and can, and indeed, in serious matters, must, be confined to the syllogistic structure he has proposed.
>
> In his treatise elevated against me, *Cornelius Martini* disputes without perfect syllogisms.
>
> Therefore, Cornelius Martini is under my authority, and I can, and indeed, since he does not consider this a trifling matter, must, confine him to the syllogistic structure he has proposed.[91]

By means of profuse methodical and effective arguments, Meisner vindicates his honor and

turns the table on his Helmstedt antagonist. He illustrates not only that he himself is a capable

logician but also that Martini is completely out of his depths and in foreign territory when it

comes to theology.[92] Several of Meisner's colleagues came to his defense as well and reassured

their friend that he was nothing of the sort Martini described in his shameful defamations. Yet, as

precious as the mild Wittenberg professor's reputation was to such practical-minded theologians

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Forstero, Promotore meo celeberrimo P.m. datum," 65–68."

[90] Meisner, *Brevis Admonitio*, "Iniquitatis," 193–95.

[91] Meisner, *Brevis Admonitio*, "Neglegencia," 210: "Quid disputat sine perfectis syllogismis, ille est sub imperio adversarii, & ad explicatam syllogismi structuram cogi potest, imò in rebus gravibus debet.

Cornelius Martini in suo tractatu contra me edito, disputant sine perfectis syllogismis.

Ergo Cornelius Martini est sub meo imperio, & ad explicatam syllogismi structuram a me

cogi potest, imò quia rem hanc non putat levem esse, cogi debent."

[92] Antonius Norhold, a contemporary of Martini and Meisner, also observed that Marinti had more in his writings from Aristotle than from the Holy Spirit. See Inge Mager, "Die Pfarrerausbildung für evangelische Landeskirchen an der welfischen Universität Helmstedt," in *Evangelische Landeskirchen der Harzterritorien in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Christof Römer (Berlin, 2003), 70–71, cited in Michael J. Halvorson, *Heinrich Heshusius and Confessional Polemic in Early Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Aldershot: Ashgate. 2010), 63.

as John Gerhard and Paul Röber (1587–1651), they applauded Meisner primarily for his faithful defense of Lutheran doctrine. In a letter from 1621, Gerhard opened his heart to his Christian friend:

> Many thanks, Your Excellence, for your tireless defense of the heavenly truth through your scholarly and formidable writings, and for not permitting yourself to become discouraged by the philosophical arrogance and condescending scorn of Cornelius. No matter how much Cornelius bursts from fury and ambition, he will not persuade anybody that Meisner is such as he has described him with his slanderous feather. I have recognized the character of this untheological and anti-theological man for several years now, and I have not expected any better fruit from him.[93]

Cornelius Martini died rather unexpectedly later that same year, thus bringing the heated syllogism debate to a close. Pastor Strube was supposed to preach the funeral sermon but was prevented due to sickness. Instead, his colleague, who appears to have been more favorably disposed to the great logician, eulogized him and claimed that, "in everything he did, he harmed nobody" (*omnibus profecit, nemini nocuit*). In a letter to Meisner from October 7, 1622, Strube conveyed his disgust at his colleague's spurious assertion suggesting that such a great lie had not been told since the times of the papacy. He recounts that when he had visited Martini on his deathbed he "did not discern the slightest trace of devotion in him."[94] However, in spite of such bitterness towards Martini, Meisner's approach to Helmstedt was characteristically gentle. He never condemned the school, never wrote off its professors as a lost cause, but continued to work

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[93] Meisner, EM, 1:263, quoted in Tholuck, *Geist*, 61: "Herzlich danke ich Ew. Excellenz für die Unermüdlichkeit in der Vertheidigung der himmlischen Wahrheit durch gelehrte und kraftvolle Schriften, und dass Sie sich durch den aus philosophischem Uebermuthe stammenden Hohn des Cornelius nicht davon abschrecken lassen. Mag auch Cornelius vor Reid und Ehrgeiz platzen, er wird doch Niemanden überreden, dass Meisner ein Solcher sei, wie er ihn mit seiner lästernden Feder beschrieben hat. Den Charakter dieses untheologischen und antitheologischen Menschen habe ich schon seit einigen Jahren erkannt und keine bessere Frucht von ihm erwartet."

[94] Meisner, EM, 1:431, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 60–61: "Dein ungeschlachter Verläumder ist dahin: ich habe ihn (Strube war Martini's Beichtvater) kurz vor seinem Tode besucht, aber auch nicht die geringste Spur von Andacht bei ihm bemerkt. Mein Kollege, der, während ich krank lag, die Leichenpredigt hielt, bediente sich der Worte: *omnibus profecit, nemini nocuit*. Eine so grosse Lüge ist wohl selbst während der Zeiten des Papsthums in dieser Kirche nicht gehört worden!"

for unity and concord on theological grounds. He even expressed regret that Gerhard had returned the call to serve on the Helmstedt theology faculty in 1622. "That university could use an orthodox, peaceable, and insightful theologian, and it would be rather beneficial if it, which until now has been mostly alone, might enter into an alliance with our churches."[95]

These northern Lutheran perspectives on Wittenberg orthodoxy set the stage and contributed the terms for the forthcoming historiography, for both rationalist and pietist sources, and continue to influence interpretations of Lutheran orthodoxy today. Mindful of these intramural perspectives on the Saxon theological hegemony and its inflexible confessional standard, and yet not overlooking the contribution that Meisner brings to the historical picture, it will now be asked what part normative theology played in the emergence of Lutheran devotional theology towards the turn of the seventeenth century. Was this a reactive development, or did it belong to the spirit of orthodoxy itself?

Piety Crisis?

Given the anti-orthodox sentiments of the politically disadvantaged theologians of Helmstedt and Rostock, it is not surprising to find modern scholarship operating with the basic assumption that the boundaries drawn by the Lutheran confessions and reinforced by Lutheran orthodoxy forced a wedge between theology and piety. Heinz Schilling sees a tension growing: to the extent that Lutheran theology is absorbed into the interests of the university (which served the state), it not only loses its ability to engender spiritual renewal outside the university, but

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[95] *Sammlung von alten und neuen theologischen Sachen* (1726), 551, in Tholuck, *Geist*, 104–5: "Die Ursach, welche ihr angebt, eure schwache Gesundheit, bedaure ich und erflehe von Herzen deren Herstellung und Befestigung. Dass aber die Veränderung des Orts und der Uebergang nach Helmstädt dazu beitragen würde, bezweifle ich. Zwar bedarf jene Universität einen orthodoxen, friedfertigen und einsichtsvollen Theologen, und es wäre wohl heilsam, wenn sie, *quae hactenus plerumque fuit singularis,* mit unsern Kirchen in Verbindung träte. Wenn indess Ew. Hochwürden Jena verlassen will, so wünsche ich am dringendsten, dass ihr der unsrige würdet."

even impedes the common person's ability to appropriate it. Lutheran devotional piety and ethical renewal emerged, as per a historical-dialectical synthesis, to overcome the crisis. According to Schilling, if Lutheran theology, or the prevailing dogmatic and polemical literature, had anything to do with a recovery of an internal piety towards the turn of the seventeenth century, or any ethical orientation within or without Lutheranism at that time, this was a purely negative influence. Hartmut Lehmann speaks of an objective, quantitative "crisis," which corresponded to a subjective, qualitative reaction of inner Angst among the general populace. Such a reaction consisted of an intense yearning for salvation that could no longer be fulfilled by the established church.[96] He adds: "Wide spread concern for the personal salvation of the soul unleashed the flood waves of devotional literature, which overwhelmed the tediously constructed buildings of confessionalized churchliness."[97]

Besides the historiographical influence of Gottfried Arnold's *Historie*, Schilling and Lehmann are reflecting the popular thesis advanced by Winfried Zeller in an essay from 1973 entitled "Die 'alternde Welt' und die 'Morgenröte im Aufgang.'"[98] According to Zeller, "that which resulted from the passing away of the old consisted in a loss of spiritual ingenuity and led

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[96] Hartmut Lehmann, *Das Zeitalter des Absolutismus*: *Gottesgnadentum und Kriegsnot* (Stuttgart, 1980, Christentum und Gesellschaft, vol. 9), 111. See also Lehmann, "Europäisches Christentum im Zeichen der Krise, in *Im Zeichen der Krise. Religiösität im Europa des 17. Jahrhunderts,* ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Anne-Charlott Trepp (Göttingen, 1999),11: "Hier können wir Dimensionen von weitreichenden religiösen Hoffnungen und von einer großen Sehnsucht nach heilsgeschichtlicher Orientierung und Sicherheit erkennen, die wie es scheint, durch die Angebote der etablierten Grosskirchen nicht oder nur ungenügend befriedigt wurden."

[97] Lehmann, "Endzeiterwartung im Luthertum im späten 16. und im frühen 17. Jahrhundert," in *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland*, edited by Hans-Christoph Rublack (Gütersloh, 1992), 545–58: "Die weitverbreitete Sorge um das persönliche Seelenheil löste Flutwellen von erbaulicher Literatur aus, die die mühsam errichteten Gebäude konfessionalisierter Kirchlichkeit überschwemmten." See also Udo Stäter, *Meditation und Kirchenreform in der lutherischen Kirche des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1995); and Lehmann, "Die Krisen des 17. Jahrhunderts als Problem der Forschung," in *Krisen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. M. Jakubowski-Tiessen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 13–24.

[98] Winfred Zeller, "Die 'alternde Welt' und die 'Morgenröte im Aufgang,'—Zum Begriff der 'Frömmigkeitskrise' in der Kirchengeschichte," in *Theologia Viatorum.* Jahrbuch der Kirchlichen Hochschule 12 (Berlin, 1973/74),197–211 (=*Theologie und Frömmigkeit* 2, Marburg 1978), 1–13; 2–3.

to a crisis of piety."[99] One perceives echoes of Paul Tarnov's juxtaposition between the "new

gospel" and the "old gospel." On Zeller's reading of the events, a "falling out of doctrine and

life" left the church hungering to fill a "vacuum of piety" that was filled by a flood of prayer

books and devotional writings drawing on the German mystics.[100] For Zeller the question of

"crisis" revolved around an evaluation of two individuals, Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608) and

Johann Arndt (1555–1621), whose literary contributions triggered the seventeenth century

devotional movement.[101] Through his "hunger for a personal, living piety," based on his study of

Scriptures and St. Augustine, Nicolai brought the crisis to light and opened the floodgates of

devotion. But it was Johann Arndt, who, five years later, addressed the nature of the crisis and

began to overcome it. According to Zeller, Arndt discovered that the essence of Christianity is

"piety," and piety has to do with the kind of life one lives. This requires a "praxis-theology," that

is, "such a theology that consists more in works than words, more in practice than in theory,

more in virtue than in speech."[102] Arndt was famous for declaring: "Everybody these days learns

how he can become important and well-known in the world, but nobody wants to learn how to be

pious. Everybody would gladly become Christ's servants, but nobody wants to be his

follower."[103]

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[99] Zeller, "alternde Welt," 2: "Das von der Zeit bewirkte Altwerden besteht also im Verlust der geistlichen Ursprünglichkeit und führt zu einer Krise der Frömmigkeit."

[100] Zeller, "Lutherische Lebenszeugen: Gestalten und Gestalt lutherischer Frömmigkeit," in *Evangelisches und Orthodoxes Christentum in Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung*, ed. Ernst Benz and L. A. Zander (Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1952), 181: "Der Hunger nach einer persönlichen, lebendigen Frömmigkeit findet, in gleicher Weise an das Erbauungsschrifttum der deutschen Mystik anknüpfend, seien Niederschlag in zahlreichen Gebetbüchern und Erbauungsschriften."

[101] This is the observation of Johannes Wallmann, "Reflexionen und Bemerkungen zur Frömmigkeitskrise des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Krisen des 17. Jahrhunderts*, ed. M. Jakubowski-Tiessen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 25. See also Zeller, "Lebenszeugen," 180–202.

[102] Zeller, "Lebenszeugen," 182.

[103] Johann Arndt, "Vorrede zum Ersten Buch," (Frankfurt am Main, 1605); printed by W. Koepp, *Johann Arndt* (Berlin, 1912), 73; quoted in Zeller, "Lebenszeugen," 182: "Jedermann studiert jetzo, wie er hoch und

What should be made of Zeller's popular theory of a piety crisis, particularly as it turns on a correlation of Nicolai's "Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens" und Johann Arndt's "Wahren Christentum?" Johannes Wallmann questions the pairing of these figures. Besides appearing around the same time and belonging to the same literary genre, they have very little to do with each other. Nicolai, pastor in Unna in Westphalia, wrote in the face of external adversity, namely, the plague, which swept through northern Germany in 1597/98. In his "Freudenspiegel," he concentrates on comforting people who are in the throws of death. Arndt's "True Christianity" was written without any consideration of any external adversity. The city of Braunschweig, where he composed those books, was experiencing an economic boom, and the adversity later caused by Duke Heinrich Julius through his military conquest of Brandenburg does not begin until October 1605, when the first book of "True Christianity" had already been published. Not external adversity, but the unrepentance and carnal security of the people motivated Arndt to write.[104]

But what does all this mean for the orthodox practice of theology? In a pioneering essay entitled "Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?"[105] Markus Matthias reconstructs Zeller's suggestion of a "piety crisis" and challenges its semantic suppositions. The suggestion that the doctrinal assertions that gave shape to the confessional boundaries of Lutheranism had an altogether negative influence on the subjective practice of faith does not do justice to the

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berühmt in der Welt werden möge; aber fromm sein will niemand lernen. . . . Jedermann wollte gern Christi Diener sein, aber Christi Nachfolger will niemand sein. . . . Die Christen wollen jetzt einen stattlichen, prächtigen, reichen, weltförmigen Christum haben; aber den armen, sanftmütigen, demütigen, verachteten, nidrigen Christum will niemand haben noech kennen noch demselben folgen."

[104] Wallmann, " Reflexionen," 28–29. See Arndt, "Vorrede zum Ersten Buch," 73.

[105] Markus Matthias, "Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?" in *Frömmigkeit oder Theologie? Johann Arndt und die "Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum*, Studien zur Kirchengeschichte Niedersachsens, ed. Hans Otte and Hans Schneider (Göttingen: Vandenheock & Ruprecht, 2007), 27–43.

contemporary Lutheran self-understanding. Modern critics of orthodoxy tend to exaggerate external factors, or rather, the mounting gap between teaching of life and a negative reaction of practice vis-à-vis theory.[106] Despite the status awarded Arndt as a devotional writer towards the middle of the seventeenth century, Matthias questions the suggestion that he had ushered in a new kind of piety. Perhaps his *praxis pietatis* was merely a version of "reformational" theology. And what about Nicolai? The idea of a rift between a confessional dogmatic theology and devotional piety must reckon with the fact that Nicolai was steeped in confessional theology—he was one of the leading anti-Calvinist polemicists of the late Reformation—and his devotions bear the influence of his teacher, Aegidius Hunnius. Apart from the poetic adornment of his "Freudenspiegel," what Zeller represents as "new" in the case of Nicolai is "all the result of a proper Christological reflection on a high intellectual level, which alone made it possible."[107]

Matthias's observation squares with Walter Sparn's insights in his essay, "Die Krise der Frömmigkeit und ihr theologischer Reflex im nachreformatorischen Luthertum," which suggest that the confessionalized Lutheran dogmatics of this period had "a purely affirmative relationship" with the development of reformational piety.[108] Such an "affirmative relationship" was reflected both inside and outside the boundaries of Lutheranism—through the development

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[106] Matthias, "Frömmigkeitskrise," 41: "Der Begriff der Frömmigkeitskrise mit seiner postulierten Diastase von Lehre und Leben (Theorie und Praxis) führt zu einer unhistorischen Bewertung der theologischen Leistung der sogenannten Orthodoxie und verkennt auch deren Begriff von bzw. Function für Frömmigkeit und Glaube." For another critique of Zeller's negative appraisal of the development of Lutheran piety, see Jonathan Strom, *Orthodoxy and Reform: The Clergy in Seventeenth Century Rostock* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999).

[107] Matthias, "Frömmigkeitskrise," 40–41. Even Zeller admits that Nicolai was stronly influenced by the Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity. Matthias cites Zeller, "alternde Welt," 91, n24: "Bei Nicolai wird "Ubiquität" aus einem sakramentstheologischen Ausdruck zu einem universalen theologischen und weltanschaulichen Prinzip."

[108] Walter Sparn, "Die Krise der Frömmigkeit und ihr theologischer Reflex im nachreformatorischen Luthertum," in *Die lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland.* Wissenschafts Symposion des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1988, ed. Hans-Christoph Rublack (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1988), 54–55.

of various dogmatic topics for unity and clarity within the confessional community and through polemical topics as well. This subject was already taken up in the case of Meisner's extramural polemics in the previous chapter. It was found that polemical topics dealing with the Reformed doctrine of double predestination were converted into sermons and manuals of instruction on how Christians may (and must) be certain of their salvation.[109] But it should be asked at this juncture, whether this affirmative relationship between polemical-topical theology and piety may be seen in the case of Johann Arndt, whose theology was thoroughly vindicated by the Saxon "oligarchy." What, moreover, was his influence on those orthodox dogmaticians, and above all, Gerhard and Meisner, who also contributed to the Lutheran devotional tradition?

The Arndt Question Revisited

The difficulty in reading Arndt as an orthodox theologian is in overcoming the difference between what he said and how he said it. The substance of his popular theology resembled that of Luther and Tauler and consisted of a regenerative and transformative theology through *imitatio Christi* and ethical renewal. However, in the expression of his theology he draws on mystical sources, including themes of "divine magic and cabbala" popularized by Paracelsus. He sees in the rebirth of metal (alchemy) a parallel to the rebirth of the soul through the "tincture" of Holy Spirit.[110] Despite the suspicion he endured from his orthodox critics, however, Arndt considered himself thoroughly orthodox. In a letter dated from October 23, 1620, in the heat of the controversy over his "True Christianity," he establishes his credentials to the Gießen

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[109] Compare, for instance, Balthasar Meisner's polemical disputation, *Disputatio Theologica De Calvinismo Fugiendo, Ob Principium Ejus Incertum, Quod Est Rationis Speculatio* (Wittenberg, 1614), later converted into his "Christian instruction," *Ein Christlicher Unterricht, Das man sich vor Calvinischen Lehre hüten solle, weil sie auff einen ungewissen Grundt, nemlich, auff der blinden Vernunfft Sinnen und Gedancken erbawet ist* (Wittenberg, 1615), with his sermons in Berlin (1619).

[110] Zeller, "Lebenszeugen," 183.

theologian, Balthasar Mentzer:

> Indeed, then, o famous man, I would that you were persuaded that from my youth up to a very old age (for I have now, by the grace of God, nearly approached my sixty-fifth year) I have not impinged upon any errors with respect to the Augsburg Confession or the Formula of Concord, I always devoted my attention to the divine Word, and I was thrown out of my homeland of Anhalt for repudiating Calvinism.[111]

Yet, as Schneider points out, his correspondences give no evidence that he fostered the traditional self-study (*loci*) model expected of students of Lutheran orthodoxy.[112] Indeed, his education was primarily in medicine, and he never earned a theological degree.[113] Thus, given his decision to practice theology rather than medicine, it should not be too surprising that his phraseology should bear some similarity to Paracelsus, the *theomedicus* who was chiefly responsible for striking an interface between the two disciplines. Similar to Paracelsus's twofold genealogy, or "zwen Geist" of man,[114] but closer in content to the Old Adam-New Adam theme (Col. 3:9–11) championed by *Theologia Teutsch* and the early Luther, he writes:

From Adam man has a carnal spirit and inherited the dominion and tyranny of the evil spirit, but from Christ [he has] the Holy Spirit with his gifts and comforting governance. For

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[111] Melchior Breler, ed., *Warhafftiger/ Glaubwürdiger und gründlicher Bericht von den vier Büchern vom Wahren Christenthum* (Lünegurg 1625), 66, quoted in Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt*, 111: "Certo igitur, vir clarissime, tibi persuadeas velim, me ab ineunte aetate usque ad multam caniticem (egressus enim ferme iam sum Dei gratia annum sexagesimum quintum) nulli errori in Augustanam Confessionem et Formulam Concordiae impingenti, verbo imprimis divino adversanti fuisse addictum, meque ex patria Anhaltina propter repudiatum Calvinismum esse eiectum." For a helpful analysis of Arndt's theology, which points up the Lutheran means of grace theology in Arndt's postil, see Eric Lund's assessment of the strong means of grace theology in Arndt's postil in "'*Sensus docendi mysticus*': The Interpretation of the Bible in Johann Arndt's Postilla," in *Hermeneutica Sacra–Festschrift for Bengt Hägglund*, ed. Torbjorn Johansson, Robert Kolb, Johann Anselm Steiger (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 223–46.

[112] Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt*, 66: "Gängige theologische Lehrbücher erscheinen im Briefwechsel Arndts niemals, häufig dagegen medizinische Schriften bekannter Paracelsisten."

[113] Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt*, 138–39: "Entgegen der Annahme der bisherigen Forschung hat der einflussreichtst Erbauungsschriftsteller des Protestantismus wohl nie ein Theologiestudium absolviert, sondern sich nach dem Grundstudium der Artes der Medizin gewidmet."

[114] Paracelsus, *Opera*, 1/XIV, 43, cited in Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt*, 146.

depending on what spirit a man has, he shares such a birth, manner, and nature.[115]

On the face of it, Arndt's mystical content is thoroughly orthodox. It corresponds to the "core and content" (Kern und Inhalt) of *Theologia Teutsch* in Part 3 of his Sixth Book of *True Christianity*. According to Arndt, "die teutsche Theologie" is the transformation of the life of a Christian into the life of Christ through the dying of the old Adam and being united with God through new birth, faith, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, the phrases Arndt uses to embellish his German theology, including references to the "divine blood of Christ" (WChr II, 1), the "heavenly flesh of Christ" (WChr II, 45), etc., came across to his orthodox critics as Gnosticizing tendencies.[116] His suggestion of a spiritual-regenerative transformation from an adamic to a Christ-formative existence through the "use and practice of virtues" (*usu et praxi virtuteum*), while coherent on a strictly mystical order, made no mention of a forensic imputation (*imputatio iustitiae alienae*), and therefore came across as a version of deification condemned by the Formula of Concord (SD, III).[117]

Whether such observations were merely nitpicking on the part of such overzealous orthodoxists as Corvinus and Osiander is not the question here. However, the anti-orthodox and anti-confessional trajectory clearly perceptible in Arndt, but especially in Rathmann and Paul Tarnov, was quite enough to inspire the younger generation, who defended their pious mentor, to follow a different—indeed more orthodox—procedure of devotional writing. On the one hand,

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[115] Arndt, WChr 1:3, 5, quoted in Schneider, *Der fremde Arndt*, 146: "Aus Adam hat der Mensch einen fleischlichen Geist, und des bösen Geistes Herrschaft und Tyrannnei ererbet; aus Christo aber den Heil. Geist mit seinen Gaben und tröstlicher Regierung. Denn welcherlei Geist der Mensch hat, solcherlei Geburt, Art und Eigenschaft hat er an sich."

[116] See Wilhelm Koepp, *Johann Arndt: Eine Untersuchung über die Mystik im Luthertum* (Berlin: Neue Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche 13, repr. Aalen, 1973), 90, cited in Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, 215.

[117] Geyer, *Verborgene Weisheit*, 215–16.

Arndt had exercised a considerable influence on the next generation, and especially on John

Gerhard. Indeed, it was on account of Arndt's influence that the young Gerhard discontinued his

studies in medicine and decided to study theology instead.[118] His *Sacred Meditations* certainly

bear the imprint of medicinal theology.[119] Shortly after Arndt died, however, Gerhard wrote his

Schola Pietatis as a corrective to, and indeed what he intended as a replacement of, Arndt's *True*

Christianity.[120] Yet, as eloquent as Gerhard's *Meditations* are, he does not lose the distinctives of

Lutheran doctrine for mystical themes. As Johann Anselm Steiger notes, Gerhard (along with

other orthodox writers contributing to confessional theology) aimed to "show how the medieval-

mystical piety tradition could be domesticated within Lutheranism without clashing with the

theological criteria of the Reformation, and was intended, on the contrary, to strengthen and

intensify them."[121] Nonetheless, in his *Schola*, Gerhard appears to move away from mystical

themes incorporated by Arndt, drawing instead on the Scriptures in order to explain "the

important and motivating reasons" of each article of faith "that should arouse and awaken each

person to godliness."[122]

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[118] See E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard Dinda and Elmer Hohle (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2001), 22. See letters from Gerhard to Arndt and Nicholas Hunnius, appended to Fischer, *Life*, 416–19; 425–27. See also Gerhard,"Dedication," in *Sacred Meditations* (1606).

[119] Johann Gerhard, for instance, produced not only the most authoritative dogmatics text of his time, the *Loci Theologici* (1610–1625), but also the *Sacred Meditations* (1606), which is one of the most influential specimens of devotional literature of seventeenth century.

[120] Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, Vol. 1, trans. Elmer Hohle, ed. Rachel K. Melvin (Malone, TX: Repristination Presss, 2006). See also Gerhard's letter to Aegidius Hunnius II from February 2, 1625, in Philipp Julius Rehtmeyer: *Historia Ecclesiastica Inclytae Urbis Brunswigae*, Part 5 (Braunschweig 1720), 238.

[121] Johann Anselm Steiger, "Heinrich Varenius' Rettung von Johann Arndts Wahren Christentum," in *Bernhard Varenius (1622–1654)*, ed. Margret Schuchard (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 45: "Gerhard . . . hat (neben anderen Autoren) nicht nur in seinem Predigten, sondern v. a. in den 'Meditationes Sacrae,' aber auch in der 'Schola Pietatis,' mit der er bekanntlich die BWC ersetzen wollte, einen Weg gewiesen, wie die mittelalterlich-mystische Frömmigkeitstradition innerhalb des Luthertums heimisch werden kann, ohne mit den reformatorisch-theologischen Grundlinien zu kollidieren, und im Gegenteil geeignet ist, diese zu vertiefen und zu bereichern." See also Steiger, "Johann Gerhard, Studien zu Theologie und Frömmigkeit des Kirchenvaters der lutherischen Orthodoxie," in: *Doctrina et pietas*, vol. 1 (Stüttgart and Bad Cannstatt, 1997).

[122] Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:3.

Meisner's Contribution to the Lutheran Devotional Tradition

As the current discussion turns to Balthasar Meisner, it will be helpful to restate the question at issue. Is Lutheran theology, as represented by the dialectic tradition of the Loci, the Lutheran Confessions, and the confessional-normative theology of the seventeenth century universities, potent or impotent to foster internal renewal and the spiritual life? Or must a theologian reach beyond the disputed points of doctrine, beyond the universities, outside of the dogmatic-topical tradition to mystical sources? Does Arndt's praxis-theology require a sacrifice of theological dogmatic clarity and accuracy? Meisner, like Gerhard, from the beginning to the end of his career, intended to accomplish much in the way of Christian ethics and renewal, but one looks in vain to find references to mystical or heretical sources. It must be admitted that Meisner's devotional works sacrifice an eloquence born of "nature" for the pattern of sound biblical words; and yet, while he did not write with the theological brilliance of Gerhard or the literary eloquence of Arndt, he manifests an astounding grasp of the Scripture and of the topics embedded therein. Mindful of the inability of common people to grasp the subtler qualities of orthodox theology, his chief purpose was to show the value of correct doctrine for the practice of piety. In order to illustrate how Meisner developed his practical theology from the perspective of a university theologian, who was chiefly concerned with the training of pastors in an age of confessionalism, it will be helpful to explore four works written with the intention of rousing Christians to the performance of good works.[123]

Meisner's most celebrated devotional work was his *Sacred Meditations*, which appeared in two volumes. The first was published in 1621 and consists of homiletical treatment of the

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[123] These works thus belong to the third (ethical) category delineated by Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 233–38. See chapter two above, pages 90–93.

Gospels appointed for the Sundays of the Church Year (*Evangelia Dominicalia*).[124] The second appeared in 1622, and treats the Gospels appointed for Festival Days (*Evangelica Festivitatum*).[125] These were the same years in which Gerhard was occupied with his *Schola*, the controversy over Arndt's orthodoxy was in full force, Rathmann had released his controversial *Vom Gnadenreich Christi*, John Tarnov was protesting against the tyranny of the Saxon Council, Martini was denouncing Meisner as a philosophical incompetent, and Meisner was polemicizing against the Calvinist aristocrats in Brandenburg. Meisner's *Meditations* were inspired by the latter course of events and may be considered as a kind of addendum to his *Collegii Adiaphoristici* written in 1520. The use of the historic pericope qualified as an adiaphoron, that is, a practice neither commanded nor forbidden by God, but regarded by Calvinists as a vestige of Roman idolatry. According to Meisner, the observance of the *Evangelia Dominicalia* was altogether useful for the maintenance of good order and the practice of piety.[126] He presents in his arguments in his dedication of the first volume to the electoral counselors of Brandenstein, which apply as well to the scope of the second volume on the *Evangelica Festivitatum*. They are as follows:

1. The example of the Old Testament Church (*Exemplum Israelitae Ecclesiae*) attests to the use of selected texts, which were set apart in order to commemorate the feasts mandated by God (Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, etc.).

2. The example of the New Testament Church (*Exemplum primitivae Ecclesiae in Novo Testamento*) suggests that the primitive church imitated the ancient practice of ascribing Gospel texts describing Christ's birth and resurrection, the mission of the Holy Spirit, etc., to its feast days, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, etc.

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[124] Meisner, *Meditationes Sacrae in Evangelia Dominicalia* (Lübeck: Jauchius, 1621).

[125] Meisner, *Meditationes In Evangelia Festivitatum Annuarum* (Wittenberg: Heyden, 1622).

[126] See Meisner, *Collegium Adiaphoristicum, in quo Controversiae circa Andiaphora inter nos & Calvinianos agitat, perspicuè tractantur, veritasque orthodoxa defenditur* (Wittenberg: John Borckard, 1663), "Disputation 11: De Festis et Lectionibus Dominicalibus de Musica Figurali, et Organis."

3. The edification of hearers (*Aedificationem Auditorum*) is best served by the repetition of Gospel lessons, which enhance the instruction of the faithful, even as St. Paul writes the "same things" to the Philippians (Phil. 3:1) and explains that such a procedure is "safe" (ἀs St.).

4. Good order in the Church (*εοταξίαν Ecclesiasticam*) facilitates the spirit of harmony in the church as people have the advantage of meditating on an appointed text rather than pastors coming up with their own. St. Paul admonishes the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 14:40) that all things should be done in good order (κατl τάξιν).

5. Unnecessarily and unseasonably changing the established texts presents the risk of scandal (*Periculum scandali*) by impeding the people's ability to memorize God's Word and concentrate on anticipated texts.[127]

6. The Calvinists lack sufficient reason (*Defectus causae vel rationis*) for changing the pericope series; to suggest that they are antiquated or papistic (which they are not) is no good reason, especially when they are useful in themselves. The Calvinists argued that the pericopes interrupted the "perfection" of the chief headings of doctrine, and Meisner lists them: God, Christ, His Office and Benefit, Sin, Law, Gospel, Justification, Penance, Baptism, Supper, Good Works, Church, Christian Freedom, Ministry, Magistrates, Marriage, Death, Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell. However, he maintains that it is much easier to inculcate the faith in simple people by means of the lectionary than to expect them to observe or memorize the elements of faith according to their topical sequence—and besides it is not difficult to adorn the Gospels with frequent references to their underlying topics.[128]

Meisner's *Meditations* do not reflect the extraordinary interdisciplinary scholarship that may be found in his disputations; they are neither replete with syllogisms nor teeming with theological jargon. However they do reveal his primary concern as a teacher of pastors. He introduces each homily with the pericope appointed for that particular Sunday, which he divides into three columns: the original Greek, Latin, and Luther's German. His choice of a superior Latin version, which he calls an "exposition of the Syriac version as it is found in the royal

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[127] Meisner cites CA 15: "De ritibus ecclesiasticis docent, quod ritus illi servandi sint, qui sine peccato servari possunt, et prosunt ad tranquillitatem et bonum ordinem in ecclesia, sicut certæ feriæ, festa et similia."

[128] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A2b–A3b. Meisner apperas to be referring to the using the Heidelberg Catechism as the organizing principle oft he Calvinist worship service.

Bibles,"[129] reflects his desire to correct the defect he later noted in his *Pia Desideria* of a good

Latin translation of the Bible. He hopes that by thus providing a triglott version of the pericopes,

the reader will always have the text before his eyes and be saved the trouble of shuffling through

numerous books whenever doubt arises about the rendering of a given phrase.[130] The devotions

themselves are written in Latin, and thus not serviceable to the lay reader, but their merit lies in

their usability for practicing theologians and corresponds to the practical goal of equipping

pastors with the necessary means to carry out their parish duties.

While Meisner's homiletical procedure is not by any means tedious or exacting, it is rather

analytic and diagnostic compared to Gerhard's *Schola*. He mines the Scriptures for definitions

and distinctions in order to assist pious Christians in the godly habit of inculcating the virtues

taught by the Holy Spirit. For instance, in his homily for the First Sunday of Advent (Mt 21:1–9),

he urges his readers to examine their lives in preparation for Christ's advent, and then delineates

three kinds of virtues mentioned in Titus 2:12: piety towards God (εὐσεβῶς), charity towards

neighbor (δικαίως), and sobriety towards oneself (σωφρόνως).[131] In his second homily he

demonstrates how the two principal vices of the heart, cowardice (*pusillanimitas*) and security

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[129] It is difficult to say what Meisner is referring to. This may be a rhetorical way of saying "another," or a "superior" vulgate worthy of kings, even as the Peshitta had been a kind of Syriac vulgate for the eastern kingdoms for as long as Jerome's translation was normative for the west. In his "Pia Desideria," Meisner expressed his desire for a better Latin translation of the Bible. See Meisner, *Pia Desideria*, 17: *DEFECTUS MINISTERII THEORETICI*: 1. Versio Latina correcta, & purum Exemplar Bibliorum. Perhaps the translation, which resembles the neo-classical Latin style, is his own.

[130] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A4a: "Homiliis verò ipsis textum originalem Graecum, unà cum Latina Syriacae versionis exposition, prout illa in Bibliis regiis habetur & Germanica Lutheri paraphrase hanc ob caussam praemissi, quò lector benevolus non tantum ante oculos semper habere, sed etiam cum versionibus, si quod dubium incideret, eo melius conferre & molesta plurimum librorum inspection supersedere posset."

[131] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, 3. See also Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio Theologiae Photinianae, Proutjj eam Faustus Socinus descripsit in libello suasorio, cui titulus: Quod Evangelici omnino deberent se illorum coetui adjugere, qui falso Ariani atque Ebionitae vocentur* (Wittenberg: Heiden, 1619), 53.

(*securitas*), correspond to two different methods of applying God's Word to sinners. Those overcome by the former vice must be treated with gentleness, while the latter must be handled with more severity, even as Peter gladly followed Jesus and forsook everything he had, whereas Paul was converted in the midst of great trembling.[132] Through these and hundreds more distinctions, he offers sage pastoral counsel on how to live the Christian life.

Meisner's homily on the Wedding at Cana under the pericope for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany (John 2:1–12) is a prime example of his meticulous approach to practical instruction, in which he holds forth on the divine institution of marriage and the virtues of married life.[133] He begins by displaying the hierarchy of the three holy estates instituted by God: the family (Nehrstandt), the pastors (Lehrstandt), and the magistrates (Wehrstadt). He then proceeds to explain the "use of the Gospel" with respect to the first of these holy institutions. He divides his homily into two parts corresponding to the following question headings. First, how should the youth prepare themselves for marriage? Second, how ought married couples to behave so that they may obtain God's blessing and the favor of men?[134]

In the first part, "Concerning Proper Preparation for Marriage," he gives the following admonishments: (1) Before Christians enter into this holy estate, they ought to have an honest opinion of marriage as the highest and most ancient institution, the highest order of chastity, and the "academy of life" (*academia vitae*) in which the practice of various virtues is learned. (2) The marital estate should inspire in newly wedded Christians a devout reference towards God; the first order of preparation should be to "invite Christ the Savior to their wedding." (3) Weddings are not to be taken lightly, but should observe good order: it should not be celebrated

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[132] Meisner*, Meditationes in Dominicalia*, 18.

[133] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, 95–109.

[134] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, 98.

with much inebriation; it should not be a private affair motivated by blind desire; it should not

take place without the parents' consent; and Christian couples should not be unequally yoked

with unbelievers or heretics (2 Cor. 6:14) unless there is good reason to hope for conversion.[135]

In the second part, "Concerning the Virtues of Pious Spouses," Meisner uses the example of

Mary's relationship to Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, to illustrate the qualities of a Christian

marriage. Such a marriage requires: (1) patience of the cross (*patientia crucis*): married life is by

no means always perfectly joyful; Christian spouses must endure the consequences of a cursed

earth (Gen. 3:17) with the assurance that nobody who waits on the Lord will be put to shame. (2)

Earnestness in request (*precum instantia*): as Mary approached Jesus and humbly beseeched her

Lord, saying: "We have no wine," so also spouses should learn to rely on God for help. (3)

Tolerance of delay (*tolerantia morae*): Just as Jesus said to his mother: "What have I to do with

you?" because his hour had not yet come, marriage should induce couples to pray. "For God's

time is slow, but most agreeable" (*Tardae enim sunt horae Dei, sed válde gratae*). (4) Vigilance

in the management of the home (*vigilantia domestica*): Mary proves herself a good manager of

the household when she instructs the servants to do as the Lord says. (5) Perseverance in divine

worship (*in culto divino perseverentia*): As in the case of the wedding at Cana, Christ should be

invited to weddings (*invitandus ad nuptias*) called upon at weddings (*invocandus en nuptiis*), and

continued to be honored after the weddings (*honorandus post nuptias*). The present Lord is God

himself, and he makes all marriages rich with his blessing (Prov. 10:22).[136]

This is but a synopsis of a single sample of Meisner's many homiletical attempts to

combine the topics of Christian doctrine, here "concerning Marriage," with the practice of piety.

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[135] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, 101–5.

[136] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, 105–9.

