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SHORT TITLE
LUTHER'S SERMONS ON JOHN 14. 15. 16.
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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by
Gerhard Carl Galchott
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Approved by: *[Signature]*

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IN HIS SERMONS ON JOHN 14. 15. 16.

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CHAPTER I

THE SPIRIT AND LUTHER'S THEOLOGY

The children of Israel had not only Messianic expectation, but also Spirit expectation.

I will pour my Spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring.¹

Peter later declared the coming of the Spirit.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.²

Some time afterwards we hear of disciples in Ephesus who said:

No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.³

Yet, hearing that there is a Holy Spirit is a part of Christian instruction. Receiving the Spirit is inseparable from Christian faith-life.

Though in Acts 10, 11, reception of the Spirit led to a form of full external communion, theologies of the Spirit have often been divisive. Christianity's current general and sometimes intense concern in connection with the Spirit has a salutary conciliatory tendency. This special attention to theology of the Spirit arises for the most part out of the ecumenical movement and the theological topic of our day: ecclesiology.

¹Is. 44:3b

²Acts 2:32-33

³Acts 19:2b

The purpose of this research is to participate in the denominational investigations with regard to specific theologies of the Spirit. Scientifically stated our purpose is only to see what Luther himself says about the Spirit and the Spirit's working.

A validation of Lutheran research into Luther is denominationally obvious. But there is even a better validation than this with regard to our doing research in Luther. In research for a Bachelor of Divinity thesis we found that a portion of Luther's theology made doctrinal statements about the Incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, vital and permeated them dynamically so that they easily enter the heart. In other words, Luther helps one to faith-theology that is confession. This contributes to Faith-life, to preaching, to the whole essence of Christianity. In this context we validate our research in Luther. We wanted to see what Luther had to say about the Spirit for ourselves. We wanted to see what Luther had to say about the Spirit because his tendency to speak theology dynamically hinted that there might be an emphasis here through which Luther could still help Lutheranism and even contribute to ecumenical thinking.

Since Luther wrote no systematics and since polemical writings must be understood in their context, we are left with his exegesis and preaching. This volume of material was limited to a text which would cause Luther to speak about the Spirit extensively. We present Luther's theology of the Spirit according to his sermons on John 14. 15. 16. These were easily discovered in the Weimar edition of Luther's works through the aid of Kurt Aland's Hilfsbuch zum Lutherstudium. Since this has become a standard reference work, we have taken the liberty

of referring to all sermons by their numerical title in this work.

The assumption upon which this study is based is the belief that it is at least partially possible to determine a man's theology by his homiletical writings. Due to the illustrative and analogical nature of sermons, one meets a wide range of expression in any man's sermons. It seems this is doubly true of Luther, who is especially vivid and concrete. The result is that words have quite a different slant and meaning in some contexts than in others. One solution to this varied use of words would be to tear Luther apart into sets of presentations. However, the result would be something disconnected and we doubt that it could be called Luther's. Our presentation, then, is unitive. We hope that Luther will not be called "confused" on this account. We see it all to Luther's credit that he could have an "inner and outer word" doctrine and then again refer to the word in such a way that this doctrine can gain no admission in his thought. We see it all to Luther's credit that he could systematize and say that the Spirit works faith while at other times he could speak the strong New Testament emphasis that the Spirit confirms faith. In this unitive presentation of the unresolved theology of Luther we have assumed that there is a certain vital core theology of the Spirit in Luther which Luther expresses merely by frequency of reference. Then we have assumed that we could present Luther's statements always in reference to that which he mentions most frequently. In doing this we have sometimes been interested in date. For the most part, the date of Luther's writings did not seem too important because what one might call his sets of presentations run through his early and later sermons. We do not quote from Luther's

very early writings, but begin with those of 1520.

The organization of the thesis might be thought of as chronological. It begins with the Person of the Spirit, and the coming of the Spirit follows. The Spirit's working with the word is the largest section, and the next chapters deal with the consequence: faith and works. The latter Luther connects equally with the indwelling of the Spirit. Chapter seven attempts to systematize Luther somewhat by presenting what seemed to be his vital core theology of the Spirit. There follows a summary and evaluation.

Previous studies in the theology of Luther have often investigated Luther's exposition of the Triune God and His working. Rudolf Otto's Die Anschauung vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther was something new with the treatment of a Person of the Trinity separately on the basis of Luther. This work of 1898 was not really answered till the appearance of Regin Prenter's Spiritus Creator in 1946, translated into English by John M. Jensen and printed 1953. Otto held that the functions of the Spirit are the functions of word and faith. Prenter does not look at this presentation with sympathy, for it seems to explain everything as the result of "purely immanent factors such as the Word and faith."⁴ His major conclusion is that the Holy Spirit is the transcendent, realistic cause of the new life and hence his work is titled Spiritus Creator. Our thesis does not really engage in this discussion, but begins anew as a research thesis. However, chapter two does preserve the Divine otherness of the Spirit's work. Chapter seven does

⁴Regin Prenter, Spiritus Creator, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. ix.

separate this thesis from Prenter's understanding of Luther's doctrine of the Trinity and from his opinion that Luther has an independent theology of the Spirit. This thesis does not stand in a relationship to Prenter's Spiritus Creator in which there is an unusual interpretation of Luther on the Trinity. But it stands in a relationship to the standard works on Luther's theology and especially Werner Elert's presentation of Luther's doctrine of God.

leads us to the trinitarian character of Luther's theology. What Luther says of the Spirit he can also say of the Father and the Son. He calls the Spirit Comforter, and he says the same of the Father and the Son. The Triune God is Comforter.

Dem was ist Teuffel, ist das alle ding gegen die ewige allmechtige Melastet, Got der Vater, Son und Heiligen Geist? Welche zu gleich sind und wollen unser Troester heissen, Denn so der ein Troester heisset, so da Gessand wird, so muss auch beide, der so ist zenset, und der, durch welchen er gessand wird, der selbige Troester sein. Das gewisslich kein ander Gott ist denn ein Troester. Und wer da wil Gott furthun nennen und mit rechten namen nennen, der sol in namen einen Troester oder (wie Paulus Rom. 15, in nennt) einen Gott das treute.

The trinitarian character of Luther's theology entails this emphasis on the unity of God. Elert says of Luther:

So oft er ueber die Trinitatslehre als solche spricht, betont er dann freilich auf das staerkste die Einheit Gottes.¹

The unity of God in Luther's theology qualifies a separate study

¹ Martin Luther, "Predigt 1511, 1512," *A. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Bohnersche Buchhandlung, 1883-1937) XXXVI, 175.

² Luther, "Predigt 1 54, 1517," *op. cit.*, XLV, 504.

³ Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums* (Muenchen: G. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932), I, 171.

CHAPTER II

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

Luther begins his sermon for Exaudi, 1532, with these words:

Hoc Euangelium docet de spiritu sancto, de quo credimus, quod sit deus. Aber hie gibt er yhm einen namen und heysst yhn Troester.¹

The Holy Spirit is God. This affirmation leads us to the trinitarian character of Luther's theology. What Luther says of the Spirit he can also say of the Father and the Son. He calls the Spirit Comforter, and he says the same of the Father and the Son. The Triune God is Comforter.

Denn was ist Teuffel, tod und alle ding gegen die ewige allmechtige Maieestet, Got den Vater, Son und Heiligen Geist? Welche zu gleich sind und wollen unser Troester heissen, Denn so der ein Troester heisst, so da Gesand wird, so mus auch beide, der so in sendet, und der, durch welchen er gesand wird, der selbige Troester sein, Das gewislich kein ander Gott ist denn ein Troester, Und wer da wil Gott furthin kennen und mit rechten namen nennen, der sol in nennen einen Troester oder (wie Paulus Rom. 15. in nennet) einen Gott des trosts.²

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¹ Martin Luther, "Predigt 1323. 1532," *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1939) XXXVI, 175.

² Luther, "Predigt 1 84. 1537," *op. cit.*, XLV, 564.

³ Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums* (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1952), I, 191.

such as this on Luther's theology of the Spirit. We are required to make certain observations:

1. When Luther is speaking of God, he is speaking of the Spirit, too, though he may not do so specifically.
2. In Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. he most often speaks of God without specifically referring to the Father, the Son or the Spirit. Specific references to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit are almost always dependent on specific references in the text of Scripture itself.

Thus, a study of Luther's theology of the Spirit opens the whole question of Luther's doctrine of the Trinity. We follow Elert here.

He says of Luther:

Selbstverstaendlich war ihm der Satz, den er auf Augustin Zurueckfuehrte: Opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa (54, 57, 35 und oeffters.) Den Kreaturen gegenueber ist Gott der absolut Eine (37, 291, 7.) Mit derselben Sicherheit bejaht er auch die dreifache Personoffenbarung. Dabei ist ihm die Personalitaet des Schoepfers vor allem durch den Vaternamen, die des Sohnes durch die geschichtliche Person Christi, die des Geistes dadurch gesichert, dasz er zu mir "redet" und das persoenliche Gotteswerk der taeglichen Heiligung durch Vergebung der Suenden an mir vollzieht (54, 41, 5; 38, 374, 35.) So oft er ueber die Trinitaetslehre als solche spricht, betont er dann freilich auf das staerkste die Einheit Gottes, ohne aber deshalb die Dreiheit zu einer blossen Offenbarungstrinitaet abzuschwaechen. Vielmehr uebernimmt er die Lehre von den immanenten Relationen. Allerdings macht er keinen Versuch, sie von seinem Glaubensverstaendnis aus zu durchdringen. Das Verbindende ist der Begriff der Substanz ("Wesen"), das immanent Unterscheidende sind die traditionellen opera ad intra. Luther bringt zwar ausfuehrliche Schriftbeweise, auch aus dem Alten Testament und bedient sich der alten, vorzugsweise der Augustinischen Analogien aus Natur und Psychologie. Aber im allgemeinen ist doch die Trinitaetslehre in seiner Theologie wie ein erratischer Block stehen geblieben.⁴

⁴Elert, op. cit., I, 190-91.

When Luther speaks of the Spirit specifically, he frequently refers to the traditional works of the Persons of the Deity ad intra as Elert notes.

Quomodo Spiritus sanctus procedat a patre et filio, Quia, quod procedit a patre, est eum ab aeterno esse idem cum patre, tamen ut non Pater ab ipso, sed ipse a patre habeat esse illud idem. Quod autem mittitur a filio, significat simul ipsum a filio quoque procedere, quia non filius a spiritu, sed spiritus a filio venit etc.⁵

However, Luther more often distinguishes the Person of the Spirit in that work of the Deity ad extra which John 14. 15. 16. attribute to the Spirit.

Das ist nu recht von dem heiligen Geist geleret, das er heisst ein Troester, und dis sein art, ampt und eigenschafft sey, Denn von seinem Goettlichen wesen oder Substantia wollen wir itzt nicht scharff disputirn, wie das wort Troester ist ein persoendlich wort, dazu gehoeret, das er eine sondere person sey, Denn weil er spricht: Der Vater sol euch einen andern Troester senden, zeigt er, das er eine unterschiedene person sey, die nicht der Vater noch der Son sey. Das er aber auch Gott sey oder inn einigem wesen mit dem Vater und dem Son, werden wir hernach weiter sehen im xv. Cap. Itzt ist gnug, das man hieraus lerne und mercke, das er ein Troester heisst, Und dasselb umb unsern willen, Denn fur seine Gottheit ist er mit dem Vater und dem Son inn unzutrennetem Goettlichen wesen, Aber uns wird er ein Troester genant, Also das dieser name sey nicht anders, weder eine offenbarung oder erkenntnis, was man von dem heiligen Geist halten sol, nemlich das er sey ein Troester.⁶

Thus, when Elert says that the Person of the Spirit is safeguarded for Luther in the working of the Spirit toward him, we agree. This is so true that Luther will give an analogy for the workings of the Persons of the Deity ad intra which is characterized by the workings ad extra.

⁵Luther, "Predigt 2058. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 446.

⁶Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 565-66.

Aber sonderlich zeigt er die unterscheid der personen des heiligen Geists oder der selbigen eigenschafft, Und dazu auch sein Goettlich wesen mit und bey dem Vater und dem Son inn dem, so er sagt: "Was er hoeren wird, das wird er reden," Denn alhie sagt er von einem gesprech, so gehalten wird in der Gottheit (ausser allen Creaturn) und setzet einen Predig stul, da beide ist, der da redet, und der da zu horet, Machet den Vater zum Prediger, den Heiligen Geist aber zum Zuhoerer, Das ist wol hoch und uber menschen verstand zu ermessen, wie es zu gehet, Aber weil wirs nicht mit menschlichen worten oder verstand erreichen koennen, so sollen wirs glewben.⁷

Sondern gleich wie der Vater ein ewiger Sprecher ist, der Son inn ewigkeit gesprochen wird, ist, also der heilige Geist von ewigkeit der Zuhoerer.⁸

This is only an analogy for the workings of the Deity ad intra. It may show, though, that the working of the Deity ad extra which is attributed to the Spirit in Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. is an integral and vital part of Luther's theology. Luther may not always refer to it as the Spirit's working, even as in the sermons on John 14. 15. 16. it is often referred to as God's working, but the working remains the same. This working of God toward us we shall try to set forth in the following chapters from Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. Although our presentation will speak only of the Spirit working, we remember that for Luther the workings of the Deity ad extra toward man are not ultimately separable in such a fashion. In some instances Luther's explicitness with regard to the working of the Spirit may be somewhat homiletical. As we systematize on the basis of Luther's sermons, we ask the reader to remember Luther's emphasis on the

⁷Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 59.

⁸Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 60.

unity of God, even in all the workings of the Deity ad extra toward men.

Luther's affirmation that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are one Comforter or one High Majesty dwelling in man must simply remain in tension with Luther's frequent reference to these workings as specifically those of the Holy Spirit.

For Luther the Holy Spirit is God. And there is no other God.

We are not to think of the coming of the Spirit unless Christ has died and risen for us. Christ's "going to the Father" brings the Holy Spirit.

Thus, what Luther says regarding the working of the Spirit is far more than a result of Christ's bestowal of peace, the reign of Christ, in the reign of the Father's right hand.

Luther has Christ say:

Derumb ist nicht besser denn je ehe je besser davon geyungen, das ich gezeichnet werde und darnach verklärer, damit der Heilige Geist gesend, und send werde, das ich zur rechten des Vaters gesetzel und mein Reich eingewonnen habe.

Luther calls Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection a

¹Martin Luther, "Postille 242, 1544," *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimarer Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1919), XXX, 323.

²Luther, "Predigt 768, 1527," *op. cit.*, XXVIII, 45.

³Luther, "Predigt 1684, 1527," *op. cit.*, XLV, 631.

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

Luther's theology of the Spirit is Christo-centric. Luther is emphatic when he says that Christ sends the Spirit.

das er die Person ist, so beide, von dem Vater und von dem Son ausgehet oder gesand wird, und heisst also der heilige Geist zu gleich der Geist des Vaters und des Sons, (das ist, Christi), wie in S. Paulus und Petrus nennen, Galat. iiii. und i. Pet. i. Es wird auch hiemit bestetigt, das Christus einiger, ewiger Gott sey mit dem Vater, weil er hie sagt, das er sampt dem Vater den heiligen Geist sendet und gibt der Christepheit, wie davon in der Auslegung dieser drey Capitel gesagt ist.¹

We are not to think of the coming of the Spirit unless Christ has died and risen for us. Christ's "going to the Father" brings the Holy Spirit.

Ideo omnia consistunt in itione, quod it ad patrem i. e. quod moritur et resurgit a morte. Is transitus bringt den spiritum sanctum.²

Thus, what Luther says regarding the working of the Spirit is for him a chief part in Christ's bestowal of peace, the reign of Christ, in the reign of the Father's right hand.

Luther has Christ say:

Darumb ist nicht besser denn je ehe je besser davon gegangen, das ich gecreutzigt werde und darnach verkleret, damit der Heilige Geist gesand, und kund werde, das ich zu³ rechten des Vaters gesetzt und mein Reich eingenomen habe.

Luther calls Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection a

¹Martin Luther, "Postille 242. 1544," D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1939), XXI, 424.

²Luther, "Predigt 968. 1528," op. cit., XXVIII, 45.

³Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 631.

spiritual "going to the Father." Thus, Christ wished the disciples to view his going from them.

Sihe, auff solche weise wil er hie sich angesehen haben, nicht also (wie die augen sehen), das er leiblich mit den fuessen von inen gehe an einen andern ort, eines wegs, den sie nicht wissen, wo er feret oder bleibt, und sie also hinder im lasse, das sie sich sein nichts mehr troesten keonnen, Sondern wie er geistlich gehet und feret (welchs er heisst zum Vater gehen) dadurch, das er leidet und stirbt und doch nicht im tod bleibt, sondern eben dadurch dahin kompt, das einn sein Reich tritt und herrschet dazu, das sie durch in zum Vater komen, und er sie schuetze, rette und helffe inn allen noeten.⁴

Christ must go spiritually to the Father before he enters His spiritual reign and sends the Spirit. Luther is consistent in his emphasis that the coming of the Spirit is dependent upon Christ's going to the Father and entering His spiritual reign.

Luther is also consistent in his emphasis that the coming of the Spirit precedes the establishing of Christ's reign on earth. The establishing of Christ's reign among us is dependent on the coming of the Spirit.

Luther has Christ say:

Denn mein Reich kan nicht angehen noch der Heilige Geist gegeben werden, ich mus zuvor sterben und aus diesem leben gehen, Mein tod und aufferstehung wird es alles new machen in himel und erden und ein solch wesen anrichten, da der Heilige Geist wird allenthalben regiren durch das Euangelium und ewer ampt.⁵

Christ's reign among us is ruled by the Holy Spirit so that the coming of Christ's reign and the coming of the Spirit are simultaneous. This leads us to Luther's description of Christ's reign as spiritual.

⁴ Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 491.

⁵ Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 33.