He freely acknowledges the imperfection of his work, as time did not permit a thorough exposition of each Gospel lesson.[137] However, he did not recommend it to the Brandenstein counselors for its superior scholarship. Rather, he cites their "piety" and "zeal for the pure religion, called Lutheran," as the reason for dedicating his *Meditations*, and he expresses his desire that they receive it accordingly.[138] Meisner did not wish to engage difficult passages or controverted subjects that would require more precision than was necessary for the work of a pastor. He says: "But I have wanted to urge popular preachers both to piety and the pursuit of good works, because it has unfortunately grown cold among many…"[139] To be a good theologian is more than having head knowledge. Meisner cites Luther's admonition to his students at the commencement of his psalms lectures: "As I see it, he is not a theologian who knows and teaches many things, but who lives sacredly and theologically (*sed qui sanctè & Theologicè vivat*)." Meisner concludes Luther's thought in right Arndian fashion: "After all, nobody becomes great in any way of life without great piety. Whoever you are, and wherever you are, be pious, and you will be great, indeed, the greatest."[140]

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[137] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A4a: "Ludens autem, & ultrò agnosco harum explicationem imperfectionem, quia non integrum semper Evangelium ob temporis angustiam declarari potuit, sed arbitrariè unus tantum alterque locus à me selectus & pertractatus est." See also Tholuck, *Geist*, 74.

[138] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A4a–A4b: "Accedit singularis vestra pietatis & Zelus erga puriorem religionem, quam Lutheranam dicunt, non fucatus, ut in spem erigar certissimam, non ingratum fore vobis hoc opusculum, vel solo pietatis, uqam urget, nomine, licèt curta doctrinae suppellex in illo reposita inveniatur"

[139] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A4a: "Neque admodum solicitus fui controversiarum admixtione, aut locorum difficiliorum accurate & profundiori enucleatione: sed popularem potius concionatorem agere, et ad pietatem bonorumque operum studium, quod proh dolor! apud multos refrixit, & continuis suscitabilis eget, in auditorium animis excitandum cuncta dirigere placuit, ideoque hinc nomo aliam aut uberiorem messem sibi promittat & expectet, quam prout sementis facta est."

[140] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A4b: "Luther noster, ut solet omnia, pulcherrimè scribit in Προσφωνήσις ad studiosos, quùm Psalterii praelectiones inchoaturus esset Tom. 2. Lat. Ego hoc video, non esse Theologum, qui magna sciat, & multa doceat, sed qui sanctè & Theologicè vivat: A qua vita quò sum alienor, eo magis mihi displicet mea profesio. Quod autem ille de Theologis id non incommodè videtur dici posse de quibus vis eminere cupientibus. Verè mihi nemo in quocunque vitae genere magnus est, nisi cum magna pietatas. Quisquis igitur es, & ubicunque es, pius esto, & magnus eris, imò maximus."

Meisner was well aware of the misgivings that would come as a result of such an emphasis

on good works, especially in his present circumstances. He, too, had endured the kind of

accusations being directed at Gerhard for his staunch defense of Arndt, or rather, the favorable

construction he put on his teacher's lack of theological precision.[141] Meisner writes in his

dedication to the *Meditationes Festivitatum* the following year:

> It is indeed deplorable that the godlessness of this time and Satan's cunning has
> brought it about that one can hardly urge the pursuit of piety without coming under
> the suspicion of Weigelianism; while, on the other hand, one can hardly oppose that
> sect without incurring suspicions of impiety.[142]

Hence, the proposal of a rift between theology and piety is not merely a modern hypothesis; the

tention was clearly felt by Meisner and his contemporaries, and especially after 1619. However,

Meisner had been emphasizing both sides of theology since the beginning of academic career,

and long before the current controversies induced him to take up Arndt's defense. Although

Meisner's devotional theology certainly resembles Arndt's practice-theology in many places, it is

difficult to show to what extent the Wittenberg theologian was influenced by Arndt's

reformation of life or whether he was simply emphasizing a common theme of Lutheran

reformational theology. He claimed that in writing his *Meditations* he was following in the steps

of "all prudent theologians" (*omnes cordati Theologi*), who judiciously pursued both theory and

practice, doctrine and life, while laying primary emphasis on the latter.[143] As Arndt was not

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[141] "In a letter from 1624, Gerhard wrote to the Strassburger, Johann Schmidt (1594–1658): Auch ich, der ich von den Weigelschen und Rosenkreuzerschen Irrthümern so weit als möglich entfernt bin, muss much wegen der *schola Eusebiana*, die ich im vorigen Jahre herausgegeben, Weigelianer und Rosenkreuzer nennen lassen. Als Grund führen sie an, dass sie von den Weigelianern und Arndianern (denn auch aus diesen macht man schon eine Sekte) gern gelesen werden." See *Epp. ad Schmidium* I, 458, quoted in Tholuck, *Geist*, 143.

[142] Meisner, *Meditationes Festivitatum*, "Preface,"):( ):( ):(1b: "Sanè vix deplorari satis potest seculi hujus iniquitas, et Satanae astutia, que rem eò deduxit, ut vix amplius urgere possimus pietatis studium, sine suspicione haeresas Weigelianae; & vix haeresin istam refutare possimus, sine suspicione impietatis." See also Tholuck, *Geist*, 75–76.

[143] See Meisner, *Meditationes Festivitatum*, "Preface,"):( ):( ):(2a: "Fecerunt istud hactenus omnes cordati Theologi quorum vestigiis insistere pro viribus allaboro, & sicut alibi pro veritate satis disputatum est." See also

known for balancing the two, but, if anything, erring on the latter, it is doubtful that Meisner had him in mind. Rather, two of Meisner's works, one on Psalm 52 and another on Psalm 119, suggest that his devotional writings took their cue from Luther himself. A very brief look at these studies ought to put Meisner's orthodox *praxis pietatis* into prespective.

In the first work, "The Faint Sighs of King David from the Fifty-first Psalm, verses 11–15,[144] written during his first term as university rector in 1614, Meisner expounds a forthright theology of David summarizing what every Christian needs to know in a short and concise epitome comparable to a catechism,[145] but with particular stress on leading a godly life. Luther, too, in his Exposition of Psalm 52 from 1532, declares that a right knowledge (*cognitio*) of this psalm is "useful and necessary in many ways." Then, in a manner that clearly bears the influence of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* of 1521, he divides the psalm's doctrine into "the chief headings of our religion" (*doctrinam de praecipuis nostrae Religionis capitibus*). They are: "concerning Penance, concerning Sin, concerning Grace and Justification, and also concerning Worship (*de Cultu*).[146] Meisner alludes to the same procedure in his treatment of the psalm, but opts for a simplified distinction between justification and sanctification. Verses 1–10, in which David begs God for the forgiveness of sins, deal with justification, or righteousness, consisting in the gracious forgiveness of sins: "For blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven,

Tholuck, *Geist*, 76.

[144] Meisner, *König Davids Seuffzerlein aus dem 51. Psalm v. 11–15* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1614), 19–22.

[145] Meisner, *Seuffzerlein*, 17: "Denn est ist genommen aus dem 51. Psalm / in welchem begriffen ist alle das jenige / was ein Christ in dieser welt wünschen und begehren sol."

[146] Luther, *Enarratio Psalmi LI*. 1532, *WA* 40, 2:317: "Est autem multis modis huius Psalmi cognitio tum necessaria tum utilis. Continet enim, de Poenitentia, de Peccato, de Gratia et Iustificatione, Item de Cultu, quem nos Deo praestare debemus. Hi sunt divini et coelestes loci, qui, nisi magno spiritu doceatur, non est possible, ut ascendant in cor hominis…Haec autem manifesta testimonia sunt, quod neque peccatum nec gratiam recte intellexerunt et simpliciter Theologiam Rationalem sine verbo Dei docuere."

whose sins are covered. Blessed in the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity" (Psalm 32:1). However, Meisner does not propose to discuss this first aspect of David's theology—he plans to save this discussion for another time—but gives his full attention to verses 11–15, in which David beseeches God for sanctification (Heiligung), and especially those words: "Create in me a clean heart, o God, and renew in me a right spirit: "For God has not called us to impurity, but to sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:7).[147] Meisner elaborates four points, or questions, that every Christian must learn from the faint sighs of David.

I.   What he indeed desires and so fervently requests, namely, a pure heart.

II. How we, too, might come upon such a gift, which happens when we follow the laudable example of dear David.

III. How we may hold onto the gift of the Holy Spirit and not lose it again, even as King David also prays: "Take not your Holy Spirit from me."

IV. What we should do after we have received a pure heart, namely, teach transgressors that they may convert sinners to God.[148]

    Although his focus is the same doctrine of sanctification that constitutes the bulk of Arndt's *True Christianity*, Meisner does not make ethical renewal, or *imitatio Christi*, the substance of his popular theology to the diminution of the imputation of righteousness. He certainly captures Luther's theology of imitation, which the reformer gained through his study of *Theologia Teutsch*, but he does not follow Arndt's procedure of drawing on mystical schemes of transformative deification, with theosophic analogies to medicinal or metallic phenomena.

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[147] Meisner, *Seuffzerlein*, 17–18.

[148] Meisner, *Seuffzerlein*, 20–22: "(I) Warnach er doch wünsche / und was er so sehnlich bitte? Nemlich der H. Geist / und ein reines Hertz. (II) Wie wir solch geschenck auch uberkommen mögen? Welches geschiet / wann wir dem löblichen Exempel des lieben Davids nachfolgen. (III) Wie wir die Gabe des H. Geistes behalten mögen / unnd nicht etwa wiederumb verlieren / drümb auch König David bittet: Nim deinen Heiligen Geist nicht von mir. (IV) Was wir nach empfangenen reinem Hertzen und newen Geist thun sollen? Nemlich die Ubertretter / lehren / daß sich die Sünder zu Gott bekehren."

Instead, more like Luther, he stays with the words of David and thus furnishes a timely (and normative) devotion on the doctrine of good works in due topical sequence.

Another devotional tract that commends itself for its spiritual and pedagogical insight is *The Threefold Treasure of a Blessed Christian* based on Psalm 119, written in 1624 with a stirring sermon from the third Sunday in Lent (Oculi), which fell on the last day of February attached by way of preface.[149] Here, Meisner shows that the blessed man depends on three sources for his salvation, namely, Christ, Christ's Word, and repentance worked by Christ's Word. In this tract, he summarizes the biblical teaching of "salvation:" it is gained (erworben) by the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, the Word incarnate; given (angeboten) through the Word preached and a proper distinction between law and gospel; and gotten (ergriffen) in true repentance through the apprehension of faith: "Christus verdienets/ das Wort verkündigets/ die Busse empfehlets."[150] After elaborating these three distinct treasures, Meisner brings the discussion full circle and grounds the Christian experience in Christ himself. He writes:

> Christ leads us through the Word to repentance; repentance leads us into the Word back to Christ, and thus he is the A and the O, the beginning and the end, from whom, as the Author of our salvation, stems every good; in whom alone, as the perfecter of our salvation and the true end and the highest good, our soul is united and reposes and can find peace.[151]

Meisner's sermon must be read in light of the Rathmann controversy and parallel to the

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[149] Meisner, *Eines seeligen Menschens Dreyfacher Schaz / Der Herr Christus / Christi heiliges Wort / Auss dem Wort geschöpffte Busse / Von welchen allen im Neunzehenden Psalmlein Davids gehandelt wird* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1614).

[150] Meisner, *Dreyfacher Schaz*,):(8b: "Das sind nun die drey herrliche Christen Schätze/ nemlich der Herr CHRISTUS selber/ Christi heiliges Wort/ unnd auss dem Wort geschöpffete rechtschaffene Busse. Von Christo ist das Heil erworben/ im Wort Christi wird das erworbene Heil uns angeboten/ durch ware Busse wird das angebotene Heil von uns ergriffen. Christus verdienets/ das Wort verkündigets/ die Busse empfehlets."

[151] Meisner, *Dreyfacher Schatz*,):(8b–):(9a: " Christus führt uns durchs Wort zur Busse; Die Busse führet uns im Wort widerumb zu Christo/ und also ist Er das A und das O/ der Anfang und das Ende/ von welchem als dem Anfänger unsers Heils/ alles gutes herkömpt/ in welchem/ als dem Vollender unsers Heils/ als dem rechten fine, und höchsten Gut/ unsere Seele einig und allein acquiesciren, und ruhe finden kan."

Wittenberg faculty censure of 1625, of which Meisner was the primary author. Such an analytical distinction among the three treasures of salvation served the normative purpose of conceptualizing the Word in an orthodox manner and thus dissolve the false dichotomy between "Christ," the true Word, and Scripture as a mere witness to the Word; or between Scripture and the salutary fruit of internal renewal. For instance, in his discussion of the second treasure, Meisner is careful to stress the inherent power of God's Word. Referring to Psalm 119:9: "How can a young man keep his way pure?" he echoes David's response, "Lord, when he abides in your words!" and then resumes to an assessment of this "Word" by paraphrasing Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:17: "For these are all salutary words, useful for teaching and for discipline in the articles of faith, for improvement and correction in the ways of life."[152] Far from a dead letter, the written Scriptures are pulsating with life; as God breathed them so they continue to breathe life into fainting hearts and enliven them by means of the "articles of faith." The external Word accomplishes in itself the very effect that the fanatics, so reputed, wished to accentuate: "What is taught therein is the truth; what is commanded therein is sanctification; what is promised therein is pure salvation and blessedness."[153] Here, again, Meisner illustrates how a devotional manual may serve all the same to norm teaching, correct false teaching, comfort the Christian, and rouse the inner man to the production of good works.

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[152] Meisner, *Dreyfacher Schatz*,):(5a–):(5b: "Wie wird ein Jüngling seinen Weg unstrefflich gehen? Herr wann er sich helt nach deinem Worten/ Psalm.119.vers.9. Dann dis alles sind heilsame Worte/ nütze zur Lehre/ und zur Straffe/ in den Glaubens Artickeln/ zur Besserung und zur Züchtigung/ im Leben und Wandel/ 2. Tim. 3.vers.17. Gottes Wort ist die stärckste Gegenwehr/ wieder alle unserer Feinde/ damit können wir die Versuchung des Teuffels/ die Verführung der Welt/ die Reitzung des sündlichen Fleisches dempffen und uberwinden. Es ist das Himlische Schwerd/ mit welchem wir uns wieder Welt und Teuffel wehren/ auch alle böse Lüste des Fleisches abhauen können/ Eph.6.vers.17. Gottes Wort ist das allerbeste Labsal/ und der köstlichste Trost in Anfechtung und Unglück/ Dein Stecken und Stab/ (deines heiligen Worts) trösten mich/ Ps.23.v.4."

[153] Meisner, *Dreyfacher Schatz*,):(5b:"Was darinnen gelehret wird/ das ist Warheit; Was darinnen befohlen wird/ das ist Heiligkeit; Was darinnen verheischen wird/ das ist lauter Heil und Seeligkeit."

Perhaps the greatest example of Meisner's success in connecting doctrine to piety is borne out in his speech, "Spiritual Meditations on the Excellence and Dignity of a Christian."[154] Meisner delivered this speech on November 5, 1622 at the promotion of Andreas Grosshenning, Pastor at Loburg. In it Meisner illustrates how the lofty doctrine of the two natures in Christ denotes a spiritual union between Christ and the Christian and ensures practical consequences for the Christian life. In this mystical discourse—it may certainly be regarded as "mystical" in comparison to anything else the Wittenberg professor produced—Meisner explains, in the face of the Socinian claim that the Lutheran doctrine of justification has no implications for human ethics, that the life of a Christian is the life of Christ who lives in him. He writes:

> Whenever you hear a Christian speak, you do not hear him, but Christ speaking from him. When you see a Christian work, you do not see him, but Christ who works in and through him. When you see a Christian fight and win, you do not see him, but Christ fighting and winning in and through the Christian. For it is not so much the Christian as Christ, who speaks, works, and wins inside of him. A Christian can do everything, but not by himself, since he is the weakest of all; but in Christ, who gives him strength and through whom he becomes the strongest of all, he can do everything.[155]

These words of Meisner are certainly evocative of Arndt's "Christ-in-you" theme in his description of the "teutsche Christliebende Theologus," in Book Six of *True Christianity*: "Christ dwells, lives, and works in [the believer] in such a way that whatever you do that is good is not yours, but everything good comes from God in us, not from us in God in such a way that he becomes our debtor."[156] However, Meisner's mystical theology is much more in the tradition of

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[154] Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken von der Vortreflichkeit und Würde Eines Christen/ als welcher das herzlichtse und heiligste Geschöpf Gottes/ aller Göttlichen Wunder und Geschöpffe Schauplatz/ Spiegel/ Siegel/ Mittel-Punkt und kurtzer Begriff ist/ Auf Begehren eines wohlbekandten Theologi*, trans. Hermann Gerhard Weland (Hamburg: Philip Ludwig Stromer, 1709).

[155] See Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken*, 44–45.

[156] Johann Arndt, *Sechs Bücher vom wahren Chrisentum nebst dessen Paradiesgärtlein und dem Bericht von dem Leben und Absterben des Verfassers*, ed. Johann Friedrich von Meyer (Frankfurt am Main: Heinrich Ludwig Bröhmer, 1845), 562: "So aber Christus in der wohnet, lebet, und wirket: so ist all das Gute, so du thust, nicht dein,

Philipp Nicolai in that it reflects the rich Christology he had long been fleshing out on a highly theoretical level, and especially through his fifty disputations on "Sacred Christology" between 1619 and 1624.[157] It was no less his intensive study of the *locus* of Christ and his benefits than his zeal for piety that motivated him in this academic speech to elaborate a fourfold communion that exists between Christ and the faith. The first is a unity of essence, according to which Christ partakes of human nature and Christians partake of Christ's divine nature, but in different ways. On the one hand, Christ has assumed human flesh in the incarnation and united it to his own divine essence in such a way that he is true man and like every other human being in every way, except for sin. On the other hand, a Christian partakes of Christ's divine nature by virtue of a union of grace. Meisner explains the difference:

> In the case of Christ, the union and communion are so solid that the two natures cannot ever be separated from each other. In the case of Christians, however, the same union is indeed solid and secure, but it can be separated and abolished by us if we sin. But if we flee from sin we may exclaim with St. Paul: "Who can separate us from the love of Christ? I am certain that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature may separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35, 38, 39.)[158]

The second union pertains to suffering. On account of the essential union of the Christian with Christ, which comes about by grace, Christ's suffering and satisfaction become the suffering and satisfaction of the Christian, and this through divine imputation. Meisner explains: "God regards Christ's satisfaction as though we ourselves had suffered and died for our sins." He elaborates on this template of exchange:

> Moreover, Christ's suffering becomes our suffering through faith, even as our suffering becomes Christ's suffering because he so claims it as his own and

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sondern es kommt Alles, was gut ist, von Gott in uns, nicht von uns in Gott, daß er unser Schuldner würde."

[157] Meisner, *Christologias sacrae disputationes L. Certis titulis notatae, accuratiore methodo inclusae* (Witteberg: Gorman, 1624).

[158] Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken*, 50.

appropriates all of the suffering of believers to himself, as though such suffering were being inflicted on himself and his person. Thus, in the Old Testament he calls out from heaven: "Whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye" (Zach. 2:8), and in the New Testament: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4).[159]

The third union pertains to good works. Christ's righteousness, holiness, and reputation become the common possession of all Christians. All of these virtues are taken from the fullness of Christ (John 1:16), and traced from him to al believers as from the body to its members. Christians can do everything Jesus can do, although in a lesser degree: "We are wise through His wisdom, righteous through His righteousness, holy through His holiness, mighty through His might, joyful through His joy."[160] According to the fourth union, Christians share in Christ's office; they are prophets, priests, and kings. In one respect, these honorific titles belong to Christ alone due to his singular performance of redemption; yet they may also be traced to Christians to a certain extent. Those who are united to Christ in faith are prophets because they confess the gospel and teach their brothers to do likewise. They are priests because they sanctify God completely (Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5), offer him the sacrifice of prayer (Ps. 141; Rev. 5:8), the offering of praise (Ps. 50:14; Hos. 14:3; Heb. 13:15), the offering of alms (Ph. 4:8; Heb. 13:15), the sacrifice of penance (Ps. 51:19), and the offering of departure from this world, and even the martyr's crown (2 Tim. 14:6). Finally, Christians may be called kings inasmuch as they have dominion over their enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil. Meisner offers a very insightful discussion over what this dominion entails, namely, that they have authority to use all of creation "in a legitimate manner," whereas those who are not united to Christ have no right to enjoy his creation. He explains:

> Indeed, since they are outside of Christ, Who has restored the lost right, they use the creation with such violence that they cannot so much as take a small kernel of corn,

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[159] Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken*, 50–51.

[160] Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken*, 52.

or even a small drop of wine (apart from what God's goodness grants them through no right of their own) without committing theft or larceny. You, who are unrepentant and godless: whenever you eat or drink anything, you do so in an ungodly manner, without any right at all, but as impetuous thieves. As far as it depends on you, your eating and drinking is an act of public robbery. But since our Savior has restored all things to us, everything belongs to us, and hence we are free to eat all kinds of food, which were formerly forbidden to the Jews. Through Christ and in Christ we have been made lords of all creation so that nothing we receive with thanksgiving is objectionable (1 Tim. 4:4).[161]

Meisner's speech would make it a clear as possible that the doctrinal assertions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are not merely useful for teaching, but are eminently practical. Consequently, however, it is impossible to realize its devotional import unless one has signed one's name in good faith to the Formula of Concord. Meisner expands on the subject of union with Christ, in uniquely Lutheran style, to include a brief dissertation on the effects resulting from such union using the scheme of the three *genera* discussed in Chemnitz's *Two Natures in Christ*,[162] alluded to in FC SD VIII, and developed by Meisner himself in his tenth disputation of *Sacred Christology*, "*De Communicatione ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΕΩΣ*," held on January 17, 1619.[163] He explains that just as the personal union, which took place once and for all in the incarnation, has certain consequences; so the Christian the mystical union of the Christian with Christ effects: (1) the appropriation of attributes (ἰδιοποία), whereby Christ reckons to Christians everything he does and suffers, and to himself everything Christians do and suffer; (2) the communion of the offices (κοινοποία), whereby Christians become prophets, priests, and kings; and (3) the communication of infinite gifts revealed in the assumed flesh (μεταποία), whereby Christians, too, possess "wisdom, righteousness, holiness, the power to perform miracles, to convert others

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[161] Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken*, 54–55.

[162] Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis, Concordia, 1971).

[163] Meisner, *Christologias Sacrae Disputatio decima: De Communicatione ΥΠΟΣΤΑΣΕΩΣ* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1619).

and regenerate them." Meisner concludes: "When we take all of these things to heart in the fear of God, they hold out a pleasant foretaste of eternal life and give us solid comfort."[164]

At the heart of Meisner's mystical-piety, then, are the very dogmatic distinctions that compose the confessional boundaries separating Lutherans from their opponents both within and without. Rather than a transformative deification, borrowed from heretical sources, Meisner speaks repeatedly and unambiguously of the forensic imputation of Christ's alien righteousness and its practical consequences. He derives a distinct ethical significance from the principle of Christ's ubiquity, or the communication of divine gifts to his assumed humanity, divisive as this teaching was to every single opponent of orthodoxy. Despite its dogmatic and academic nature, Meisner's "Spiritual Meditations on the Excellence and Dignity of a Christian" proved useful even to orthodox and pietist Lutherans of the next generation. In 1709, the Hamburg preacher, Hermann Gerhard Weland, came across a printing of this speech and, becoming convinced that it merited a greater audience than the academy, translated it into German. Likewise, Heinrich Ammersbach (1632–1691), a pietist preacher and poet in Halberstadt, used Meisner's speech to demonstrate an unbroken trajectory from Phillipp Jakob Spener to Luther upon the common assertion "that out of a Christian and Christ emerges one and the same person, so that a believing Christian may indeed say: 'I am Christ.'"[165]

Conclusion: Meisner's Legacy as Historiographical Corrective

Meisner bequeathed a two-sided, yet singular, legacy to the church. He was an imposing

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[164] Meisner, *Geistreiche Bedanken*, 56–57.

[165] Heinrich Ammersbach, *Rettung der reinen Lehre Dd. Lutheri, Meisneri, Speneri, und andrer, welche lehren: daß aus einem Christen und Christo gleich als eine Person wärde, daher ein gläubiger Christ wol sagen könne: Ich bin Christus* (Frankfurt am Main: Jacob Gottfried Seiler, 1678). On the concept of the "unio mystica" with Christ in the Lutheran tradition, see Theodor Mahlmann, "Die Stellung der unio cum Christo in der lutherischen Theologie des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Unio: Gott und Mensch in der nachreformatorischen Theologie*, ed. Matti Repo and Rainer Vinke (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1996).

theologian and a pious Christian man. As he demonstrated in the case of Cornelius Martini, he was a sophisticated university professor, and yet, as must be acknowledged from his dealings with the theologians at Danzig and Rostock, he was also a prudent churchman. From the beginning of his teaching career to the very end, he gave his attention to both theoretical and practical concerns. He was hailed as "Joshua of the evangelical church" for his staunch defense of the Formula of Concord and "Beati Mites" for his moderation in controversy.[166] His influence on the latter half of the seventeenth century was felt by representatives of orthodoxy and pietism alike. What precisely does Meisner's devotional theology contribute to the current historiographical picture?

Both Heinz Schilling and Hartmut Lehmann assume that the catalyst for the spiritual-devotional awakening at the turn of the seventeenth century was an external "crisis," which in turn precipitated an internal religious transformation. Drawing on Winfried Zeller, they envision this transformation as a reactive movement away from an ecclesiastical (confessional) to a free, from a general to an individual, and from an external to an internal religiosity.[167] According to Markus Matthias, these authors presuppose a modernist psychological framework, according to which religious practice is pitted against theology, and the subjective appropriation of faith is contrasted with an institutional "Hochreligion." "It is clear," says Matthias, "that piety here always stands for an inwardly-performed religiosity that remains adverse to every kind of external ritual performance (obviously including preaching and administration of the

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[166] Tholuck, *Geist*, 35, 117.

[167] Markus Matthias, "Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?" 31: "Für beide Autoren wirken die äusseren Krisen als Katalysator für die geistige, gesellschaftliche und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Entwicklung bzw. für deren Fortschritt. Deutlich unterstellen beide Autoren, dass es (A) (kausal) die äusseren Krisen im 17. Jahrhundert sind, die eine Transformation des Religiösen herbeiführen, und sich (B) (teoleologisch) diese Transformation als legitime Entwicklung von einer kirchlichen zu einer kirchlichen zu einer freien, von einer allgemeingültigen zu einer individuellen oder von einer äusserlichen zu einer innerlichen Religiosität darstellt."

sacraments)."[168] However, as may be seen from the foregoing study of Lutheran intramural conflicts, such a twentieth century assumption of a disparity between theory and practice seems merely to have duplicated in modern sociological terms a definite theological stance that was deemed "fanatical" in the contemporary historiography of Lutheran orthodoxy.

However much the northern universities resented the officiousness of the Saxon Council, and notwithstanding Paul Tarnov's suggestion of a "new gospel" coming out of the high places of the Evangelical Church, it would be a mistake to suppose that Lutheran orthodoxy produced a "reactive" devotion. In the first place, the opposition to dogmatic theology was not of one kind. John Tarnov's idea was shared by Gerhard, but was not shared by the Helmstedt professors, and certainly not by Cornelius Martini, who believed that Aristotle was more advantageous to establishing the meaning of the Biblical text than the traditional means of philology. And, although Paul Tarnov allied himself with Calixt against the Saxon oligarchy, Helmstedt was never known for its cultivation of piety or mystical theology. Rather, it was Strube, the fiercely anti-philosophical parish pastor and defender of Arndt, who appealed to the Saxon tribunal demanding a censure. And what of Arndt? He wrote his controversial *True Christianity* (1605–1610) during the heyday of the neighboring Academia Julia. While his instruction certainly reflected more than his immediate experience, it was likely the kind of "mouth Christianity" he

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[168] Matthias, "Gab es eine Frömmigkeitskrise um 1600?" 33–34: "Die heutige religionswissenschaftliche Begriffsbestimmung von Frömmigkeit ist selbst so neuzeitlich geprägt, dass die Anwendung des Begriffs von Frömmigkeit (als Wort und Sache) auf vor- und frühneuzeitliche Phänomene nur in der Weise geschehen kann, dass der Anwendungsbereich respektive der Bedeutungsrahmen genau definiert wird. Das gilt etwas für die volkskundliche und kirchengeschichtliche Beschreibung von Frömmigkeit (oder Spiritualität) als Inbegriff der Ausdrucksformen gelebter Religiosität, für eine religionspsychologische Beschreibung der Frömmigkeit als Sammlung von Gefühlsqualitäten und der Bewertung echter Frömmigkeit als Innerlichkeit oder schliesslich für die religionswissenschaftliche Gegenüberstellung religiöser Praxis gegenüber reflexiver Theologie oder subjektiven Glaubensvollzugs gegenüber einer institutionalisierten Hochreligion. Es ist deutlich, dass Frömmigkeit hier immer für eine innerlich vollzogene Religiosität steht, der gegenüber alles äussere rituelle Handeln (offenbar Predigt und Sakramentsausteilung inbegriffen) defizitär bleibt."

witnessed in Helmstedt that induced him to write.[169] To the extent that Arndt's practical theology was reactive, therefore, and despite the fact that his expressions were not always in conformity with the pattern of orthodoxy, his was an anti-Helmstedt, not an anti-Wittenberg, theology.

The case of Meisner shows, moreover, how important it is not to exaggerate the external circumstances of Lutheran devotional theology. Yes, it was his observation that "the hearts of many were growing cold" that motivated Meisner to write his *Meditations*, but he had been writing devotional tracts from the beginning and during the pinnacle of his academic duties. A cursory reading of these works, such as has been provided in this chapter, reveals a natural connection between what he considered both true and useful for fostering piety. Even if he grants a distinction between theoretical and practical undertakings, i.e., between the modes of discourse preferable for different readers, he is engaged in the same theology, and dogmatic theology plays no less a role in his devotions than in his disputations. Meisner operated with an integral theology concept—this will be discussed the final chapter—and the same practical spirit that moved him to rein in Martini's extravagant philosophy stimulated him both to defend his theoretical credentials and to put the best construction on Arndt and Rathmann. Finally, his practical works were instructive all the same as they offered a necessary corrective to the fanatical tendencies his fellow orthodoxists perceived in Arndt and Rathmann. He did not submit to the authority of formal logic any more than he dabbled in mystical schemes; both were alien to orthodoxy. Perhaps his greatest contribution to theology was this: rather than choosing one or the

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[169] This is the suggestion of Johannes Wallmann, in "Reflexionen," 30: "Vermutlich blickt Arndt mit solchen Worten auf die in den Jahrzehnten vor Ausbruch des Dreissigjährigen Krieges in hoher Blüte stehende, im Glanz des Späthumanismus prosperierende nahe Academia Julia in Helmstedt, bald nach ihrer Gründung die frequentierteste deutsche Universität nach Leipzig und Wittenberg, wo Cornelius Martini verkündet: 'Wer die Logik und die Metaphysik beherrscht, kann in einem Moment die Bibel verstehen.' Was Arndt im Blick hat, mag man Not oder Krise nennen—es war jedenfalls etwas, was nicht vor Augen liegt, was er erst aufdecken muss: dass es unter denen, die sich Christen mit dem Mund nennen, keine wahren Herzenschristen, keine Frömmigkeit, kein wahres Christentum gibt."

other, he embodied a genuinely practical orthodoxy by investing the theory of doctrine in the

practice of life.

CHAPTER SIX

MEISNER'S SOBER PHILOSOPHY

"Qui sine periculo volet in Aristotele Philosophari, necesse est ut ante bene stultificetur in Christo."[1]

Introduction

Understanding the phenomenon of Lutheran orthodoxy depends largely on one's take on the association of the names of Luther and Melanchthon. By the turn of the seventeenth century, this association was roughly equivalent to the relationship between theology and philosophy. According to Gottfried Arnold, Melanchthon, following the pattern of the scholastics, introduced a "literal condition" that strangled Luther's primitive gospel discovery.[2] From Arnold's perspective, Lutheran pietism recovered the true spiritual impulse that Melanchthon and his orthodoxy progeny had buried beneath many words. This ongoing competition between "Luther" and "Melanchthon" was not simply the invention of modern historians, but reaches deep into the Lutheran tradition. The names had acquired their significations during the days of the Interim, when the Gnesio-lutherans declared themselves the true successors of Luther, and persisted through their disputes with the Reformed. Not until 1606 did the influence of Melanchthon's *Loci*, with its questionable teachings concerning the role of the human will in conversion,[3] finally

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[1] Martin Luther, *Heidelberg Disputations*, "Ex Philosophiae," Thesis 29, in *WA* 1:355.

[2] Gottfried Arnold, *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Thomas Fritschens sel. Erben, 1729), 1:702.

[3] See especially Melanchthon's *Loci Praecipui Theologici*, 1559, CR 21, "de humanis viribus seu de libero arbitrio," 659–60: "Ideo veteres aliqui sic dixerunt: Liberum arbitrium in homine facultatem esse applicandi se ad

give way to the *Compendium* of that celebrated theologian, Leonhard Hutter, who was later

vested with the moniker of "*Lutherus redonatus*."[4]

Nevertheless, Wittenberg orthodoxy did not understand itself in terms of Luther

overcoming Melanchthon, but rather as a realignment of the two. Laurentius Rhodomann,

reflecting on the state of the University of Wittenberg in 1602, declared that Melanchthon, whose

name had become virtually synonymous with the faculty of arts, or "philosophy," had once again

become the spokesman of Luther's theological enterprise.[5] Indeed, this city of God was boasting

a double blossom of philosophy and theology: now it was necessary for the study of philosophy,

languages, and arts to thrive in the lower faculty in order for the pure doctrine from heaven to

reign in the higher faculty. In brief, by the turn of the seventeenth century theology and

philosophy had reached a consensus in the Lutheran camp.[6] Inasmuch as Lutheran orthodoxy

comprised that consensus—their cultivation of the Aristotelian renaissance marked a "fresh

beginning" in the history of theology[7]—it would be necessary to inquire into the manner in

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gratiam, id est, audit promissionem et assentiri conatur et abiicit peccata contra conscientiam." He then proceeds to argue that there must have been a difference between David and Saul, "necesse est aliquam esse dissimilem in his duobus," and hence posits a threefold cause of conversion, and this "copulationem caussarum" is "verbi Dei, Spiritus sancti, et volutatis." See also his comments on predestination: "Ordinatur Deus et trahit verbo suo et Spiritu Sancto, sed audire nos oportet et discere, non repugnare, non indulgere diffidentiae et dubitatione" (916). While not mentioning Melanchthon by name, these teachings were rejected in FC, SD, II, 6–47. See also Leonhard Hutter, *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum, Ex scripturis sacris, [et] libro Concordiae, jussu et autoritate sereniss: elect: Saxoniae, Christianae, Christiani II &c. Collectum, [et] ab utraq[ue] Facultate Theologica, Lipsiensi [et] Wittebergensi approbatum: In usum tum trium Scholarum Illustrium, tum reliquarum* (Wittenberg: Paul: Helwig, 1615), 89–104.

[4] Walter Friedensburg, *Geschichte der Universität Wittenberg* (Halle/Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1917), 473, 504.

[5] Laurentius Rhodoman, *Oratio secularis, publice habita Witebergae, in solenni 64 Magistrorum creatione, in Acta Jubilaei Academiae Witebergensis celebrati Anno 1602*, part 10 (Wittenberg, 1603), cited in Heinz Kathe, *Die Wittenberger Philosophische Fakultät 1501–1817* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002), 165–66. Rhodomann compares Luther to Moses and Melanchthon to Aaron.

[6] That same centennial year of 1602 Jacob Martini, the great logician and master of Aristotelian philosophy, had traversed from Helmstedt to Wittenberg, where he joined the faculty of arts.

[7] Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis, Concordia, 1968), 299: "In spite of its profound loyalty to the universal church and to the Lutheran tradition, classical orthodoxy nevertheless denotes a fresh beginning, not least of all with respect to its erudite reworking of theology. The new orientation which

which philosophy was recovered for the sake of Lutheran theology.

It is precisely here where Balthasar Meisner, the "lover of philosophy,"[8] becomes indispensable to the scholarship of seventeenth century Lutheranism. Meisner's philosophical program, which he published in three volumes between 1611 and 1623 under the title of *Philosophia sobria*, was intended to determine the proper use of philosophy in theology. In order to understand and assess the orthodox theological enterprise, it will be helpful to ask: what precisely did Melanchthon's philosophy add to Luther's biblical theology? To what extent, moreover, should such a "literal condition," as Arnold called it, be identified with the Aristotelian metaphysics that Lutheran orthodoxy came to espouse nearly half a century after Melanchthon's death? Were philosophy and theology so mutually exclusive that the mere use of the former necessarily entailed a material modification of the latter? To what extent did Aristotle's return to the Lutheran academy go hand in hand with Luther's biblical theology? This chapter will first pursue the general question that guided Meisner's own investigation: *Is philosophy useful for theology, and if so, to what extent?*

The Use of Philosophy in Theology

The question of the relation of philosophy to theology is as old as the church itself. It was formulated two centuries after Christ by the church father Tertullian: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem," he asked rhetorically, "or the Academy with the Church?"[9] The church's

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Lutheran orthodoxy represents can be associated with the philosophical school known as Neo-Aristotelianism."

[8] Edmund Smits includes "Balthasar Meisner, a lover of philosophy," among the most important theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy. See Edmund Smits, "Introduction," *The Doctrine of Man: In the Writings of Martin Chemnitz and Johann Gerhard*, ed. Herman A. Preus and Edmund Smits (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962), xii.

[9] Tertullian, *De Praescriptione haereticorum* 7, in PL 2.2:599-600; *Ante-Nicene Fathers: Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian. I. Apologetic; II. Anti-Marcion; III. Ethical,* ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Christian Literature, 1885), 3:246**.**

decisive answer came from St. Augustine about two hundred years later: "[Philosophy] should be used, not enjoyed" (*Utendum, non fruendum*).[10] The scholastic version of Augustine's maxim was formulated by Thomas Aquinas in 1261, four years after the Sorbonne in Paris was founded: "[T]hose who use the works of the philosophers in Sacred Doctrine, by bringing them into the service of faith, do not mix water with wine, but rather change water into wine."[11] Reminiscent of the doctrine of transubstantiation, the relationship between theology and philosophy in the scholastic tradition was comprised of an effort to subdue philosophy to heavenly realities.

Luther and Melanchthon

The Reformation too was forced to reckon with this general question from the outset. On April 26, 1518, Martin Luther expounded his new theological orientation, for the first time before his fellow Augustinians, in Heidelberg. There Luther endorsed a "*theologia crucis*" on the basis of 1 Corinthians 1:18: "For the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."[12] A theology of the cross should be sharply distinguished from a scholastic theology of glory. In John 14, Philip would have obliged Christ to show him the Father, by means of a syllogism perhaps, but he misses the major premise: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."[13] In Thesis 29, the first of his

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[10] Augustinus, *De doctrina christiana libri IV*, in *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 32, ed. Joseph Martin (Turnhout: 1962), 1: 8. Augustine's actual words are " *utendum est* hoc mundo*, non fruendum* " (my emphasis). Meisner's *Prooemium*, in view of Colossians 2:8, is practically a commentary on Augustine's phrase. See "*In Philosophiam Sobriam Prooemium ad Lectorem*," in *PhS*, 1:1–9.

[11] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Boethius*, Q.2, art. 3, 5, in *Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason and Theology. Questions I–IV of the "Commentary on the De Trinitate" of Boethius*, trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1987), 48–49.

[12] "Heidelberg Disputation, 1518," *LW* 31:33–69.

[13] *LW* 31:52: "In John 14 [:8], where Philip spoke according to the theology of glory, "Show us the Father," Christ straightaway set aside his flighty thought about seeing God elsewhere and led him to himself, saying, "Philip, he who has seen me has seen the Father" [John 14:9]. For this reason true theology and recognition of God are in the crucified Christ."

"Philosophical Theses," Luther levels his unique theology, now completely qualified by the cross of Christ, against philosophy: "Whoever would philosophize by using Aristotle without danger to his soul must first become thoroughly foolish in Christ."[14] Inasmuch as "theology" and "philosophiz[ing] by using Aristotle" are both qualified by the cross of Christ, any talk of an ongoing mutual *relationship* between the two would be to miss the point entirely. To be sure, "theology" consists in the qualification: to the extent that it is a theology *of the cross*, it is theology; to the extent that it is not, it is philosophy.[15] Of course, Luther does not understand mean philosophy in the formal sense of Platonism, Stoicism, Skepticism, etc., but in a broader and more practical sense of an outlook or worldview—how a person sees life.[16] Understood in this way, even such a philosophy may serve a salutary purpose if it meets the qualification of the cross. Luther states in Thesis 30: "Just as a person does not use the evil of passion well unless he is a married man, so no person philosophizes well unless he is a fool, that is, a Christian."[17] Luther's criterion of utter foolishness, while fundamental, does not denigrate the use of philosophy in any way. On the contrary, theology furnishes the necessary basis upon which philosophy may thrive, as it were, on a second order.

Four months after Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, Philip Melanchthon arrived at Wittenberg by the order of Elector Frederick the Wise to develop the still young "reform

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[14] *LW* 31:41.

[15] See Johannes Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr-Paul Siebeck, 1961), 16. Wallmann writes: "In der Formel 'theologia crucis' ist Theologie nicht Genus, sondern eine Grösse, die durch ihren Genitiv erst konstituiert wird. In der Gegenüberstellung einer 'theologia gloriae' und einer 'theologia crucis' wird das Wort 'theologia' also nicht univok, sonder äquivok gebraucht."

[16] See Bengt Hägglund, *Theologie und Philosophie bei Luther und in der occamistischen Tradition* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1955), 63. Hägglund explains that by "philosophy" Luther is not thinking of an academic discipline *per se*, but broadly in terms of the "natural man."

[17] *LW* 31:41.

university" into a center for the humanities (*studia humanitatis*). Melanchthon delivered his inaugural address on August 28, 1518 under the title, "*Sermo . . . de corrigendis adolescentiae studiis*" (On the Improvement of the Studies of Youth).[18] Melanchthon explains that philosophy suffers from a scholastic corruption of the sources and from an incorrectly translated Aristotle.[19] To improve the state of university education, therefore, he strongly urges a return to the purest philosophical and biblical sources: "Once we have directed our thoughts to the sources, we will begin to take hold of Christ."[20] While some humanists were happy to stay with education or the arts by themselves for enjoyment and the pleasure of the subject alone, Melanchthon's return to the sources was not supposed to be a study for its own sake. His intention was to make the *studia humanitatis* as serviceable as possible to the faith of Christ. This "teleological feature"[21] of Melanchthon's pedagogy entailed a thorough purging of the speculative elements of Aristotle's philosophy. The study of philosophy (and Scripture) should not concern itself with metaphysical questions, i.e., questions about necessity, essences, modes of being, and the like, because these things offer no benefit to the student.[22] By divesting philosophy of its useless metaphysical

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[18] The text can be found in CR 11:15–25.

[19] See Peter Walter, "Melanchthon und die Tradition der '*studia humanitatis*,'" in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 110 (1999/2): 191–208, especially 202: "Melanchthon spricht sich also keineswegs schlechthin gegen Aristoteles aus, sondern für einen gereinigten."

[20] CR 11:23: "*Cum animos ad fontes contulerimus, Christum sapere incipiemus.*" See Walter, "Melanchthon," 201. Quoting from *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl* (Humanistische Schriften, ed. R. Nürnberger), ed. Robert Stupperich with Hans Engelland (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1951–1975), 3:30–41.Walter lists a variety of expressions used in Melanchthon's inaugural address to express the same idea: "*meliores disciplinae*" (32)…, "*renascentes Musa[e]*" (30), "*renascenti[a] studi[a]*" (31, 41), "*instauranda[e] littera[e]*" (32), "*renascent[es] litter[ae]*" (35), "*fontes ipsos artium ex optimis auctoribus hauritis*" (38), "*ad fontes*" (40), etc.

[21] Heinrich Heppe, *Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus in den Jahren 1555–1581* (Marburg: R. G. Elwert'scher Druck und Verlang, 1852), 1:49, quoted in Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 35.

[22] Melanchthon expressed this characteristic view point in the introduction to his 1521 Loci communes (1521), in *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl* 2:7: "*hoc est Christum cognoscere beneficia eius cognoscere, non, quod isti docent, eius naturas, modos incarnationis contueri..*"

content and reworking it in view of a common goal, Melanchthon's ambition comprised an altogether tactical and practical agenda: to replace the speculative *quaestio* method of the medieval scholastics with the Ciceronian dialectic of Rudolph Agricola as he had learned it at Tübingen.

With a few modifications, Melanchthon imitated Agricola's practice of reducing logic to rhetoric.[23] In the grammar-logic-rhetoric trivium, rhetoric capped the communication arts, and logic secured its end. Instead of the "contrived" and "unworldly" dialectic of the scholastic textbooks, he developed a practical form of dialectic that aimed at the organization of content and subject matter.[24] Far from chasing abstract verities, Melanchthon, in his philosophical textbooks, simply incorporated standard examples routinely used for purposes of explanation. Sachiko Kusukawa explains:

> Instead of trying to resolve exhaustively by way of logical reasoning (as in the *quaestio* method), Melanchthon proceeded by *loci*: each section began with a question such as "Quid est physica?" "Quid est anima?" and "Quid est mundus?" followed by a direct and clear answer.[25]

Just how well Melanchthon's dialectic served Luther's theology may be seen from the *Loci Communes* of 1521 and the Augsburg Confession of 1530.[26] By the time of Melanchthon's death

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[23] Wilhelm Risse, *Die Logik der Neuzeit: 1500-1640* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann, 1964), 83–84.

[24] Volkhard Wels, "Melanchthon's Textbooks on Dialectic and Rhetoric as Complementary Parts of a Theory of Argumentation, in *Scholarly Knowledge: Textbooks in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Emidio Campi et al. (Geneva: Droz, 2008), 141. See Melanchthon's definition of his own version of dialectic in: "Erotemata dialectices," in CR 13:513: "Dialectica est ars seu via, recte, ordine, et perspicue docendi, quod fit recte definiendo, dividendo, argumenta vera connectendo, et male cohaerentia seu falsa retexendo et refutando."

[25] Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1995, 174. Kusukawa shows how Melanchthon's natural philosophy (*Initiae doctrinae physicae, 1549*) was designed particularly for the advancement of Lutheran theology. As the law serves as a pedagogue, so Melanchthon's natural theology leads the people to Jesus.

[26] In the introduction to his *Bondage of the Will* (1525), Luther refers to Melanchthon's *Loci Communes rerum theologicum* of 1521 as "an unanswerable little book which in my judgment deserves no only to be immortalized but even canonized" (*LW* 33:16). Likewise, concerning the Augsburg Confession of 1530, it is significant that both Luther and Melanchthon considered the work to be Luther's own. See Charles Porterfield

in 1560, however, his practical philosophy had come to be cherished among his students more and more for its intrinsic, speculative value. The dialectical tools were honed to strain at gnats until eventually the tool exceeded its practical use and began to determine the power and outcome of the theological content it was designed to serve. Tools again were taking over, the means becoming ends, and Melanchthon had become too helpful: with each new distinction came a new point of debate and with each new debate came a new distinction—and by the end of the sixteenth century a new scholasticism was on the horizon.[27]

After Dialectic: The Resurgence of Aristotelian Philosophy

Many of Melanchthon's students, particularly among the Gnesio-Lutherans, continued to stress the importance of the Praeceptor's dialectic. At the same time, some saw the danger of a runaway philosophy intruding upon Christian doctrine. Johannes Wigand, for instance, urged a "*sana Philosophia*," a "rational philosophy," whereby the philosophical instruments would be taken back into the service of theology.[28] Wigand, together with Tillemann Heshusius, was forced to leave the University of Jena when August became regent of Saxe-Weimar in 1573 in place of his underaged nephew, Friedrich Wilhelm,[29] and they ended up in Königsberg. But the

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Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and its Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1871), 237–38.

[27] See Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Bonn: Marcus, 1944), 415: "Indessen spitzte sich durch die stete Polemik die Dialektik immer mehr zu, und so bildete sich seit dem Ende des 16ten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland und in den Niederlanden aus jener Aristotelischen Philosophie eine neue Scholastik aus." Hägglund calls it "German scholasticism," a parallel development with Lutheran orthodoxy, albeit, completely different.

[28] Johannes Wigand issued a tract in 1563, *On Philosophy and Theology: To What Extent Sound Philosophy May Serve Theology, and to What Extent Theology is Preeminent*, *De philosophia et theologia. Quatenus sana Philosophia Theologiae seruiat, & quatenus Theologia excellat* (Rostock: Myliander, 1563). See also Robert Kolb, "The Advance of Dialectic in Lutheran Theology: The Role of Johannes Wigand (1523–1587)," in *Regnum, Religio et Ratio, Essays Presented to Robert M. Kingdon*, ed. Jerome Friedman (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1987), 93–102.

[29] Note that while they may have used such terms as "Oheim" and "Neffe," the genealogical charts indicate that Friedrich Wilhelm was the son of Johann Friedrich the Middler, who was August's second cousin once

vast majority of those professors and pastors who were forced to flee Wittenberg and Dresden in 1574, and again in 1592, were Philippists run out of Saxony by Christian II. The spirit of Melanchthon leaves Wittenberg when the Philippists are expelled from Wittenberg. Meanwhile, Melanchthonian humanism (they say) continues at other universities outside of the boundaries of Lutheran orthodoxy—at Heidelberg, Strassburg, Marburg, Basel, and especially at the University of Helmstedt, which was founded in 1576.[30]

Among the Philippists the talk turned to defects in Melanchthon's practical philosophy. At least, this was how Melanchthon's student, John Caselius (1533–1613), came to consider the matter. Caselius went to Italy and lived there intermittently between 1560 and 1568 intending to introduce Melanchthon's dialectic.[31] But, after becoming acquainted and hugely impressed with the Italian late humanist philosopher, Jacob Zabarella (1533–1589),[32] Caselius decided to abandon the topical approach of Cicero, Agricola and Melanchthon in favor of Zabarella's elucidation of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.[33] Not only did Zabarella's insights promise a more dependable form of logical argumentation, but they were also unaffected by Melanchthon's

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removed, August's grandfather Albert being the brother of Friedrich Wilhelm's great-grandfather, Ernst.

[30] Tholuck, *Geist*, 57: "Der Sitz des aristotelischen Quellenstudiums wurde jedoch diejenige Universität, welche auch bald nach ihrer Begründung die Pfleganstalt des in Folge des Krypto-Calvinismus von Wittenberg ausgetrieben Humanismus wurde—Helmstädt."

[31] See Merio Scattola, "Gelehrte Philologie vs. Theologie: Johannes Caselius im Streit mit den Helmstedter Theologen," in Herbert Jaumann, *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 155–81.

[32] Zabarella's works on logic, *Opera Logica* (1578), *Tabula logicae* (1580), and *In duos Aristotelis libros Posteriores Analyticos comentarii* (1582), did not appear in publication until a decade later. For an insightful study of Zabarella and other Italian influences on German school metaphysics, see Riccardo Pozzo: "*Res considerata* and *Modus considerandi rem*: Averroes, Aquinas, Jacopo Zabarella and Cornelius Martini on Reduplication," in *Medioevo* 24 (1998): 151; and "Logic and Metaphysics in German Philosophy from Melanchthon to Hegel," in *Approaches to Metaphysics*, ed. William Sweet (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 61–74. According to Pozzo, Zabaralla's interpretation of Aristotle's *Analytics* was based on his reading of Averoës and Thomas Aquinas.

[33] J. Caselius, *De bono Academiae Oratio*, in Pozzo, "Ramus," 216.

religious aspirations. According to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, scientific knowledge, as

opposed to mere opinion, is gained by means of demonstration. Aristotle explains:

> [D]emonstrative knowledge must proceed from premises which are true, primary,
> immediate, better known than, prior to, and causative of the conclusion." Hence, in
> order to know something (x) it is necessary to know (a) the cause of x and (b) that x
> cannot be otherwise.[34]

Thanks to Zabarella's commentaries, Caselius and his colleague Cornelius Martini (1568–

1661)[35] were able to introduce Aristotle's logic to the newly formed Academia Julia in Helmstedt

in 1597. Instead of Melanchthon's provisional "*quid est*" approach to philosophy in view of its

theological goal, the new Helmstedt philosophers took Aristotle on his own terms, independent

of theological interests, and proceeded from known facts to the truth of the matter. Their

intention was to pursue philosophy in its own right, unhinged and unimpeded by its praepodeutic

purpose and certainly not philosophy in the more general sense used by Luther noted early.

Theology and philosophy were completely distinct sciences governed by their own unique

principles. Metaphysics, too, had its place in the faculty of arts. Rather than the Boethian-

scholastic model, however, in which metaphysics dealt with divine qualities in a hierarchy of

being—subjects Melanchthon avoided—Martini was able to reintroduce metaphysics as the

study of being *qua* being, a category that included God insofar as he, like all such things, exists.

Ian Hunter notes the significance of this development:

> Disconnected from the hierarchy of disciplines leading up to theology and the
> hierarchy of being leading up to metaphysical substances, Lutheran philosophy of the

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[34] *Posterior Analytics*, 1.2.71b9-17, in *Posterior Analytics & Topica*, ed. G. P. Goold, trans. Hugh Tredennick and E. S. Forster (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960). See also *Posterior Analytics*, 1.2.71b20-23. In his inaugural speech of 1518, by comparison, Melanchthon declared that Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* ought to be interpreted in terms of his Rhetoric: "Analytica posteriori . . . anno superiore praelecturus, a nobis Themistii libellos . . . accepit. Addidi quaedam e Philopono transcript. . . . Admonui insuper illic ab Aristotele rhetorica doceri." (CR 11:19), quoted in Risse, *Logik*, 1:83.

[35] Pozzo, "*Ramus contra Martinum defenses*: The Helmstedt Controversy 1594-1598," in *Autour de Ramus*, ed. M. Magnien, et al. (Paris: Champion, 2005), 213–33.

Helmstedt kind facilitated the birth of autonomous sciences grounded in empirical objectives and observations. It thereby pointed the way towards the philosophical eclecticism associated with the notion of *Aufklärung*.[36]

The new orientation at Helmstedt came in the form of fierce opposition to the textbooks of Peter Ramus (1515–1572), whose influential teachings were beginning to make remarkable inroads in the lower faculties across northern Europe.[37] While the new Helmstedt philosophers embraced Zabarella's doctrine that logic was not a part of philosophy itself, but comprised a habit (*habitus intellecutalis instrumentalis*) on the part of the philosopher himself,[38] Ramus took the opposite approach. He collapsed metaphysics (what?) into method (how?), and subsumed the substance of philosophy to logic. Thus, rather than several, "non-universal," "non-necessary" methods, as required by Zabarella, Ramus taught a single, all embracing, and "necessary" method proceeding from general knowledge to particular expertise.[39] Ramus offered to the university what Howard Hotson has described as "commonplace learning." It was an aggressive method that aimed at pushing students through the arts curriculum and generating scholars as quickly as possible, and this, during a critical period in the rapid expansion of Germany universities.[40]

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[36] Ian Hunter, "The University Philosopher in Early Modern Germany," in *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity*, ed. Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 61. Hunter is relying on the scholarship of Horst Dreiztel, "Zur Erforschung und Eigenart der 'Ekklektischen Philosophie,'" *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 18 (1991), 281–343.

[37] For an impressive study of Peter Ramus, see Walter Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), especially 53,, 236–39, 295–318. A good comparison of the methods of Melanchthon and Ramus may be found in chapters 16 and 17 of Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 320–74.

[38] J. Zabarella, *De natura logicae*, bk. I, ch. 2, p. 5; in Pozzo, "*Ramus*," 216.

[39] Peter Ramus, *Dialecticae libri duo*, 9; quoted in Risse, *Logik* 1:135, cited in Pozzo, "*Ramus*," 216: "Dialectica primum est ars, id est comprehensio praeceptorum in rebus aeternis propriorum et ordine dispositorum ad utilem vitae finem spectantium."

[40] Howard Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and Its German Ramifications*, 1543–1630 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

In the aftermath of the Lutheran reception of the Book of Concord in 1580, German territorial princes played an unprecedented role in the introduction of logic textbooks in the schools and universities in their regions.[41] The appeal of the Ramist dialectic was that, in contrast to Aristotle, it made for an extremely efficient philosophical program. However, the same appeal also drew the most criticism. Since Ramus's philosophical doctrines were handed down primarily, though not exclusively, in the Reformed schools, Lutheran educators, particularly in Saxony, declared that Ramus was handmaiden of Calvinism. Hotson explains that "Ramus' pared-down logic and pedagogical reforms [were considered] as a mere adjunct to Calvin's pared-down religion and sweeping programs of further reformation."[42] Hence, Ramus became extremely unpopular in territories that accepted the Book of Concord. Lectures on Ramist philosophy were allowed privately in 1585,[43] and, after 1590, only reluctantly. After the death of Christian I, and the expulsion of the crypto-Calvinists in 1591, Ramism was outlawed, first in Leipzig in 1592, and then again, both publicly and privately, in Wittenberg in 1603.[44]

This antagonism between Ramist method and Lutheran orthodoxy, motivated by confessional interests in Saxony, made the situation in Helmstedt all the more fascinating. The anti-Ramist sentiments in the arts faculty were not purely philosophical. Since Duke Julius of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1528–1589) had refused to sign the *Formula of Concord* in 1577, and therefore the confession was never legally binding on the territory of Brauschweig-Wolfenbüttel,

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[41] Pozzo, "*Ramus*," 215. See also Peter Petersen, *Geschichte der aristotelischen Philosophie im protestantischen Deutschland* (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1921), 136.

[42] Hotson*, Commonplace Learning*, 112.

[43] See *Acta Witeb*. ms. Fasc. III. 187, 14; in August Tholuck, *Geist*, 56: "In legendo halten die Professores phil. den methodum Philippi, wissen auch unter ihnen keinen Streit der Ramisterei halber, allein dass die doctrina Rami von etzlichen privatis magistris gelesen wird, daraus mit der Zeit mancherlei Zerrüttung der academia erfolgen könnte."

[44] Walter Friedensburg, UUW 1:629, cited in Hotson, *Commonplace Learning*, 112.

the university was free from the pressure of Saxon politics and the prevailing orthodoxy of the Lutheran Leucorea. In 1589, Caselius marched confidently under the banner of "Melanchthon" only to abandon both Melanchthon's curriculum, and the insidious Ramist dialectic in favor of Zabarella's speculative logic, which Cornelius Martini would formally introduce in 1592.[45] Thus, refusing to pay tribute to Luther's theology, and now with the eradication of Ramist philosophy, the University of Helmstedt thrived autonomously, like no other German university, in the glow of late humanism.[46]

These rather obscure controversies, mostly limited to the faculty of arts, precipitated a bitter controversy at Helmstedt between theologians and philosophers. Daniel Hoffmann (1538–1611), the favorite theologian and chief counselor of Duke Julius, had made a reputation for himself as a staunch opponent of the use of philosophy in theological statements. With the backing of his prince, Hoffmann opposed the *modus loquendi* of the FC arguing that the final draft of the Formula had introduced innovations through terms and concepts foreign to Scripture and the church fathers, including its use of *abstracto*, *ubiquitas*, and *communicatio idiomatum*.[47] When Duke Heinrich Julius (1564 –1613) called Caselius to the faculty of arts upon the death of Julius in 1589, Hoffmann took the appointment as a personal offence. Not only did Caselius's appointment threaten his esteem as a theologian, to say nothing of the status of the theological

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[45] See Pozzo, "*Res considerata*," 169, and Pozzo, "*Ramus*," 213–33.

[46] Ernst Ludwig Theodor Henke, *Georg Calixtus und seiner Zeit*, (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1853), 1:47: "So kamen jetzt in der lutherischen Kirche die Studien welche ihr anfangs so grosse Dienste geleistet hatten, schon wieder in Verfall; so wurden auch in ihr wieder Humanisten und Theologen getrennt."

[47] See "Preface to the Book of Concord," in KW, 12. Compare the full discussion of the concordists' use of the church fathers in "*Catalogus Testimoniorum*," ed. Marion Bechtold-Mayer and Johannes Hund, in *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 1611–52; including Hoffmann's *Errores Andreae* and Andreae, *Disputatio de Duabus Naturis in Christo, atque earundem idiomatum* (Tübingen, 1569).

faculty, the new philosopher's opposition to Ramus came as an affront to his theological positions.[48] In Hoffmann's estimation "Ramus" represented "resistance to Aristotle," whom the wounded theologian had long regarded as the chief nemesis of Luther's theology. Caspar Pfaffrad, a student of Hoffmann, was committed to Ramus not because of his pragmatic appeal, but because he provided the very anti-Aristotelian framework necessary for supporting Hoffmann's fideistic agenda.[49] He could find no other way to save Luther's theology from being confined to formal logic than to deny categorically that theology and philosophy adhered to a single standard of truth: the same statement may be true in philosophy and false in theology. In 1600, he directed a disputation against his colleague, Cornelius Martini, in which he undertook to prove that Luther held his view of "*duplex veritas*."[50]

The upshot of the controversy was that Cornelius Martini won the debate, the Aristotelian renaissance prevailed, and Hoffmann was expelled from Helmstedt in 1601.[51] Meanwhile, as that academy since turned university followed the course plodded by the philosophical faculty, the controversy sent shockwaves across Germany as theologians tested various means for grappling with the interface between theology and philosophy. While it is certainly possible to describe the

[48] On the controversy between Hoffmann and the philosophical faculty, see Peter Petersen, *Geschichte*, 133–34; Risse, *Logik*, 183–86. For an excellent study of Hoffmann's argument, his dispute with the Helmstedt philosophical faculty, and the impact it had on Lutheranism at the turn of the seventeenth century, see Markus Friedrich, *Die Grenzen der Vernunft: Theologie, Philosophie und gelehrte Konflikte am Beispiel des Helmstedter Hofmannstreits und seiner Wirkungen auf das Luthertum um 1600* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 2004.

[49] See Ernst Schlee, *Der Streit des Daniel Hoffmanns ueber das Verhältniss der Philosophie zur Theologie* (Marburg, 1853), 10–12.

[50] Daniel Hoffmann, *Disputatio pro Duplici Veritate Lutheri a Philosophies Impugnata et ad Pudendorum Locorum Ablegata* (Magdeburg, 1600); Hoffmann, *DE STATIBVS CONTROVERSIS. PRIMIS ACCESSORIIS. Helmstadij agitatis inter DN. Danielem Hoffmannum SS. Theologiae Doctorem, et Professorem primarium, et quatuor Philosophos ibidem. è scripto M. CORNELLI MARTINI, QVOD CONFECIT ADVERSVS D. Iohannem Olearium, excerptis: nunc vero propter grauissimas causas, & plurimorum petitiones in lucem editis nomine Studiosorum per IOHANNEM MVLLERVM Christi Ministrum.* (Halle: Joachim Krusicke; Paul Gräber, 1600).

[51] See Wallmann, *Theologiebegriff*, 86.

dispute in the rhetoric of "Hoffmann breathing the spirit of Luther and Martini the spirit of Melanchthon,"[52] the reality is more ironic. Whether looking from the perspective of Hoffmann or Martini, one is asking for an absolute separation between theology and philosophy: Hoffmann stressed a theology freed from philosophy, and Martini stressed philosophy freed from theology.[53] In either case, on the Helmstedt model philosophy loses the teleological feature that Melanchthon had offered to Luther. Philosophy remains in one form or another, but it is no longer propaedeutic to theology.

As indicated above, the method of Ramus survived in the Reformed tradition as attempts were made to reclaim philosophy for the service of theology. Clemens Timpler,[54] Bartholomew Keckermann,[55] and Rudolph Goclenius,[56] to name the most influential Reformed philosophers, attempted to recover Melanchthon's original twofold plan of purifying Aristotle and making such a refined philosophy useful for theology. Bartholomew Keckermann (1572–1608), professor at

[52] Robert Preus, *The Theology of post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 129.

[53] The recess according to the university visitation in 1603, cited in Hans-Walter Krumwiede, *Kirchengeschichte Niedersachsens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 184, reads: "Philosophen und Theologen sollten sich streng an ihre Grenzen halten, die Philosophen zurückkehren zu den Vorschriften der Statuten 'welche schon, was man von dem Studio philosophiae halten, judicieren und urtheilen soll, ziemlich vermelden,' und sich im Unterricht auf das beschränken, was unmittelbar für die Studenten als Grundlegung weitere Studien nützlich sei." See also Ian Hunter, *The Secularisation of the Confessional State: The Political Thought of Christian Thomasius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 43–44.

[54] See Karl Eschweiler, *Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1928), 251–325. See also Joseph S. Freedman, *European Academic Philosophy in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries. The life, significance and philosophy of Clemens Timpler (1563/4– 1624)* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1988), 210–11.

[55] See Joseph S. Freedman, "The Career and Writings of Bartholomäus Keckermann (d.1609)," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 141 (3): 305–64 (1997); reprinted in: J. S. Freedman, *Philosophy and the Arts in Central Europe, 1500–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999). See also Richard Muller, "*Vera Philosophia cum Sacra Theologia nusquam pugnat*: Keckermann on philosophy, theology and the problem of double truth," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 341–65.

[56] See Jeffrey Coombs, "Goclenius, Rudolphus," in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, ed. Barry Smith and Hans Burkhardt (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1991), 312–13. For a study of Reformed scholastic theology in general, see Paul Althaus, *Die Prinzipien der deutschen reformierten Dogmatik im Zeitalter der aristotelischen Scholastik* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1914).

Heidelberg and practitioner of logic during those critical years leading into the seventeenth century, was perhaps most successful in this regard. Trained at Wittenberg, Leipzig, and finally Heidelberg in the method of Ramus, Keckermann sought to bring a "universal method" to bear on nearly every philosophical discipline. This tremendous effort resulted in the production of several "systems," or systematic textbooks.[57] Rather than pit Ramus against Aristotle, however, as the Helmstedt Ramists had attempted, Keckermann used the former as a mechanism for systematizing the latter's doctrines, including his metaphysics. In the area of ethics, especially, this procedure opened up the possibility of following Aristotle as closely as possible while at the same time correcting him where his doctrines contradicted the Scriptures.[58]

Taking his cue from Zabarella's division of science according to two distinct orders,[59] Keckermann divided all disciplines into theoretical and practical: theoretical sciences (metaphysics, physics, mathematics) require a synthetic method, which proceeds from first principles (causes) to the things that depend on those principles; while the practical disciplines (ethics, politics) are learned by means of an analytical method, which begins with the goal and then proceeds through the means by which that goal is "introduced into the subject."[60] He maintains that theology is distinct from ethics—theology deals with inner spiritual goals, while ethics deals with external civil goals—yet inasmuch as theology is the consummation of ethics,

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[57] Freedman, "Keckermann," 313.

[58] M. W. F. Stone, "The adoption and rejection of Aristotelian moral philosophy in Reformed Casuistry," in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Jill Kraye and M. W. F. Stone (London: Routeledge, 2000), 59–90; 74.

[59] See Jacob Zabarella, *De Methodis libri quattuor* (Venice, 1578); repr., ed. C. Vasoli (Bologna: Clueb, 1985), xvi–xxiv; cited in Stone, "The adoption and rejection of Aristotelian moral philosophy," 86n52. See also Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), Cahpter 7. Charles H. Lohr, "Latin Aristotelianism and the Seventeenth-Century Calvinist Theory of Scientific Method," in *Method and Order in Renaissance Philosophy of Nature: The Aristotle Commentary Tradition*, ed. Daniel A. Di Liscia, Eckhard Kessler nad Carlotte Methuen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 369–80.

[60] Bartholomew Keckermann, *Systema Logica,* 2nd Ed. (Hannover, 1603), 593.

his primary aim is to subordinate ethics to theology.[61] As the completion of ethics, theology was the true goal of every practical science and thus adhered to that "universal practical method" that made it reducible to the precepts of a system. Indeed, being the first to systematize theology according to an analytical method alongside other operative disciplines, Keckermann introduced "systematic theology" to the theology of post-Reformation Protestantism.[62]

In a sense, these "semi-ramists" saved Melanchthon from Helmstedt, and placed philosophy into its useful role, but due to Ramus's method, Melanchthon's useful "teleological feature" gave way to an inflexibly stable philosophical standard that generated a new scholasticism.[63]As shall be seen in the next chapter, Lutheran orthodoxy benefited from the Reformed textbook achievements, especially in their development of theological prolegomena, however they also perceived that their use of philosophy had gone too far.

Lutheran Aristotelianism

In Saxony and Upper Hesse, where the Book of Concord of 1580 held legal sway, a completely different solution to the Luther-Melanchthon rift was being developed. There, the pressure to support the metaphysical premises of the Formula of Concord, i.e., *ubiquity* and abstract terms,[64] generated a uniquely Lutheran brand of Aristotelian metaphysics that would

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[61] See Keckermann, *Opera omnia*, 1:829–30, 1:254–55, in Stone, "The adoption and rejection of Aristotelian moral philosophy," 68–70.

[62] Keckermann, *Systema S.S. Theologia* (Hannover, 1615), 9–11.

[63] See Ong, *Ramus*, 298, quoted in Hotson, *Commonplace Learning*, 6: Walter Ong notes: "Nowhere else is the Ramist influence felt on such a scale as in the works of Johann Heinrich Alsted, whose compends of all knowledge mark the confident beginnings of modern encyclopaedism; in theanalyzer of the Scriptures, Johannes Piscator; in the great systematizer of Calvinist theology, Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf; in Bartholomew Keckermann, who systematized theology, theo other sciences, and history as well; in Johannes Althusius, who methodozed politics . . . and [in] Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius)."

[64] The debate at Königsberg, between the Gnesio-lutherans and the Helmstedt theologians (Hoffmann) over the "modus loquendi" of the final draft of the Formula of Concord, and especially over the use of the scholastic term, "abstract," and "ubiquity." (See "Preface to the Book of Concord," KW, 12).

prove more influential than any other proposals during the first half of the seventeenth century.[65]

According to Sachiko Kusukawa, new circumstances called for solutions beyond the scope of

Melanchthon's natural philosophy:

> For the Lutherans in the 1570s, philosophy became necessary in a different way. The issues that they now faced were quite different from those that concerned Melanchthon in the late 1520s and 1530s. It was the controversy with the Calvinists over the two natures of Christ that occupied these Lutherans most and they saw metaphysics as a powerful tool with which to conduct the controversy.[66]

Christoph Scheibler (1589–1653) of Jena, the "Protestant Suárez," appealed to many of the

same Aristotelian sources that inspired the Helmstedt philosophers in an effort to reinforce the

Christological and anthopological assertions of the Formula of Concord. He dedicated his *Opus*

metaphysicum (1617), the most comprehensive treatment of metaphysics in the seventeenth

century, to Landgrave Ludwig of Hesse, with a strong appeal to metaphysics for the purpose of

preserving the teachings of Formula from Daniel Hoffmann.[67] Scheibler pursued metaphysics

within the boundaries of natural theology by arguing from matter in accordance with the thing

itself (*res ipsa*) and (*ratio*). Thus, by means of "metaphysical abstraction," a procedure borrowed

from Suárez, he included "immaterial substance" within the science of metaphysics. Since

metaphysics was not limited to bodies (a subject of physics), but extended to immaterial

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[65] See Hunter, *The Philosopher*, 61.

[66] See Kusukawa, *Transformation*, 204. See, however, Joar Haga, *Was there a Lutheran metaphysics?: The Interpretation of Communicatio Idiomatum in Early Modern Lutheranism.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), who argues that the metaphysics processed through Tübingen theology was a correlary of Luther's radical Christology. He describes the contest between Luther and Melancthon in the following manner: "Whereas Luther sharply formulated the problem of integrating Christology within a metaphysical framework with a fixed anthropology, and even called for a new language, Melanchthon tried to preserve a bridge between theology and philosophy by offering an interpretation of Christ within his rather Newoplatonic antrhoplogy, combining elements of philosophy and theology in a higher synthesis" (15). Indeed, Haga shows, Melanchthon rejected the *communicatio idiomatorum*, which was the basis for that called "Lutheran metaphysics" in post-reformation Lutheranism.

[67] Christoph Scheibler, *Opus metaphysicum, duobus libris universarum hujus scientiae systema comprehendens* (Giessen, 1617) is perhaps the most comprehensive Lutheran work on metaphysics ever written (61–64). See Hunter, *The Philospher*, 35–65.

substance not limited to times and places, the science itself included the subjects of God, angels, and departed souls and underscored the teaching of ubiquity.[68]

Scheibler's metaphysical work followed closely upon and was strongly influenced by the metaphysical and logical works of Wittenberg professor, Jacob Martini (1570–1649). Having been called from Helmstedt to teach logic at Wittenberg in 1602, Martini aimed to subordinate the Aristotelian humanist learning he had acquired at Helmstedt to the spirit of Luther's theology. While he had developed his metaphysics through a series of disputations from 1610,[69] his views are most succinctly summarized in his *Vernunftspiegel* of 1618.[70] Since metaphysics is limited to the exploration of "all being, in so far as it is being (*omne ens … quatenus ens*)," it has, by virtue of its task, an *inner relationship* with theology.[71] In other words, metaphysics and theology share the same subject matter, "being *qua* being," and this on two accounts. First, if metaphysical being (*ens metaphysicum*) is simply *essentia ab omnibus quae sunt abstracta*, then the concept of God as a real, existent being belongs to the subject of metaphysics. Second, the intrinsic purpose of metaphysics is the knowledge of truth, and this is a godly purpose: "For the true is that which is real," to wit, *quae non hominis, sed ipsius DEI manu in natura quasi conscripta (est)*.[72] Finally, both philosophy and theology, which presuppose nature (*natura*), require correct reasoning (*recta ratio*) for an accurate understanding.[73]

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[68] Scheibler, *Opus metaphysicum*, 418–19, 454; in Hunter, *Philospher*, 62.

[69] Jacob Martini, *Disputationum Ethicarum Duodecima De Nobilitate / In incluta Wittebergensi Academia proposita, Praeside Jacobo Martini Professore publico Ordin: & Extraord* (Witteberg: Henckelius, 1613).

[70] Jacob Martini, *Vernunfftspiegel, das ist / Gründlicher vnnd vnwidertreiblicher Bericht / was die Vernufft / sampt derselbigen perfection, Philosophia genandt / sey / wie seit sie sich erstreckt / und fürnemlich was für einen Gebrauch sie habe in Religions Sachen / Entgegen gesetzt allen newen Enthusiastischen Vernufftstürmen vnd Philosophyschändern...* (Wittenberg, 1618).

[71] Jacob Martini, *Vernunfftspiegel*, 550, in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 13.

[72] See Martini, *E Dedic.* b 3 v, a 5 r, in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 14.

[73] See Martini, *E Dedic.* a 5 v; E 447; Meisner, *PhS*, 1:709., 777; in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 14.

Not only the speculative concept of being *qua* being, but also the empirical dimension assumes the integration of metaphysics. Both disciplines are beholden to "God's creation" and "God's Word," and are grounded *a priori* in the unity of God's will. Indeed, according to its subject matter and its purpose, philosophy is good in and of itself, *abstracte et qualiter ex se et sua natura comparata est.*[74] Hence, a philosophical standard so abstract that it is able to transcend the particulars of Scriptures, and therefore exclude the discipline of theology altogether (Cornelius Martini) is also broad enough to embrace the subjects dealing with the existence of God and creation by virtue of its shared basis. At Giessen and Wittenberg philosophy as "general metaphysics" (Realwissenschaft) was basically Tübingen Christology, or better, the *Catalog of Testimonies*, breathing academic air. If Aristotle has anything useful to say, then metaphysics must transcend even him, and he must be made to serve the God who exists and whose Word mediates all other existence. Still, it was left to another—a student as accomplished in philosophy as he was in theology at a remarkably young age—to show the precise manner in which such a philosophy could be completely serviceable in the realm of Biblical theology.