Christus Reich ist ein gaistlich Reich unnd nicht ein eusserlich wesen, Darumb so nimpt es hynweeg alles vertragen, so man in das fleisch haben mag, auff das es durch den geist ynn den hertzen der glaubigen regieren muege.⁶

Luther has Christ say:

ich zum vater gee, ein ander reich, nicht ein eusserlich wesen antzufahen, und ir mich fort nicht sehet, denn mein reich ist nicht von diser welt, auff das also die gantze welt zu schanden werde durch den gaist, darumb, das sie ire gerechtigkeit auff eusserliche ding stellet.⁷

The spiritual nature of Christ's reign i. e. the spiritual working of the Spirit is not identical with our external preaching of the Scriptures.

Der Troester, der hailige gaist, leret und nichtt die ausserliche predig, woelche allain ein dienerin ist des gaistes.⁸

Luther distinguishes between the inner or spiritual voice of the Spirit and the outward word of Scripture. Regin Prenter says:

Luther expresses this contrast by the aid of the Augustinian distinction between the outward and the inward Word. The outward Word is the Word of Scripture (or verbum vocale, or the sacrament), the inward Word is God's own voice by his Spirit.⁹

It is necessary to mention this already here for Christ gave the external office of word and sacraments before the coming of the Spirit. However, Christ's reign did not begin among us until the coming of the Spirit in, through, and over the word and the sacraments.

Da Christus spricht: Solchs habe ich zu euch durch sprichwort geredt, ist sovil gesagt. Biszher habet yr mein wort nichtt kuennenden vernemmen, es hat euch alles tunckel und verborgenn gedaucht.

⁶Luther, "Postille 75. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 250.

⁷Luther, "Postille 75. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 260.

⁸Luther, "Postille 82. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 279.

⁹Regin Prenter, Spiritus Creator, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. 102.

Es kompt aber die zeyt, nemlich, wenn ich den heyligen geyst geben werde, da ich durch meinenn geyst frey herausz reden werde, das ist offentlich, in ewern hertzen, von den dingen, die meinen vater angehoeren. So ist nu disz die summa. On den geist verstehet man nicht das wort.¹⁰

So today it is still true:

Sic verba dei et scriptura bleibet unverstanden, nisi spiritus sanctus det.¹¹

The coming of the external office of word and sacraments does not always ensure the coming of the Spirit and Christ's reign. In 1544, Luther says that the Spirit is always with God's word, but His sermon doesn't always strike the heart:

Also gehets auch noch, das wir wol Gottes Wort hoeren, welches ja des heiligen Geistes Predigt, der auch allzeit dabey ist, doch nicht allzeit bald das hertz trifft und gegleubt wird.¹²

With this we are led to Luther's predestinarian concept of the Spirit, Who comes to whom He will. More prominent for Luther is the connection of the Spirit to the inner word i. e. the Gospel and in some way to the outer word. Although Luther has the predestinarian concept of the Spirit, he seems to prefer another explanation for the Spirit's coming to some and not to others. At least he prefers this explanation homiletically.

Darueber haben solche auch den schaden, das sie nicht koennen Gottes Wohnung sein, und kein heiliger Geist bey inen ist noch der Gnade wirdig werden, das Gott durch sie rede oder wircke, sondern weil sie sein Wort verachten, so verachtet er sie auch wider.¹³

¹⁰Luther, "Postille 77. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 262.

¹¹Luther, "Predigt 1232. 1531," op. cit., XXXIV. 1, 397.

¹²Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 469.

¹³Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XII, 573-74.

The Spirit has connection with the word. Who despises the word, the Spirit despises in return.

Luther can also distinguish those to whom the Spirit gives the inner word or Gospel by their need for such comfort.

Das Euangelium ist nicht eyn predig fur yederman, Es ist uber die masz ein sussz predig: Aber wenn eyn rauch, duerr hertz drauff fellet, so schafft es keyn nutz, sondern es werden die leut nur frecher und leyhtfertiger davon unnd meynen, sie duerffen nicht mit dem fleysch streyten, denn sie fulhen yhre sund unnd ungluech nicht. Darumb wirtt der heylig geyst niemant geben eben denen die da stehen ynn betrubnis unnd angst, da schafft das Euangelium nutz und frucht. ¹⁴

It seems all to Luther's credit that he did not resolve the predestinarian concept of the Spirit and yet said homiletically that the Spirit comes to those who hold to the outer word and are in need of the Gospel.

The coming of the Spirit is linked, then, to the outer word and sacraments.

Zum andern ist auch das hierin angezeigt, das solch Wort mus vorher gehen oder zuvor geredt werden, und darnach der heilige Geist dadurch wircken, also, das mans nicht umbkere und einen heilige Geist trewme, der on Wort und vor dem Wort wircke, sondern mit und durch das Wort kome und nicht weiter gehe, denn so weit solch Wort gehet. ¹⁵

Yet these externals cannot be identified with the coming of the Spirit.

Ergo libenter audite euangelium, tunc sequetur spiritus sanctus. Wen das nicht zum wort bewegt, dem bewegt nictes. ¹⁶

So Luther says of the Spirit:

¹⁴ Luther, "Predigt 305. 1523," op. cit., XII, 573-74.

¹⁵ Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 469.

¹⁶ Luther, "Predigt 1041. 1529," op. cit., XXIX, 365.

Macht ecclesiam Christianam, remissionem peccatorum, aufer-
stehung carnis.¹⁷

And this must be thought of inwardly or spiritually, too. Christ
says:

Es sol auch mein Reich nicht stehen in solchem vergenglichen
wesen, Sondern es mus ein ander ding werden und dahin komen,
das ir nicht nicht mehr sehet, da ich ausser diesem leiblichen
sichtbarn wesen ewig regiere und euch auch dahin bringe, da eitel
neue volkommene Gerechtigkeit und ewig Leben sey, Welches ich
itzt in der Christenheit durch des heiligen Geistes Predigt und
Werck anfahe.¹⁸

What does Luther mean by saying that the Spirit works inwardly
or spiritually?

Also ist in dem Reich Christi ausgegossen (wie der Prophet
Sacharias xii. mit schoenen worten sagt) der Geist der Gnaden
und des Gebets, Denn das ist der heilige Geist, der da wonet in
den Hertzen der Gleubigen sampt dem Vater und Son, durch sie
redet und wircket und inen trost und Sieg gibt wider die suende,
Tod und Teufels gewalt zu bestehen, Thut aber solches nicht durch
eitel offenbarliche mechtige beweisung grosser krafft und stercke,
sondern, weil sie noch ire suende und unwirdigkeit fuehlen, tregt
er die selbigen und decket und troestet sie der Gnaden und Verge-
bung in Christo.¹⁹

This is the spiritual character of the Spirit's working. He comes
with Christ's spiritual reign and will preserve it till the world's end.

Und mit diesen worten "Er bleibet bey euch und wird inn euch sein,"
Item "Ich wil euch nicht waisen lassen, ich kome zu euch," Ist die
Chrisliche Kirche oder Christenheit versichert und hat die gewisse
zusagung und starcken trost von Christo, das sie on den heiligen
Geist nicht sein sol bis an der welt ende, Das man gewis kan und
sol wissen, das dennoch der heilige Geist bleibe ewiglich und on
ende und alzeit seine Christenheit auff erden habe und erhalte.²⁰

¹⁷Luther, "Predigt 1042. 1529," op. cit., XXIX, 366.

¹⁸Luther, "Postille 235. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 368.

¹⁹Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 463.

²⁰Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 574-75.

The coming of the Spirit is not a doctrine for everyone. Everyone can know of this doctrine, or grasp it outwardly, as Luther would say. But only those have really grasped the reality of the Spirit's coming who grasp it by faith, i. e. grasp it inwardly.

Denn der Bapst fueret diesen text gewaltiglich und starck, und sie sind die leute, die da schreien und rhuemen wider uns, der heilige Geist sey bey inen inn ewigkeit, Item: Wir sind die Christliche Kirche, wenn wir zusammen komen und etwas schliessen oder ordenen, das heisst des heiligen Geists ordnung, Denn es ist nicht zu glauben, das die Kirche irre oder feile, Und sind aus diesem text so gros, stark und der sachen so gewis worden, das sie darauff stehen wie eine eiserne maur, Und haben damit diesen Artikel der unser hoechster trost und stercke ist, verstoeret und diesen Text schendlich verkert und verderbt, Denn das muessen wir selbs glauben und sagen, das der heilige Geist sey bey der Kirchen, und das sie gewislich auff erden sey und bleibe.²¹

We must ourselves believe that the Spirit has come with the reign of Christ.

²¹Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 575.

Wie der heilige Geist sein Gueetlich, ewig wesen (so er inn im selbe heil) von Christo nimet, so mus auch sein ampt oder predigt nicht anders sein, denn das er Christum also verkheret, als der

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

One summary statement Luther uses for the working of the Spirit is:

der Heilige Geist wird allenthalben regiren durch das Euangelium und ewer ampt.¹

It seems that Euangelium here stands for the spiritual or inner word. Ewer ampt refers to the external word and sacraments. It is noteworthy that even this statement from 1538 after the polemics with the Enthusiasts may still refer to the external word and sacraments as man's office. Though Luther says that the Spirit works through the external word and sacraments, he never identifies them with the Spirit's working with the Gospel, i. e. the spiritual word.