Balthasar Meisner's "Sober Philosophy"

A Definition of Terms

In the wake of the explosion of neo-Aristotelian philosophy at Helmstedt, and now

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[74] Martini, *Vernufftspiegel*, 168, in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 14. Sparn writes: "If such a science has its truth and essence from its object, then its task exists solely in the affirmation of that which is, therefore, in the *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*." According to Sparn, the assumption of Max Wundt that Lutheran metaphysics was carried out in the service of theology alone, and not in the interest of philosophical precision, is unfounded. He is also mistaken when he claims that, rather than complying with the rule of reason (*recta ratio*), they conformed only to the Scriptures, for this assumes that such a metaphysics existed that went against the Scriptures! See Max Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1939), 110; Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 196.

influencing all of the major academies in Germany through the metaphysical and logical writings of Scheibler and Jacob Martini, Balthasar Meisner began to explore the relationship between philosophy and theology at Wittenberg. He first disputed on the subject in 1611 during his *iter academicum* in Giessen with his Philosophia sobria. His preface leads with the general question: "Is there is a use of philosophy in theology and, if so, what is it?[75] The primary terms inherent in the question are "philosophy" and "theology;" what both of these terms mean will determine the relationship between the two. By "philosophy" is meant not the "finely spun questions that can be debated from two sides." Nor is a philosopher one "who can put forth nothing but probable arguments concerning entities, haecceities, formalities, and other useless notions, and can give birth to new, monstrous opinions in great number to boot."[76] According to Meisner, philosophy is not the province of one or another sect—Stoic, Platonic, Epicurean, or Aristotelian—but "whatever has been said correctly by these sects." It is not found concretely in this or that subject, "but rather abstractly and according to its qualities and nature." He lands on the following definition:

> And so for us philosophy *is the habit of soul that consists in wisdom and prudence,* or, the system of all theoretical and practical disciplines. The former [theoretical disciplines] perfect the intellect, the latter the will. The former respect the truth, the latter the good. The former lead us to possess the truth, the latter to acts of virtue.[77]

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[75] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:9: "An & quis sit philosophiae in theologia usus?"

[76] Meisner, *PhS* 1:10–11: "Per Philosophiam nonnulli intelligunt aliud nihil, quàm varias variarum opinionum sectas, & spinosarum quaestionum, in utramque partem disputabilium, copiosas myriadas; Philosophumque arbitrantur eum esse, qui non nisi de Entitatibus, haecceitatibus, formalitatibus aliisque inutilibus notionibus probabiliter disceptare, quin & novas monstrosas sententias magno numero parturire possit."

[77] Meisner, *PhS* 1:11: "Maximè ergo mihi arridet illud Clementis Alexandrini quando lib. 1. stromat. Philosophia, ait, non est dicenda Stoica, nec Platonica, aut Epicuraea, aut Aristotelica, sed quaecunque ab his sectis rectè dicta sunt, hoc totum selectum, dicendum est Philosophia. Non igitur concretè, & prout in hoc vel illo subiecto reperitur, consideranda est Philosophia, sed potius abstractè & qualiter ex se & sua natura comparata est. Atque ita Philosophia nobis est habitus animi sapientiâ & prudentiâ constans, seu, systema disciplinarum omnium Theoreticarum & Practicarum. Illae intellectum, hae voluntatem perficiunt: illae τὸ ἀληθὲς hae τὸ ἀγαθὸν respiciunt: illae ad veritatis possessionem, hae ad virtutis actionem nos deducunt."

Inasmuch as philosophy is simply a "zealous inquiry after truth, ardent love of virtue, and an earnest avoidance of vices," only the one who exhibits such virtues may rightly be called a philosopher.[78] In his "Oration on the Incomparable Memory of Balthasar Meisner, Theologian and Philosopher," from 1627, Erasmus Schmidt (1570–1637), professor of Greek and mathematics at Wittenberg, declared that for the young Meisner, philosophy was a "God-given culture" and not merely "heathen speculation."[79]

Although he provides a more elaborate definition of "theology" under "Ethical Questions," which will be discussed in the following chapter, Meisner gives the following threefold meaning of "theology" for the sake of introducing the general question. First, theology may be taken as synonymous with "faith and religion." In this sense all Christians, learned and unlearned, who have a basic grasp of the articles of faith, assent to them with a simple mind, and practice Christian virtues may be called theologians.[80] Second, it is a function of the ecclesiastical ministry (*functio ministerii ecclesiastici*). Here a theologian may refer to all parish pastors who preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, absolve, exercise church discipline, and visit the sick, even though they are not experienced in doctrinal controversies.[81] Finally, theology is usually understood as "the accurate and complete knowledge…of the divine mysteries, combined

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[78] Meisner, *PhS* 1:11–12: "Probè igitur notetur, quòd Philosophia, de cuius usu hîc soliciti sumus, nobis nil sit aliud quàm sedula veritatis inquisitio, ardens virtutis amor & seria vitiorum fuga atque in quo haec reperiuntur, ille demum Philosophi titulo dignus est."

[79] Erasmus Schmidt, *Oratio Balthasaris Meisneri Theologi et Philosophi incomporabilis memoriae* (Wittenberg, 1627), 26–27, cited in Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 218. Kathe summarizes Schmidt's point: "Die Philosophie war für Meisner gottgeschenkte Kultur, keine heidnische Spekulation."

[80] Meisner, *PhS* 1:11: "Primò enim sumitur *pro fide & religion Christiana,* quae omnibus fidelibus communis, indoctis aequè ac doctis, ita, ut Theologi sensu lato dicantur, quicunque articulos fidei norunt, iisque; simplici animo assentiuntur, & in virtutibus Christianis, Deo placentibus sese exercent."

[81] Meisner, *PhS* 1:12–13: "Accipitur *pro functione ministerii Ecclesiastici,* quae consistit in praedicatione verbi, in administratione Sacramentorum, in absolvendis paenitentibus, in visitan dis aegrotis, in consolandis afflictis, in monendis & corrigendis praefractis, & quae sunt aliae ministerii Ecclesiastici partes. Hoc sensu omnes concionatores verbi, etiamsi in controversiis Theologicis parùm sint exercitati, dicuntur Theologi."

with an excellent ability to refute and shut up those who contradict." In this sense, a theologian is

not merely one who possesses a superior *gnosis* of Christian doctrine, which be displayed in

formal discourse, but rather, in order to be a bonafide theologian,

> a solid and accurate knowledge (*notitia*) of the articles of the Christian faith is
> required; a full understanding of the theological controversies is required; an
> excellent ability is required of defending the true faith, even ex tempore and without
> regard to whom the argument is against, even if they are newly arisen adversaries,
> and of ably refuting all artifices, sophists, and tricksters.[82]

It is only in this final category that Meisner proposes to investigate the use of philosophy in

theology. For even though philosophy treats of the visible things of creation, referenced in

Romans 1:20, and promotes worship of the Creator, it does not provide sufficient knowledge for

faith or stipulate what kind of worship it requires. Moreover, pastors may well be fine

theologians without being educated in philosophy. With this clarification, Meisner is prepared to

discuss the nature of the question. He considers three opinions concerning the use of philosophy

in theology—two extreme and one moderate. The former extreme attributes too little to

philosophy and suggests that it is not only useless but also inherently inimical to faith.[83] Without

mentioning Hoffmann, Meisner clearly has him in mind. The latter extreme attributes too much

to philosophy by conceding to it a certain lordship over theology. Here, he cites the old

scholastics and the modern Calvinists, and explicitly, Goclenius and Keckermann. He explains:

> For although these seem sometimes to teach correctly about the use of Philosophy,
> and tie it down to servile obedience, not permitting it a lordly rule, still soon in other
> place they write the contrary and in actual fact they very much prove it in their

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[82] Meisner, *PhS* 1:13: "Usitatiùs Theologia consuevit accipi, *pro accurata & perfecta* (perfectionem viatoris intelligo) *mysteriorum divinorum cognitione,* coniunctam cum excellenti δυνάμει τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν και ἐπιστομίζειν. Hoc significatu Theologus non est, qui qualemcunque locorum communium γνῶσιν habet, qui concionem aliquam formare & habere potest, sed requiritur solida & accurata articulorum Christianae fidei notitia, requiritur plena controversiarum Theologicarum inrelligentia, requiritur excellens δύναμις, fidem veram, etiam ex tempore & contra quosvis, etiam de novo exortos adversarios confirmandi, strophasque; omnes, argutiores quoque & subtiliores potenter refellendi."

[83] Meisner, *PhS* 1:14–15.

theological disputations. For what else is it to deny and impugn many articles of faith because the philosophical maxims seem not to allow them, than to set up philosophy as the judge and master of theological articles?[84]

Meisner endorses the "moderate opinion between these extremes." While he wholly concedes the use of such philosophy in theology, he restricts it to its legitimate use. According to him: "You must philosophize, just not too much and not alone, but soberly and modestly."[85]

Securing the Foundation: An una vel duplex sit veritas?

As the advance of metaphysics and demonstrative logic pushed the *Quaestio Generalis* to the limit, Meisner pursued the interest of supporting the ontological (or Christological) assertions of Luther and confessional Lutheranism. A very accessible piece of literature, the *Philosophia sobria* was designed to help students with controversial questions by parceling out the theological context and then distributing the various challenges to their relevant philosophical disciplines: logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics.[86] He outlines the following procedure:

Therefore it will be expedient for me to separate this consideration into four sections of which questions are: First, Logical; Second, Practical; Third, Physical; and finally Fourth, Metaphysical. In my discussion of each problem I will observe, wherever there is need, that the terms of the question should be explained, the status rightly established, the true thesis sufficiently confirmed, the false antithesis clearly refuted,

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[84] Meisner, *PhS* 1:17: "Etiamsi enim hi de usu Philosophi nonnunquam rectè docere, eamque ad servilem obedientiam adstringere, non herilem principatum ipsi permittere videantur: attamen mox aliis in locis contrarium scribunt & facto ipso in disputationibus Theologicis clarissimè comprobant. Quid enim aliud est, negare & impugnare multos fidei articulos, quia Philosophicae maximae eos non concedere videantur, quàm Philosophiam Theologicorum articulorum iudicem magistramque; constituere?"

In 1611, the same year Meisner's *Philosophia sobria* was published, Gerhard made many of the same arguments in the context of theological anthropology. See Preus, *Theology*, 1:118–19: "Now when some philosophizer wants to make his own axioms and utterances so all-embracing that he thinks the high mysteries of faith must be judged by these and thus invades foreign boundaries, then it happens *per accidens* that what is true in theology is said to be false to philosophy, not as touching the true use of correct philosophy but as touching the disgraceful abuse of the same."

[85] See August Tholuck, "Balthasar Meisner," *Realenzyklopädie der protestantischen Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd Edition (1903), 511–12: "Man muss philosophieren, aber nicht zu sehr und nicht allein, sondern recht, besonnen und bescheiden."

[86] Meisner, *PhS* 1:37, 281, 425, 622, cited in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 19.

and finally, whenever it is made explicit in a theological locus, it should be indicated what use the question has."[87]

Logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics were not, as with Melanchthon's dialectic, merely *ad hoc* instruments for transmitting theological assertions. Philosophy could benefit from a much closer relationship with theology if the two adhered to a single ontological basis. Fundamental to the *Philosophia sobria*, therefore, was an answer to the question of double truth: "*An una vel duplex sit veritas?*" Under the fourth division, *Questiones Metaphysicas*, Meisner sets the following two statements side by side:

First Assertion: In view of its essence, philosophy never contradicts theology.

Second Assertion: In view of its existence, philosophy often contradicts theology.[88]

For Meisner, the distinction served, in addition to theological precision, to differentiate the various disciplines. According to Meisner, the various philosophical disciplines—logic, ethics, physics and metaphysics—ought to agree with theology, notwithstanding their respective scopes, and right reasoning (*recta ratio*) ought to adhere to one truth and not many. This is a metaphysical presupposition. If metaphysical being (*ens metaphysicum*) is simply essence abstracted from things that exist, then the concept of God as a real, existent being ought to support theological assertions no less than philosophical assertions. The task of every discipline, theological or philosophical, exists solely in the adjustment of the intellect to something that is

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[87] Meisner, *PhS* 1:8: "Dispescam autem hanc considerationem in sections quatuor: quarum Prima quaestiones Logicas, Secunda Practicas, Tertia Physicas, Quarta denique Metaphysicas expediet. In sigulorum problematum discussion istud observabo, ut, sicubi opus fuerit, termini quaestionis explicentur, status rectè constituatur, thesis vera sufficienter confirmetur, antithesis falsa evidenter refutetur, & demum quem, quove in Loco Theologico decisa, quaestio usum habeat, breviter indicetur."

[88] Meisner, *PhS* 1:647: "Assertio prima: Philosophia, ratione essentiae suae, nunquam contradicit Theología e. Assertio secunda: Philosophia, ratione existentiae considerata, saepe contradicit Theologíae." In his *Disputatio de fidei justificantis, 1. appellationibus. 2. partibus. 3. causa efficiente. 4. objecto. et 5. subjecto* (Wittenberg, 1625), 98, Meisner intensifies the second assertion of this formula by using "always" (semper) instead of "often" (saepe).

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real (*adaequatio intellectus ad rem*).[89] The second assertion indicates that the philosophical

disciplines, when they are permitted to function independently of their respective purposes, often

transgress their limits. Since one branch of learning operates with a set of principles that is

different from another—geometry deals with shapes and sizes, whereas arithmetic involves the

study of quantities—, the one cannot deprive the other of its unique properties. Likewise,

theology, which assumes the grammar of Scripture and teaches salvation and eternal life, may no

more rescind the laws of physics than physics may annul the promises of the Bible. In view of

both the respective epistemological scope and the joint metaphysical interest of each discipline,

therefore, a *mixtum quid* of theology and philosophy is altogether unnecessary.[90]

Meisner's programmatic solution to Hoffmann's proposal of double truth, that is, the idea

that theology and philosophy adhere to two different standards of truth, had two distinct

advantages for seventeenth century Lutheran theology. First, it provides an exchange template

for clarifying certain philosophical terms that are used in theology. Martin Luther, in his

Disputatio de divinitate et humanitate Christi of 1540, calls for "a whole new vocabulary" in

light of the incarnation of Christ and insists that theological statements are not necessarily true in

philosophy.[91] For instance, *homo* and *humanitas* signify the same thing in philosophy (Meisner's

first assertion), but something quite different in theology (Meisner's second assertion). In line

with John of Damascus and the scholastic tradition,[92] Luther was driving at a further distinction

between *abstract* and *concrete* terms. Abstract terms (*humanitas*) fulfill *philosophical*

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[89] Meisner, *PhS* 1:709, 777, cited in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 14.

[90] Meisner, *PhS* 1:44, in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 16.

[91] Luther, *Disputatio De divinitate et humanitate Christi*, in *WA* 39:94. On the revolution of philosophical terms in light of Luther's Christology, see Haga, *Lutheran Metaphysics*, 21–90.

[92] John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 43–44, in PL 42:1213.

requirements in as much as they strike a correspondence to reality, and thus preclude logical absurdities. Concrete terms (*homo*) satisfy *theological* requirements in as much as they require theologians to stick to the subject (e.g., the Person of Christ), and thus avoid fallacies of biblical content.[93]

Luther does not use these terms, "essence" and "existence," nor was he attempting to formulate a solution to double truth, but he was using a conceptual template that was consistent with his anthropology set forth in his "Disputation Concerning Man."[94] In this disputation, published in 1536, Luther draws a hard and fast distinction between philosophical and theological anthropology.[95] "Philosophy," says Luther, "defines man as an animal having reason, sensation, and body" (Thesis 1). Luther grants that human reason is "the highest in rank among all things, and in comparison with other things of this life, the best and something divine" (Thesis 4). But he restricts such lofty power to *a posteriori* knowledge of itself (Thesis 10). Ccompared with theology, philosophy reveals "almost nothing about man" (Thesis 11) because it does not show "his origin which is God" (Thesis 17). Such a distinction between philosophy (*a posteriori*) and theology (*a priori*), while serving no explicit propaedeutic role in Luther's theology, squares perfectly with Meisner's *Anthropologia sacrae* of 1614, particularly as it was borne out of his clarification of the philosophical term "nature" and the biblical doctrine of

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[93] See Luther, *Enarratio 53. capitis Esaiae* (1544), in *WA* 40/3:707, quoted in Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971), 33. Luther insists that "we ought to be absolutely silent about the abstract, for faith teaches that here there is no abstraction but a concretion, a union, and a junction of both natures." See also the "Catalog of Testimonies" appended to SD VIII, in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 1111: "For concrete terms are words of such a kind as designate the entire person in Christ, such as *God,* man. But abstract terms are words by which the natures in the person of Christ are understood and expressed, as *divinity, humanity*."

[94] Luther, *Disputation Concerning Man* (1536), *LW* 34:137–39.

[95] For a discussion and analysis of this treatise, see Gerhard Ebeling, *Disputatio de homine, Lutherstudien*, 3 vols. (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1977–1989).

"sin."[96]

The debate centered around Robert Bellarmine's juxtaposition of two allegedly mutually exclusive positions held in the Lutheran camp: (1) Luther's use of the term "nature" to define the doctrine of original sin, particularly in his Psalms Lectures,[97] and (2) the Formula of Concord's definition of original sin as "*accidens*"[98] in contrast to the position of Mathias Flacius that sin was of the very substance of the human being.[99] Thus, necessity of definition compels the authors to conclude that "original sin is not a substance but an *accidens*."[100] According to the Formula, four articles of faith depend on this distinction:

First, the article of *creation* requires that we distinguish between God's good work of creation and the corruption of sin. "God is not a creator or author of sin. Nor is original sin a creature or handiwork of God; rather it is the devil's work."[101] The distinction here lies between the created structure of the human being, both body and soul, which is God's creation, and the corruption of this structure, which is the work of the devil.[102] Second, the article of *redemption*

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[96] For a comprehensive study of classical Lutheran anthropology, see Bengt Hägglund, *De Homine: Människoupfattningen i äldre luthersk tradition* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1959). Hägglund discusses Meisner's anthropology in the context of the Lutheran tradition, and specifically in relation to the Flacian problem. He shows how Meisner and his contemporaries overcame the enduring challenge posed by Flacius by using thought patterns inherited from Luther himself. See also Anselm Schubert. *Das Ende der Sünde: Anthropologie und Erbsünde zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

[97] SD I 53. See *WA* 12:403,9; *LW* 12:307-8, in SD I 52: "Your birth, your nature, and your entire essence is sin, that, is sinful and impure."

[98] SD I, 55–57.

[99] Matthias Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae* S. Bas. 1567. P. II, 482, in Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, Erste Hälfte (Erlangen: Verlang von Theodor Bläsing, 1859), 315: "Hoc igitur modo sentio et assero, primarium peccatum originale esse substantiam, quia anima rationalis (die vernünftige Seele in ihrer Gemeinschaft mit Gott), et praesertim ejus nobilissimae substantialesque potentiae, nempe intellectus et voluntas, quae antea errant ita praeclare formatae, ut essent vera imago Dei."

[100] SD I, 57.

[101] SD I, 40-41.

[102] SD I, 42: "Therefore, in order to distinguish God's creation and work in the human being from the devil's work, we say that it is God's creation that the human being has a body and soul and can think, speak, act, and accomplish anything. . . . That this nature is corrupted and that our thoughts, words, and deeds are evil is in its origin

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depends on this distinction, for Hebrews 2:17 says that God's Son "became one of us, in every respect like us" excluding sin. If human substance were sin, one of two things would have to be true: either the Logos did not assume human substance into himself, or when he did he assumed original sin itself. Both of these propositions, of course, are inconsistent with Scripture.[103] Third, the doctrine of *sanctification* necessitates a distinction between human substance and the sin from which the human substance is washed, cleansed and sanctified. God does not forgive sin by destroying human substance, nor is sin itself baptized in the name of the Triune God.[104] Finally, the article of the *resurrection* depends on a distinction between the substance of the glorified body and the sin, which attaches to it in this life. If sin were the substance of the human being, then either different substance than that of the human creature would rise, or sin itself would rise to glory and eternal life on the Last Day.[105] In each of these cases, the glory of God and the salvation of man ultimately depend on eliminating the consequences inherent in a confusion of these terms, substance and *accidens*.

Despite the Formula's clarification of Luther's position,[106] Bellarmine insisted on a holding

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a handiwork of Satan."

[103] SD I, 43-44.

[104] SD I, 45.

[105] SD I, 46-47.

[106] See SD I, 6. Luther never intended to suggest that human nature was itself sin, but rather that "the entire nature, person, and essence of the human being are completely corrupted by original sin, to their very foundation." His conception "person-sin" was stated in opposition to the scholastic assertion that concupiscence, or the inclinations of the human appetites (*conversio ad creaturam*), was not itself sin unless motivated by a conscious and deliberate act. In his sermon on the Gospel for the Festival of the Circumcision of Jesus (*WA* 51:354), Luther uses the term "person-sin" to indicate that, even in the absence of any conscious or deliberate act, the person is fundamentally sinner. Compare with Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I, II, quest. 82, art. 3, who distinguishes between the formal cause of original sin (*aversio a deo*) and the material cause, or concupiscence (*conversio ad creaturam*). See G. K. Chesterton's explanation in *St. Thomas Aquinas* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1956), 37. See also Robert C. Schultz. "Original Sin: Accident or Substance: The Paradoxical Significance of FC I, 53-62 in Historical Context," *Discord, Dialogue, and Concord: Studies in the Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord*, ed. Lewis W. Spitz and Wenzel Lohff (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 41–42. In his sermon on the Gospel for the Festival of the Circumcision of Jesus (*WA* 51:354), Luther uses the term "person-sin" to indicate that, even in the

the Lutherans theologians to a consistent use of the term "nature." According to Aristotelian metaphysics, Luther's "nature" is indistinguishable from Flacius's "substance," which Lutherans now claim to reject: essence, nature and substance are synonyms. Unlike Leonard Hutter in his *Compendium*[107] and John Gerhard in his *Loci*,[108] who dismissed Bellarmine's objection with little explanation—perhaps they did not fully appreciate its philosophical import[109]—Meisner understood well that the problem was in the definition of the terms Bellarmine had proposed. Lutherans agree with scholastic tradition that original sin is a complete absence or "lack of the original righteousness acquired in Paradise,"[110] but this begs the question of what is actually meant by "original righteousness." Moreover, what is meant by "natural?" The philosophical difference between Meisner and the scholastic position represented by Bellarmine was as follows.

Bellarmine defines original righteousness as a supernatural gift (*donum superadditum*) of divine similitude that was added supernaturally to the natural human creature. Hence, original sin is not a privation of any natural properties, but only of this supernatural addition to nature.[111] Thus, when Adam lost the *similitudino dei* through the Fall, this in no way changed his structure. Man's nature is the same after the Fall (*post lapsum*) as it was before the Fall (*ante lapsum*), a

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absence of any conscious or deliberate act, the person is fundamentally sinner.

[107] Leonhard Hutter. *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum* (1610), especially 295–302.

[108] John Gerhard. *Loci Communes Theologici* (Jena: 1610-1622), ed. Eduard Preuss (Berlin, 1863–1885), especially I, VIII, II, 116.

[109] Schubert, *Sünde*, 53–54: "Gerade an dieser nicht problematisierten Wiederholung der Position Luthers sieht man, dass Hutter und Gerhard die Bellarminsche Frage in ihrer eigentlichen Bedeutung gar nicht verstanden hatten."

[110] SD I, 10; see also Ap. II, 15. Compare Bellarmine. *De Amissione Gratiae et Statu Peccati* (Neapel, 1858), 228: "peccatum originale est carentia doni justitiae originalis, sive habitualis aversio, et obliquitas voluntatis, quae est macula mentem Deo invisum reddens appellari potest."

[111] Bellarmine, *De Amissione et Statu Peccati* (Neapel, 1858), 189, in Schubert, *Sünde*, 48: "Neque idem sunt imago Dei, et justitia originalis, sed justitia originalis ornamentum quoddam et perfectio imaginis Dei."

difference comparable to being clothed or naked.[112] Thus, sin is simply a condition of being in want (*ens mere privatum*) of righteousness, man's nature remaining pure (*pura natura*).

Meisner held that the original righteousness lost in the Fall was not merely a supernatural gift added from beyond, but an actual quality (*accidens*) with which God created man; it was the way he was created (*concreatum*), a characteristic of his substance—it was something "natural." By "natural," Meisner does not mean *constitutive*, in the sense that it makes the human nature what it is, nor does he mean *consecutive*, in the sense that it can be predicated essentially like the qualities of the soul. Rather, he means *subjective*, in so far as it clings closely to the nature; *perfective*, in so far as it adorns the nature and helps it to perfect itself; and *transitive*, in so far as it is imparted and passed down to others in a natural way.[113] A loss of original righteousness entailed a *positive* effect on the human nature, involving an actual and qualitative change of mind, will and desires (*habitualia animae vitia*). While original sin is not *constitutive* of human nature, it is nevertheless predicated of human nature *concretivo et existentiali sensu*. Whether *ante lapsum* or *post lapsum*, Lutheran theological anthropology views the human subject not only in abstract terms of *what*, but (primarily) in an existential and concrete sense of *how*.[114] According to Meisner, the human being must be considered both *abstractly* and *concretely*:

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[112] Bellarmine. *De Gratia Primi Hominis*, *Roberti Cardinalis Bellarmini Opera Omnia. Editio prima iuxta Venetam MDCCXII. Tomus Quartus* (Neapel, 1858), 24, in Schubert, *Sünde*, 49: "Quare non magis differt status hominis post lapsum adae a statu ejusdem in puris naturalibus, quam differat spoliatus a nudo, neque deterior est humana natura, si culpam originalem detrahas, neque magis ignorantia et infirmitate laborat, quam esset et laboraret in puris naturalibus condita."

[113] Meisner, AS 1:54f, in Schubert. *Sünde*, 57: "Quod igitur II. spectat *vocem Naturalis*, sumitur illa 1. *constitutive* pro eo, quod ipsi naturae largitur esse. 2. *Consecutive*, pro eo, quod a forma essentialiter fluit, vt facultates animae. 3. *Subjective*, pro eo quod naturae penitissime infixum haeret. 4. *perfective*, pro eo quod naturam exornat, iuuat, perficit. 5. *Transitive*, quod naturaliter & per naturam propagatur. . . . Primum secundumque modum non intelligimus. . . . postremos vero modos omnes attendimus."

[114] Meisner departed from the scholastic tradition, including his Catholic and Reformed contemporaries, by refusing to define original sin as *ens mere privatum*.

For we consider the human being in two ways: 1. *abstractly*, to mean simply εἶναι, and we call this good because it has God as its author, from whom there is nothing but good. 2. *concretely*, to mean not only τὸ εἶναι, or in respect of its οὐσίας, but also in the sense of τὸ ὑπάρχειν and "to exist," in so far as that original sin clings to him and always exists together with him.[115]

With this definition, a conceptual reduplication of the solution to double truth he offered three years prior, Meisner is able to get at the heart of the matter. Flacius's real fallacy is to view the human being exclusively in concrete terms—as sinner—and then to conflate this sense with an abstract reflection of human nature *per se*.[116] His error is simply the inverse of Bellarmine's. Indeed, both attempted to reconstruct human nature in absolute terms, but theology does not permit of abstractions apart from concretions. Thus, the only reason theology permits a consideration of nature (*quoad* τὸ εἶναι) in the first place is because it is also being considered in existential (indeed, practical) terms (*quoad* τὸ ὑπάρχειν). Otherwise, theology would have no business treating the subject. In abstract terms (qualified through a theological consideration of the subject) "nature" is a reference to God's good creation, which Christ redeemed in his incarnation, sanctified, and will raise up on the last day.[117] Inasmuch as concrete terms do not exclude abstract terms, but include them (*ratione* οὐσίας), philosophy does contradict theology on this score, but corroborates it. Philosophy contradicts theology only to the extent that it cannot adequately account for nature in existential terms (*quoad* τὸ ὑπάρχειν).

Through his new conception of "natural" Meisner bequeathed a new vocabulary upon

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[115] Meisner, AS 1:19: "Nam consideramus hominem dupliciter 1. *abstracte*, quoad simplex eiv/nai et hoc bonum dicimus, quoniam Deum habet authorem, a quo non nisi bona. 2. *concrete* non modo quoad to. eiv/nai vel ratione ouvsi,aj, sed etiam quoad to. u`pa,rcein et existere, quatenus in eo haeret, et una cum eo semper existit illud originale vitium;" in Hägglund, *De Homine*, 150.

[116] See Meisner, AS 1:7, in Hägglund, *De Homine*, 50: "Et sane omnis error Flacii ex hoc fonte vel inprimis fluit, quod nunquam in abstracto de peccato ipso loqui voluit, sed semper in concreto, conjungendo hominem, et hominis corruptionem."

[117] SD 1, 40–47.

Lutheran anthropology that would influence Lutheran dogmatics for the remainder of the seventeenth century. Indeed John Quenstedt would later regard Meisner's *Anthropologias sacrae* as the chief source for the locus, "*De imagine dei*" in Lutheran systematic theology.[118] According to Anselm Schubert, Meisner successfully preserved the Lutheran *Diskursgegenstand* from the vantage point of its two basis postulates: Original sin is *natural*, albeit non-essential (not constitutive of human substance); and original sin is *accidental* – it belongs *subjectively*, *perfectively*, and *transitively* to the subject's nature. The same basic distinction served Meisner's development of the philosophy of law. By striking a mediating position between Thomas Aquinas and Matthias Flacius, that is, an interface between Semi-Pelagianism and Quasi-Manichaeism, he paved the way for the philosophical category of "natural law" later developed by Samuel von Pufendorf (1632–1694) and Christian Thomasius (1655–1728).[119]

<center>Breaking Down the "reductio ad absurdum"</center>

The second advantage that Meisner's solution to double truth brought to the theology of Lutheran orthodoxy was a substantial means for breaking down the logical arguments of his opponents—via the strictest (via Zabarella) demonstrative logic. It is significant that same year Aegidius Hunnius was called to establish Lutheran orthodoxy at Wittenberg, Cornelius Martini began to introduce Zabarella's logic at Helmstedt. During Meisner's first year of academic studies, he boarded in the house of Hunnius, who died in the spring of 1603. During the course

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[118] John Quenstedt. *Theologia Didactico-polemica* (Wittenberg, 1685), II, 851, 857, 866, 894, 898; in Schubert, 56, note 84, 58, note 91. See also Gerhard *Confessio Catholica* (Frankfurt am Main: 1679), 1371.

[119] For Meisner's philosophy of law, see *Dissertatio De Legibus In quatuor libellos distributa, Quorum Primus agit de Lege in genere. Secundus de Lege aeterna. Tertius de Lege naturae. Quartus de Legibus humanis, tum Politicis, tum Ecclesiasticis Wittebergae* (Wittenberg: Helwigius-Rothius,1632). See also Merio Scattola, *Das Naturrecht vor dem Naturrecht. Zur Geschichte des "ius naturae" im 16. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1999), 87–88, 99–101.

of that year, the fifteen-year-old scholar was thoroughly indoctrinated in the theology of Martin Luther and the Formula of Concord.[120] Meanwhile, through his studies with the newly arrived professor of philosophy, Jacob Martini, he also learned to draw appropriate theological conclusions. Armed thus with a mastery of metaphysics and demonstrative logic, as well as an extraordinary work ethic, Meisner set out to disarm the crafty logic of his Reformed philosophical adversaries in whose writings he perceived a tendency to seize upon certain Lutheran theological positions, reduce them to their philosophical constituents, and then press their conclusions *ad absurdum*.[121]

For instance, the French Reformed theologian, Antoine Chandieu and the more sophisticated German Reformed theologians coming after him, maintained that since Scripture says that the body of Christ is a mystery (Eph. 5:32, 1 Tim. 3:16), and a mystery is by definition "above nature" (ὑπερφυσικά), any attempt to describe Christ's body in the Lord's Supper in terms of physical presence not only contradicts Scripture but is "against nature" (ἀντιφυσικά).[122] Ascribing to the Lutherans the absurd proposition of a visible, local, and palpable body in the Lord's Supper, the Reformed schoolmen maintained their own theological position of a mere spiritual eating while simultaneously keeping the laws of physics in force as they pertained to the Lutheran position. Thus, in the name of "sana philosophia," they ascribed to Lutherans and Catholics, respectively, the twin errors of "consubstantiation" and "transubstantiation."[123]

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[120] Tholuck, *Geist*, 14.

[121] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 19.

[122] Antonius Sadeël, *De Spirituali Manducatione Corporis Christi et Spirituali potu Sanginis ipsius in sacra coena Domini: Theologica et Scholastica Tractatio* (Geneva: Jean le Preux, 1590), 5–9, 75–76.

[123] Chandieu treats the twin errors of transubstanciation and consubstantiation, both of which the orthodox Lutheran teachers rejected, as though they were the same kind of error. See Sadeël, *De Spirituali Manducatione Corporis Christi*, 74, 89, 96. Rudolph Goclenius uses the same philosophical language in his *Lexicon philosophicum, quo tanquam clave philosophiae fores aperiuntur* (Frankfurt: Petrus Musculus, 1613), on the hypostatic union (412) and *supranatura* (469–71). See also Goclenus, *Collegium philosophico-theologicum*

The adherents of the Formula of Concord consistently rejected the kind of "Capernaitic eating" implied by the idea of consubstantiation, or a "physical" presence of Christ's body in the Supper in the same manner as the bread and wine. It was rather a sacramental presence, "in, with, and under" the physical presence of the material elements of bread and wine.[124] They dismissed such accusations as "Zwinglian sophistries."[125] Hunnius, in his *Confessio de persona Christi*, written in 1577, the same year in which the Formula of Concord was adopted, declares that the Reformed error concerning Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper hinges entirely on the major premise: "a body cannot be in more than one place at the same time."[126] The syllogism is false because it follows from a major premise prescribed by physics, but physics has nothing to say about the concept as it is used by John, Peter, and Paul in the Bible. While the Reformed syllogism follows formally, Hunnius knows that the real problem is not logical (How?), but metaphysical (What?).[127]

However, it was Meisner who first made a comprehensive and methodical analysis of the

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controversiam de persona Christi et coena dominica scholastice (Marburg: Rudolph Hutwelcker, 1610). Clemens Timpler, *Theses et antitheses brevissimae de his quatuor capitibus: De coena domini. De persona Christi. De baptismo. De praedestinatione* (Heidelberg: Abraham Smesmann, 1594), argues against the doctrine of transubstantiation in the name of "sana philiosophia" and maintains that the doctrine of ubiquity is contrary to the laws of physics (1–16).

[124] *LW* 37: 306; SC VI, 1. 2; SD VII, 35.

[125] Previous Lutheran sources that critique the Reformed philosophical treatment of the Lord's Supper and the ubiquity of Christ's human nature include SD VII, "Concerning the Holy Supper," and VIII, "Concerning the Person of Christ," in KW, 591–634; Martin Chemnitz, *Two Natures in Chirst*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1981); Aegidius Hunnius, *Assertio Sanae Et Orthodoxae Doctrinae De Persona Et Maiestate Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ad dextram virtutis potentiae[que] Dei: in usum studiosae iuventutis sub forma Quaestionum & Responsionum proposita. In Qua Refutantur Sophismata Futilissima D. Christophori Pezelii Bremensis* (Spies, 1592); Leonhard Hutter, De communicatione et naturarum et earundem Idiomatum in Christo (Wittenberg: Mullerus, 1597).

[126] See Nicolaus Hunnius, *Bekenntnis Von der Person Christi* (1577, Bl. 21ᵛ-22 ᵛ), quoted in Markus Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession: der Beitrag von Ägidius Hunnius (1550–1603) zur Entstehung einer lutherischen Religionskultur* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2004), 224. The Calvinist syllogism reads: "Corpus non potest simul et semel in pluribus esse Locis, Ergo Dej simul in pluribus aut omnibus locis esse potest."

[127] Matthias, *Theologie und Konfession*, 224.

Reformed agenda. From the time he was taken on as an adjunct of the philosophical college at the University of Wittenberg in 1608 he had been gathering the "principal questions" with which Reformed philosophers—and especially Rudolph Goclenius, Clemens Timpler, and Bartholomew Keckermann—were attempting to "make a disguise for the simpler folk."[128] As his first order of priority Meisner rejects an illicit subordination of theological syllogisms to philosophical method. Under the *Quaestio Generalis* he disputes Keckermann's doctrine of "mixed conclusions," which required a codependency of theology and philosophy. Assuming, for instance, the controversial question: "*An corpus Christi in pluribus locis praesenter dominetur?*" ("Whether the body of Christ has dominion presently in more than one place?"), Keckermann would argue that since only philosophy can define the terms of the conclusion ("*corpus*" and "*pluribus locis*"), syllogistic conclusions should be drawn not only by means of theology and the written Word of God, but equally by means of philosophy.[129] Meisner establishes his counter-position:

> Here, I do not deny that philosophy explains what a place is or what a body is. But, I completely refuse to acknowledge that philosophy is able to render a judgment on the question. Indeed, I am not concerned with the nature of the terms separately, but rather the coherence of the terms, namely, whether the dominion that is present in more than one place, should be ascribed to the body of Christ. Now, what doctrine does not know about both terms, it cannot judge concerning the coherence of the terms. Such is philosophy. Therefore, it cannot judge. How then shall it judge concerning the body of Christ, if it knows nothing about it?[130]

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[128] In his dedicatory epistle to Elector Christian II of Saxony, Meisner writes, *PhS*, 1: ():(6).: "Et eam ob causam praecipuas quaestiones Philosophicas, quae subinde occurrunt in controversiis Calvinisticis, et quibus fucum facere solent simplicioribus, tum temporis seligebam, privatis lectionibus pro modulo meo exponebam."

[129] Bartholomew Keckermann, *Praecognitorum Logicorum Tractatus tres* (Leipzig, 1598), 3: 1, 2, quoted in Meisner, *PhS* 1:26: "Atque in eo dissentimus à Keckermanno, qui … statuit de talibus mixtis conclusionibus iudicari & posse & debere, non ex sola Theologia & verbo Dei scripto, sed pariter ex Philosophia, ex qua terminus alteruter petitus est*.*"

[130] Meisner, *PhS* 1:27: "Talis verò non Philosophia, sed sola est Theologia. Unde parata conclusio, quòd ex sola quoque Theologia & non ex Philosophia simul, de quaestionibus eiusmodi pronunciandum sit. E. gr. Decantatum & valdè controversum est ζήτημα: An corpus Christi in pluribus locis praesenter dominetur? Hîc quid locus, quid corpus sit Philosophiam exponere non diffiteor. Philosophiam autem de hac quaestione iudicare posse,

Or, to state the matter in biblical terms: "Your wine is mixed with water!" (Is. 1:22).[131] By means of one logical demonstration after another, Meisner astutely denies to philosophy the authority of demonstration in theological matters. In Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, this is called a *metabasis eis allo genos* (a mutation to another kind) and is considered the most fundamental error in scientific reasoning.[132] Meisner cites this principle: "The conclusion is not valid when the genus of the predicate is changed."[133] That is to say, "changing the subject" in the middle of a scientific demonstration is not allowed. Under *Quaestiones Logicas*, Meisner lists four ways in which this error has lately been perpetrated among his opponents: (1) when one crosses from one category over to another; (2) when terms are understood differently in each premise; (3) when first notions (essence) and second notions (existence) are mixed; and (4) when abstract things are confused with concrete things, the subject with the predicate, and vice versa. Whenever these things occur, they are an indication of a flawed conclusion (*vitiosae consequentiae*).[134] In the following example, Meisner recounts the popular Reformed attempt at a *reductio ad absurdum*:

The body that is eaten in the Lord's Supper was given into death for us.

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omninò inficior. Non enim de extremorum natura seorsim solicitus sum, sed de extremorum cohaerentia, an videlicet praesens dominium in pluribus locis, verè attribuatur corpori Christi? Iam quae doctrina utrumque terminum non cognoscit, ea de terminorum cohaesione iudicare nequit. Talis autem Philosophia. Ergò iudicare nequit. Quo modo n. iudicaret de corpore Christi, cùm illud omninò ignoret?"

[131] Meisner, *PhS* 1:44: "Proinde summus Philosophiae abusus est, si ex eius principiis de effatis Theologicis iudicare quis praesumat, atque ita mixtum quid ex Theologia & Philosophia efficiat, de quo conqueritut Dominus apud Esa. 1. v. 22. Vinum tuum mistum est aqua."

[132] See Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 1. 7 75ª38-ᵇ6, in Steven J. Livesey, *Theology and Science in the Fourteenth Century: Three Questions on the Unity and Subalternation of the Sciences from John of Reading's Commentary on the Sentences* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 22: "One cannot prove anything by crossing from another genus—e.g. something geometrical by arithmetic . . . of things whose genus is different—as arithmetic and geometry—one cannot apply arithmetical demonstrations to the accidentals of magnitudes, unless the magnitudes are numbers."

[133] Meisner, *PhS* 1:354: "Non valet consequentia, mutato genere praedicationis."

[134] Meisner, *PhS* 1:354: "Contingit autem ista mutatio secundum neotericos quadrupliciter. 1. Quando sit transitus ex una categoria in aliam. 2. Quando termini aliter accipiuntur in utraque praemissa. 3. Quando notiones primae & secundae miscentur. 4. Quando confunduntur abstracta cum concretis, casus obliqui cum rectis, & retro. Quotiescunque ergo haec occurrunt, signum sunt vitiosae consequentiae."

However, the body that was given into death for us was visible and palpable.
Therefore, a visible and palpable body is eaten in the Lord's Supper.

But the genus of the premises was obviously changed. In the major premise the body of Christ is spoken of with respect to its *essence* (*ratione ousias*) and is predicated of substance. (That is what it is.) In the minor premise, however, it is predicated of *quality* (*ratione poiotekos*). (That is what it is like.) The Calvinists thus violate the third, and by implication, the fourth common error above. Meisner quotes Luther favorably to the effect that, in this instance, the substance is changed into an accident.[135]

If Lutheran orthodoxy had a penchant for syllogistic reasoning, this fact alone does not separate seventeenth century Lutheranism from the spirit of Luther's biblical theology. (It may distinguish, but it does not necessarily separate the two.) Long before Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* was reintroduced in the university curriculum, Luther had appealed consistently to the strictest demonstrative logic.[136] In the Marburg Colloquy of 1529, Luther exposed the *rhetorical* ploy in Ulrich Zwingli's *alloeosis*[137] by showing the necessary correspondence of Jesus' words to their referent: "This" and "My body."[138] Luther corroborated his theological stance in defiance of

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[135] Meisner, *PhS* 1:353–54: "Etenim genus praedicationis plane immutatum est. De corpore Christi loquitur major, ratione ousias, prout est in praedicamento substantiae; minor, ratione *poiotekos*, ut est in praedicamento qualitatis; unde & recte argute dixit B. Lutherus, Terminus substantialis mutatur in accidentalem." (Luther reference is unknown.)

[136] In his *Vernunfftspiegel*, Jakob Martini shows from Luther's *Bondage of the Will* that the latter was thoroughly grounded in metaphysics. Martini writes : "Meine meinung ist/ vnd kan es probiren/ . . . were *Lutherus* kein *Philosophus*, vnd *in specie* ein *Metaphysicus*, er hette *De Servo Arbitrio*] wol vngeschrieben gelassen/ derhalben es auch keiner verstehen kan/ es sey denn/ dass er *Metaphysicam* gründlich verstehe" (*Vernunfftspiegel* (1618), 1029, quoted in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 5.)

[137] See SD VII, 7 in KW, 594. Ulrich Zwingli argued for a "verbal exchange" called *alloeosis* to explain that when Jesus ascribes divine things to his human nature, he is really speaking rhetorically, and he intends to ascribe them to his divine nature. Conversely, when Scripture says that Christ suffered, it means that only the human nature suffered, since it is absurd to say that the divine nature suffers.

[138] Luther warns against Zwingli's *alloeosis* in his *Large Confession on the Lord's Supper* (1528), *WA* 26:319; *LW* 37:209–10, cited in SD VIII, 39–40, in KW 623: "Beware, beware, I say, of this alloeosis, for it is the devil's mask, since it finally constructs a kind of Christ after whom I would not want to be a Christian, that is, a Christ who is and does no more in his passion and his life than any other ordinary saint. For if I believe that only the

the illicit philosophical axiom that "nothing should be ascribed to the human nature in the person of Christ that transcends or opposes its natural, essential characteristics."[139] Indeed, the laws of physics require a "body" to remain in one place at one time. But Luther refuses to subordinate theology to the laws of physics: "I protest," says Luther,

> that I differ from my adversaries with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and that I shall always differ from them. Christ has said, This is my body. Let them show me that a body is not a body. I reject reason, common sense, carnal arguments, and mathematical proofs. God is above mathematics. We have the Word of God; we must adore it and perform it![140]

Luther's rejection of Zwingli's *alloeosis* was not a blanket rejection of philosophy, much less an appeal to a uniquely theological criterion of truth, but a scrupulous protest against a *metabasis eis allo genos*. Zwingli's use of axioms pertaining to the subjects of physics and mathematics constituted a philosophical attack on the metaphysical standard implicit in Jesus' words: "This is my body." Despite the peculiar claims of philosophy, Luther appealed at once to the simplicity of faith and the power of demonstration.[141] This dual feature of Luther's theology—simplicity of faith and power of demonstration—characterized Lutheran orthodoxy as an *academic* theology from the beginning. The cosmic implications of Luther's Christology necessitated an aptitude among his followers—an aptitude Melanchthon refused to teach—to counter the cryptic sway of Zwingli's *metabasis*.

In any case, the orthodox use of philosophy in theology is clear. Rather than purifying

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human nature suffered for me, then Christ would be a poor Savior for me, in fact, he himself would need a Savior."

[139] SD VIII, 4, in KW, 616.

[140] "Proceedings from the Marburg Colloquy," in Jean Henri Merle d'Aubigné, *History of the great reformation of the sixteenth century in Germany, Switzerland, & c.* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), 662. See also "Hedio's Account" *LW* 38:32. Luther argues: "In this text there is no room for mathematics."

[141] See Luther's *Confession concerning Christ's Supper*, in SD VII, 103, in KW 610–11: "For I do not want to deny in any way that God's power is able to make a body be simultaneously in many places, even in a corporeal and circumscribed manner. For who wants to try to prove that God is unable to do that? Who has seen the limits of his power? The fanatics may indeed think that God is unable to do it, but who will believe their speculations? How will they establish the truth on that kind of speculation?"

philosophy of its speculative elements, as Melanchthon did, Meisner finds philosophy useful for theology precisely for its speculative role. Where theology determines the terms and premises, philosophy is able to secure the ontological foundation upon which theology rests. As Meisner explains in various ways in his *Two Speeches: One on Noah's Ark, with which the Academy is Compared, Another on the Cherubim,* the philosophical faculty is foundational. In the first speech, it corresponds to the bottom of the ship and thus provides "the necessary basis of the higher faculties" inasmuch as it "supports the essence of all knowledge of the truth." Likewise, in his second speech, where he compares the academy to the Statue of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2:31–33: his head is made of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron and clay. To the latter he ascribes to philosophy the "*prima fundamenta*" because it supports all other disciplines.[142] Meisner did not simply apply the right kind of logic, some catchall inductive method with which to collate theological and philosophical principles. His intention was to show that his logic adheres to a more certain criterion. His logic is correct only to the extent that his metaphysics is correct, granting that "every truth depend[s] on reality, and every reality on the work of God and word of God."[143]

Conclusion

Is philosophy useful for theology, and if so, to what extent? Luther had no use for human wisdom until the mystery hidden for centuries should have made everything foolish. Melanchthon, the man of letters, was driven by his own pious desires to help the process along.

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[142] Meisner, *Orationes duae, prior de arca Noachi, cum qua comparatur academia, posterior de Cherubinis* (Wittenberg: Caspar Heiden, 1622), 12, in Kathe, *Philosophische Fakultät*, 165–66.

[143] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 164: ""jegliche Wahrheit auf Wirklichkeit und jede Wirklichkeit auf das Werk Gottes oder auf das Wort Gottes zurückführend."

He had good reason to abandon the mind-numbing dialectic of scholastic theology. But, as Johannes Wallmann has shown, he did not replace it with a theology of his own. Luther appropriated the *regina disciplinarum* and then qualified it with the cross of Christ.[144] Melanchthon dumped the word "theology" as a vestige of scholasticism, like the doctrine of transubstantiation.[145] Without a transcendent theology, however, Melanchthon's heirs were stranded with the earthborn tools of an eclectic philosophy designed to achieve—what now? Unimpeded by Luther's theology of the cross, Melanchthon's would-be heirs began to restock from a different source and sharpened their wits on the "pure" logic of Aristotle. Meanwhile, the foolishness of the cross did not cease to qualify the rudiments of the Lutheran academy. In its own time, Lutheran orthodoxy, imperfect as Luther himself was, embodied that ideal. Lutheran orthodoxy, as the case of Balthasar Meisner shows, was very much a scholarly enterprise. Yet, considered at its core, this feature owes much more to Luther's assertions than Melanchthon's "*literae*."

Meisner's sober approach to philosophy was not, to be sure, a return to Melanchthon's practical philosophy. Melanchthon had intentionally tweaked philosophy to serve the evangelical faith, and in that respect, one may argue, he added a "literal condition" to the letter of Scripture. Meisner, on the other hand, felt no need to fine-tune the Aristotelian *organon* for the sake of theology. Instead, he turned to the thing-in-itself, adhering simultaneously to the strictest Aristotelian logic and Scripture alone as the qualification of all reasoning: "*Credenda sunt*

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[144] See Luther's Letter to Spalatin, January 1518, in *WA* 1:133: "*Ut Theologus, non ut Grammaticus loqui debeo.*"

[145] See Melanchthon's "Baccalaureate Theses" (1519), in *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl*, ed. Robert Stupperich (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1951), 1:25 (These Nr. 18); in Wallmann, *Theologiebegriff,* 21.

mysteria fidei, ut intelligantur.[146] Nor is it entirely adequate to say that the Lutheran schoolmen turned to Aristotelian metaphysics merely for the purpose of shoring up their own peculiar theological claims,[147] as if metaphysics were an instrument on loan for a different purpose than its own. A universal standard was implied by the biblical claims they sought to validate: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," "This is my body," etc. Meisner and his philosophical colleagues furnished what Walter Sparn has styled a "Christianization" ("Verchristlichung") or "Christological mediation" ("christologische Vermittlung") of general metaphysics.[148] Yet, in the case of Balthasar Meisner, philosophy did not have a *material* influence on theology. Quite the other way around, theology exerted a *formal* influence on philosophy to produce a sober philosophy.

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[146] Meisner, *PhS* 1:5. It is noteworthy that Aristotelian (per Zabarella) metaphysics was developed successfully only within the Lutheran camp, particularly at Helmstedt and Wittenberg. The Reformed either adopted the Lutheran brand and adapted it to their theological positions, or they cultivated their own version of metaphysics along the lines of Cartesian dualism. See Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik*, 144–45. According to Wundt, the ultimate success of Lutheran metaphysics owed to their definite confessional maxim: *finitum capax infiniti*.

[147] Ernst Troeltsch. *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Johann Gerhard und Melanchthon* (Güttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1891), 1–6, 101–14, in Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 6, 217.

[148] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 128, 164. See Martin Luther, "Disputatio De divinitate et humanitate Christi," in *WA* 39: 94: "omnia vocabula in Christo novam significationem accipere."

CHAPTER SEVEN

MEISNER'S PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Nam Theologiae proprium subjectum est homo peccati reus ac perditus et Deus iustificans ac salvator hominis peccatoris.[1]

Introduction

Guided by the same question as the previous chapter, "To what extent is philosophy useful for theology?" the present chapter will focus on the development of Meisner's theology concept within the Lutheran tradition and the theological method he proposed for putting it into practice. The details of this development are what ultimately distinguished Lutheran orthodoxy from the scholastic and rationalist schools that were taking shape simultaneously, and also from the Reformed scholasticism, which was taking form well ahead of Lutheran orthodoxy. It was in this context, and for this stated purpose, that Meisner, under the heading of "ethical questions," became the first Lutheran theologian to explore the nature of "theology," that is, whether it a theoretical or practical pursuit. Therefore, one must look to the same place where Meisner defines the scope and boundaries of philosophy to discover the sources of Lutheran theological prolegomena and its emerging definition of theology as a "practical God-given *habitus*."

Johannes Wallmann in his classic study, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt*, works with the same basic trajectory employed by Gottfried Arnold, but he offers a much different assessment of Lutheran orthodoxy. Examining the diverging conceptions of "theology" between John Gerhard and Georg Calixt, he traces Luther's "*theologia regenitorum*,"

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[1] Luther, *Enarratio Psalmi LI*. 1532, *WA* 40, 2, 327–28.

a theology that cannot exist except alongside faith, through John Gerhard, the arch-orthodoxist of the seventeenth century, to Philip Jacob Spener. On the other hand, he traces a "*theologia irregenitorum*" (a theology that is possible with or without faith) from Melanchthon through Georg Calixt and the Helmstedt School to the proto-rationalist, Johann Solomo Semler. Wallmann makes a very convincing case that the chief proponents of Lutheran orthodoxy, both early and late, shared Luther's supreme concern for individual faith, as well as the supernatural character of theology.[2] To what extent do the terms Meisner used in an attempt to grapple with the proper use of philosophy in theology fit into Wallmann's scheme? What was Meisner's own objective when he set out to define theology the way he did? An examination of his career-spanning effort to do just that will reveal, perhaps more than any other available literary source, what Meisner believed he was doing *qua* theologian, and thus furnish a veritable self-portrait of an orthodox Lutheran theologian.

The Birth of Theological Prolegomena

The question, "*Quid est theologia?*" does not emerge from the sacred text so naturally that the subject of theological prolegomena merits its own place among the theological commonplaces. Nowhere does the word "theology" appear in Scripture.[3] The tradition of writing prolegomena to theology as an academic discipline reflects the epideictic encomia, part of the classical *progymnasmata*, which was used to prepare students of rhetoric for writing

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[2] Johannes Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1961), 1–4; 71–75.

[3] The word, "theology," was used by Plato (De Republica, 1) and Aristotle (Metaphysica X, 6). However, one may find biblical synonyms such as "godliness" (1 Tim. 2:10: θεοσέβεια), or better, "knowledge of the truth according to godliness" (Titus 1:1: ἐπίγνωσις ἀληθείας τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν).

declamations in preparation for their core studies.[4] It was common for university professors in

Germany upon assuming a post at the university to give an oration in the form of an encomium

highlighting the distinct "usefulness and necessity" of their respective disciplines: Theology,

Law, Medicine, and Philosophy. Theological prolegomena, therefore, which developed rather

slowly in comparison with other disciplines, came about in a strictly academic context. Richard

Muller explains:

> The academic focus on these and other questions of a fundamental definitional nature
> belongs to the process of institutionalization characteristic of Protestantism toward
> the end of the sixteenth century—an institutionalization connected both with the
> development of academic institutions and with the affirmation of catholicity.
> Characteristic of the academic life of the age are public orations on the nature of
> theology as a discipline and discourses in praise of theological studies.[5]

In was in this context, moreover, that the old scholastic writings on the nature and character

of theology began to become subjects of interest among the heirs of the Reformation. The

Reformed theologians led the way. Francis Junius, a student of John Calvin and Theodore Beza

in Geneva from 1562 to 1565, published his monumental *De Theologiae Verae* in 1594.[6] Junius

did not produce his prolegomena in the spirit of the new philosophy then gaining momentum in

the German universities. Unlike Keckermann, he was not intending to cultivate a "pure

Aristotle," but instead repristinated the scholastic theologians extensively. Their use of the

scholastics made sense on two accounts. First, they could not very well draw on the writings of

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[4] Paul Saliger, *Encyclopaediae, seu Orbis disciplinarum, tam sacrarum quam prophanarum, Epistemon* (Basel: Joanem Oporinum, 1559). He treats "Encomium Disciplinarum" in pages 689–750.

[5] Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: Prolegomena to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 1:114. See also the Catholics Jacob Gretscher, *Encomium Theologiae, in Illud D. Augustini: Huic Scientiae tribuitur id, quo fides gignitur, nutritur, defenditur, roboratur, in Gregory de Valentia, Disputatio, De Natura et Usu Theologiae, Praesertim scholasticae, in Incyta Atque Catholica Ingolstadiensium Academia* (Ingolstadt: David Sartor, 1587) and Gregory Valentia, *Disputatio Theologiae necessitate et Ratione: Itemque de Gratia* (Ingolstadt: David Sartor, 1589).

[6] Francis Junius, *De Theologiae Verae: Ortu, Natura, Formis, Partibus, et Modo Illius* (Leyden, 1594). On "formal prolegomena," see Muller, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1:150.

the Reformation because Luther and Calvin had not produced such lofty descriptions of the nature and character of theology. Second, the scholastic way of theology was a natural unfolding of the progressive spirit of Reformed theology. Junius, Amandus Polanus (1561–1610), and later Alsted, were representing an architectonic and eclectic theology that had already embraced the medieval scholastic tradition in the name of catholicity.[7]

One may certainly see the beginning theological prolegomena in Erasmus's *Ratio seu Methodus Compendio Perueniendi ad Ueram Theologiam* (published in 1520), which was designed as an introduction to studying the Scriptures, and specifically the New Testament.[8] The first step in the development of theological prolegomena in Lutheran circles may be said to have come in the 1550s, when John Wigand and Matthew Judex, in their *Syntagma*, placed "De verbo Dei" before "De Deo," which had been Melanchthon's starting point.[9] However, it was not until 1625, when John Gerhard attached his *Proemium* to his *Loci Theologici*, which he had already completed three years prior, that Lutherans began to write formal prolegomena treating the nature of theology in their dogmatic textbooks.[10] Gerhard appears to follow the lead of his Reformed contemporaries who had already been producing prolegomena since Junius' *De*

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[7] Amandus Polanus, *Partitiones Theologiae Christianae* and *Syntagma theologiae*; Encyclopedic and extremely eclectic at its height. John Henry Alsted, *Synopsis Theologiae* (Hanover, 1627).

[8] See Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 1:76.

[9] See John Wigand and Matthew Judex, *Syntagma seu Corpus Doctrinae Veri & Omnipotentis Dei (Basel*, 1560), in Preus, *Theology*, 1:88–90. One may also observe an instance of "De verbo Dei" coming at the beginning of dogmatics a few years earlier in one of the earliest "Loci communes Lutheri," or collections of Luther quotations. For a brief treatment of this, see Robert Kolb, "The Syntagma of Johannes Wigand and Matthaeus Judex,"*Hermeneutica Sacra. Studien zur Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift im 16.- und 17. Jahrhundert / Studies of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Torbjörn Johansson, Robert Kolb and Johann Anselm Steiger (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 189–206.

[10] See Preus, *Theology*, 1:109: "The great impetus of constructing a formal prolegomenon that would contain definite subjects for consideration is found in John Gerhard's Loci Theologici, written from 1610 to 1622. In Gerhard we have what Hoenecke calls 'das Muster der Prolegomena,' for in Gerhard's short prolegomena are contained the elements of practically everything that was to be considered under prolegomena for the next hundred years." See Adolph Hoenecke, *Evangelisch-Lutherische* Dogmatik, 4 vols. (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1909), 1:6.

Theologiae Verae. Gerhard shows very little in the way of innovation, but reproduces Junius's

basic line of reasoning in form and substance. Pulling many scholastic theologoumena straight

out of the Reformed playbook—distinctions between *archetypal* and *ectypal* theology, natural

and supernatural theology, a definition of theology in terms of a "God-given aptitude," etc.—he

reveals remarkable agreement with Reformed theologians on most of the essential questions.[11]

An important exception to this rule concerned the question of what kind of discipline (or

aptitude) theology required: is it theoretical or practical? On this question, Gerhard abandoned

the Reformed and the scholastic theologians entirely. While the Reformed entertained various

opinions among themselves, and thus perpetuated the old scholastic debate over whether and to

what degree theology is theoretical or practical, Gerhard and the normative Lutheran tradition

that followed him maintained that theology was a *practical* discipline. Before getting into the

details of how Lutheran theologians came to understand theology in terms of a practical aptitude

(*habitus* θέοσδοτος), it will be important to ask why the Lutherans entertained these foreign

questions in the first place and, indeed, why not until 1625, a generation after the Reformed had

already begun to write theological prolegomena.

Not only did Lutherans and Reformed begin to produce theological prolegomena at

different times; they came at the pertinent questions from different perspectives. While

Reformed theologians wrote theological prolegomena as theologians, and not primarily as

philosophers, Lutherans initially took up the task from the perspective of the lower faculty.

Indeed, it would be difficult to overstate the role of the philosophical faculty in the construction

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[11] Preus, *Theology*, 1:114, "Dorner correctly says that compared with the Reformed the Lutheran Church was the subject of a slower but also a more united and consecutive development in dogmatics and dogmatic prolegomena." See Isaac A. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology*, 2 vols., trans. George Robson and Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1871), 2:98.

of Lutheran orthodoxy. Jacob Martini (1570–1649), who joined the Wittenberg philosophical

faculty as professor of logic in 1602, the same year Meisner matriculated at the university, first

introduced Zabarella's philosophy in his inaugural *Oratio de Utilitate et Necessitudine Logicas*.[12]

Jacob Martini and Meisner, who were more influential than any other Lutheran theologian of

their day in exploring the use of Aristotle in theology, as philosophers, both ended up joining the

theological faculty at Wittenberg. Although Jacob Andreae had pitched a definition of theology

as "entirely practical" in his *Oratio de Instauratione Studii Theologici*, delivered on April 25,

1577,[13] he had elaborated the utility of theology strictly in context of curricular reform. Kenneth

Appold notes that Andreae certainly foreshadowed the theology concept of Wittenberg

orthodoxy independent of the influence of Keckermann,[14] but it was not until the 1620s that with

Balthasar Meisner "[a]n entirely new subject of academic study emerged."[15] Lutherans did not

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[12] Jacob Martini, *Oratio de Utilitate et Necessitudine Logicas* (Wittenberg, 1606).

[13] Jacob Andreae, *Oratio De Instavratione Stvdii Theologici, In Academia Vvitebergensi, ad earn puritatem Doctrinae coelestis, in qua, viuente D. Luthero, Doctores Sacrarum Literarum pie consenserunt* (Wittenberg: Johann d.Ä. Krafft, 1577).

[14] JAndreae, *Instaurationsrede* (Wittenberg: 1577), E1ᵛ, quoted in Kenneth Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung: Das theologische Disputationswesen an der Universität Wittenberg zwischen 1570 und 1710* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 21: "Siquidem universa Theologia practica est, eiusque Professor ineptus, qui in hoc genere exercitatus non est. Theoretica vero nulla est, ubi νόημα, praestantissima vis animae, in obsequium Christi captiva ducenda est, et simplici opus est fide, cuius vis, quanta sit, non nisi in summis certaminibus conspicitur." Appold concludes: "Das Andreae diese Sätze in Rahmen einer programmatischen Neubegrundung des Theologiestudiums spricht, zeigt, dass der erst später in dogmatischen Lehrbüchern formulierte Theologiebegriff bereits bei der Gründung der Wittenberger orthodoxie im Jahre 1577 wirksam war, und nicht erst etwa durch den Einfluss von B. Keckermann zustande kam—wenn auch unbestritten bleibt, dass dieser die methodologsichen Konsequenzen des praktischen Theologiebegriffs für die systematische Theologie am deutlichsten erkannt hat."

[15] Kenneth Appold, "Academic Life and Teaching in Post-Reformation Lutheranism," *in Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture: 1550–1675*, ed. Robert Kolb (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 112–113. For studies dealing with the development of the Lutheran theology concept, see: Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 64–67; Appold, *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 46–66; Wilhelm Gass, *Geschichte Der Protestantischen Dogmatik in Ihrem Zusammenhange Mit Der Theologie Uberhaupt* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1854), 1:231–5; Markus Matthias, "Orthodoxie," in TRE 25 (1995): 473–76; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 1:234–36; Sparn, "Krise der Frömmigkeit und ihr theologischer Reflex im nachreformatorischen Luthertum Die Absicht," in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, ed. Hans-Christoph Ruflack, Issue 197 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1992), 71–82; Walter Sparn, *Wiederkehr der Metaphysik. Die ontologische Frage in der lutherischen Theologie des frühen 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1976), 30–5; Wallmann, *Theologiebegriff*; Preus, *Theology,* 1:107–118;

write prolegomena until after Meisner's authoritative three-volume Philosophia Sobria was completed, and the question of the relation of theology and philosophy had already been thoroughly investigated.

Rather than beginning with Gerhard's topics,[16] therefore, or even Meisner's *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputationes* (10) in 1625, one must go back as far as 1608 when Meisner began taking up the task of gathering the "chief questions" with which the Reformed were instigating controversies against the Lutherans. Before Gerhard published his *Proemium* in 1625 Meisner had taken up the question of the nature of theology publicly in his *Philosophia sobria*, volume one (1611) and again in volume three (1623). In that philosophical context one will find the Lutherans striving against the Reformed, against the grain of medieval scholasticism, under that vexing question of whether theology is a theoretical or practical discipline.

<div align="center">Ethical Questions: The Nature of Theology</div>

Meisner's first careful examination of the Reformed prolegomena, which later became part of the Lutheran stock, came mainly in response to Bartholomew Keckermann. In *Philosophia Sobria*, part 1, under "Ethical Questions," Meisner pursues the general question: whether practical philosophy should be subordinated to theology. Keckermann states in his *Praecognitorum Philosophicorvm Libri duo*:

> The doctrine of ethics, economics, politics, that is, all of practical philosophy, as it were, is subordinated to the theological doctrines concerning the law of God, and

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156–228.

[16] Reflecting his research on the normative dogmatic textbooks, Robert Preus asserts in *Theology,* 1:109: "Gerhard was the first Lutheran to address himself specifically to the subject of the nature of theology." For a current study of of Gerhard's theology concept, see Glenn K. Fluegge, *Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) and the Conceptualization of Theologia at the Threshold of the "Age of Orthodoxy." The Making of the Theologian*, Oberurseler Hefte 21, 2018.

chiefly the second table of the law, which cannot be completely understood and explained without the doctrine of virtues and vices, which practical philosophy treats.[17]

Meisner calls attention to the fact that Keckermann's conclusion is the opposite of his premise. Inasmuch as the doctrine of the law, and specifically, the second table of the law, cannot be properly understood or explained apart from the doctrine of virtues and vices which practical philosophy concerns. Therefore, by sleight of hand, Keckermann is not proposing to make practical philosophy subordinate to theology, but the other way around.[18] In either case, however, subordination of one to the other can only produce false and absurd conclusions. If one says that philosophy should be subordinated to theology then it follows that virtues cannot be learned apart from theology. In that case, the ancients never truly pursued practical philosophy because they lacked the teaching of the Ten Commandments. If, on the other hand, it is stated that theology should be subordinated to ethics to the extent that it concerns the second table of the law, then nobody can follow the Decalogue unless he should become a bona fide ethicist. This, of course, is absurd because plenty of good Christians are bad philosophers. "Therefore," Meisner concludes, "no true and essential subordination exists between theology and practical philosophy."[19]

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[17] Bartholomew Keckermann, *Praecognitorum Philosophicorvm Libri duo: naturam philosophiae explicantes, et rationem eius tum docendae, tum discendae monstrantesHanoviae, book 1* (Antonius, 1612), 110; cited in Meisner, *PhS*, 1:431: "Doctrina Ethica, Oeconomica, Politica, h. e. tota Philosophia practica quasi subordinatur doctrinae Theologicae de lege Dei, & imprimis praeceptis secundae tabulae, quae plenè intelligi & explicari non potest sine doctrina virtutis & vitiorum, de quibus Philosophia Practica tractat."

[18] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:434–35: "Nota autem quòd Keckermanni conclusio & medium omninò de diversis agant. Conclusio ipsius haec est: *Philosophia Practica subordinatur Theologiae.* Ergò Philosophiam Practicam facit subalternatam, & Theologiam subalternantem. Probat hoc isto medio, *quia secunda tabula plenè intelligi & explicari non potest sine doctrina virtutum & vitiorum, de quibus Philosophia Practica tractat.* Hoc medium non probit Philosophiam esse subordinatam Theologiae, sed contrà Theologiam Philosophiae."

[19] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:435: "Et quodcunque statuatur, semper falsa & absurda sequentur. Si dicas, Practicam subordinari Theologiae, sequetur, Philosophiam Practicam nullo modo posse addisci absque Theologia. Haec enim natura & indoles est disciplinarum subordinatarum. Veteres igitur nullam habuerunt Philosophiam Practicam, quia caruerunt Theologiâ. Sin dixeris, Theologiam quoad praecepta secundae tabulae subordinari Practicae, sequetur

Meisner begins to address the nature of theology, properly speaking, under the question of

whether theology can be accurately drawn from among the intellectual habits (ἕξις, aptitude)

enumerated by Aristotle in the sixth chapter of his Ethics.[20] These *habitus intellectuales*, or five

ways of knowing, are: wisdom (σοφία, *sapientia),* which revolves around principles and

conclusions and consists of understanding and knowledge; understanding *(*νοῦς, *intelligentia)* is

the habitus of knowing the causes of things; knowledge (ἐπιςήμη, *scientia*) is the habitus of

demonstration (ἕξις ἀποδεικτικὴ) or drawing conclusions; prudence (φρόνησις, *prudentia*) is a

"practical habitus" whereby things are accomplished and determined to be good or bad; and skill

(τέχνη, *ars*) is a creative habitus, which deals with things that are made.[21] The first three virtues

correspond to theoretical or speculative habits, whereas the last two are practical or operative.

Although Meisner rejects the idea, held by scholastics past and present, that theology may be

classified according to any one of the Aristotelian virtues, he gives special attention to diverging

opinions within in the Reformed camp on the theory-practice spectrum. The first opinion,

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neminem esse verum Christianum, neminem verè & intelligere & observare posse praecepta Decalogi, nisi qui perfectus sit philosophus practicus. In disciplinae enim subalternatae operatione nemo versari potest, sine cognitione subalternantis, cùm haec illius contineat principia & fundamenta. Illud autem absurdissimum esse experientia ipsa comprobat, dum saepè boni sunt Christiani, qui mali sunt Philosophi.

"Concludimus ergò iterum, nullam veram & essentialem subordinationem esse posse inter Theologiam & Philosophiam Practicam."

[20] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:449: *DE VIRTUTE TAM INTELLECTUALI, QUAM MORALI, & ILLI OPPOSITO VITIO. QUAESTIO I. An Theologiae genus accuratum desumi possit ex habitibus intellectualibus, ab Aristotele enumeratis?* See Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1098b33 and *Problemata*, 955bl. On the controversy over "habitus" and its reception in Lutheran theology, see Markus Friedrich, *Die Grenzen der Vernunft: Theologie, Philosophie und gelehrte Konflikte am Beispiel des Helmstedter Hofmannstreits und seiner Wirkungen auf das Luthertum um 1600* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). In the background is the controversy between Daniel Hoffmann (Peter Ramus) and Cornelius Martini. Just as Ramus considers philosophy to be logic itself, or the methodic application of knowledge, he considers theology as "doctrine." On the other hand, those who joined Zabarella in saying that logic was merely a "*habitus*," suggested that theology was comprised of an aptitude in the mind that disposed the theologian to theology as a discipline. See Peter Ramus, *Commentarius de Religione Christiana* (Frankfort, 1577), 6; David Pareus, *Collegiorum Theologicorum Decuria* (Heidelberg, 1621), 5.

[21] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 6. cap. 3, in Meisner, *PhS*, 1:453.

originally promoted by Franciscus Junius, in his *De Theologiae Verae*,[22] maintains that theology

is "wisdom." This position was taken over and developed by Polanus, who proposes the

following definition:

> The theology of the wayfarer (*Theologia viatorum*) is wisdom of divine things,
> graciously imparted by Christ through the Holy Spirit to human beings remaining on
> earth, so that by the light of the mind they may contemplate God, and divine things
> through their own increase, and rightly worship God until in heaven they attain a
> clear and perfect vision of him to his glory."[23]

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Keckermann considers theology to be a purely

practical discipline. He calls it "religious prudence for coming to salvation." Thanks to his

marvelous synthesis of Zabarella's logic and Ramus's universal method, discussed above, he

offers the following arguments: Theology is a practical discipline; therefore it is either poetic or

practical (*vel* ποιητικὴ *vel* πρακτικὴ; it is not poetic because it pertains to the regeneration and

sanctification of the affections, and therefore it is not a skill. Therefore, it is practical, and per

consequence prudence, for it is occupied with virtues, and therefore, since it is taught by the

virtue of affection, it is evident from a description of prudence.[24]

Meisner proceeds to demonstrate that neither of these twin assertions (*geminam

assertionem*), neither wisdom nor prudence, theoretical or practical habits, give an adequate

description of theology. Theology is not wisdom because it lacks the demonstrations required by

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[22] Junius, *De Theologiae Verae,* chapter 2.

[23] Amandus Polanus, *Syntagma* l. 1, in Meisner, *PhS*, 1:451: "Theologiam viatorum, uti vocat, sic describens: Theologia viatorum est sapientia rerum divinarum, à Christo per Spiritum sanctum cum hominibus in hac terra degentibus per gratiosam inspirationem communicata, ut lumine intellectus contemplentur Deum, & res divinas ipsius per sua incrementa, Deumque rectè colant, donec in caelo claram & perfectam eius visionem consequantur, ad gloriam ipsius."

[24] Keckermann, *Syst. Theol,* l. 1, in Meisner, *PhS*, 1:451–52: "[Theologia est] prudentiam religiosam perveniendi ad salute . . . Theologia disciplina operatrix est. E. vel ποιητικὴ vel πρακτικὴ. Non ποιητικὴ, quia pertinet ad regenerationem & sanctificationem affectuum, ideoque ars non est. E. πρακτικὴ & per consequens prudentia, quia haec circa virtutes, atque adeò affectus virtute imbuendos est occupata, ut apparet ex descriptione prudentiae 6. Ethic. cap. 4. 5. & seqq."

science. Nor does it rest solely in contemplation since the mysteries of faith do not proceed from things that necessary, but from the testimonies of God.[25] But Meisner is chiefly concerned with eliminating the second assertion and demonstrating how Keckermann's doctrine of prudence contradicts Aristotle himself. He provides six reasons why theology may not be construed as prudence on Keckermann's proposal:

(1) because he does not present prudence as a habit directing the things that pertain to this life, as Polanus argues against Keckermann (Polanus *l*. 1. *Syntag*. cap. 13); whereas, according to Aristotle, prudence is a practical habit concerning human goods (est ἕξις πρακτικὴ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ, *l*. 6. *Ethic. c.* 5.)

(2) because prudence is not being associated with discipline, but rather to doctrine and the illumination of the Spirit, whereas Aristotelian prudence is acquired through discipline.

(3) because it does not treat merely of contingent things, but also necessary things. However, according to Aristotle, prudence is deliberative (φρόνιμός ἐϛιν ὁ βουλευτικός, l. 6. Ethic. c. 5.), and one may not deliberate concerning necessary things (οὐκ ἐϛι βουλέυσασθζ πρϛὶ τῶν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὄντων, l. d.).

(4) because the goal of theology is not practical blessedness (*beatitudo practica*), but rather theoretical, inasmuch as it consists of contemplation and enjoyment of God. The goal of prudence, however, is nothing more than practical blessedness in the actions provided.

(5) because theology involves more actions than the three comprised by prudence: deliberation, judgment, and instruction.

(6) because, contrary to Keckermann's assertion (*Prudentia autem per se non perficit intellectum, sed appetitum, l.* 1. *System. Ethic. c.* 3), prudence perfects not merely the will but the human intellect as well.[26]

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[25] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:454–55.