Our treatment of the Spirit's working through the external word and sacraments will come later in this chapter. We shall now examine what Luther says about the Spirit's working with the Gospel, i. e. the spiritual word.

For Luther, the Spirit's working seems always to be a working with the spiritual word among men. The spiritual word is inseparable from the Spirit's working. On the basis of what Luther says we should not think of the Spirit working without the spiritual word.

Wie nu der heilige Geist sein Goettlich, ewig wesen (so er inn im selbs hat) von Christo nimpt, So mus auch sein ampt oder predigt nichts anders sein, denn das er Christum also verkleret, als des

¹ Martin Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1939), XLVI, 33.

Vaters ewigen Son inn ewigkeit von im geporn und inn die welt gesand, das wir durch in zum Vater komen und das ewige leben haben.²

Luther calls this glorification of Christ a sermon. It seems to refer to the very same inner word which Luther talks about elsewhere. We interpret Luther as having many different ways of referring to the inner word. In 1520 he seems to use the term sapientia:

Divinum donum est spiritus sanctus et prestat usum omnium rerum: docet sapientiam Christus, usum sapientie prestat spiritus sanctus.³

In 1523 he has Christ say:

Der heylig geyst soll zu euch vom hymel komen, der wirtt mich ynn ewer hertz drucken, das yhr mich erkennet und darnach auch durch mich den vatter, so wirtt ewer hertz fro werden.⁴

In 1525 he uses the term scripsit in corde:

Ergo discernit duas doctrinas, externam et internam, et hoc vult verba, quae dicit: "suggeret." Habet ergo textus: Christus praedicavit omnia mundlich, quae Christianus debet scire. Spiritus sanctus scripsit in corde.⁵

In 1526 he uses the term eyne krafft Gottes:

Christus wort ist nit flaischlich, sondern eine krafft Gotes wie S. Paul sagt zu den Rhoemern: Das Euangelion ist eyne krafft Gottes, die da selig macht alle, die darann glawben.⁶

Luther uses the term eitel flamen in 1529:

Christus est consolator cum verbo, spiritus sanctus mit dem verstand, erleuchtet mit der that. Verbum damnatur et abit, spiritus sanctus loquitur eitel flamen in corda nostra, illa manebit.⁷

²Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 66.

³Luther, "Predigt 103. 1520," op. cit., IX, 464.

⁴Luther, "Predigt 305. 1523," op. cit., XII, 574.

⁵Luther, "Predigt 606. 1525," op. cit., XVII, 1, 269.

⁶Luther, "Postille 82. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 279.

⁷Luther, "Predigt 1041. 1527," op. cit., XXIX, 365.

A phrase used in 1532 is:

Spiritus sanctus leret Christum yns hertz bilden.⁸

In 1538 Luther says of the Spirit:

Darumb mus er warlich bey euch sein und nicht allein mit dem wort zun ohren schallen, sondern auch das hertz mit seim liecht und feur stercken.⁹

In 1544 Luther speaks of the Spirit's Trostpredigt:

ein Christen . . . sol sich halten an das Wort und Trospredigt, die der heilige Geist thut allen armen betruebten hertzen und gewissen.¹⁰

In the same year he speaks of the krafft of the Spirit:

Und ist bey uns ein grosse unterscheid, das Wort hoeren und des heiligen Geists krafft und wirckung in dem selben fuehlen.¹¹

From Luther's varied descriptions of the inner word we gather that Luther would be opposed to calling the Spirit's word by one name, such as "the inner word." The Spirit's word is too magnificent and inexpressible for such systematization. Yet the Spirit's word is also familiar, so that we are to use homily illustrations for this word, such as power, love, and writing in the heart.

One of Luther's most complete expressions of the inexpressible inner word is found in a sermon of 1538.

Itzt aber sol und wil ich hoeren und lernen, was mir der heilige Geist prediget, Nemlich, wie Christus fur uns sein blut vergossen und mir die sunde getilget, den Tod überwunden, Gottes zorn und die Helle ausgelesschet und allein durch sein leiden, sterben und

⁸Luther, "Predigt 1323. 1532," op. cit., XXXVI, 177.

⁹Luther, "Predigt 1685. 1538," op. cit., XLV, 726.

¹⁰Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 448.

¹¹Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 460.

aufferstehen mich machet zum Erben des ewigen lebens. ¹²

This external expression of the Spirit's sermon is not to be identified with the Spirit's sermon to the heart. But the Spirit's sermon to the heart may come through this external word.

We would like to refer to the inner word as an extension of Christ, of the eternal Logos, even as Luther sometimes calls the inner word Christ or Jesus, and continually refers to it as the spiritual word of Christ.

Luthers says of Christ:

Also setzet er dem Heiligen Geist selbsein ziel und mas seiner predigt, das er nicht newes noch anders sol predigen, denn was Christus und sein wort ist. ¹³

This inner word of Christ comes to our hearts through the working of the Spirit. The result is faith in our hearts. Faith is in our hearts through the working of the Spirit and because of Christ's inner word or Gospel with which the Spirit works. Faith does not exist because of one or the other, but because of both.

In the next chapter we shall speak of faith as the result of the Spirit's working with Christ's inner word, i. e. the Gospel. It has only been introduced here to show how closely Luther connects the inner word to the Spirit.

Luther says that Christ makes a preacher of the Spirit:

Er beschreibt aber den heiligen Geist hie und allenthalben also, das er in nicht schlecht nennet nach seinem wesen, wie er ist und

¹² Luther, "Predigt 1685. 1538," op. cit., XLV, 730.

¹³ Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 58.

heisst der heilige Geist, Denn damit ist er von uns, als der nicht zusehen noch zufluehlen, unbegreiflich, Sondern gibt im einen namen von seinem Ampt und werck, damit er sich begreiflich und gleich leibhaftig machet, welches ist das Ampt des Worts, Und machet einen Prediger aus im, da er in nennet einen Troester.¹⁴

In 1523 Luther says:

Weyl wir hie sehen, das Christus sein wortt will auff den heyligen geyst stellen, wilcher auch darumb hie ist, das er von Christo zeugnis gebe unnd was er geleret hatt, lebendig mache ynn unszern hertzen, das wirs verstehen und glewben.¹⁵

Luther says:

spiritus sanctus khan nit sat werden de Christo testari.¹⁶

In a sermon of 1538 Luther has Christ say:

Denn wenn der heilige Geist kompt, so sol das allein sein ampt sein (spricht er hernach im xvi, Capitel), das er sol von Mir predigen und mich verkleren.¹⁷

We have called the Gospel Christ's inner word, but it is also a word from the Father.

Luther has Christ say:

Der heiliger Geist aber wird nicht von im selber reden, sondern, was er von mir empfehet, und wie er hoeren wird mich und den Vater miteinander reden etc.¹⁸

In 1538 Luther says:

der heilige Geist sol reden und verkuendigen nichts anders, denn was er hoeret, nemlich inn der ewigen Gottheit bey Christo und dem Vater.¹⁹

¹⁴Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 445.

¹⁵Luther, "Predigt 305. 1523," op. cit., XII, 576.

¹⁶Luther, "Predigt 604. 1525," op. cit., XVII. 1, 262.

¹⁷Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 576

¹⁸Luther, "Postille 235. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 380.

¹⁹Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 68.

The Spirit with this inner word comes not only through the external word, but also through the external sacraments.

Luther knows that the Spirit's sermon does not strike the heart of every baptized person to create justifying faith:

Der glaub kan wol sein in baptisato viro, muliere.²⁰

Nevertheless, when the Spirit's sermon does strike the heart in baptism, Luther can say:

In baptismo venit spiritus sanctus und hub sich an predig, mirackel etc.²¹

Luther also says:

Ja (sprichstu), wie kome ich dazu oder was gehet der Heilig Geist mich an? Antwort: Er hat mich getaufft und das Euangelion von Christo geprediget und mein hertz erweckt zu glawben, Die tauffe ist ja nichts aus mir gewachsen, das Euangelion und der Glawbe auch nicht, Sondern er hat es mir gegeben, Denn die finger, so nicht getaufft haben, sind nicht des menschen, sondern des Heiligen Geists finger, Und des predigers mund und wort, das ich gehört habe, ist nicht sein, sondern des Heiligen Geists wort und predig, der da durch solch auswendig mittel inwendig den glawben gibt und also heiligt.²²

Baptism here seems to be called one of the external means by which the Spirit comes to word internally with the Gospel for faith.

Whether we are referring to the external word or the external sacraments, it seems that Luther would point to the Spirit and the Spirit's power (word, Gospel), which are active through these externals.

When we come to speak about the Spirit and the inexpressible word (comfort, power, flame, writing in the heart) and their connection to

²⁰Luther, "Predigt 1530. 1535," op. cit., XLI, 68.

²¹Luther, "Predigt 604. 1525," op. cit., XVII. 1, 262.