[26] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:455–56: "Porrò *Theologia prudentia non est,* 1. quia non saltem est habitus dirigens ea, quae ad vitam hanc degendam pertinent, uti contra Keckermann. argumentatur Polanus *l*. 1. *Syntag*. cap. 13. Prudentia autem est ἕξις πρακτικὴ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ, *l*. 6. *Ethic. c.* 5. 2. quia non comparatur exercitatione, sed potiut- doctrina & illuminatione Spiritus. φρόνησις autem vel prudentia Aristotelica exercitatione potissimum acquiritur. 3. quia non versatur tantùm circa contingentia, sed etiam necessaria. Prudentiae verò est consultare, φρόνιμός ἐϛιν ὁ βουλευτικός, *Prudens est consultatorius,* l. 6. Ethic. c. 5. Ast οὐκ ἐϛι βουλέυσασθζ πρϛὶ τῶν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὄντων, *non licet consultare de rebus necessarus* l. d. 4. quia finis Theologiae non est beatitudo practica, sed potius Theoretica, consistens in contemplatione & fruitione Dei. Finis autem prudentiae non nisi practica beatitudo est, in actionibus posita. 5. quia non consistit unicè in consultando, iudicando, & praecipiendo, prudentia a. non sunt

If theology corresponds to none of the Aristotelian habits, as Meisner declares in his opening assertion, then what is it? To what class does such a *habitus* belong? He proceeds by means of a second assertion to classify the theological discipline as a God-given habit (*habitus* θέοσδοτον)."[27] To be clear, such a theological aptitude is neither innate (ἔμφυτοι *vel connati*), as was the case with Adam and Eve before the fall; nor acquired (ἐπίκτητοι *vel acquisiti*) by human beings in their fallen state by means of natural human ability. Rather, the theological aptitude is "given by God." To the apostles God gave the theological aptitude immediately, but today he makes theologians through their diligent reading and meditation of Scripture. Unlike any of the philosophical aptitudes, therefore, the *principle* by which and through which this *habitus* is learned (*principium ex quo & per quod addiscitur*), namely, the Holy Scriptures, is "truly divine." What is more, theology has a truly divine *object* to which the human mind cannot ascend by means of its own powers.[28]

Meisner adds that this particular God-given *habitus* should not be confused with merely having faith or being a Christian, for "not all who teach and know theology are in a state of grace and individually (*specialiter*) enlightened by the Holy Spirit, but [the *habitus* θεόσδοσος is given] on account of the heavenly and divine character, and that, partly of its principle [Scripture] and partly of its object [doctrine]."[29] Thus, David and Solomon, for instance, who

plures actus praeter istos tres nominatos. 6. quia unà intellectum hominis, & non tantùm voluntatem perficit. *Prudentia autem per se non perficit intellectum, sed appetitum, & non tàm tendit ad felicitatem contemplativam, quàm practicam,* ait Keckerm. ipse *l.* 1. *System. Ethic. c.* 3."

[27] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:457: "SECUNDA ASSERTIO. Theologia per specialius & magis proprium genus non videtur definiri posse, quàm per habitum θέοςδοτον."

[28] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:457: "Etiamsi enim ad comparandum habitum Theologicum requiratur diligens lectio & meditatio, (non enim in funditur uno momento, ut Apostolis, qui extraordinariè & immediatè Theologi facti sunt,) attamen principium ex quo & per quod addiscitur, verè divinum est, sacrosancta nimirum Scriptura; quin & obiectum habet planè θεκὸν & divinum, ad cuius cognitionem mens humana per se ascendere nunquam potuisser."

[29] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:458: "Erit ergò habitus θεόςδοτος vel divinitus datus, non quòd omnes qui Theologiam docent & sciunt, sint in statu gratiae, & à Spiritu S. specialiter illuminati, sed *partim* ob principii, *partim* obiecti

sinned mortally, reveal the extent to which it is possible to remain good theologians while being bad Christians. The former has to do with true doctrine (*vera doctrina*), the other with sincerity of life (*vita sincera*); the former indicates that one is learned, the other that one is pious.[30] This distinction between theology (θεολογία) and piety (θεοσέβεια) is critical to Meisner's understanding of θεόσδοτος. The one consists of true understanding concerning God (γνῶζις); the other is pious worship towards God (πρᾶξιν). Both are divine, yes, but in different respects: knowledge is given by God through his Word, whereas practice is linked to God's gracious indwelling of the Christian. The "divinity" of theology, however, does not depend on the regenerated subject, but is derived solely from Scripture and cultivated through a contemplation of the mysteries of faith.[31]

Having thus eliminated all five of Aristotle's intellectual virtues as "most alien" to the theological habit, which he has thus far defined as θεόσδοτος, Meisner turns to the either-or question: "What kind of a God-given aptitude is it: theoretical or practical?" If theory is based on things that are necessary, or given; and practice is based on things that are contingent, or generated, then it cannot be completely one or the other. It concerns doctrines directed at "practice" (law and good works), or *praecepta morum*, which aim to perfect the will and appetite. But it is also occupied with "necessary things," by which he would have his readers understand "grace," or *dogmata fidei*, which would perfect the mind.[32] Thus, Meisner goes back

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caelestem & divinam rationem."

[30] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:458–59: "David certè & Salomon cùm peccarent mortaliter, nihilominus manebant boni Theologi, quamvis essent mali Christiani. Aliud enim est *doctrina vera,* aliud *vita sincera:* ab illa docti, ab hac pii denominamur.."

[31] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:459–61.

[32] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:462–63: "Etenim occupata est etiam in necessariis, scire gratiâ. Et licèt illa ad virtutum Christianarum studia quodammodo conducant & excitent, non tamen per se & essentialiter ordinata sunt ad praxin. Aliud enim sunt *dogmata fidei,* aliud *praecepta morum,* Ita locus de Deo, de creatione, Angelis & Diabolis, &c. non est locus practicus."

and forth between one false choice and another, though clearly seeing Keckermann's proposal as posing the greater threat, until he finally lands upon a solution of his own:

> Therefore, since the goal of theology is not merely to inform the actions of men, but also to explain the mysteries of faith and to perfect his intellect, it will not be a merely practical habit. Could we then call it a mixed habitus (*habitus mixtum*)? Yes, that would seem to follow. For it cannot be denied that theology has a twofold duty and function: first, to teach the knowledge of the truth that is of faith by setting forth the true dogmas and by refuting the false; and second, to set forth the practice of worship by correcting bad morals and inculcating good morals.[33]

To the suggestion that such a definition might destroy the unity of faith, Meisner responds that the *habitus mixtus* merely defines two parts of the same virtue, just as faith itself is made partly intellectual (*notitia*, *assensus*) and partly a matter of the will (*fiducia*)."[34]

Meisner's "habitus θεόσδοτος" was the first positive attempt on the part of Lutheran theologians faithful to the Formula of Concord to define "theology" in terms of an intellectual virtue, or a habituated and deeply rooted quality of the mind. Thus, as will be explored further below, it was extremely significant in the development of Lutheran dogmatics. However, it is rather apparent that Meisner himself was not entirely comfortable with his initial description of the *habitus* as "mixtus." The young philosophy student appears to be thinking out loud, as it were, more eager to refute his opponent than to clarify his own position. Yet, however clumsy Meisner's initial attempt at defining theology may have been, it would pave the way for later normative Lutheran definitions.

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[33] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:462–63: "Quia ergò Theologiae finis est non tantùm informare actiones hominis, sed etiam mysteria fidei patefacere, & intellectum hominis perficere, ideò merè practicus habitus non erit. Ergóne dicemus *habitum mixtum?* Ita sanè videtur sequi. Negari enim non potest, quòd Theologiae duplex sit munus & officium. 1. *docere* γνῶσιν ἀληθείας, quae fidei est, dogmata vera τῇ διδασκαιίᾳ exponendo & falsa τῷ ἐλέγχῳ redarguendo. 2. *dirigere* πρᾶξιν εὐσεβείας, malos mores τῇ ἐπανορθώζει emendando, & bonos τῇ παιδείᾳ instituendo."

[34] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:463: "Neque his tollitur Theologiae unitas. Sicut enim fides una virtus est, licèt diversas partes habeat, & tùm virtus intellectualis sit, quoad notitiam & assensum, tùm practica quoad fiduciam: Ita Theologia unus est habitus, licèt partim intellectus, partim voluntatis esse dicatur. Sufficit unitas ordinis, & obiecti quod in Theologia est *omne in verbo revelatum,* sive sit dogma fidei, sive praeceptum morum: non requiritur unitas subiecti & specialis obiecti." See discussion in Preus, *Theology*,1:201.

Before Meisner's 1611 disputation on "Ethical Questions," Lutheran suggestions of a "practical theology" had not yet grappled with the hard distinction between theory and practice as taught by Aristotle. The term, "practical," was borrowed for lack of a better word and used rather imprecisely to explain the consequence of a theologian's actions upon himself. Conceptions of theology in terms of a *theologia regenitorum*, or a theology inhering in the *viator* himself, had the potential to develop into strains of works righteousness—whether of a pre-Reformation class through meritorious acts or post-Reformation through self-contrived acts of spiritual regeneration.[35] Not even Luther's proposal of *oratio, meditatio* and *tentatio*,[36] essential as it was to forming the theological mind, was sufficient to exclude the ethical dimension implicit in the scholastic theology precisely because it presupposed that a theologian was a regenerate Christian (*theologia viatorum*). In Meisner's estimation, Keckermann's "religious prudence" was the greatest threat to both sober philosophy and the true nature of theology because it subordinated theology to an ethical category—justification to sanctification—and made the *dogmata fidei* dependent on intellectual virtue. Yet, however much Keckermann's systematic textbooks helped to shape the Reformed philosophical tradition,[37] his novel theology concept proved even more beneficial to Lutheran theologians as it provided a foil against which the Lutheran position would find its lasting articulation. In 1611 Meisner was moving in a certain direction, away from theological ethics to the proper subject of theology. When he returned to the subject twelve years later to sharpen his position, he had not departed from this path.

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[35] This is the observation of Walter Sparn, "Krise," 72–74.

[36] See Martin Luther, "Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings, 1539," in *LW* 34:279–88.

[37] For instance, Keckermann's various *Systema* and had a profound influence on the development of Alsted's *Encylopedia*. See Hunter, *Philosopher*, 54.

Meisner's Late Theology Concept

In the third volume of his *Philosophia sobria*, published in 1623, Meisner writes in response to the philosophical abuses among the Catholics.[38] Again, he takes up the various patterns of scholastic theology under the headings "Intellectual Virtues," and strengthens his previous arguments all the more, only with more theological precision reflecting a decade serving as a professor of theology.[39] By then much had changed in the way of terminology. The use of "*habitus mixtus*" to describe the nature of theology was later shared by Reformed theologians, in particular, John Henry Alsted and John Berg,[40] and rejected by Lutheran dogmaticians in the latter part of the century.[41] However, Meisner had already revisited his previous definition of *habitus mixtus* in 1623 and states his preference for a *habitus practicus*. His readers should not take offense at his previous definition, even if it appears a little strange. It just goes to show that, especially when one is dealing with abstruse questions, is important to give a "second thought" (δεύτερος φροντίδας) to the matter and be as precise as possible (*ad* ἀκρίβειαν). Since all theory is directed to the practice of advancing the human being to eternal

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[38] The second part (1615) deals with common lexical and logical problems among the Roman Catholics; and the third part (1623) deals with questions of ethics and politics, also among the Roman Catholics, and particularly Robert Bellarmine.

[39] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:137–206.

[40] John Henry Alsted, *Theologia Scholastica Didactica Exhibens Locos Communes Theologicos* (Hanover, 1618); John Berg, *Decas Disputationum Theologicorum* (Frankfurt, 1621). See also the Catholic theologian, John Capreolus, *In Libros Sententiarum Amplissimae Quaestiones* (Venice, 1589), 13. See Francis Sylvius, *Commentarius in Totam Primam Partem S. Tho. Aquinatis*, I, 12. See Preus, *Theology* 1, 199–200.

[41] See Preus, *Theology*, 1:198–201. Preus cites Abraham Calov, *Isagoges ad SS. Theologiam Libri Duo de Natura Theologiae et Methodo Studii Theologici* and first appearing in 1652: "The activity *[actus]* of faith is involved with many different sorts of objects, but never merely that these objects might be known or assented to (as the papists would have it). No, faith is concerned to apply and grasp such objects, and this is something practical." Preus (201): Is there any difference between the positions of Meisner and Calov? In spite of what would appear to be strong disagreement, there is no real difference. Calov, out of concern to maintain the practical nature of theology, merely "extends the meaning of a *habitus practicus* beyond philosophical precision and takes it in a somewhat wider manner."

salvation, he clarifies: "I prefer to call theology *only practical*."[42] Meisner offers a precise,

analytical definition, indeed, the first articulation of theology in terms of a "practical aptitude" in

the Lutheran orthodox tradition. It reads as follows:

> Theology is a practical, God-given aptitude existing in the mind of the theologian and
> guiding him in order that, by means of true religion, he might lead fallen human
> beings to eternal blessedness.[43]

It would be worth exploring Meisner's analysis in some detail in order to gain a better

perspective on the development of his conception. He breaks down his definition of theology

into seven parts.

First, with respect to its "*genus*," theology consists of a "habitus θεόσδοτος." On this point

Meisner says nothing new in comparison to his 1611 disputation. Although his argument is in the

context of refuting the scholastic theologians, especially Thomas and Durandus, Keckermann

remains his primary foil. He restates the same principle, namely, that theology is God-given

inasmuch as it embraces divine mysteries based on Scriptures alone.[44] To suggest that the

theological aptitude could be subordinated to the philosophical aptitudes, especially since

Aristotle knew nothing about supernatural theology, is absurd. It is to disregard the philosopher's

own manner of teaching (τρόπον παιδείας) and transgress his cardinal prohibition of a *metabasis*

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[42] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:190: "Ut autem quodammodo restringatur illud genus, addo ulterius, quod sit habitus θεόσδοτος *practicus*, siquidem finis et objectum ejus practica sunt, ut *theor. 1.& 2.* fusius declaratum. Posset quidem habitus *mixtus* vocari, quatenus et theoriam et praxin continent, quo etiam respexi *part. 1. Philosophia Sobriae, pag. 461.* quia tamen omnis theoria Theologica directa est ad praxin, nimirum, ad promotionem hominum ad salutem aeternam; malo nunc Theologiam *tantum practicam* appellare. Nec offendatur Lector, si quaedam *part. 1. Philosophiae Sobriae sect.12.c. 2.quaest.1.* ab hac thesi non nihil aliena viderit, sed cogitet, deute,roj fronti,daj saepius esse meliores, et in quaestionibus abstrusis, praesertim ubi nullum habemus praevium manductorem, ad avkri,beian primo statim tempore difficulter perveniri posse."

[43] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:191: "Theologia est habitus θεόσδοτος practicus, in mente Theologi existens, eumque dirigens, ut homines lapsos, per veram religionem, perducat ad aeternam beatitudinem."

[44] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:190: "Concludo igitur, quod sit *habitus* θεόσδοτος, quoniam mysteria divina complectitur, et non nisi in revelatione divina fundatur."

eis allo genos.[45]

Second, the genus is *restricted* by the concept of "*practicus*." Meisner does not concede anything to Keckermann's view when he maintains that the goal of theology is practical; indeed, he strengthens his case all the more. Not only was Keckermann's "religious prudence" problematic, but even more insidious was the phrase "coming" (τό *pervenire*) to salvation. In order to break away from the ethical category, entirely, Meisner recommended that the purpose of theology is not to *come* to salvation (τό *pervenire*), which would suggest that nobody can be saved unless he first becomes a theologian, but rather to *lead others* to salvation (τό *perducere*) through correct doctrine, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments.[46]

Third, Meisner emphasizes that the subject in which theology inheres (*subjectum inhaesionis*) is the mind of the theologian just as "philosophy" inheres in the philosopher and medicine in the physician. This is an important qualification because it serves further to clarify his above distinction between the one who leads and the one who is being led. To drive this point home, Meisner frequently draws on the scriptural analogy between theology and medicine. While Johann Arndt and Johann Gerhard had already made the same comparison,[47] Meisner follows the *Institutiones medicinae* (1611) of Dr. Daniel Sennert, his esteemed colleague and

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[45] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:186–187: "Et sane absurdum est; Theologiae genus quarere velle inter habitus Philosophicos, quum ita fiat transitus de genere in genus, quod est contra ipsum τρόπον παιδείας. Aristoteles nihil scivit de supernaturali Theologia: Illos igitur tantum recensuit habitus, qui a mente proxime trahund originem, et per naturae vires comparari possunt; e quorum numero si Theologiae genus petere, ac de hujus natura judicare velis, secundum illorum *naturam*, *nihil hoc erit* aliud, quam heterogenea miscere, Philosophiam cum Theologia confundere, ac plurimorum errorum fundamenta jacere, velut ipso Scholasticorum exemplo probari potest luculentissime."

[46] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:192: "Non ergo possumus adprobare definitionem *Keckermanni*, scribentis; *Theologiam esse prudentiam religiosam perveniendi ad salutem*. Ut enim de *genere* nihil dicam, *differentia* minus recte assignata est, quoniam exinde sequeretur, *Theologiam prima esse habitum auditorum et salvandorum*, non autem doctorum, et neminem pervenire posse ad salutem, nisi qui sit Theologus, vel habitu Theologiae instructus, quod absurdum. Est ergo doctrina *non perveniendi*, quod auditorum; sed potius *perducendi* aut promovendi ad salutem, quod doctorum."

[47] John Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, trans. Wade Johnston (Saginaw, MI: Magdeburg Press, 2008).

very close friend, "*noster Aesculapius Amicus*" from the medical faculty, as his chief

inspiration.[48] According to Meisner, the vocation of a theologian is analogous to that of a

physician, and theology is a "spiritual medicine" or "therapy."[49] He explains:

> Therefore, just as medicine is not properly speaking an aptitude of the patient (except
> per accidens), but of the physician, and to that degree it is not a doctrine of coming,
> but of leading to health; so also theology is not an aptitude of the patient or of the
> student being cured (accept per accidens), but of a theologian and a doctor, and to
> that degree it is not a doctrine of coming, but of leading to spiritual health, or eternal
> salvation.[50]

Fourth, Meisner comes to the "patient" himself, or the "subject of operation" (*subjectum*

operationis), which refers to the lapsed human beings who are being saved. Again, and he

repeats, a clear distinction must be maintained between "the human beings themselves who are

being informed and saved" (*ipsi homines informandi et salvandi*), and the theologian himself. He

explains that just as the person being cured is the subject to which the physician applies himself

and directs his medicinal skill, so the person being saved is the subject upon which the

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[48] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:166: "Finis autem Medicinae non est theoreticus, vel in contemplando; sed practicus, vel in operando situs, nimirum in sanitate praesente conservanda, et amissa restituenda, ut erudite ostendit celeberrimus noster Aesculapius Amicus meus plurimum honorandus et conjunctissimus Dn. *Daniel Sennertus*, l.1.Instit.c.1. [*Institutiones medicinae* (1611)]; Ergo fines etiam Theologiae, tanquam spiritualis Medicinae, similiter non erit Theoreticus, sed practicus, quippe in spirituali animorum sanitate restituenda unice consistens."

[49] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:105; 112; Gerhard, *Prooemium*, § 28; in Sparn, "Krise," 72–73.

[50] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:193: "Ut igitur accurate loquendo Medicina non est habitus patientis (nisi per accidens) sed Medici, adeoque primo non est doctrina perveniendi, sed perducendi ad sanitatem; Sic Theologia non est habitus patientis vel sanandi auditoris, (nisi per accidens,) sed Theologi et doctoris, adeoque primo non est doctrina perveniendi; sed perducendi ad sanitatem spiritualem, vel salutem aeternam." In his discussion of Abraham Calov, Robert Preus (*Theology*, 1:192–93) states the exact same argument: "Theology acts not as a medicine *(habitus patientis)* but as a physician. "Hence theology is not the art or activity of being saved and healed spiritually, except *per accidens*; but it is the business of the theologian and teacher to bring spiritual healing to others. It is sufficient for the theologian that he have the aptitude to lead a poor sinner to salvation, and that either by being occupied with the salvation of others or indirectly by having a sure knowledge of his own salvation." See also Abraham Calov, "Epistola Dedicatoria," in *Systema*, VIII, a2v–a3r, quoted in Preus, *Theology* 1:193: "Now the source of this comparison is clearly in the sacred writings. The Son of God Himself calls Himself the Physician of Israel (Ex. 15:26). He declares that He came into the world that, like a physician, He might restore those who are spiritually diseased (Matt. 9:12). He professes that He was anointed for the very purpose of binding up the brokenhearted (Is. 61:1), healing hearts that are crushed, giving sight to the blind, and announcing healing to those who have been broken (Luke 4:18)."

theologian himself operates and directs his theology. Indeed, as long as the theologian is doing his job, his pupil (*subjectum operationis*) is "deriving faith through the preaching of the gospel and obtaining salvation through faith."[51] Although justifying faith is indeed *pure passiva*, Meisner's goal-oriented theology assumes "faith" when he considers the Christian's active role in the pedagogical process. On the one hand, it is the theologian who moves (*promovendi*) his patient by means of teaching the gospel. On the other hand, it is faith that promotes the patient to his goal. This latter part of the equation is the subject of several of Meisner's earliest theological works concerning *man* according to his various states and *faith* by which he advances from one state to another. Since theological anthropology was among Meisner's most significant theological contributions to post-reformation theology, it would worth examining its basic components, i.e., "man" and "faith," in some detail.[52]

Between 1612, before he had acceded to the theological faculty, and 1615, Meisner published a series of disputations under the title of *Sacred Anthropology, in which the state of human nature and the articles pertaining to it are explained.*[53] Appearing in three volumes, these disputations were comprised of an enormous treatise expounding not only that topic traditionally designated as "*de homine*,"[54] but nearly every other topic of Christian teaching as well. In this he

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[51] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:191–92: "Nam velut homo curandus est subjectum, in quod diregente arte Medica operatur Medicus: Sic homo salvandus est subjectum, in quod dirigente Theologia, tamdiu operatur Theologus, donec ille ex praedicatione verbi concipiat fidem, et ita per fidem adipiscatur Salutem."

[52] See Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Dogmatik*, 4 vols., ed., Walter and Otto Hoenecke (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1912), 2:304–482. Hoenecke draws on significant portions of Meisner's *Anthropologias Sacrae* for his own treatment of the doctrine of man. See also the scholarly treatment of Lutheran anthropology in Bengt Hägglund, *De Homine: Människoupfattningen i äldre luthersk tradition* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1959).

[53] Meisner, *Anthropologias sacrae, in qua status naturae humanae, et eo spectantes articuli exponuntur, decas I–III* (Wittenberg, 1612–1615).

[54] Traditionally, anthropology included such topics as the image of God, the freedom of the will, the constitution of man, the origin of the soul, the immortality of the soul, and the state of the soul after death. See Robert Preus, *Theology*, 2:189.

follows the traditional Augustinian approach of considering man according to his state before the

fall (*status integralis*), after the fall (*status corruptionis*), and in his state of renewal (*status

reparationis*).[55] Following his usual procedure of clarifying the question at issue, Meisner makes

the necessary distinction between *philosophical* anthropology and *theological* anthropology. The

former considers the human being according to his essential parts (*secundum essentiam

partesque*) and assumes the divisions of medieval psychology, while the latter treats the subject

according to his different states (*secundum statos diversos*) and takes Scripture as its basis.[56]

Assuming the same logic that he used in his answer to the problem of double truth, Meisner

grants that while the human being may be considered with respect to his essential characteristics,

a posteriori, theological anthropology, properly speaking, conforms to Luther's *a priori*

description of the human being as "being justified" (*homo iustificari*) at the same time.[57]

The latter, which echoes Luther's emphasis on the whole human being (*totus homo*), does

not exclude the former, but assumes it as a necessary condition.[58] Bengt Hägglund points out that

when Meisner defines the human being in concrete terms, that is, as he stands before God

according to his totality, he is not merely referring to the existential man (*totus homo*), but also

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[55] See Meisner, *AS*, Vol. 1: De Statv Integritatis Et Corrvptionis : In quadraginta quaestiones distributa, & conscripta; Vol. 2: De Gratia Dei, Et Praedestinatione Fidelivm; Vol. 3: Ad Statvm Reparationis pertinens. De Libero Arbitrio Et Ivstificatione Peccatoris Coram Deo. Matthias Haffenreffer, professor at Tübingen from 1592–1617, was also currently organizing the articles of Christian doctrine according to an analysis of man in his various states. See Matthias Haffenreffer, *Compendium doctrinae coelestis* (Stockholm, 1714). For a helpful discussion of Haffenreffer's system in the context of seventeenth-century anthropology, see also Bengt Hägglund, "Was ist der Mensch? Psalm 8,5: Eine Grundfrage der altlutherischen Bibelauslegung," in *Chemnitz, Gerhard, Arndt, Rudbeckius: Aufsätze zum Studium der altlutherischen Theologie*, ed. Alexander Bitzel and Johann Anselm Steiger (Waltrop: Harmut Spenner, 2003), 165–73.

[56] See Hägglund, "Mensch," 165–67.

[57] See Luther, *Disputation Concerning Man* (1536), *LW* 34:137–39.

[58] Hägglund, "Mensch," 166–67. See also Luther's discussion of Romans 7, where he describes "flesh" as "an infirmity or a wound of the whole man" in his *Lectures on Romans* (1515–1516), *LW* 25:340–41.

the empirical man (*totum hominis*), indeed, the entirety of man's body and soul, etc.[59] He

explains: "[I]t is clear that, even in its theological context, [*totus homo*] refers without distinction

to the familiar empirical man."[60] What does this mean? As long as faith is *ex parte hominis*, the

faith by which a person stands before God (*totus homo*), and therefore "causes" his justification,

does not exclude the active man as he lives, breathes, and thinks. Indeed, in as much as

Augustine's dictum is true that "God who made us without ourselves will not save us without

ourselves" (Sermon 169, 13),[61] he is an active participant in the process of moving from one state

to another. Hence, returning to Meisner's *subjectum operationis*, the justified sinner is actively

engaged in the appropriation of the theologian's teaching. Together, the application (theology)

and appropriation (anthropology) constitute the formal basis of a *new* disposition. Walter Sparn

summarizes this point:

> Theological anthropology distinguishes the *status renovationis humanae naturae*
> from the *status corruptionis* through the act (!) of faith, which "grasps" God's
> promise of grace and Christ's merit; an act which is the instrument through which
> God imputes Christ's righteousness to the human being and forgives his sins.[62]

Meisner's description of "faith" (*ita per fidem*) as the means by which the human being

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[59] Meisner, *AS*, 1:13 (Disp. I. qu. III, 4), cited in Hägglund, *De Homine: Människoupfattningen i äldre luthersk tradition* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1959),156. "ita subjectum imaginis divinae fuit et totus homo, et totom hominis, non secus atque est peccati et renovationis." Hägglund explains: "Med totalitetsbestämningen avses ej blott en abstract föreställning om människan utan hela den kontreta, av själ och kropp bestående människan (ej blott 'totus homo' utan även 'totum hominis'). Därför kan också arvsynden konkret beskrivas i dess verkningar: I intellektet har förblindelse inträtt, i viljan ondska och hårdhet, i kroppen dödlinghet etc."

[60] Hägglund, *De Homine*, 157: "Ser man emellertid på bestämningen av det mänskliga subjektet (*totus homo*), är det uppenbart, att man därmed även i det teologiska sammanhanget utan åtskillnad avser den vanliga, empiriska människan."

[61] See also Luther in his *Disputation Concerning Justification* (1536), *LW* 34:165: "Many things are necessary which are not a cause and do not justify, as for instance the earth is necessary, and yet it does not justify. If man the sinner wants to be saved, he must necessarily be present, just as he asserts that I must also be present. What Augustine says is true, 'He who has created you without you will not save you without you.'"

[62] Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 180: "Die theologische Anthropologie unterscheidet den *status renovationis humanae naturae* vom *status corruptionis* durch den Akt (!) des Glaubens, der die Gnadenverheissung Gottes und das Verdienst Christi „ergreift;" ein Akt, der das Instrument ist, durch das Gott dem Menschen die Gerechtigkeit Christi zurechnet und seine Sünde vergibt."

advances from a state of corruption to a state of renewal was the subject of his inaugural

dissertation, which he delivered to the theological faculty in 1613 upon his promotion to doctor

of theology. He published his speech under the title, *Dissertatio Inauguralis De Fidei*

Iustificantis 1. Appellationibus. 2. Partibus. 3. Causa efficiente. 4. Objecto. & 5. Subjecto.[63]

Under the "parts" of justifying faith, he explores the traditional Lutheran terms of "knowledge"

(*notitia*), "assent" (*assensus*), and "trust" (*fiducia*).[64] According to Meisner, the middle term,

assensus, may be used in two completely different ways. It may indicate either persuasion

derived from a syllogistic conclusion (reason) or a firm theological conviction based on the

authority of Scripture (faith). The latter signifies a pairing of assent with trust; it is a fiducial

assent, in which "*assentiri*" denotes "*ut simul me totum ipsi quasi concredam et omnibus*

cogitationibus in eum confidam."[65] Thus, to summarize, the trusting subject (*subjectum*

operationis, *totus homo*) advances from one state to another when the cogitating (empirical) man

(*me totum, totum hominibus*) assents with "*omnibus cogitationibus*" to salutary teaching. In

response to objections that the orthodox definition of faith as *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*

reveals a tendency to intellectualize or psychologize faith,[66] Kenneth Appold clarifies that this

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[63] Meisner, *Disputatio Inauguralis De Fidei Iustificantis 1. Appellationibus. 2. Partibus. 3. Causa efficiente. 4. Objecto. & 5. Subjecto* (Wittenberg, 1613). In this speech, Meisner offers a thorough analysis of the nature of faith in response to Catholic and Socinian errors.

[64] This was not a new development in itself. Melanchthon had already introduced these terms to Lutheran theology in his "Enarratio epistolaei prioris ad Timotheum" (1550 to 1551), *CR* 15:1312. See Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Origins of the Object-Subject Antithesis in Lutheran Dogmatics: A Study in Terminology," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 21 (1950): 97–98.

[65] Meisner, *PhS* 2:25. Jaroslav Pelikan notes that Meisner's singular use of *assensus* in the second book of his *Philosophia sobria*, sets him apart from other Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century. While erstwhile Lutheran theologians, including Chemnitz, interpret *assentiri* in terms of adhering to intellectual content, Meisner understands the word in its original sense as referring to the disposition of the will. See Pelikan, "Origins," 98.

[66] In a paper delivered to "The Symposium on Seventeenth Century Lutheranism" at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Carl Braaten argues in "The Correlation between Justification and Faith in Classical Lutheran Dogmatics," in *The Symposium on Seventeenth Century Lutheranism*, Selected Papers, vol. I (St. Louis, 1962), 85: "While justification is allegedly not dependent upon any change in man, it was as a matter of fact predicated upon the subjectivity of man, his repenting and believing, his knowledge, good will, and trust (*notitia, assensus, fiducia*)."

threefold division "serves merely analytical purposes." In his study of Calov, who follows

Meisner and the normative Lutheran tradition, he explains: "It does not designate a psychological

compartmentalization, and much less a progression measurable in discrete steps of psychological

experience." Rather, it is "a holistic orientation of the total person."[67]

Meisner began to correlate his theological anthropology, and specifically his analysis of

justifying faith, with his progressive pedagogy in his *Brief Analysis of the Socinians*, which he

published in 1619.[68] In his discussion of "fundamental articles," or articles that are necessary for

salvation, he establishes his premise: salvation depends on faith, without which it is impossible

to please God (Heb. 11:6). He then proceeds to define this necessary and saving faith (John 3:16)

in terms of both *assensus* of the mind and *fiducia* of the heart. The latter, he argues, is the

"cause" inasmuch as it initiates the "act of justification and salvation," while the former

"requires a prior condition" in the one who is being justified and saved. He explains:

> For whoever does not know God and the divinely ordained means of salvation, and
> lacks fiducial assent (*fidelis assensus*) concerning those things, cannot obtain
> salvation, just as a sick person cannot be healed if he neither knows the physician nor
> regards his medical advice as true and salutary; wherefore it is certain that in
> everyone being saved knowledge and assent are required beforehand, as it were, the
> first part of justifying faith.[69]

This is also the position of Rudolph Bultmann in *Theologische Enzyklopädie* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1984), 103, quoted in Appold, *Vocatio*, 213n38: "Und wenn in diesem Sinne der *assensus* zur *notitia* und *fiducia* gestellt wird, kommt der Wahn heraus, dass die Heilstatsachen zuerst anerkannt werden müssen, bevor sie Grund des Glaubens sein können, obwohl sie doch erst im Glauben als Heilstatsachen sichtbar werden." Martti Vaahtoranta also appears to have this objection in mind when he seeks a prior ontological ground for justification in the *unio spiritualis* between the sinner and Christ, rather than in "psychophysical" qualities in the human being. See Martti Vaahtoranta, *Restauratio imaginis divinae: die Vereinigung von Gott und Mensch ie Vereinigung von Gott und Mensch, ihre Voraussetzungen und Implikationen bei Johann Gerhard* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft 1998), 217–18.

[67] Appold, *Vocatio*, 213–14.

[68] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio Theologiae Photinianae, Proutjj eam Faustus Socinus descripsit in libello suasorio, cui titulus: Quod Evangelici omnino deberent se illorum coetui adjugere, qui falso Ariani atque Ebionitae vocentur* (Wittenberg: Heiden, 1619), 252–61.

[69] Meisner, *Brevis Consideratio*, 252–53: "Salus nostra dependet a fide, sine qua Deo placere impossibile, *Heb. 11.v.6.* Hic omnis qui credit in Christum, non perit, sed habet vitam aeternam, *Ioh. 3.v.16.36.* Qui vero non

Indeed, faith represents a coordinate to which theological teaching is ordered, and from which the pupil assents to such teaching. Consistent with Luther's existential-empirical conception of man, Meisner's pedagogy is dependent upon this anthropological coordinate for its practical success. The theologian's practice (*praxis*) assumes knowledge and assent on the part of the Christian (*subjectum operationis*) to the fundamental articles of faith (*theoria*).[70] Thus, by 1619 Meisner had begun to make a solid case that "theory," which he took as synonymous with "doctrine," was a necessary constituent in the theological *praxis* both with respect to the doctrine itself (*sui*) and the Christian's knowledge of the same (*nostri*).[71] The idea of investing theory in practice—a virtual summary of what has here been styled "practical orthodoxy"—presupposes an interface between the application (theology: *sui*) and the appropriation (anthropology: *nostri*) of doctrine.

The fifth part of Meisner's definition concerns the subject of treatment (*subjectum tractationis*), or the "object" of theology, which he designates as "true religion" (*vera religio*). This subject embraces "every means by which the lapsed human being is moved forward to salvation" (*omnia media, quibus homines lapsi promoventur ad salutem*). Meisner's 1623 definition of religion in terms of doctrine-as-means is made the more precise through his 1626

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credit, jam judicatus est, v. 18. nec vitam videbit, sed ira Dei manet super eum v. 36. Fides ista salvifica comprehendit praecipue *assensum* mentis, et *fiduciam* cordis. *Haec* actum justificationis et salutis, ut caussa ingreditur; *ille* in omni justificando et salvando, tanquam necessaria conditio prerequiritur. Qui enim ignorat DEUM et media salutis divinitus ordinata, caretque fideli assensu circa illa, is salutem adipisci nequit, sicut aegrotus non sanatur, qui vel Medicum nescit, vel Medici consilia pro veris et salutaribus non habet; ideoque certum est, in omni salvando praerequiri notitiam et assensum, tanquam primam fidei justificantis partem."

[70] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:254–55:"Quod indicium eo sit illustrius, si ex ipsis Scripturis diserte probari possit, aliquem fidei articulum sub necessitate notitiae et assenus esse propositum, quales utique sunt articuli de Deo & Christo, deque mediis salutis, quorum necessaria πρᾶξις evidenter indicat necessitatem θεωρίας et assensus."

[71] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:254: "Sunt igitur fundamentales articuli ratione 1. *sui,* dogmata caussas salutis explicantia. 2. *nostri*, dogmata, scitu Christianis salvandisque omnibus necessaria, sic ut absque illorum notitia vitam aeternam nemo consequatur."

Disputationes de Religione. He writes in the first disputation:

> True religion is doctrine, communicated to human beings from the revealed word by the working of the Holy Spirit, by which, having been made religious and pious, they rightly know, revere and worship the true God, and finally enjoy eternal happiness.[72]

With this succinct definition of religion, the theoretical and practical aspects of Meisner's previous conception of "*mixtus*" converge upon "*homin[es] . . . religiosi et pii effecti.*" Religion embraces both sides of doctrine—as the theologian applies it and as his patient appropriates it. As such, it is neither purely theoretical, nor purely practical; it is "*doctrina qua*"—divine teaching "by which" the renovated human being, through ample use of the pedagogue's instruction, comes to know (theory) and worship (practice) God aright.

Sixth, Meisner comes to the "internal goal" (*finis internus),* which consists of the actual work of the theologian (τό *operari Theologi*). This is the theological *praxis* itself (*ipsum perducere ad salutem*), which has to do with leading the human being to eternal life (*circa hominum ad vitam aeternam perductionem*). The reason it is called the "internal goal" is because it is falls within the ability of the theological practitioner to produce it; it is his "spiritual medication" (*spiritualis medicatio*). Everything a theologian does, indeed everything that goes into the theological enterprise (*tota Theologia, et omnis Theologi opera*), serves and aims at the production of a method, or system, that assists in the saving of sinners. Having established that theology is practical, that is, corresponding to a practical aptitude on the part of the teacher, and in keeping with academic standards, Meisner prescribes the analytical method for theology.[73]

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[72] Meisner, *De religione et eius articulis generatim consideratis,* 19 Disputations (Wittenberg, 1625–1626)*,* Disp. I, theor. 4, quoted in Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 251: "Religio vera est doctrina, hominis ex verbo revelato Spiritus Sancti operatione communicata, qua religiosi et pii effecti Deum verum recte agnoscunt, venerantur et colunt, tandemque aeterna felicitate fruuntur." Appold claims that in using the term, "religion," to designate the very instrument of the theologian's *praxis*, Meisner has hit upon a brand new definition of "religion," never before used in Christian theology. See Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 248.

[73] For a study of the relationship between this *habitus mentis* and the burgeoning theological method of

This method differs markedly from the "synthetic method" of Melanchthon and Chemnitz, according to which the various *loci communes*[74] were arranged, "speculatively," as it were, from cause (God) to effect (salvation). The analytic method (*ordo resolutivus*), by contrast, is designed to be practical. It begins with the *goal* (salvation of man), then it addresses the *problem* (sinful man), and finally it introduces the *means* for bringing sinful man to salvation (grace, means of grace, etc.).[75]

Although Bartholomäus Keckermann, drawing on Jacopo Zabarella,[76] was the first to recommend this method, Matthias Flacius (1520–1575) had mentioned the analytic method and delineated its theological use already in the first edition of his *Clavis scripturae* published in 1567. Later, Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627) took a stab at the analytical method in his *Synopsis theologiae analytico ordine comprehensa* (1610), but it was not made truly serviceable for Lutheran theology until Helmstedt theologian, Georg Calixt (1586–1656), published his *Epitome theologiae* in 1611.[77] Calixt's method would become the basis of the great *Systema* of later

seventeenth century Lutheran orthodoxy, see Marcel Nieden, "Theologie–Rechtfertigung des Theologen? Anmerkungen zur *Methodus studii Theologici*," in *Zur Rechtfertigungslehre in der Lutherischen Orthodoxie*, ed. Udo Sträter (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2003), 55–69.

[74] For a precise historical account and explanation of how Melanchthon appropriated Aristotle's *Topics*, particularly as this work was mediated through Cicero and the humanistic tradition, see Quirinus Breen, "The Terms 'Loci Communes' and 'Loci' in Melanchthon," in *Church History* XVI, 4 (1947): 197–209.

[75] See Hans Emil Weber, *Die Analytische Methode der Lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Naumburg.: Lippert & Co., 1907), 26. See also Preus, *Theology*, 156.

[76] On Keckermann, see Joseph S. Freedman, "The Career and Writings of Bartholomew Keckermann (d. 1609)," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 141, no. 3 (Philadelphia, 1997), 305–64. On Keckermann's "eclectic-systematic" method, see Wilhelm Risse, *Die Logik der Neuzeit: 1500-1640* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann, 1964), 1:1540–1640 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1964), 443–50. See also Richard A. Muller. "*Vera Philosophia cum sacra Theologia nusquam pugnat:* Keckermann on Philosophy, Theology, and the Problem of Double Truth," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 341–65.

[77] See George Calixt, *Epitome Theologiae and in his Disputationes de Praecipuis Christianae Religionis Capitibus* (Helmstedt, 1611); *Apparatus Theologicus* (Helmstedt, 1628); and *Apparatus Theologici et Fragmenti Historiae Ecclesiae Occidentalis* (Helmstedt, 1661). Calixt follows the following outline: (1) De fine hominis discusses man's highest good, immortality, resurrection, and eternal life. (2) De subjecto covers the articles of God, creation, man, and sin. (3) De principiis et mediis discusses the grace of God, predestination, and Christology, soteriology, the means of grace, the ministry, absolution, repentance, and good works. See also Kenneth Appold,

Lutheran orthodox theologians. What characterizes the system is not so much the order in which the topics of Christian faith are arranged, but the principles governing its structure. It was built upon the principles of theology, considered uniquely as "practical," with a view towards accomplishing its soteriological end. [78] In short, the system was designed to *do* something, or rather, to use the language of Meisner, it was itself the *doing* (τό *operari*).

Meisner had great plans for writing a complete *Systema* of his own, and he outlines his intentions in the same section of volume three of his *Philosophia Sobria*. He proposes to present the nature of theology in the form of a *praecognita*, or *Paedia Theologica*, consisting of four chapters and culminating in a thorough treatment of the parts of theology. Chapter one would resemble the previous works of John Gerhard, Andreas Hyperius, and Matthaeus Sutlivius[79] and take up the proper method of theological study.[80] Chapter two would carefully spell out and explain the theological terms being used; chapter three would deal with the nature of theology; finally, chapter four would deal with the parts of his *Systema*. Parts one through three of Meisner's *Systema* were supposed to deal with the principle (Scripture) from which both the means, or object (Religion), and the end (God) would be deduced. These three (principle, means, and end) are the theoretical postulates, the comprehension of which is directed at the actual

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Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 24–30; Hans Emil Weber, *Der Einfluss der protestantischen Schulphilosophie auf die orthodox-lutherische Dogmatik* (Leipzig: *A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung,* Nachfolge,1908), 20–36.

[78] See Sparn, *Wiederkehr*, 24. Sparn, citing Johann Neldel, professor of rhetoric and logic at the University of Leipzig from 1586 to 1612, explains: "Die analytische Methode verwendet nur spezifische, 'eigentümliche' Argumente (*vernaculae sumtiones*), d.h. solche Annahmen, die das Wesen des prädizierten Subjektes durch seine konstitutierenden Ursachen (*propria principia et causae, scil. essentiae*) benennen und daher aus der eigentümlichen Natur des Beweisgegenstandes adäquat schliessen (*ex propria rei subjectae, de qua agitur, natura*)."

[79] Gerhard, *Methodus studii theologici* (1620); Andreas Hyperius, *Methodus theologiae* (1568); Matthaeus Sutlivius, *De recta studii theologici ratione* (1602).

[80] Meisner, *PhS* 3:198. See John Gerhard, *Methodus Studii Theologici*; Andreas Hyperius, *De Theologo, seu de ratione studii theologici*, book 3 (Basel: Oporinus, 1559); Mathew Sutlivius, *De Recta Studii Theologici ratione* (Antonius, 1604), book 1.

practice of theology. Such practice comprises the final five parts: part four would present the "spiritual cure" (*curam spiritualem*) by taking up the problem (Anthropology and Sin); part five, the remedy (Grace and Salvation); part six, the state of the individual human being after justification (Good Works); part seven, the *corpus mysticum* (Ecclesiology); and finally, part eight, the last things (Eschatology).[81]

Meisner died before he was able to write his intended *Systema*,[82] but he succeeded, over and above several disputations on the Scriptures, in completing chapter one in the form of *Procognitorum Theologiae*,[83] and he was in the process of composing his disputations on the nature of *Religion* when he fell ill. The medical overtones resonant of Sennert's *Institutiones medicae* are worth pointing out, as they reveal to what extent Meisner viewed the *finis internus*, that is, the work itself of theology, to be a veritable *spiritualis medicatio*.

Finally, the seventh part of Meisner's theology, the "external goal" (*finis externus*), is the actual salvation of the human being, and indeed, the possession of salvation and the blessed enjoyment of God (*actualis hominum salvatio, vel salutis possessio, et beata Dei fruitio*). Here is not merely the map with all its theoretical principles and *praxis*, but the destination itself. While the actual goal is obviously beyond the scope of the *Systema* alone—it is the singular work of the Holy Spirit—theology has no real purpose or scope without a consideration of this end. As for the theologian, he can only bring his patient as far as the means that lead to the actual attainment and possession of salvation. Meisner writes:

> Further, as the physician, although he cannot always achieve his ultimate goal, for it
> is impossible to make all sick people well; nevertheless, in order to satisfy his office,

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[81] Meisner, *PhS* 3:199–200.

[82] See *PhS* 3:206: "Si Deus vitam, viresque concesserit, fieri potest, ut ista specialius deducantur, et omnia uni plenoque Theologici systematis corpori inclusa exhibeantur."

[83] Meisner, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Disputationes*, 10 Disputations (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1625).

he must disregard nothing none of the things that are in the nature and power of his skill for healing. So the theologian, although he does not lead all of his hearers to salvation, since this is also impossible on account of the perversity of men; nevertheless, he will have discharged his office correctly if he omits nothing in his own power for healing and restoring people.[84]

It is noteworthy that the entire system is organized around the central article of justification through faith. For what could be more useful for leading sinners to salvation than to bring them into contact with the means (of grace) through which justification and forgiveness of sins is communicated?[85] Given the purposefulness of the *System*, however, it is apparent that the theological operation does not turn on biblical revelation as such, but rather on the *purpose* of revelation. The Bible is a book, which "we read and hear with no other purpose than to learn from it how to come to salvation."[86]

The Influence of Meisner's Theology on Later Orthodoxy

Meisner and Calixt

If one were to consult the prevailing historiography handling the Lutheran conception of theology, as outlined above by Meisner and later pursued by the Lutheran systematicians of the second half of the century, one is left with a rather monolithic picture. Ernst Troeltsch, in his *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Johann Gerhard und Melanchthon*, lumps Gerhard and Calixt into

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[84] Meisner, *PhS* 3:167: Porro, uti Medicus, quanquam finem ultimum non semper assequatur, quum universos aegros efficere sanos sit impossibile; nihilominus officio suo satisfecisse discendus est, se eorum, quae in natura et artis potestate sunt, ad sanandum nihil omiserit. Ita Theologus, quanquam non omnes auditores ad salutem perducat, quum hoc etiam ob hominum perversitatem impossibile; nihilominus munere suo recte perfunctus erit, si, quae in sua potestate sunt, ad sanandos, restituendosque homines nihil omiserit.

[85] Appold, *Orthodoxie*, 244.

[86] Meisner, *PhS* 3:118; "Omnia enim ideo scripta sunt, ut per fidem ex Scripturis haustam, consequamur vitam aeternam. Hanc Dei in communicandis Scripturis fuisse intentionem, patebit in ultimo die, ex ipsa executione. Ibi enim credentes secum deducet in coelestem gloriam, ut fruantur aeterna beatitudine, et ipse a nobis glorificetur sine termino. Hinc Dei verbum nullo fine alio vel legimus vel audimus, quam ut inde discamus modum perveniendi ad salutem." See also Sparn, "Krise," 73.

the same basic mold, and Hans Emil Weber views Wittenberg and Helmstedt as virtually

identical. Why? Because both schools followed the analytical method.[87] Not surprisingly,

Meisner receives very little treatment; although Weber credits him with infusing Aristotelian

philosophy into theology in the same fashion as Calixt, as though two mutually complementary

developments were taking place simultaneously at Helmstedt and Wittenberg.[88] Since Meisner

had begun to explore the nature of theology in 1611, the same year in which Calixt published his

Epitome theologiae, it would help to offer a brief comparison of the two theologians, and then,

through further comparison with representatives of Lutheran orthodoxy measure the impact of

Meisner's thought on later Wittenberg conceptions of theology.

Despite the fact that both Meisner and Calixt prescribed the analytical method, and it must

be kept in mind that this was in keeping with the current trends of the day, and specifically as an

alternative to Ramist method, a closer look reveals that they were motivated by a completely

different conceptions of theology. Calixt defines "theology" as a "practical aptitude of the mind

that teaches and shows from the divine revelation comprehended in the sacred letters how a

person might come to eternal salvation."[89] On the one hand, the positive contribution Calixt has

made to Lutheran theology should not be underestimated. He has clearly identified its practical

nature, and his definition does not neglect its divine principle and source. On the other hand,

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[87] See Preus, *Theology*, 1:157n117. See Ernst Troeltsch, *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Johann Gerhard und Melanchthon* (Güttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1891); Hans Emil Weber, *Der Einfluss der protestantischen Schulphilosophie auf die orthodox-lutherische Dogmatik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1908). See also Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, 4:372); Hermann Schüssler, *Georg Calixtus: Theologie und Kirchenpolitik* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1961). Each of these authors blurs every distinction between the two schools; both were in the business of mixing philosophy with theology.

[88] Weber, *Einfluss*, especially "Grundlegung: Das Verhältnis von Vernunft und Offenbarung in der lutherischen Orthodoxie," 5–13. Weber gives no consideration to the premise of Meisner's *opus magnum*, namely, to curb the illicit use of philosophy in theology by properly demonstrating the difference of their respective scopes.

[89] Calixt, *Epitome Theologiae*, 62: "Theologia est habitus intellectus practicus qui e revelatione divina sacris literis comprehensa docet et ostendit, quomodo ad vitam aeternam perveniendum sit."

conspicuously absent from his conception is the idea of θεόσδοτος, or the conviction that such a practical aptitude cannot be derived from the catalogue of Aristotle's intellectual virtues. For Calixt, theology is rather "*acquisitus*," or "an aptitude acquired through study and hard work."[90] Moreover, he does not exclude the synergistic interpretation suggested by the choice of the term "*pervenire*," which was also used by Keckermann. The Calixtine theology lacks any significant emphasis on the "other," and thus fails to qualify as what Heinz Nieden has aptly termed "*allopraxis*." The theologian is not leading others, but rather he himself is coming, to salvation. Upon close analysis, not much difference lies between Keckermann's religious prudence and Calix's *habitus acquisitus*—both fit the description of auto-practice.

Despite Wallmann's observation that it was the Helmstedt theologians who tended to separate faith and theology, Calixt holds carefully to the contrary. According to him, one cannot be a theologian without faith. However, what does he mean by faith? For Calixt faith is not the kind of fiducial assent that entails a trusting relationship of the totality of the person (*totum hominis*) with God, but rather an aptitude, a *habitus*, on the part of the theologian that enables him to draw logical conclusions commensurate with theological principles. It is precisely that "other" kind of assent, which Meisner regards as mere assent to rational conclusions. It must also be remembered that Meisner's 1611 argument for the non-necessity of using syllogisms in theological disputations would later sustain hefty criticism from none other than Calixt's teacher, Cornelius Martini. While the Helmstedt theologian is sure to assert that revelation is the "primary cause" (*principium primum*) of theology, the very suggestion that logic should be a secondary cause places the principle of *sola Scriptura* in danger.[91]

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[90] Calixt, *Epitome Theologiae*, Praefatio, VIII, quoted in Preus, *Thoelogy*, 1:155. Compare with Meisner, *PhS* 3:457–58.

[91] See Preus, *Theology*, 1:155.

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The main difference between the two theologians comes down to a failure on the part of Calixt to correlate the application and appropriation of theology. For him, anthropology does not serve the same kind of guiding role as does the *principium operandi* in the case of Meisner.[92] Instead, Calixt merely plugs the topic of man and sin into his outline and relies on syllogisms to prove his version of the Lutheran position.[93] He makes no use of an analogy to medicine; theology is not primarily "*praxis*," but a list of dogmas to be proved through the strictest logical analysis. In the end, the only thing Calixt has in common with Meisner is the academic shell of a "practical theology" and the basic tenets of the analytical method.

Perhaps even more compelling than the bare fact that Wittenberg and Helmstedt used the same theological method, that both harnessed the same trending philosophical instruments, or even that such a method came as an alternative to the synthetic method used by almost every Lutheran theologian over the past century, was the fact that, despite its Reformed origins, the analytical method never caught on in Reformed circles.[94] Keckermann introduced "practical theology" to the Protestant schools in the same manner as Calixt applied it, rather uncritically, to Lutheran dogmatics. However, since Calvinist theology is inherently speculative, reasoning as it does from cause (*gloria Dei*) to effect (*fruitio Dei*), Reformed theologians retained the synthetic-topical method of Melanchthon.[95] Why, then, one might ask, despite the differences between

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[92] Meisner, *PhS* 3:163: "Sic quando Theologus cognoscit *hominis statum miserum, et corruptionem innatum;* non cognoscit eam propter seipsam, ut tantum sciat; sed cognoscit propter aliud, nempe, ut ex illa miseria et ipse, et alii liberentur eo melius; quia morbi notitia semper praerequiritur, si morbus recte curari debeat."

[93] Is the essence of original sin itself a positive quality of the soul? Meisner says yes, while Calixt and the Helmstedt school argues that original sin is merely the negation of original righteousness. See Meisner, *Quaestiones Vexatae IV. An peccatum originis formaliter sit aliquid positivi?* (Wittenberg: Gorman, 1620).

[94] Weber, *Die Analytische Methode*, 26: "Keckermann überträgt die analytische Methode auf die Theologie als Philosoph, nicht als reformierter Theologe."

[95] Weber, *Die Analytische Methode*, 41. It must be kept in mind that, despite the description of "speculative," Melanchthon's use of *loci* was entirely dedicated to good teaching and therefore intentionally "practical."

Helmstedt and Wittenberg, did the analytical method catch on among orthodox Lutherans? One answer would be that Lutheran theology is inherently contingent on the means of grace, and thus it was more amenable to a system that emphasized the means (*doctrina qua*) by which a theologian, as per *functio ecclesiastici*, leads his pupils, patients, or parishioners to salvation. In a word, Lutheran theology in whatever form is inherently practical.[96]

<div align="center">The Tension between θεόσδοτος and Theologia Irregenitorum</div>

Meisner's greatest and lasting contribution to the classical Lutheran theology concept may be said to consist of the two points that distinguish him from Calixt, namely, the *habitus* θεόσδοτος (not acquired through Aristotelian virtues) and his emphasis on *allopraxis* (pertaining to the faith and salvation of another). The latter emphasis, which presupposes a distinction between faith and theology, a concern Meisner voiced in 1611, led him to embrace a position that later theologians, and especially the pietists, have called a "theology of the unregenerate" (*theologia irregenitorum*). Meisner writes in the first volume of his *Philosophia sobria*: "Therefore when theology is called a God-given aptitude, it becomes this *only*, as said: 1) on account of the divinity of its *principle*, which is Scripture, and 2) on account of the divinity of its *object*, which is the mysteries."[97] He then considers the (likely) scenario in which the theologian himself is regenerate. He adds:

> But if the subject is regenerate, a third consideration is added, namely, the special illumination and inhabitation of God, which nevertheless is not according to the essence of the theological aptitude, unless we should wish to argue against experience that at the time of unrepentance [the aptitude] is at once destroyed.[98]

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[96] Weber, *Die Analytische Methode*, "II. Der methodische Eigenwert der methodus analytica," 65–74.

[97] Meisner, *PhS* 1:459: "Quarè cùm Theologia nominatur habitus θεόσδοσος, fit hoc tantùm, uti dictum, 1. ob *principii,* quod Scriptura, & 2. *obiecti,* quod mysteria, divinitatem" (*my emphasis in translated text*).

[98] Meisner, *PhS* 1:459: "Quòd si subiectum renatum sit, accedit respectus tertius, nimirum specialis Dei illuminatio & inhabitatio, quae tamen non est de essentia Theologici habitus, nisi illum tempore impoenitentiae

In introducing "θεόσδοτος" to the Lutheran theological tradition, he wished exclude the idea that one must be a believer in order to be a theologian, or vice versa. He is rather explicit: "I argue these things lest anybody think that theology cannot be called a God-given aptitude unless it be in a regenerate subject."[99] In short, θεόσδοτος does *not* mean regenerate, nor does it entail any kind of spiritual enlightenment on the part of the theologian, except, of course, *per accidens*. By limiting theology strictly to the mind of the theologian, and just as strictly not necessarily to the theologian's own spiritual enlightenment, one may rightly question whether Meisner has not actually separated theology from faith, or theology from the theologian. What of Luther's view that whoever is "*orthodoxus en Deum*" necessarily produces faith becoming of a Christian?[100]

Meisner revised his position by 1623, but he does not materially change his position from before. Whereas before he was interested in demonstrating that theology was not practical in Keckermann's sense, but also theoretical, and therefore *mixted*, he was later concerned with showing that theology entirely practical, but not in Keckermann's sense of practical. Why is theology practical? Meisner answers: because the goal of theology is not merely to acquiesce to the stated goal (enjoyment of God), which is theoretical; rather, "the principle part of dogmatic faith" is that "both he and others who hear him might become partakers of eternal salvation."[101] He is obviously making an allusion to 1 Tim. 4:16. But he also appeals to 1 Peter 2:9 to show

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statim perire contra experientiam asserere voluerimus."

[99] Meisner, *PhS* 1:459: "Haec eum in finem disputo, ne putetur Theologiam habitum θεόσδοτον nominari non posse, nisi in subiecto renato sit."

[100] Luther, *Operationes in Psalmos 1519–1521*, *WA* 5, 28: *"Qui enim orthodoxus in Deum est, non potest sine bona facere, bonos mores prestare."*

[101] Meisner, *PhS* 3:163: "*Deum* enim cognoscit Theologus tanquam finem, siquidem in fruitione Dei sita est nostra beatitudo; et cognoscit ipsum, non ideo, ut in ista cognitione acquiescat, nec aliud desideret; sed potius, ut per istam cognitionem; tanquam praecipuam fidei dogmaticae partem, sine qua nemo salvatur, et ipse, et alii, qui ipsum audiunt, salutis aeternae participes fiant."

that the end of faith (τέλος πίστεως) is the same as the end of theology: neither end in mere

contemplation, but in the actual attainment of eternal salvation.[102] Meisner continues to press his

point in an effort to show the practical nature of theory. Just as medicine has both a mediate (ὦ)

internal goal of healing oneself and an ultimate (δι ὦ) internal goal of healing the body of

another, likewise, theology has either a mediate internal goal of healing the theologian himself or

an ultimate internal goal of saving others through the pure preaching of the word and

administration of the sacraments.[103] However, as far as the *habitus* is concerned, "*Theologia non*

est habitus patientis vel sanandi auditoris, (nisi per accidens,) sed Theologi et doctoris…" Thus,

as far as "θεόσδοτος" is concerned, even with his new explanation, he retains his previous view

of a *theologia irregenitotum* in essence. The only difference is that now he tacitly couches the

concept within his new and unique contribution of *allopraxis*, entailed by the term, "*perducere*."

Although the external goal of theology is indeed "coming" to salvation through faith, the God-

given aptitude pertains to leading others to the same goal by means of teaching correct

doctrine.[104] He never changes his definition of θεόσδοτος, nor does he conflate it with a

disposition of being in a state of regeneration.

Indeed, this was the difference between himself and Keckermann (and Calixt). The mind of

the theologian, with all the supernatural virtues implied by "θεόσδοτος," that is, in view of the

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[102] Meisner, *PhS* 3:165–66: "Potest hoc ulterius confirmari ex *1. Pet. 2.vers.9.* ubi salus animarum nominatur τέλος πίστεως, vel *finis fidei*, siquidem ideo credimus, ut salvemur. Jam qui est finis fidei, idem est finis Theologiae, fidem docentis; sicut in doctrina Ethica idem est finis virtutis, et ipsius Ethici, de virtutibus agentis. Atqui finis fidei non est contemplatio nuda; sed adeptio et possessio salutis aeternae. Idem igitur erit finis Theologiae."

[103] Meisner, *PhS* 3:166–67: "Ergo finis etiam Theologiae, tanquam spiritualis Medicinae, similiter non erit Theoreticus, sed practicus, quippe in spirituali animorum sanitate restituenda unice consistens. Et veluti Medicinae fini *alius* dicitur esse ὦ; vel medius, ut ipsum medicari; alius δι ὦ, et ultimus, nempe sanitas corporum: sic Theologiae finis similite *vel est* medius et internus, ipsum to. medicari Theologicum, vel operari circa hominem salvandum, per puram verbi praedicationem Sacramentorum administrationem, Ecclesiaeque gubernationem."

[104] Meisner, *PhS* 3:193: "Sic Theologia non est habitus patientis vel sanandi auditoris, (nisi per accidens,) sed Theologi et doctoris, adeoque primo non est doctrina perveniendi; sed perducendi ad sanitatem spiritualem, vel salutem aeternam."

principle (Scripture) and goal (salvation) of theology, is intended for the soul of another. It thus

ensures that the possession of healing abilities will not be reduced to a works-righteous

habituation of virtues, call it "faith," by which the *viator*, call him a "theologian," moves himself

to salvation. The regenerate aspect of Meisner's theology is not excluded from this internal goal,

however. It is captured by the anthropology (*principium operationis*) of his succinct definition,

but especially his conception of religion, the object and means whereby "*homin[es]…religiosi et*

pii effecti" know and worship God. If Meisner's approach comes across as excessively

analytical, it must be appreciated that he is writing as one who is keenly aware of the

philosophical pitfalls surrounding a definition of the nature of theology.

Later orthodox Lutheran theologians are very reluctant to commit to any form of

unregenerate theology, even for the sake of logical clarity. Therefore, many of the concerns that

attended Meisner's initial description of θεόσδοτος fail to play the slightest role in their

understanding of the term. Two years after Meisner published the third volume of his

Philosophia sobria, after the sober-philosophical groundwork had been laid, John Gerhard

offered a definition of theology in his *Proemeum* (1625) that would become standard for

Lutheran generations to come. He states:

> Theology is an aptitude given by God, conferred upon man by the Holy Spirit
> through the Word. By this theology a person is prepared by his knowledge of divine
> mysteries through the illumination of his mind to apply those things that he
> understands to the disposition of his heart and to the carrying out of good works. By
> theology a person is also given the skill and ability to inform others about these
> divine mysteries and the way of salvation and to defend the heavenly doctrine from
> the corruptions of those who oppose it, to the end that men, shining with true faith
> and good works, may be brought to the kingdom of heaven.[105]

Gerhard gives precious little attention to the *practical* nature of the *habitus*; indeed, the

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[105] Preus, *Theology*, 1:117–18.

term "*practicus*" is absent from his succinct definition. It will be noticed that Gerhard is actually dealing with two overlapping definitions of theology. On the one hand, he distinguishes between the "aptitude" itself and the "disposition of the heart." The purpose of this God-given aptitude is twofold. On the one hand, it is to prepare a theologian to apply the knowledge of divine mysteries to himself, to his own spiritual benefit. (Meisner's mediate internal goal.) On the other hand, the same God-given aptitude enables the theologian to apply such saving knowledge to others as well so that they, too, may be brought to salvation. (Meisner's ultimate internal goal.) Gerhard saves his readers the kind of diagnostic effort required in order to disentangle the kind of analytical definition one finds in Meisner, but in doing so he leaves more to the reader's imagination. What is meant by θεόσδοτος? Gerhard's dual conception may be compared to a pair of concentric circles in which dispositional (regenerative) and habitual (non-regenerative) elements hang together.[106] What is certain is that Gerhard, like Meisner, is determined to preserve Luther's regenerative theology, while being careful not to conflate the *habitus* with faith.[107] His *Methodus Studii Theologii* makes considerable use of the reformer's "three things that make a theologian," *oratio, meditatio*, and *tentatio*, which apply equally to the exercise of Christian faith and the theological aptitude.[108] Heinz Nieden has even suggested that Gerhard's nascent theology concept, taken over from Luther, should be described in terms of "justification of the theologian."[109]

   While the next generation of theologians was more explicit than Gerhard regarding the

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[106] For a detailed discussion of Gerhard's definition, see Wallman, *Theologiebegriff*, 65–74.

[107] See Glenn K. Fluegge, *Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) and the Conceptualization of Theologia at the Threshold of the "Age of Orthodoxy." The Making of the Theologian*, Oberurseler Hefte 21 (2018), 138–46.

[108] Wallmann, *Theologiebegriff*, 74.

[109] Marcel Nieden, "Theologie–Rechtfertigung des Theologens? Anmerkungen zur 'Methodus studii theologici' Johann Gerhards von 1620," in *Zur Rechtfertigungslehre in der Lutherischen Orthodoxie*, ed. Sträter and Appold (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2003), 55–69.

practical nature of theology, there is in his wake a noticeable shift in understanding of the

habitus θεόσδοτος. Wittenberg theologian, Abraham Calov (1612–1686), the fiercest opponent

of the Helmstedt theology in his day, gives long shrift to the idea of "practical" in his *Systema*

(1655). He gives more attention to the subject than any other theologian since Meisner's

treatment over twenty years earlier. His succinct definition is as follows:

> Theology is a practical aptitude of cognition drawn from divine revelation,
> concerning true religion, by which man after the fall is to be led (*perducendus*)
> through faith to eternal salvation.[110]

Calov practically reduplicates Meisner's arguments, only more thoroughly, and uses the

same theologians, especially Keckermann, as his foil. With respect to the *genus propinquum*,[111]

or the nature of the aptitude, which aims at practice ("*tendet ad praxin*"), his conclusions are

quite the same as Meisner's; he clearly maintains that it is *allopraxis* (*perducere*), and he gives

two reasons: (1) its purpose, which is to bring sinners to conversion, salvation, and enjoyment of

God, and (2) its object, which is man, and "not man as that concerning which something is to be

proved [contra Calixt], but man as an object who is to be blessed and saved forever."[112] Calov

also shares Meisner's concern for a hard distinction between faith and theology. With respect to

Keckermann's "religious prudence," he argues that the Reformed philosopher fails to distinguish

between what he calls the "*habitus fidei*" and "*habitus theologiae*." He declares: "However, not

all theologians are elect, nor all elect theologians."[113] Although the term, "θεόσδοτος," is lacking

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[110] Abraham Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* (Wittenberg, Röhner, 1655), 1:1: "Theologia est Habitus Practicus cognitionis è revelatione divina haustae, de vera Religione, qua homo post lapsum per fidem ad salute aeternam perducendus." For a thorough study of Calov's conception of theology, see Preus, *Theology*, vol. 1, 157–228; and Appold, *Vocatio*, 46–50.

[111] See Meisner, *PhS* 3:189.

[112] Preus, *Theology*, 1:196–97.

[113] Calov, *Systema*, I, 56; cited in Appold, *Vocatio*, 54: "Non autem omnes Theologi sunt electi, nec omnes electi sunt theology."

in his precise definition, he does mention it in passing. When he comes to this so-called "*proximum genus*" of the practical aptitude, he offers little more explanation than to say that it is "drawn from the Scriptures." Appealing to Meisner for support, he avers that, among the gifts of God, θεόσδοτος is a reference "not to sanctification, but ministration."[114]

Perhaps the most systematic treatment of the nature and character of theology came from the pen of John Quenstedt (1617–1688), Calov's colleague at Wittenberg and nephew of the great John Gerhard. In the first chapter of his *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*,[115] Quenstedt offers twenty-eight definitions of the term, "theology." Of these definitions, the twenty-eighth and final, where he states that theology is an "aptitude," is preeminent. He proceeds to define theology primarily as "the knowledge that is known in the mind and inheres in the heart of man." His precise definition reads:

> Theology considered as an aptitude and concretively is a God-given practical aptitude of the understanding, conferred through the Word by the Holy Spirit on man, regarding true religion, so that by his work man, a sinner, might be brought through faith in Christ to God and eternal salvation.[116]

Possibly due to his intimate knowledge of George Calixt, having studied under him at Helmstedt before joining Calov's faculty at Wittenberg, Quenstedt gives much more attention to the question of θεόσδοτος than does Calov. With Meisner, he rejects the Helmstedt idea of a "*habitus acquisitus*,"[117] and, in emphasizing its supernatural and God-given character, he submits

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[114] Calov, *Systema*, I, 5: "Alii dicunt θεόσδοτον *vel* divinitus datum, quia est inter dona DEI non quidem sanctificantia precisè; sed ministrantia." Calov cites 1 Cor. 12:8 and James 3:15 as proof that the aptitude refers to "the Spirit the word of wisdom," as opposed to "the wisdom that descendeth not from above."

[115] John Quenstedt, *Theologia didactico-polemica sive systema Theologicum* (Wittenberg, 1685).

[116] John Quenstedt, *Theologia didactico-polemica: The Nature and Character of Theology*, trans. Luther Poellot (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 52–53.

[117] See Meisner, *PhS* 3:189–90.

the following clarification:

> When we call theology a God-given aptitude we do not mean such as is conferred on us by God directly and without all our zeal and labor, but by a God-given aptitude we mean with blessed Meisner (1) one that is opposed to aptitudes invented by human genius and zeal, (2) whose principle of knowledge is given from God, namely Holy Scripture, (3) whose object, which it sets forth, is truly divine, and (4) which is acquired not so much by our zeal and labor as by the supernatural grace of God and operation and illumination of the Holy Spirit through the Word.[118]

It should be noted that Quenstedt felt obligated not merely to clarify, but also improve upon Meisner's original meaning of θεόσδοτος in 1611. He hastens to claim as essential the very point that Meisner, in his original context, was equally determined to qualify as nonessential. Again, Meisner makes himself rather clear: "I argue these things lest anybody think that theology cannot be called a God-given aptitude unless it be in a regenerate subject."[119] By including "illumination of the Holy Spirit" as an essential part of his definition is to affirm specifically what Meisner intended to deny. In Quenstedt one perceives a significant terminological shift in the Lutheran orthodox tradition. The same shift is noticeable as well in the *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* published the next year by his younger contemporary at Jena, Johan Wilhelm Baier (1647–1695).[120] Yet, five years before Quenstedt (1685) and six years before Baier (1686) first published their updated definitions of θεόσδοτος, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) had already taken the next step.[121]

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[118] Quenstedt, *The Nature and Character of Theology*, 80.

[119] Meisner, *PhS* 1:459: "Haec eum in finem disputo, ne putetur Theologiam habitum θεόσδοτον nominari non posse, nisi in subiecto renato sit."

[120] Johan Wilhelm Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, ed. C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia, 1877), 1:69. According to Baiar, the "habitus" is "in substantia sua supernaturalem," and indeed, "per vires gratae et operationem Spiritus Sancti acquisitum."

[121] For a thorough study of the life and theological development of Philipp Jakob Spener, see Johannes Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986). See also F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965); Carter Lindberg, "Introduction," in *The Pietist Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Carter Lindberg (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

In his *Die allgemeine Gottes-Gelahrtheit aller gläubigen Christen und rechtschaffenen Theologen*, Spener maintains that all Christians and only Christians may truly be called theologians. Indeed, *theologia irregenitorum* was a contradiction of terms.[122] Spener's very influential work came in response to an attack appearing under the title, *Theosophia Horbio-Speneriana* (1679), from a certain Georg Konrad Dilfeld (c. 1630–1684), deacon in Nordhausen am Harz.[123] Prompted primarily by Spener's previous *Pia Desideria* (1675), but also in response to several correspondences with Spener and his father-in-law, Henrick Horbs, Dilfeld charges Spener with fanaticism and "crypto-Weigelianism." Insisting on a logical separation between a "*habitus theologiae*" and a "*habitus fidei*," he claims that Spener has conflated the two. Although Dilfeld does not cite any of his sources, Wallmann makes the case that his concept, which favors "*acquisitus*" over "*infusus*," was not representative of standard Lutheran orthodox teaching, but owes more to the influence of Calixtine theology.[124] In any case, the attack provided Spener an opportunity to defend his own position showing himself to be in line with the orthodox Lutheran tradition. What is more, he cites Meisner and appeals specifically to his teaching of "θεόσδοτος"

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[122] Philipp Jakob Spener, *Die allgemeine Gottesgelehrtheit aller gläubigen Christen und rechtschaffenen Theologen: auss Gottes Wort erwiesen, mit den Zeugnüssen vornehmer alter und neuer reiner Kirchen-Lehrer bestätiget, und der sogenannten Theosophiae Horbio-Spenerianae* (Frankfurt: Verlag Johann David Zunners, 1680), 185–87. See also the discussion concerning the relationship between theology and faith in Oswald Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, ed. Jeffrey G. Silcock and Mark C. Mattes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 33.

[123] Georg Konrad Dilfeld, *Theosophia Horbio-Speneriana oder sonderbahre Gottesgelahrtheit Henrici Horbs*, …und seines Schwagers Philippi Jacobi Speners . . . allen hochgelahrten und rechtschaffenden Theologis reiner evangelischer lutherischer Kirche zu fernern und reifern Nachsinnen für gestellet (Helmstedt? 1679). On Dilfeld, see Wallmann, *Spener*, 97. A thorough study of the debate between Spener and Dilfeld may be found in Walmann, "Spener und Dilfeld: Der Hintergrund des ersten pietistischen Streites," in *Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Zeitalter des Barock: gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 197–219.

[124] See Wallmann, "Spener und Dilfeld," 217–19. Dilfeld contends: "Theologiae nicht sey infusus quails olim fuit primorum parentum ante lapsum, Prophetarum & Apostolorum,; Sondern multo labore vigili studio & magna industriae acquisitus sey" (*Theosophia Horbio-Speneriana*, 20–21.) Wallmann traces the final phrase to Calixt's famous words from his *Epitome Theologiae* (Braunschweig, 1653: IIIr): "Hic habitus acquiritur studio et labore."

as evidence that the Lutheran tradition had always endorsed a *theologia regenitorum*.[125] He also

indicates in a letter to Dilfeld that he had proof in the form of written correspondence of seventy

credible Lutheran theologians who supported his view that "new birth" is a necessary condition

of being a theologian.[126] With Spener and those who followed him, the Meisneran term,

θεόσδοτος, had come to signify "regenerated" and was strictly *autopraxis*. While it is difficult to

determine the extent to which Spener had begun to influence the Lutheran dogmatic tradition in

the 1680s, by the turn of the eighteenth century pietism had indeed become an intellectual force

to be reckoned with.[127] A brief comparison of two representatives of late Lutheran orthodoxy,

who were clearly shaped by pietism in one way or another, will shed some light on the

developing question.

One theologian, David Hollaz (1648–1713), a Lutheran pastor who never held a university

post, certainly bears the influence of Spener. Although he never mentions "the pietists," he

exhibits in his own theology their penchant for analyzing the psychological and cognitive

processes of "the theologian" himself.[128] In the prolegomena of his *Examen Theologicum*

Acroamaticum (1707), which is perhaps the last great work of Lutheran dogmatics ever written,

Hollaz goes to lengths comparing the two kinds of theologians, the *theologus irregenitus*, by

which he understands a religious hypocrite engaged in pure "*mataeologia*" (idle knowledge of

religious matters) and the *theologus renatus*.[129] His own definition comes as a response to the

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[125] Spener, *Die allgemeine Gottesgelehrtheit*, 185–87.

[126] Letter: Spener an Dilfeld 27. 1. 1683 (Theol. Bedenken 3, 495), cited in Wallmann, "Spener und Dilfeld," 200.

[127] K. James Stein, *Philipp Jakob Spener: Pietist Patriarch* (Chicago: Covenant, 1986), 104–8.

[128] Preus, *Theology*, 1:227: "By the time of Hollaz theological prolegomena had taken another step backwards by becoming too involved in speculation regarding the psychological and cognitive processes of the theologian."