²²Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 616.

the external word and sacraments, we find ourselves in a maze of homiletical metaphors.

Luther can speak of the Spirit working with a power, flame, comfort in the external word. Then the term "word" only refers to the external word. In this sense Luther can depreciate the word, for by itself it has no value. Or he can praise the word as necessary, since it must be received in order that with it one may receive the Spirit's comfort (power, flame, writing in the heart). Whether Luther depreciates or praises the external word does not depend so much on whether we are in the early Luther or the later Luther. If Luther is in this metaphor where "word" is only used of the external word, he depreciates it when he thinks of the papists, and he praises it when he thinks of the enthusiasts. If the later Luther is in the metaphor where "word" is the external word, and if he is thinking of the papists, then even in his late years he will not praise the external word very much. It is a shell.

But Luther does not stay in metaphors where "word" is only the external word. Luther can speak of the Spirit working with a word (Gospel, sermon) in the external word. Then we have both an external word and an internal word.

Luther can also speak of the Spirit working with a word (Gospel, sermon) in the scriptures (letters). Then "word" is a term referring only to the Spirit's inner word (Gospel, power, flame) and the scriptures, which are fleshly, are not to be called the word.

If Luther had stayed with these metaphors where "word" was external, or external and internal, or purely internal, then our

presentation would be rather simple.

But Luther will speak using "word" in another way besides these. He does not only view the scripture and sermon as having a shell and a kernel-- calling only the shell the word, speaking of an outer and inner word, calling only the kernel the word. Luther can speak of scripture as God's word to him, and then distinguish between grasping it and not grasping it, having it remain external and having the Spirit bring it into the heart, understanding it and not understanding it.

Then it is not scripture which is spiritual or fleshly, but its impact upon us is either spiritual with the presence of the Spirit or fleshly. The external scriptures are spiritual, but we understand them fleshly without the Spirit and spiritually with the Spirit.

It all depends on whether you are concentrating on the scriptures --if so you will speak of them as both fleshly and spiritual--or whether you are concentrating on the relationship which persons have to scriptures--then you will speak of this relationship either as fleshly or spiritual.

This is all involved with Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, which is most difficult to present in human words. External and internal are not apt terms since the external can be spiritual. The internal can be fleshly. Likewise, that which is regarded as spiritual may be just externals, while the fleshly may be permeated by the internal. It is not for us to enter into a discussion of the epistemological difficulties Luther and we share. It is only for us to note that Luther can speak of the scriptures as wholly within the reign of Christ, distinguishing between a true reception, a true understanding, and a false reception, a

false understanding. Luther has this distinction of use very early. We are not to think of it as a more careful analogy resulting from the polemics with the Enthusiasts.

Divum donum est spiritus sanctus et prestat usum omnium rerum: docet sapientiam Christus, usum sapientie prestat spiritus sanctus.²³

Now it is true that when one is distinguishing between an inner and outer use of scripture, then one need not speak of an inner and outer word any more. The fact that Luther keeps using this latter type of phraseology would seem to indicate that Luther can think of the inner and outer word doctrine together with the inner and outer use doctrine. The two fit together, for the inner and outer word doctrine is really a very precise or incisive explanation when one is trying to give an explanation why such a thing as outer use of Scripture should exist and why it is not always inner. Outer use of Scripture exists, according to this analogy, because the Spirit's power or inner word isn't having effect and because there is only outer use of the outer word.

Luther's outer and inner word doctrine is found in a sermon of 1537 where he refers to the working of the Triune God in the outer word:

Wenn wir gen himel komen, so werden wir in anders ansehen, on mittel und tunckel, Aber hie auff erden wirstu in nicht sehen noch erlangen mit deinen sinnen noch gedancken, Sondern wie S. Paulus sagt, wir sehen in im tunckeln wort oder bild verhullet, nemlich inn dem wort und Sacramenten, Das sind gleich als seine larven oder kleid, darunter er sich verbirgt, aber gewislich ist er da gegenwertig, das er selbs wunder thut, predigt, Sacrament gibt,

²³Luther, "Predigt 103. 1520," op. cit., IX, 464.

trostet, stercket und hilfft, Und wir also in sehen, wie man die sonne sihet durch eine wolcken, Denn wir können doch itzt nicht den hellen anblick und schwaen der maieestet nicht leiden, darumb mus er sich also zudecken und verhuellen als hinder einer dicken wolcken, Also ist beschlossen, wer beide, den Vater und Christum, nach dem er verkleret und inn der Maieestet sitzet, sehen und ergreifen wil, der mus in durchs wort und inn den wercken, so er inn der Christenheit thut durchs predig ampt und ander stende, ergreifen.²⁴

The external portion of the word and the sacraments i. e. the outer word and sacraments can be depreciated or praised. When the devil is playing with the outer word, then it would not be praised.

Aber es ist der Teuffel, der also geuckelt und wuerfel spielet mit der schrift und sie drehet, wie er wil, das, wo man in angreifet, sol man den ael bey dem schwantz gefasset haben.²⁵

When the external letters of Scripture in themselves offer some comfort, then Luther will praise the outer word as an outer comfort, while he still points beyond to the true inner comfort.

Wyr haben zween troster, eynen mundtlichen troster, das ist Christus, und eynen herczlichen troster mit seynen gaben, das ist der heylige geyst.²⁶

Then the outer words of scripture can be such a clear comfort to Luther going into his heart, that they are praised as actual spiritual, inner words, which the Spirit is using.

Also hat der hailig gaist allain ausz gestrichen die geschrifft unnd Christus und haben die klar gemacht.²⁷

Summa: Christi worth sindt so hoch verborgen, das sich keyne vernufft vernympt. "Es wyrdt aber die zeyt kummen" i. e. cum

²⁴Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 552.

²⁵Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 546.

²⁶Luther, "Predigt 1041. 1529," op. cit., XXIX, 365.

²⁷Luther, "Predigt 216. 1522," op. cit., X. 3, 160.

spiritus sanctus venerit, tunc loquar, ut intelligatis. . . .
cum venerit spiritus sanctus, tunc videbitis, quod sint clara
verba. 28

Whether Luther regards the word and sacraments as having a kernel in them or a veil over them, Luther is at least consistent in emphasizing that the Spirit's word or unveiling can only come through use of the word and sacraments.

Also lerne aus diesem text, wie und wo du den Heiligen Geist suchen solt, nicht droben über den wolcken, sondern da Christus in hin weiset und spricht: "Der Troester, welchen der Vater Euch senden wird," Und: "Er sol euch alles leren und erinnern." Darumb mus er nicht bleiben droben sitzen, Sondern herunter zu den Christen gesand werden, Und wer in finden und erlangen sol, der mus nicht also hinauff gaffen (wie wir gethan haben), als schwebe er droben über den verstorbenen heiligen, Aposteln, Marterern, Jungkfrauen etc. Sondern hieniden auff erden ist er, gleich wie die Christenheit auff erden ist, Denn wo die selbe ist, da sol er auch allzeit und ewiglich sein, Wie er droben gesagt hat. Also das man in zihe und vereinige inn das ampt und regiment der Christenheit, des worts und Sacraments, Und dasselbige hoch hebe und preise, das wo das ist, und wer es empfehlet, das gewislich der Heilige Geist da bey ist und empfangen wird und dadurch wircket, die hertzen erleuchtet und erkenntnis Christi oder den glawben gibt und also aus sundern rein und heilig macht. 29

Da kan denn der heilige Geist sein Ampt und krafft uben, welche ist das hertz leren und erinnern des gepredigten Worts.

Darumb ist das Wort der halben gut und nuetz, imerdar zu hoeren und handeln, obs nicht allzeit trifft. 30

In the use of the word and sacraments Luther can have the predes-
tinarian concept of the Spirit's coming:

Per praedicationem wil er, zu dem er wil. 31

²⁸Luther, "Predigt 1232. 1531," op. cit., XXXIV. 1, 397.

²⁹Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 617.

³⁰Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 469.

³¹Luther, "Predigt 606. 1525," op. cit., XVI. 1, 269.

Luther can also think of Christians being well instructed in the right use and understanding of the word and sacraments, so that they who have the Spirit's gift of faith and the Spirit's indwelling hidden in them can draw the Spirit's comfort from the word.

Der Teuffel kan dir bald einen pfeil inz hertz schiessen oder ein ander anfechtung dich treffen, Darumb sihe zu, das du darauff geruestet seiest, wo es kompt, das du doennest halten und stehen und trost aus Gottes wort schepffen.³²

But the Spirit's comfort comes only through use of the word and sacraments.