[129] David Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1763), 30, question 29. For a thorough discussion on the nature of theology and being a theologian, see pages 1–32, but especially questions the 18–

question, "*Quid est theologus?*" He distinguishes between a theologian "in general" (*sensu generali*) and a theologian "in specific" (*sensu specialii*). By the former he means "a man who is rendered capable by a theological aptitude to explain and defend the heavenly truth." The latter, whom he considers "the more excellent" (*excellentiori*), is "a regenerate theologian" (*theologus renatus*). Hollaz effectually flips Meisner's definition upside down, supplants the customary "θεόσδοτος" with "*renatus*," and renders the generic *habitus* as a mere theoretical knowledge without any necessary practical consequences. Indeed, while he does not go as far as to say that all Christians are theologians, the practical nature of theology, including the aptitude to teach others ("*aptus ad docendum alios*") is bound up with the personal possession of saving faith (*fiducia*).[130]

Another theologian, John George Neumann (1661–1709), a "rigidly orthodox Lutheran"[131] wrote his most important work, *Theologia Aphoristica* (published posthumously in 1718) during his tenure as professor of theology at Wittenberg (1692–1706).[132] His prolegomena was directed primarily in response to Spener and the pietists who viewed "theology" in terms of a "cognitive illumination" equal to faith and separate from any scholarly exertion or specially acquired qualifications.[133] Neumann remains true to the Lutheran tradition insofar as he defines theology as a *habitus practicus* θεόσδοτος, however he adds that, besides being divinely given, which was

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32. Hollaz jusxtaposes "true theology" with the following of eight forms of "mataeologia:" "ethnica," "turcica," "judaica," "samaritana," "haeretica," "schismatica," "sycretistica," and "sceptica" (29–30).

[130] Hollaz, *Examen*, 12: "Theologus sensu generali dicitur homo instructus habitu theologico, quo promtus redditur ad veritatuem caelestem explicandam & defendam (a). Sensu speciali & excellentiori theologus dicitur renatus, veritati primae, mysteria fidei revelanti, in motum praebens assensum, eique speciali fiducia innitens, aptus ad docendum alios, & ad redarguendum contradicentes (b)."

[131] For a discussion of Neumann's theology concept, see Preus, *Theology*, 1:202–29.

[132] John George Neumann, *Theologia Aphoristica* (Wittenberg: Zimmermann, 1718).

[133] See Philipp Jakob Spener, *Consilia Et Judicia Theologia* (Frankfurt a. M., 1709) 3, 700.

not in itself a debatable point between orthodoxy and pietism, the *habitus* was also acquired

(*acquisitus*) through a mastery of the sacred texts. In no way has Neumann hereby taken over the

Helmstedt concept, however. Rather, he feels compelled to clarify what every other orthodox

Lutheran dogmatician before him was sure to explain, namely, that the *habitus* is not

coterminous spiritual enlightenment.[134] Not only does Neumann insist on a logical distinction

between faith and regeneration, but he is even bold to assert, as Balthasar Meisner did in 1611,

that theology is "*irregenitorum.*" Defending his position "against the fanatics and against the

pietists," he clarifies that he is not speaking "falsely, literally, or equivocally," but rather

"logically, metaphysically, and spiritually."[135] In other words, Neumann is not promoting

mataeologia, much less is he suggesting that a theologian should be a heathen or a hypocrite.

Rather, he is drawing the same logical distinction that Meisner and Calov, too, had made

between faith and that particular kind of mental virtue that qualifies a person to teach.[136]

Although Meisner and Calov were responding to Keckermann, and not specifically to "fanatics,"

Neumann uses the same argument to exclude any kind of "theology" that consisted merely of a

personal commitment to divine mysteries without primary concern for its proper end—the

salvation of others.[137]

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[134] Recall, for instance, Quenstedt, *Theologia*, 80: "When we call theology a God-given aptitude we do not mean such as is conferred on us by God directly and without all our zeal and labor."

[135] Neumann, *Theologia Aphoristica*, Aphorismo VI, 7–8: "Notitia Theologica, ejusmodi irregeniti, non falsa, literalis, & aequivoce dicta, sed *Logice* aeque ac Metaphysice, spiritualiterque vera, verique adeo neminis Theologia est."

[136] Indeed, the nature of "faith" was the deeper issue for Neumann. The preface to his posthumous *Theologia Aphoristica* explains that the chief difference between Neumann (orthodoxy) and Spener (pietism) concerned the nature of faith. While Neumann taught that justifying faith was alive when it received the merits of Christ, Spener taught that such justifying faith was already alive before receiving the merits of faith.

[137] Preus, *Theology*, 1:228–29.

Assessment of Meisner's Practical Theology

In 1733, over a century after Meisner's death, Johann Georg Walch summarized the nature

of the question at issue: "Does one need to be born again in order to be a true theologian?"[138]

Considered apart from the sober-philosophical context in which Meisner urged a strictly logical

and metaphysical distinction between "theology" and "faith," it is difficult to appreciate its

importance for the history of Lutheran orthodoxy. Robert Preus is explicit that none of the

theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy adhered to the idea of *theologia irregenitorum*, not even

Meisner.[139] He writes:

> To Pietism an unregenerate theologian was a contradiction in terms. If Gerhard,
> Dannhauer, and Calov would not have said exactly this, they would at least have
> insisted that an unregenerate theologian is an impossibility according to 1 Cor. 2:14.
> These earlier theologians, as also the pietists, were deeply concerned over
> maintaining a pious clergy, and the notion of theology being practiced by unbelievers
> was unthinkable and scandalous to them.[140]

Wallmann, too, makes the case that Lutheran orthodoxy shared Luther's supreme concern

for a theology of the regenerate, and so draws the trajectory from Spener back to Luther through

John Gerhard.[141] Indeed, there were but two paths a theologian could go by, two solutions to

Walch's summary question resulting in two mutually exclusive theological programs. However,

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[138] Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und Theologische Einleitung in die Religions- Streitigkeiten der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1733), 1:566: "Die Frage, so untersucht wurde, betraf hauptsächlich diesen Punct: ob zu einem wahrem Theologo erfordert werde, daß er müsse wiedergeboren seyn?"

[139] See Preus, *Theology*, 1:206, footnote 207: "Calov is not teaching a theology of the unregenerate here, nor do any of the theologians of his day. This disastrous teaching came later as the orthodox Lutherans battled with Pietism." See Quenstedt, *Ekthesis* 6–15 (I, 16–17); Bechmann, *Theologia Polemica*, 49; Meisner, *PhS*, 3:244; John Musaeus, *lntroductio in Theologiam* (Jena, 1679), 126.

[140] Preus, *Theology*, 1:232. Preus adds: "There was no need for Neumann to have gone so far. Bechmann, a generation earlier, had answered the pietistic error without falling into the opposite extreme by merely showing the difference between theology and faith. So had Hollaz, even with all his weaknesses on this point." See Friedemann Bechmann, *Theologia Polemica*, 49; and Hollaz, *Examen*, Prol. I, q. 29 (I, 33–32).

[141] Wallmann, *Theologiebegriff*, 1–4; 71–75.

as far as the term is properly concerned, Wallmann could just as well have linked Georg Konrad Dilfeld to Meisner, or Meisner and Neumann to the Helmstedt definition he traced from Melanchthon through Calixt to the rationalist school of Johann Solomo Semler. Looking from the perspective of the end of the century, there is no doubt that Preus and Wallmann have correctly diagnosed the nature of the debate. Calixt's definition of "faith" was no more the "*fiducia*" understood by his orthodox opponents than his syllogistic theology was truly "practical." Yet, as far as the terminology is concerned, Calixt did not endorse a *theologia irregenitorum* any more than Spener himself. Although the position would become commonplace in the universities of Germany through the influence of Semler and Friedrich Schleiermacher, Oswald Bayer is not entirely correct when he asserts: "The distinction between faith and theology is an invention of modernity."[142] It is, at any rate, a fact of historical irony that Balthasar Meisner, who famously earned himself the moniker of "*Beati Mites*," did indeed go so far as to make this unthinkable distinction, although he certainly modified his position later on. Moreover, Spener who was the one chiefly responsible for equating the terms, "theology" and "faith," attested to Meisner's utmost concern for a pious clergy by having the latter's *Pia Desideria* published in 1679.

Neither Spener nor Wallmann nor Preus is wrong concerning Meisner's practical-theological commitment. However, they will not find their evidence by looking to theology concepts modeled after Mesiner's because the former are operating with a definition of "θεόσδοτος" that changed after the latter's death. Calov's reticence to use the term suggests that it had already come to signify something closer to *renatus* and, therefore, did not serve the argument he was making (and Meisner had previously made) against Keckermann's "religious

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[142] Oswald Bayer, *Theology*, 111.

prudence." Quenstedt's amelioration of Meisner's original conception, too, suggests that the significance of the term had already changed. A category shift had taken place. The practical concern that attended the idea at its conception had given way to an altogether different kind of practical concern.[143] Later Lutherans, including Quenstedt, Johann Baier, David Hollaz, the North American tradition of Walther, Pieper, and J. T. Mueller, and many other Lutheran theologians down to the present day, interpret θεόσδοτος as embracing *autopraxis* and expressly excluding the *irregenitorum*.[144] While Meisner's thumbprint may be found on the more profound and philosophical analysis of Calov, it is all but entirely lost in the case of Hollaz. What, in the final analysis, accounts for the relative lack of influence that Meisner's theology concept had on later orthodoxy?

Although it was not Gerhard, but Meisner, who first drafted a Lutheran conception of theology as *habitus practicus*, Gerhard's "*Proemium de Natura Theologiae*" of 1625 would become the normative summary and pattern for future conceptions. This should not be surprising since the *Proemium* was preserved in the form of his *Loci Theologici*, which remains to this day the most excellent piece of theological work ever produced in the Lutheran orthodox tradition. Since Gerhard wrote his piece after the philosophical groundwork had already been laid, his neatly presented exposition is much more lucid and proved significantly more accessible than

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[143] See Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum: Theologie und Frommigkeit bei Martin Moller* (1547-1606) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 235: "Der dritte und wichtigste theologische Aspekt von Praxis ist der *ethisch-religiöse*."

[144] See John T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis, Concordia, 1934), 33–34: "Unbelieving ministers or teachers do not deserve the name of theologian; and in the sense of Holy Scripture they are not theologians, though they may have apprehended the doctrines of the Word of God intellectually and be able to present them clearly and correctly. In other words, there is no *theologia irregenitorum*, or theology of the unregenerate, since the souls of the unconverted and unbelieving are not inhabited and actuated by the Holy Ghost, but by the 'prince of this world,' that is, Satan. Eph 2,2. Holy Scripture always describes a true minister of Christ as a penitent, believing child of God, who ascribes to divine grace both his sufficiency and his call into the ministry. 2 Cor 3,5; 2 Tim 2,1ff. A true minister of Christ, or theologian, is therefore a sanctified believer."

pages 431 to 464 of the second chapter of one of Meisner's earliest disputations. Consequently, Gerhard's ambiguous definition, embracing both *auto-* and *allopraxis*, won the day and left room for a reinterpretation of θεόσδοτος as *renatus*. When later dogmaticians picked it up the question they were responding to Calixt's "humanization of theology"[145] that made Gerhard's definition more attractive, or at least safer. Although Calov certainly improved on Gerhard's lack of emphasis on "practice," after Calov the practical nature of the *habitus* was no longer a matter of dispute. The Calvinists had generally accepted the argument by then, and besides, theologians were occupied with new challenges, new ideas, new theological deviations, as they faced atheists, Quakers, and fanatics who questioned whether theology could be considered a *habitus* in the first place.[146]

Added to the surpassing influence of Gerhard is the reality that Meisner's proposed *Systema* was not completed. His untimely death in 1626 was followed by a lag in production of significant dogmatic works that warranted theological prolegomena. Meanwhile, the horrors of the Thirty Years War underscored the necessity of bringing the common people up to speed on the significance of theological controversies. More important than the theoretical disputations, which persisted all the same within the walls of the university, was the need to address the kinds of "theoretical defects" Meisner cites in his *Pia Desideria*. His colleague, Nicholas Hunnius, would indeed fulfill Meisner's desire to have a short tract written on what every Christian needs to know for salvation.[147] In any case, it is not likely that the finer points of Meisner's

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[145] Wallmann, *Theologiebegriff*, 113, cited in Preus, *Theology*, vol. 1:155.

[146] Preus, *Theology*, 1:227.

[147] Meisner, B*althasari Meisneri Pia Desideria, Paulo ante beatum obitum ab ipso manifestata et delineata, ac in simul Consilia Theologica, de quibusdam Defectibus in & ab Ecclesiis Evangelicorum tollendis* (Frankfurt a.M: 1679), 17. See Nicolas Hunnius, "Kurzer Inhalt dessen, was ein Christ von göttlichen und geistlichen Dingen zu wissen und zu glauben bedürftig aus Gottes Wort gefaßt" (Wittenberg, 1625).

metaphysical distinction between a theologian and a believer could have been long preserved in the latter half of the century when the practical concern for pious clergy was much more pressing. Yes, the Socinians would later prompt Calov to cultivate Lutheran metaphysics anew, along with a pronounced emphasis on cognitive psychology, or "*gnostologia*."[148] Still, Meisner's case against Keckermann, though picked up by Calov and Neumann, was otherwise lost on a generation that sought knowledge and enlightenment increasingly in subjective experience and introspection. The "nature" of theology had become disproportionately psychological, and due consideration of the anthropological states (*totus homo*) had given way to a growing fascination with the order of salvation (*ordo salutis*).[149]

Conclusion

What is practical about Balthasar Meisner's theology? Elke Axmacher observes three distinct categories of "*praxis*" in the vernacular of seventeenth century Lutheranism: scientific-theoretical, homiletical, and ethical-religious.[150] Her typology is helpful for gauging a theologian's intentions in a given context and serves the historian to avoid confusing categories. What is practical in one category is not necessarily practical in another. A disputation in the university, or better, an analytical *Systema*, may be the best means for demonstrating the practical nature of theology as a *habitus practicus* θεόσδοτος, but this form may not replace an evangelical sermon in a liturgical setting, a catechetical instruction in a school, or a devotion featuring the right *praxis pietatis* in a Christian home. As a pioneer of the orthodox Lutheran theology concept, Meisner was writing strictly on the "scientific-theoretical" order of academic

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[148] Appold, *Vocatio*, 74.

[149] See Max Koch, *Der Ordo Salutis in der Alt-Lutherischen Dogmatik* (Berlin: Verlag von Alexander Duncker, 1899).

[150] Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum,*, 233–38.

disciplines. Coming at the question as a philosopher doing his reasonable propaedeutic duty, his "Ethical Questions" of the first volume of *Philosophia sobria* in 1611 would form the basis of furture normative Lutheran theological prolegomena. His initial question of whether theology was theoretical or practical, and his own solution of a "*habitus* θεόσδοτος *mixtus*," precipitated a tension between a *theologia regenitorum* and *irregenirorum*. If this tension is understood according to Wallmann's scheme, it may be said to have constituted a clash between Axemacher's first and the third categories, the latter being the "ethical-religious" aspect of "*praxis*."

As discussed above in chapter five, under the heading, "*Meisner's Contribution to the Lutheran Devotional Tradition,*" the same theologian who proposed a *theologia irregenitorum* in 1611 had made it clear enough in his devotional writings that a true theologian should be a Christian pastor—pious, believing, and abounding in good works, and this not by logical necessity, but in fact. He quoted Luther to that effect: "[H]e is not a theologian who knows and teaches many things, but who lives sacredly and theologically." Meisner was not referring to the nature of theology here, but the manner in which a practicing theologian ought to consider himself: "Whoever you are, and wherever you are, be pious, and you will be great, indeed, the greatest."[151]In this practical-devotional aspect, and especially through his emphasis on *praxis pietatis*, he resembled Spener more closely than many of the theologians who would pick up his theology concept after his death. He epitomized what Spener meant by θεόσδοτος—a theologian ought to be *renatus*—even if this was not Meisner's point in coining the term. Neither Spener

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[151] Meisner, *Meditationes in Dominicalia*, "Dedication," A4b: "Luther noster, ut solet omnia, pulcherrimè scribit in Προσφωνήσις ad studiosos, quùm Psalterii praelectiones inchoaturus esset Tom. 2. Lat. Ego hoc video, non esse Theologum, qui magna sciat, & multa doceat, sed qui sanctè & Theologicè vivat: A qua vita quò sum alienor, eo magis mihi displicet mea profesio. Quod autem ille de Theologis id non incommodè videtur dici posse de quibus vis eminere cupientibus. Verè mihi nemo in quocunque vitae genere magnus est, nisi cum magna pietatas. Quisquis igitur es, & ubicunque es, pius esto, & magnus eris, imò maximus."

nor any of his followers, except, implicitly, the mystic historian Gottfried Arnold, ever classified this Wittenberg theologian as "dead orthodox."

Still, it is important not to miss the practical purpose with which Meisner suggested the term, θεόσδοτος, to Lutheran theology in its original "scientific-theoretical" context. If his metaphysical style does not serve today's reader well, it should be kept in mind that Meisner was not especially comfortable with his definition either. Being the first theologian—and still a philosophy student in 1611—to put the scholastic textbook to the test of Lutheran orthodoxy, he went about this task only tentatively and nervously. He would later improve on his description of the *habitus* "*mixtus*" without abandoning his previous logic. He also retained the original incentive of his erstwhile *theologia irregenitorum* by couching its signification within a careful description of "*practicus*" in terms of *allopraxis*. A blanket identification of θεόσδοτος with "*regenitus*," as occurs in the case of Spener, or even in later Lutheran orthodoxy, fails to appreciate the Lutheran tradition that Meisner represented, and this despite his reliance on Aristotelian vocabulary. Meisner's focus on the *subject* of theology reflects the influence of Luther himself. Beginning with his Psalms Lectures in the early 1530s, which anticipated the restoration of the disputation at Wittenberg, Luther was realizing the value of making clear definitions and distinctions of theological terms. Concerning "theology," he writes: "For the proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and lost and God the justifier and Savior of sinful men."[152] A conservative attempt to safeguard the doctrine of the gospel called for a further analysis of Luther's twofold subject. Meisner extended it into three subjects: "*subjectum inhaesionis*" (the theologian's cognition) "*subjectum operationis*" (man in his various states) and

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[152] Luther, *Enarratio Psalmi LI*. 1532, WA 40, 2: 327–28: "Nam Theologiae proprium subjectum est homo peccati reus ac perditus et Deus iustificans ac salvator hominis peccatoris."

"*subjectum tractationis*" (divine doctrine applied and appropriated). Rather than reenacting or reappropriating an unrepeatable religious experience, he proposed a *Systema* that would codify the doctrine of justification, which was the center of Luther's reformational theology.

Notwithstanding the differences noted in Axmacher's typology, at the heart of Meisner's scientific-theoretical theological *praxis* was a genuine *praxis pietatis*. As with Luther's orthodoxy "*en Deum*,"[153] so with Meisner's emergent theology concept, piety begins with doctrine; practice begins with theory. In 1611 he called for a distinction between two equally divine parts of theology, namely, theory and practice, θεολογία and θεοσέβεια. The one is "γνῶζις," or "true sense concerning God," because it is from God and comes through his word. The other is "πρᾶξις," or "pious worship towards God" because it is combined with his gracious inhabitation.[154] In 1623 he changed his definition of "*habitus practicus*" to *allopraxis* by converting all of the theologian's theoretical knowledge into the practice of leading others to salvation. He thus ensured what Luther and all the dogmaticians taught. There is no theory that is not practical, no orthodoxy that does not produce piety and devotion towards God. Quenstedt concludes his own study of "theology in general," by citing this critical insight from Meisner's *Philosophia sobria*, volume three:

> Let the words of blessed Meisner be noted: "However much theologians discuss some things that seem to be merely theoretic, yet one must not therefore think that the final end itself of theology is theory or contemplation, for we do not agree to that but direct it [theology] to activity, to the attainment of salvation, or to a common end."[155]

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[153] Luther, *Operationes in Psalmos* 1519–1521, *WA* 528.

[154] Meisner, *PhS*, 1:458: Proindè accuratè distinguendum inter θεολογίαν & θεοσέβειαν. Aliud enim est *verus de Deo sensus,* aliud *pius erga Deum cultus. Hic* πρᾶξιν, *ille* γνῶζιν denotat. Utrumque divinum est, sed diverso respectu: γνῶζις, quia Dei & per Deum vel eius verbum, πρᾶξις quia à Deo & cum Deo, hoc est, cum gratiosa eius inhabitatione coniunctum est.

[155] Quenstedt, *The Nature and Character of Theology*, 85. Quenstedt is quoting from Meisner, *PhS*, 3:162: "Quantumvis igitur quaedam tractentur a Theologis, quae videntur esse mere theoretica; non tamen ob id putandum est, quod ipse Theologiae finis ultimus sit theoria vel contemplatio, siquidem in ista non acquiescimus; sed eam ad

This is a summary of Meisner's practical orthodoxy: "Whoever does not always strive towards and consider this end in all of his theory does not deserve to be called a true theologian."[156] What could be more practical than an evangelical theology in which all theory is truly practical and all teaching leads to salvation?

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operationem ad salutis adeptionem velut ad communem finem dirigimus."

[156] Meisner, *PhS*, 3:167: "Hunc finem, qui non semper intendit, nec in omni sua theoria respicit, is veri Theologi nomen non meretur."

CONCLUSION

MEISNER'S CONTRIBUTION TO LUTHERAN ORTHODOXY

"Auffs erst ist der unterscheid für zu nennen, das ein ander ding ist Ampt und person odder werck und thetter."[1]

Restatement of Thesis and Summary

This dissertation has attempted to show how Balthasar Meisner embodied the practical spirit of Lutheran orthodoxy in his person, life, and literary production during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. He did this by taking the latest philosophical and pedagogical developments into the service of preserving Luther's evangelical theology, while avoiding the scholastic tendency to subordinate "theology" to the philosophical choice of either theory or practice. In so doing, he reinforced the normative influence of Lutheran orthodoxy in Saxony for the remainder of the seventeenth century.

Chapter one introduced the need for a current study of Lutheran orthodoxy in light of the historiographical landscape of seventeenth-century Lutheran studies. Two centuries of scholarship had been dominated by Gottfried Arnold's *Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* (1699/1700) with its momentous assumption that Luther and Melanchthon, or therefore, the Reformation and Lutheran orthodoxy, were inherently contradictory movements. Although the tide of scholarship changed with the publication of Hans Leube's *Reformideen* (1924), which pointed out the practical interests of early Lutheran orthodoxy, Karl Holl's "Luther Renaissance," well

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[1] Martin Luther, *Ob Kriegesleute auch in seligem Stande sein können*, WA 19:624.

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underway, was popularizing the view that Lutheran orthodoxy was incapable of reduplicating

Luther's experiential theology through mere intellectual "assent." Besides the source-based

studies of Lutheran doctrinal theology as may be found in the latter half of the twentieth century

(e.g., Robert Preus, Heinz Ratschow, and Kenneth Appold), most recent research has focused on

the orthodox development of the nature of theology and theological method in the context of the

changes taking place at the University of Wittenberg towards the turn of the seventeenth century.

It is here, where Balthasar Meisner has received the most treatment, and here is also where this

dissertation has found its contextual point of entry.

Chapter two explored the semantic field of the paradoxical phrase, "practical orthodoxy." It

was discovered that those post-reformation theologians who regarded themselves as "orthodox"

understood "orthodoxy" in terms of a concerted effort to preserve the evangelical consensus of

the Lutheran Reformation. They understood well that a theology that stands or falls with its

scholastic character, be it medieval, Jesuit, or variations of Reformed "Protestant Scholasticism,"

depends for its ostensive orthodoxy on the perfection of its scholastic character. The scholastic

method thus threatens to usurp the normative features of orthodoxy through the imposition of a

false choice between "theory" and "practice," with the former corresponding to disciplines

having to do with *knowing* (science) and the latter corresponding to *doing* (ethics). Martin Luther

refused to play the game, but instead referred the entire theological enterprise to its subject of

contemplation, to wit, man the sinner and God the justifier. Such "true speculation," or

"orthodoxy towards God," inherent in Luther's practical theology, is borne out in imitation of

King David who repented of his sins and confided in the mercy of God, and this necessarily

produced the good works required of Christians. Balthasar Meisner's challenge, therefore, was to

preserve Luther's anti-scholastic and practical theology, even making the "synchronic standards

of science" to serve that end, while simultaneously resisting the scholastic trap with its false philosophical choice between theory and practice.

Chapter three focused on Meisner, his person and life, and the political world in which he contributed to the construction of Lutheran orthodoxy at the University of Wittenberg in the age of confessionalization. Inasmuch as the Reformation needed to accommodate new church-political realities as well as compensate for the abolition of scholastic curricula at the university, it was in many ways an effort to normalize religion in Saxony. Hence, notwithstanding the macro-historical proposals of Heinz Schilling and Hartmut Lehmann to the effect that the theologian was a mere agent of the state, it is evident that the success of the electors' state-building agendas depended on the confessional consensus that Lutheran orthodoxy understood itself to be. Since the beginning of the Reformation, the Saxon elector was able to reform institutions and later, under the provisions of the Peace of Augsburg since 1555, assert his right of reform, in proportion to the university's ability to clarify the church's theological position. It thus became the function of the university to further the consensus needed for unifying Saxony. According to Meisner, and echoing the proposals of Jacob Andreae a generation earlier, theology was to reign supreme—it was to be the *regina disciplinarum*—if the university was going to contribute to the good of church and society. Such a theological task was by no means interchangeable with social disciplining, however. The confessionalization of Saxony went hand in hand with the university's practical purpose of leading sinners to salvation. In this sense, Meisner's theological curriculum, which aimed to be evangelical and practical, comported well with the elector's policies. In his *Pia Desideria*, dictated shortly before his death in 1626, Meisner indicates theoretical and practical defects as well as improvements he would like to have seen in church and society. Here, he clearly sees it as his responsibility to admonish the political

estate to pious living and to establish schools and institutions that would serve the good of the church. Indeed, as the case of Meisner shows, the elector was a theologian's prince to the same degree as the theologian was a prince's pastor.

Chapter four examined the context in which Meisner manned the walls of orthodoxy alongside his orthodox colleagues defending the Lutheran consensus against the onslaught of Jesuits, Calvinists, and Socinians. Although he was as dedicated as his Lutheran contemporaries, and perhaps, for the sake of bringing clarity to the controverted issues, even more eager to engage in public controversy than his colleagues, he exercised remarkable restraint in his polemical writings and offered the kind of clarity that revealed the heart of a practical theologian. Intending to function primarily as an educator of common folk, and therefore only parenthetically should he be regarded as a political propagandist, Meisner reached out with a pastor's zeal to Lutherans in foreign territories where the protection of princes was lacking. In the case of Catholic theologian and court preacher of Palatinate-Neuburg, Jacob Reihing, he enjoyed the success of making a friend out of a foe and winning a devout Catholic to the Lutheran religion through his appeal to the Scriptures and the Christian conscience. He was also privileged to preach several sermons emphasizing the Christmas gospel of universal grace to the Lutherans of Brandenburg in the face of the "second reformation" that had been introduced there by the late John Sigismund. He clarified the theological presuppositions of the Socinian heresy so well that his "Brief Consideration of Photinianism" drew more critical response than any other anti-Socinian writing of his time. The greatest merit of this writing, however, was its success in demonstrating the inherent practicality and goal-oriented character of Lutheran doctrinal positions. In a word, Meisner's polemical writings bear the mark of a practical theologian in that he engaged the controversies of his day by means of providing much needed clarity without

undue acrimony or bitterness. Celebrated at his death as the "Joshua of the evangelical Church," Balthasar Meisner also lived up to his moniker of "*Beati Mites*."

Chapter five considered the chief threats facing Wittenberg orthodoxy from within the Lutheran camp during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. On the one hand, Meisner was forced to reckon with "fanatics," so reputed because they identified with certain extra-scriptural mystical teachings at the expense of theological clarity. On the other hand, he dealt with the academic elites at the University of Helmstedt, and especially the famous logician, Cornelius Martini, who argued that Scripture could not be understood without the use of formal logic. Although these two intramural foes found themselves on opposite ends of the theory-practice spectrum, they were united, at least in the case of the northern universities of Helmstedt and Rostock, in their opposition to Wittenberg orthodoxy and the magisterial Saxon Council. This anti-orthodox sentiment is all the more intriguing considering that it was not in reaction to correct doctrine that Johann Arndt took to writing his controversial *True Christianity* between 1605 and 1610—indeed, Arndt had always regarded himself a devotee of the Formula of Concord—but rather in response to what Helmstedt pastor, Heinrich Julius Strube, later labeled as "epicureanism" on the part of the Helmstedt philosophical faculty. In the question of Arndt's orthodoxy, the Saxon theologians issued a *Gutachten* in his favor. Yet, while the devotional tracts of Gerhard and Meisner were themselves contributions to the Lutheran devotional tradition represented by Arndt, they may well be taken as tacit criticisms of the latter's mystical approach to Lutheran theology inasmuch as the former made explicit the practical use of the theological topics. Meisner's practical works, consisting of devotional tracts and dissertations highlighting the doctrine of sanctification and mystical union with Christ, are highly instructive as they show the practical nature of Lutheran doctrine without sacrificing the precision and clarity

characteristic of his academic writings. Thus, Meisner embodied the practical spirit of orthodoxy by investing the theory of doctrine in the practice of life.

Chapter six considered the general question of whether philosophy is useful for theology, and to what extent. First, it explored standard attempts in the history of theology to place philosophy in its proper relation to theology. Then it observed the conflicting approach among the self-styled disciples of Luther and Melanchthon, respectively, to the beneficial use of the up-and-coming Aristotelian philosophy in theological discourse. Against the background of the question of "double truth," or whether theology and philosophy adhere to distinct ontological and epistemological criteria, the chapter examined the arguments Meisner put forth in his *Philosophia sobria* of 1611. Meisner maintained that philosophy and theology could enjoy a fruitful relationship as long as they adhered to a single ontological basis, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, theology defined its own terms so as to remain in the driver's seat. As a theologian and a philosopher, Meisner maintained that philosophy is useful for theology to the extent that it is subjected to theology. When theology is master over all other disciplines, theology becomes a practical undertaking, oriented to the saving of souls and the nurturing of faith and good works. The function of orthodoxy, therefore, was to ensure the supremacy of theology over all the other academic discipline, while at the same time granting to each discipline its proper function within its own sphere. In this way, rather than philosophy exerting a material influence on theology, as was previously suggested by the standard historiography of Lutheran orthodoxy, the case of Meisner shows that theology had a formal influence over philosophy producing a "sober philosophy."

Chapter seven described Meisner's struggle to define "theology" as a practical enterprise in the same context as the previous chapter. While the writing of formal theological prolegomena

was not yet commonplace among Lutheran theologians when Meisner began studying at the University of Wittenberg in 1602, the Reformed had already rehabilitated the scholastic terminology that the Lutherans would later take over. John Gerhard is often credited as the pioneer of Lutheran theological prolegomena in his *Proemium* of 1625. However, Meisner had offered a full treatment of the nature of theology in volume one (1611) and again in volume three (1623) of his *Philosophia sobria*. Meisner's definition of theology as a "habitus θεόσδοτος" was the first successful attempt on the part of Lutheran theologians faithful to the Formula of Concord to define "theology" in terms of an intellectual virtue, that is, a habituated and deeply rooted quality of the mind. His successive attempts originated largely as a critique of Bartholomew Keckermann's "practical theology," by which the Reformed philosopher understood a "religious prudence for coming to salvation." Meisner could not accept such a "practical theology" because it suggested to him that a person attained salvation not through the "dogmas of faith," but through the habituation of intellectual virtues. Therefore, in 1611 he proposed that theology is a *habitus mixtus*, thus making a distinction between true knowledge of God (theory) and pious worship towards God (practice). Meisner was never comfortable with this initial definition of theology. Although it was technically correct, it simply juxtaposed two mutually supplementary goals: one theoretical and another practical. In 1623 he changed his definition of theology to a "*habitus practicus*" by converting all of the theologian's theoretical knowledge into the practice of leading others to salvation. While subsequent generations of Lutheran orthodoxy did not necessarily use all of Meisner's vocabulary the way he intended it, he preserved for them in sober language what Luther and all the Lutheran dogmaticians had taught: there is no theory that is not practical, no orthodoxy that does not produce piety and devotion towards God.

Concluding Comments: Whether Theologians, Too, Can Be Saved

This dissertation has been working against the grain of popular historiography dealing with the period of Lutheran orthodoxy, and especially the supposed dichotomy between Luther and Lutheran orthodoxy. Whether a distinction is being drawn between the spirit of Luther and the spirit of Melanchthon (Gottfried Arnold), between select theologians of the first quarter of the seventeenth century and the developing school of Lutheran orthodoxy they represented (August Tholuck), or between Lutheran theology proper and the relentless process of state building (Heinz Schilling), one is often dealing with an exaggeration of external influences on Lutheran orthodoxy without consideration of the personal goals orthodox theologians aimed to accomplish in their own historical context. For instance, the real problem facing Lutheran theology at the turn of the seventeenth century was not a "crisis of piety", as Winfred Zeller has suggested. What concerned those who were actually practicing theology in the early seventeenth century, and especially the academic theologians, was the relationship between one's own personal piety and the theological profession itself. As the ecclesiastical ministry became increasingly vital to the legal constitution of the state in the years leading up to the Thirty Years War, theologians were forced to ask the question: What is theology? This was an altogether self-reflexive question. On the one hand, it was to ask: *Quid ago*? What am I supposed to do? And yet on the other hand it was to ask: *Quo vado*? What am I supposed to achieve? It was thus more accurately a crisis of profession or vocation.

A difficult question lingering beneath every successive attempt to define theology throughout the seventeenth and well into the eighteenth century had to do with whether an unregenerate person could retain the *habitus* required to teach theology, or whether the *habitus* depended on the theologian's having saving faith. In 1611, Meisner answered in the affirmative using the example of King David who lost his faith through mortal sin and yet did not therefore

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immediately lose the mental facility to teach theology. While he abandoned the notion of a

theologia irregenitorum by 1623, he nevertheless maintained that the God-given aptitude to

teach doctrine was for the purpose of leading others, and not primarily oneself, to salvation.

Indeed, he argued, if such intellectual virtues were interchangeable with "saving faith," then

being smart and capable of doing things were sufficient to save a person. On the other hand, if

true and saving *fiducia* were not required for the theological profession, then theology runs the

danger of becoming a mere intellectual exercise, a function of external control, void of the Holy

Spirit, without consideration of its divine origin and spiritual benefit. Hence, the tension between

the theologian's vocation and his own personal salvation persists.

In his tract, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can be Saved" (1526) Martin Luther offers counsel to

the Christian soldier by elaborating upon two fundamental distinctions: first, between an office

and the man who holds it, or between a work and the person who does it. Second, he

distinguishes between such an external work and the righteousness that justifies in the sight of

God, which only faith in Christ can do. However, Luther concludes: "This office or work, though

in itself godly and just, can nevertheless become evil and unjust if the person or doer is not good

or just or does not do it justly."[2] Therefore, the soldier ought to be willing to perform his duty for

the sake of civil virtue and with a good conscience. May this principle be extended to the

vocation of a theologian as well? If theology is "*praxis*" comparable to a soldier's civil

righteousness, then, like any good work, the theologian's practice is certainly justified by its

external functionality. Like a soldier who kills, Luther goes on, "a good doctor in the case of so

great and serious a sickness that he must amputate or destroy a hand, foot, ear, or eye to save the

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[2] *WA* 19:624: "Denn es kan wol ein ampt odder werck gut und recht sein an yhm selber, das doch böse und unrecht ist, wenn die person odder thetter nicht gut odder recht ist odder treits nicht recht."

body," appears "dreadful and unmerciful."[3] Likewise, it might be adduced, a theologian must engage the enemy; he must cut with his distinctions and destroy with his well-founded conclusions. So is the case with normative orthodoxy. Of course, such a person ought to be informed, not by a desire to "amputate or destroy," but by a good conscience and with due piety towards God. Like a soldier, so also a theologian must grapple with an apparent contradiction between his vocation and personal life, between theology and faith.

Yet, in the final analysis, theology is not like war at all. When the battle is over, the soldier goes home to his family and ceases to engage the enemy. In his heart, if it is towards God, he takes no continuous pleasure in killing; he was merely doing his duty—joyfully, yes, but as a grateful functionary. The theologian, however, cannot simply hang up his uniform when he gets home. He must remain a Christian. Nor does Luther offer the same kind of resolution to the theologian struggling with the tension between his job, in which he carefully and deliberately applies God's word to others, and his personal appropriation of the same doctrine. He may certainly distinguish, as did Meisner and the Lutheran dogmaticians, between theology and faith, but in reality, the theologian may never separate the two. The same criteria Luther stipulates to the theologian—*oratio*, *meditatio*, and *tentatio*—are just as essential to the life of the Christian.

Much of the conflict between the orthodox and the pietist theologians of the latter half of the seventeenth century came down to a crisis in vocation. Where professional theology has the appearance of mere theory, or when it is buried beneath technical jargon and heated polemics, it is difficult to see how it can be the same thing as a theology that is appropriated by the heart of a simple Christian. Nevertheless, in keeping theology cognitive, normative, and theoretical, it must

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[3] *WA* 19:625–26: "Denn gleich wie ein gutter artzt, wenn die seuche so böse und gros ist, das er mus hand, füs, ohr odder augen lassen abhawen odder verdehrben, auff das er den leib errette, so man an sihet das gelied, das er abhewet, scheinet es, er sey ein grewlicher, unbarmhertziger mensch."

be admitted that Meisner did more to preserve the "subject" of Luther's practical theology than to pave the road to either extreme of rationalism or pietism. The former, characterized by mere cognition devoid of the Holy Spirit, is as far away from the spirit of orthodoxy as Wittenberg was from Helmstedt. The latter, with its chief representative in Philip Jacob Spener, who stresses a subjective criterion of "cognitive illumination" equal to faith and separate from any scholarly exertion or specially acquired qualifications, also misses the mark. It might be asked to what extent later orthodoxy did not exhibit many of the scholastic tendencies that Meisner wished to avoid. Perhaps in questions of practical theology, Spener resembled Meisner more closely than many of his own orthodox contemporaries. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss the relative merits of later orthodoxy and pietism, one might wonder if such controversies as arose then could have arisen in Meisner's day. Meisner embodied the best of both worlds: he was a brilliant university professor, a dutiful servant of the prince, an imposing polemicist, a Christian pastor, a talented and sober philosopher, and a practical theologian. All of these characteristics qualify him as a representative of practical orthodoxy. Meisner's tireless struggle to detoxify scholastic philosophy and put the best of his mind and strength into the service of saving souls strengthens the case that Wittenberg orthodoxy was eminently practical.

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