So far we have only considered the inner word as Gospel, while the outer word was comforting, necessary, or damned. But Luther can speak occasionally of the inner word as damning:

Darumb ist kurtz die meinung dieser wort, Das der Heilige Geist uber alle menschen, wie sie auff erden gefunden werden, sie seyen Heiden oder Jueden, strefflich oder unstrefflich fur der welt, und uber alle ire thun und wesen (auch das sie fur das beste und grosste heiligkeit halten) sol das urteil fellen, das sie unter Gottes zorn und verdammis sind und bleiben müssen, Und inen nicht kan davon geholffen werden, es sey denn, das sie an Christum glewben, Las nu her komen und rhuemen, wer da kan, von seiner oder ander leut fromkeit, tugenden, guten wercken und heiligem leben, so hoerestu hie, das es nichts gilt, wenn der Heilige Geist mit seinem othem, das ist: durch dis predig ampt (wie Esaias 40. sagt) drein wehet und bleset, Denn dis straffen gehet uber sie all, das alle ir rhum mus fallen, und alle ir thun und wesen sie fur Gott nichts helfen kan.³³

According to Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. the Spirit's inner word or otherm is almost always considered only comfort. There are a few passages such as the above where the inner word is considered a damning, but even in these there are traces of Luther's other

³²Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 471.

³³Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 38.

doctrine.

The other doctrine concerning the inner word is that it can be a damning, but only one which turns us from our works to Christ, i. e. an inner word which becomes comfort for us. If it does not become comfort for us, then it is not the Spirit's inner word, but the devil speaking.

Darumb lerne hieraus, so du ein Christen bist, wer dich wil schrecken und das hertz bloed machen, das du gewislich koennest schliessen, das er des Teuffels bote ist, Denn wo auch Christus jmand schrecket zur busse und bekerung vom unglouben und suendlichem leben (wie er S. Paulo die Gelater schrecket), so wehret ers doch nicht lang, Denn er thuts nicht darumb, das du solt trawrig bleiben, sondern fueret dich bald heraus und troestet dich wider. Das thut der Teuffel nicht.³⁴

For the most part in Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. the Spirit and the inner word only comfort, while the devil is responsible for all that works against them.

Haec officia Spiritus sancti, nulla ratio, lex, consilium, opus praestare potest. Sed solius ipsius est haec gloria, quod sit Consolator.³⁵

It seems that Luther wishes to say that within the true reign of Christ where the Spirit is ruling with the Gospel, there is no law or troubled hearts, but only consolation and faith. The reign of Christ, which the Spirit rules with the Gospel, cannot be identified with the extension of the word and the sacraments, but where they are preached and administered, the Holy Spirit is working with power (Gospel, unveiling of the Gospel) through them, over them, and in them to create the hearts of faith, which are Christ's spiritual or inner reign.

³⁴Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 475.

³⁵Luther, "Predigt 2058. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 445.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRIT AND FAITH

Luther's very close connection between the Spirit and faith comes already from his exegesis.

vocat consolatorem, quia Hebraice "Geist" heist "ein mut."
Sic spiritus sanctus dicitur "mut dei," das er thut und durch
dringt, quod conclusit.¹

Dicitur Spiritus sanctus "geist," "ein mut."²

The coming or indwelling of the Spirit (Courage) entails the coming or indwelling of faith (courage) in our hearts.

After Luther discusses the promises of the coming of the Spirit in 1520, he says this is nothing other than the doctrine concerning faith.

Sunt igitur he pollicitatione aliud nihil quam doctrina fidei.³

So, when Luther speaks of faith, it shows this background.

Der glaube aber ist eyn feste, ungezweyffelte zuversicht auff
Gottes verheysunge, das sie war sey.⁴

This faith or confidence is only given by the Spirit according to Luther.

Aber solchen glauben und gewisse sicherheit mus der heylig geyst
geben.⁵

¹ Martin Luther, "Predigt 604. 1525," *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1939), XVII. 1, 259.

² Luther, "Predigt 606. 1525," *op. cit.*, XVII. 1, 270.

³ Luther, "Predigt 103. 1520," *op. cit.*, IX, 465.

⁴ Luther, "Predigt 602. 1525," *op. cit.*, XVII. 1, 250.

⁵ Luther, "Predigt 602. 1525," *op. cit.*, XVII. 1, 251.

Luther can speak of the Christian experience as:

1. having faith;
2. having the Holy Spirit in one's heart through the inner word of the host and baptism.

Thus, Christ is not in our heart until both can be said of us.

*Prius est in corde tuo, aperitur tibi per fidem, vel spiritum sanctum in corde per verbum in pane et baptismo.*⁶

It is the Spirit and His word which give us faith, though.

*Damit bezeugt wird, das der Heilig Geist sey bey der Christenheit und mache sie heilig, nemlich druch das wort und Sacrament, dadurch er inwendig wircket den glawben und erkenntnis Christ.*⁷

If we say that the Spirit and His word give us faith, we have placed the Spirit before the word He brings and made the word an inner word. Luther can speak in this manner, or he can place the external word before the Spirit: The word and the Spirit give us faith. Or he can have an external word and the Spirit with an internal word giving us faith.

*Scriptura dicit datzu, ut fides confirmetur euserlich, sicut spiritus sanctus intus firmat fidem, qui ergo contemnit verbum externum, et spiritum non habebunt.*⁸

Of Luther's varied use of the term "word" we have spoken enough in the last chapter. We only note that Luther usually says that faith is the result of the Spirit's working and the working of either Christ's, God's, or the Spirit's word. Where Luther says that faith is the gift of the Spirit, we do not interpret him as wishing to omit the word.

⁶Luther, "Predigt 676. 1526," *op. cit.*, XX, 400.

⁷Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," *op. cit.*, XLV, 614.

⁸Luther, "Predigt 606. 1525," *op. cit.*, XVII. 1, 271.

So also when Luther speaks of the word giving faith and he treats the Spirit as giving strength for the new righteousness, we do not interpret Luther as wishing to say that there could be faith without the Spirit.

However, Luther does speak at times as though faith were only a gift of the Spirit or only a working of the word.

Deinde clare vides fidem et profeccionem eius non esse nostrarum virium, sed donum esse spiritus sanctus.⁹

Solches hat er nu gethan und befohlen zu predigen durch das Euan-gelium und foddert von allen Meschen (. . .) Busse (. . .) Und Glauben, das inen Gott in solcher Busse umb seines Sons willen die suenden vergeben wolle. Wer nu solcher Predigt gleubt, der hat durch den selben Glauben vergebung der suenden und ist in Gottes gnaden, Und ob er gleich dem Gesetz nicht gnug thut, so wird im doch die uberige suende nicht zugerechnet, sondern ist auch unter der vergebung, Und mit solchem Glauben wird im auch der heilige Geist gegeben, das er gewinnet liebe und lust das gute zu thun und der suende widerstehet.¹⁰

Whether faith is attributed to the Spirit, the word, or both, seems to depend on the scripture verse which Luther is expounding. Most of the time it seems that Luther thinks of the Spirit making faith a faith of the heart and then he thinks of the Spirit keeping us in such faith. The Spirit does this with the inner word or with unveiling of the word.

To speak about the inner faith which the Spirit works with the word, we are required to call it by many names. Thus Luther can call it peace or happiness toward God. The term "faith" itself is not always used by Luther to refer to inner faith. Its usage is as varied as his use of "word."

⁹Luther, "Predigt 1038. 1529," op. cit., XXIX, 339.

¹⁰Luther, "Postille 235. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 359.

In this chapter we will speak of the Spirit's working with the word to create in us inner faith, peace, happiness toward God. It is most difficult to have this inner faith, peace, happiness toward God. Therefore, we are required to have this chapter on the Spirit and faith.

When Luther thinks of us having this inner faith, peace, happiness toward God, it is a gift of the Spirit's working with the word that we love God and do His will. This ultimate activity of the Spirit in us through our inner faith we shall treat in the next chapter, "The Indwelling of the Spirit."

For Luther continuing in inner faith, peace, happiness toward God was most difficult because of his own sin.

Luther says of Christ:

Auff das wir ya nicht vertzagen, so saget er: Ich wil euch senden einen troester und ein solchen, der da almechtig ist. Und nennet den hailigenn Gaist alhie einen troester, Denn ob mich gleich meine suende, die forcht des todes ploed machen, so kumpt er her und rueret mein hertz und spricht: Heeu, frisch hin an. Also ploszet er uns einen mut ein, spricht uns freeuntlich unnd troestlich zu, das wir nicht vertzagen vor dem tode und hynan geen, wenn wir gleich zehen helsze hetten, und sagen: Ey, wiewol ich suend hab, noch dennoch sind sie hin durch, Und wenn ich ir noch mer hete, das sie uber mir zusamme schluegen, so wil ich doch hoffen, das sie mir nichts schaden muegen, Nicht das man die suende nicht empfinden solt, denn das flaisch mues sie empfinden, sondern der gaist uberwindt und untertruckt die ploedigkeit und fuert unns hin durch, Denn er ist mechtig genug dartzu.¹¹

Here the Spirit was working with an inner word to keep Luther in the inner faith, peace, happiness toward God.

For Luther the harshness and force of this world and the laughing doubt of the devil also opposed any continuing in inner faith.

¹¹Luther, "Postille 81. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 273.

Luther has Christ say of the Spirit:

Denn ich wil in also senden, das er in euch und ewer Troester sey, (weil ir von der Welt keinen trost habt), der euch hertz und mut gebe wider der Welt feindschafft und des Teufels schrecken. ¹²

Luther's frequent use of Unglueck and other specific references to physical loss or danger show that he sometimes regarded these as opposing inner faith. But for Luther, the Spirit is almighty against them.

der ist almechtig unnd aller dinnge ain herr. was vermag nun die creatur wider uns, so bey uns steet der schoepffer? Sieh wie grosz ist der troester des hailigenn gaists, Lasz nun alle tuercken geen, so der unser schuetz und ruckhalt ist. ¹³

Luther's inner faith can be entirely happy in suffering and death. However, when Luther sees the Spirit bringing us to such inner faith with the word, he can see suffering and persecution as the occasion in which the inner faith is finally built in us.

Da scheiden sich nu die zwene Troester, der ein weltlich devil, der sthet darauff, das man sich verlest auff gut, ehr, gewalt etc. Yhr aber werdet der keines haben, denn es ist nichts gewisses, Es hilfft und Troestet nicht lenger, bis ein fieber oder Pestilentz kompt, so ists denn schon ausgetroestet, Sondern wenn yhr erschreckt und bloede seid fur den leuten und ewrm hertzen dazu, so solt yhr einen Troester haben.

.....
wens schon alls dahin ghet, weib, kinder, haus, hof, gut, ehr, leib und leben, so lebt dennoch der noch droben, der heist Jesus Christus, der fur mich mensch geborn, gestorben und aufferstande ist. ¹⁴

In the same way sin can be the occasion in which the inner faith is strengthened. Luther even speaks of the Spirit letting us fall.

¹² Luther, "Postille 242. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 425.

¹³ Luther, "Predigt 215. 1522," op. cit., X. 3, 150-51.

¹⁴ Luther, "Predigt 1323. 1532," op. cit., XXXVI, 175-76.

Wol ists war, Der Heilig Geist lesst unter weilen die Christen fallen, irren und straucheln und sunnda da bleiben und thuts eben darumb, das wir nicht an uns gefallen haben, als weren wir von uns selb heilig, das wir lernen, was wir sind und von wem wir die heiligkeit haben.¹⁵

This is another instance where the Holy Spirit is not Comforter for a while that He might be Comforter. The same thing is true when the Spirit preaches to us according to a few other Luther sermons.

Luther speaks of those who receive and concur with the Spirit's preaching of Law.

Aber das sie nicht verdampt werden wie die andern, darin machet allein dis die unterscheid, das sie solche straffe annemen, bekennen und klagen, das sie suende haben und an Christum gleuben und durch in vergebung der suenden suchen, Und also die frembde Gerechtigkeit haben, welche ist allein gantz und gar des Herrn Christi eigen werck, krafft und verdienst.¹⁶

This is connected with Luther's statements that the inner faith, peace, happiness can be continuously next to the Old Man in a person and still maintain itself. Our sin and sinful nature are not to disturb faith.

Aber der hailig gaist musz zuvor da sein, sunst thut er nichts.

Dann das gewissen ist der suend zuschwach, Ja es ist kaine suende so klain, da sich kuende wider schuetzen das gewissen und wenn sy gylch so klain were, als lachen in der kirchen. Item wenn der todt daher kommen und das bloede vertzagte gewissen mutig machen, das es hyndurch gee, ob gleych alle suende auff im legen. Also musz es gleych almechtig werden, wie der ist der im zuspricht, Also das sich zuvor ainem rauscheden blat fuercht, das fuercht sich vor allen teeuffel nicht, und welchs gewissen zuvor nicht lachen erhalten kuende, das erhelt yetzunt alle suende, dann das ist der nutz und frucht des hailgen gaists, das auch die suende wirt verendert in den allerbesten brauch.¹⁷

¹⁵Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLVI, 618.

¹⁶Luther, "Postille 235. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 363.

¹⁷Luther, "Predigt 215. 1522," op. cit., X. 3, 152-53.

This inner faith, happiness toward God, peace next to our sinful natures Luther describes elsewhere.

Luther has Christ say:

Denn ich wil den Vater bitten, und er, durch mein bitt, sol euch gewislich den heiligen Geist geben dazu, das er euch troeste, Dabey ir koennet gewis sein, das ich euch lieb habe, des gleichen auch der Vater und der heilige Geist, der da gesand wird.

Ja, sagt dein hertz dagegen, Du hast nicht recht gelebt und bist voller sunde, Das ist leider all zu war, Was denn? O du mus zur Hellen, spricht der Teuffel. Nein, das wil Gott nicht, Da fare hin, teuffel und die boese welt, Denn mein Herr Christus sagt nein dazu, das der Vater nicht mit mir zoerne, Sondern den Troester gebe und der selbige zu mir kome, wie er bittet, Und sie also der sache eines sind, das sie nicht wollen mich erschreckt noch betruet, viel weniger verstossen und verdampt haben, sondern mich getroestet und selig haben.¹⁸

If the Spirit is a Comforter against sin, then He is a Comforter against all Anfechtung, even in Unglueck. Luther had Christ say this in a sermon of 1520.

Seyt frisch, Ich fahr da hin und lasz euch in allem ungluck, doch will ich euch geben eyn geyst, der wirt euch muts genung machen wider alle anfechtung.¹⁹

The inner faith, peace, happiness toward God gives traces of itself outwardly so that it is discernible according to Luther.

Der glaub kan wol sein in baptisato viro, muliere, und man kans spuren, an credat vel an rideat. Ibi videbis viventem Sanctum non ex operibus, sed quel in corde.²⁰

On the other hand Luther says that the Spirit's comfort or word is buried so deep in faith, that one would think that inward faith is not discernible.

¹⁸Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 565.

¹⁹Luther, "Predigt 104. 1520," op. cit., IX, 467.

²⁰Luther, "Predigt 1530. 1535," op. cit., XLI, 68.

Es ist aber solcher trost und warheit des heiligen Geistes seer heimlich und tieff verborgen im Glauben, das die Christen auch selbs solches nicht allzeit empfinden.²¹

It is this inner faith from the heart which is the condition of man's justification according to Luther.

So man von hertzen glaubtt, so wirt man rechtverttig.²²

At the same time Luther knows that inner faith is always in growth, battling fear. The Spirit coming with the word is the Strengthenener of faith. When we call the Spirit the Comforter the context is dynamic. Faith is in growth.

Luther has Christ say of the Spirit:

Hic spiritum sanctum vocat "paraclitum" vel ein vorsprech. Nos sumus blod. timemus mortem, iram et iudicium dei, etiamsi sumus in fide. Dominus dicit: regnum meum ist also gethan: per mortem etc. ad vitam ducam vos; ad hoc pertinet cor securum et trotzig und mutig, et hoc facit spiritus sanctus et dicit tibi: hui hin an.²³

For the growing faith Luther uses many analogies. One of them is dying and rising. Another is not trusting from the heart in things, but rather in Christ or God. In this connection Luther says the loss of things or any persecution only makes us stronger or happier in faith.

Es ist aber gewysz war, Ye mer ein Christ vervolung hat von auswendig, ye froehlicher er ist im hertzen und ye mer frydes er hatt, denn er liebet Christum.²⁴

Thus, a Christian is not afraid of death for it only helps him to life.

²¹ Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 448.

²² Luther, "Postille 81. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 271.

²³ Luther, "Predigt 468. 1524," op. cit., XV, 566.

²⁴ Luther, "Postille 83. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 282.

Also haben wir die troestliche verheissung, den Christen gegeben so da gerchreckt werden durch den tod und allerley unglueck, das sie koennen trotzen wider den Teuffel und die welt und sagen: Wenn du mich toedtest, so toedtestu mich nicht, sondern hilffest mir zum leben, Begrebstu mich, so reissestu mich aus der asschen und staub gen Himmel, Und summa Dein zorn und toben ist mir eitel gnade und huelffe, Denn du givst mir nur ursache und den anfang, das mich Christus zum leben bringet, wir er hie spricht: "Ich lebe und ir solt leben." ²⁵

But it is always a battle for such inner faith toward God to grow.

Luther says that the work of the Spirit with the word is always becoming.

Darumb rede ich von dem ampt des heyligen geysts, was er thun soll und ymmer ym schwang gehen lasset, wenn ers hatt angefangen, . . . Denn seyn ampt stehet nicht also, das es schon aussgericht sey, Sondernn das es von tage zu tage ymmer yhe mehr wirckt und weret so lang wyr leben. Also, das doch ymmer betrubnis auch mitt unter dem frid gemengt sey. Denn wenn keyn betrubnis do were, so kont er uns nicht troesten. ²⁶

Luther says that we should learn to suffer joyfully and hold to the external word through all that comes. Then the Spirit will be working that eternal life in us which is eternal comfort.

Vita eterna est trost eternum. ²⁷

To say that Luther always regards faith as the work of the Spirit explicitly is incorrect. But we can often note that when Luther wishes to speak about strong faith or faith as opposed to mere knowledge, he will speak extensively about the working of the Spirit with His power (Gospel, flame, writing in the heart, unveiling of the Gospel).

spiritus sanctus mit dem verstand, erleuctet mit der that. ²⁸

²⁵Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., KLV, 595.

²⁶Luther, "Predigt 305. 1523," op. cit., XII, 577.

²⁷Luther, "Predigt 604. 1525," op. cit., XVII. 1, 260.

²⁸Luther, "Predigt 1229. 1531," op. cit., XXIX, 365.

CHAPTER VI

THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT

The ultimate activity of inner faith, peace, happiness toward God is the subject of this chapter. For Luther the activity of faith is love.

Nam ea fides excitat in me amorem.¹

However, Luther often speaks of the Spirit creating this love through His indwelling in us, especially when he has not mentioned the Spirit in connection with the creation of faith.

Wer nu solcher Predigr gleubt, der hat durch den selben Glauben vergebung der suenden und ist in Gottes gnaden, Und ob er gleich dem Gesetz nicht gnug thut, so wird im doch die uberige suende nicht zugerechnet, sondern ist auch unter der vergebung, Und mit solchem Glauben wird im auch der heilige Geist gegeben, das er gewinnet liebe und lust das gute zu thun und der suende widersteht.²

Thus, love is the activity of faith and it is also the creation of the indwelling of the Spirit. Luther says both. When Luther says that love is the activity of faith, then he has usually introduced the Spirit as the Creator of faith. The quotation above from 1520 is an exception. Here Luther says the activity of faith is love, and then says that this love is the Holy Spirit.

Nam ea fides excitat in me amorem, qui amor est spiritus sanctus.³

Our treatment of love separately after faith is encouraged by Luther to some extent. At the same time we note that many quotations

¹ Martin Luther, "Predigt 103. 1520," D. Martin Luthers Werke Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1939), IX, 463.

² Luther, "Postille 235. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 359.

³ Luther, "Predigt 103. 1520," op. cit., IX, 463.

will not separate between faith and love in the least way. And Luther even says:

Denn lieb und glaub sind von einander ungeschaiden.⁴

Luther can speak about the indwelling of the Spirit without separating between faith and love:

so mus ich auch sagen, das der heilige Geist inn mir sey, Denn du wirst gewislich keinen glauben, keinen guten gedancken, freud und trost von im haben, ja keine predigt hoeren noch thun, Also auch kein werck der liebe oder einigs rechten Christlichen stand thun, Es sey denn der heilig Geist bey dir und solch inn dir schaffe und wircke.⁵

At other times Luther can speak about the indwelling of the Spirit as assuring faith that is already existent and then creating love and works. And Luther can speak about the indwelling of the Spirit as only creating love and works.

Und auch eusserlich sein Leib und Glieder werden ein Tempel des heiligen Geistes 1. Corinth. vi., damit er als ein Christen und guter Baum eitel gute fruechte und nutz schaffet, guts thut und dem boesen widerstehet und meidet.⁶

Luther can speak most concretely about the Spirit's dwelling in us for physical works.

Und summa, Ein solcher Man, durch welchen Gott beide, redet, labet und wircket, was er redt, lebt und thut, Sein Zunge ist Gottes Zunge, seine Hand ist Gottes Hand, und sein Wort ist nicht mehr Menschen, sondern Gottes wort.⁷

This was a great comfort for Luther, perhaps because he saw the Old Man in everything he did.

⁴Luther, "Postille 82. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 278.

⁵Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 579.

⁶Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 459.

⁷Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 459.

Denn Got bey uns wonen hie auff erden heyst anders nicht, denn das alles, was wir thun, reden, dencken und leiden, soll alles wolgethan sein, man esse, trincke, arbeyte, man stehe auff, man lege sich nider, man bette, studire, singe oder lese, Gott will ims alles gefallen lassen.⁸

In this sense, then, Luther could speak of the indwelling of the Spirit as a magnificent communion of love in which man loves God and God loves man.

Das wil ein rechter herrlicher newer Pfingstag werden und ein treffliche erzeigung und krafft des heiligen Geistes, ein himlische Versammlung oder Concilium zu beiden teilen, Da die hertzen durch den heiligen Geist erleuctet und entzuendet werden mit der liebe gegen Christum, Und widerumb Christi und des Vaters liebe gegen inen scheineth und leuchtet, Und so freundlich zusammen halten beide, Gott und Mensch, da der heilige Geist des Menschen hertz selbs zubreitet und weieth zum heiligen haus und Wohnung, Tempel und Monstrantzen Gottes, Und der Mensch solchen herrlichen, edlen, lieben und werden Gast und Einwoner oder Hausgenossen kriegt, der da ist Gott der Vater und der Son.⁹

Whether Luther mentions the Spirit's actual indwelling in us seems most dependent on the text which Luther is expounding. When he does make a statement regarding the Spirit's indwelling, he often implies or says that the Spirit's working in the indwelling is still nothing but a working with the word (comfort, inner sermon).

Das heisset je den heiligen Geist freundlich und troestlich uns furgebildet, das wir in nicht anders sollen ansehen und halten denn fur einen solchen freundlichen lieben Troester und Beystand, Und wissen, das er von Gott dem Vater und Christo dazu gesand und gegeben wird und sich gewislich auch also gegen uns erzeigt (durchs Wort), das er uns warhafftig troestet und eitel gnade, Liebe und guts von Gott anzeigt, Versichert die hertzen, das Gott (beide, der Vater und der Son) nicht mit inen zuerneth oder sie verdammt noch sie erschreckt haben wolle, Weil der heilige Geist von inen beiden zum Troester gesand wird und den befelth hat, das

⁸Luther, "Postille 350. 1532," op. cit., LII, 323.

⁹Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 457.

er nichts anders denn, was er hoeret, verkuendigen sol.¹⁰

We might be justified then in saying that Luther means the same thing whether he says the Spirit works with comfort until faith is strong enough to thank and love in return, or says the Spirit indwells with love which creates love in return. The Spirit is always working with comfort, love, Gospel, unveiling of the Gospel, for the activity of love.

Luther calls the Christian's external activity various names. We have used "love" to denote this external activity. This is our own usage of the term since "love" can often be only inner love in Luther's writings.

The Spirit's working becomes also external for Luther especially in prayer.

Luther says:

Darumb wil Christus hie sagen: Wenn ir an nicht glaubet und den Geist empfangen habt, da durch das hertz versichert wird der gnaden Gottes (Davon er droben gesagt hat: "Wer mich sihet, der sihet auch den Vater" etc.), So wird gewislich folgen, das ir auch muesset beten, Denn dis ist das rechte, eigene und allein der Christen werck.¹¹

Aber ein recht Christlich gebet sol und mus also gehen aus dem Gnaden geist.¹²

On the basis of his text, Luther also emphasizes Christian witness.

Das ist: Wenn der im hertzen ist, der redet durch euch unnd macht euch gewisz und sicher, das das Euangelion war ist. Da folget denn das bekendtnus des Euangelions herausz.¹³

¹⁰Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 446.

¹¹Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 540.

¹²Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 540.

¹³Luther, "Postille 81. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 274.

This witnessing from the Spirit has the Spirit in it witnessing inwardly.

ir werdet auch zeugen, der gaist innwendig, ir aber auswendig, mit dem worte. ¹⁴

The Spirit with the word works that we are happy toward God.

This inner happiness also leads to external happiness.

Das sihet man auch an allen falschen lerern und Rotten geistern (als die ires Meisters, des Teuffels art auch an sich haben), Die thuns und vermoegens nicht, das sie irgend ein bloed gewissen solten troesten oder froehlich machen, sondern machen die hertzen nur irr, trawrig und schweermuetig, das sie daher gehen als verdustert oder wahnwitzige leute, Und achten das fur koestlich, geistlich leben, so man daher gehet im grawen rock, den kopff hengeret, saur sihet und trawrig sich stellet, Das ist nichts denn des Teuffels affenspiel und beth oerung, der daran seine lust hat, das er die hertzen erschrocken, feig und verzagt mache. Also wollen auch sie ire geistligkeit mit saursehen ausrichten, das man nimer keine rechte troestliche gedancken haben noch ein froehlich wort reden kan. ¹⁵

About 1538, Luther began to teach that the Spirit's assuring of the heart not only made faith certain but led to the right judging of external doctrine.

Ich aber wil euch geben (spricht Christus) den Geist, der euch sicher und gewis machet der warheit, das ir nicht duerfft zweiveln inn diesem oder jenem stuecke, so ewer seligkeit betrifft, sondern der sache gewis und Richter sein koennet und urteilen ueber alle ander lere. ¹⁶

Most frequently, Luther becomes specific about the Spirit's working for external activity as the fulfilling of God's holy will or command.

Denn wo solch erkentnus ist, kan der heylig geist nicht aussen bleyben. Wenn er denn kompt, so musz er das hertz willig, lustig und frolich machen, das es frey hynan gehe und gerne thue

¹⁴Luther, "Postille 81. 1526," op. cit., X. 1. II, 271.

¹⁵Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 472.

¹⁶Luther, "Predigt 1685. 1538," op. cit., XLV, 728.

alles, was gott gefellet mit frohlichem mutt und leydet was zuleiden ist und auch gerne sterbe. Und ye klerer und grosser das erkenntnis ist, ye grosser wirt auch solch lust und freude. So ist dann gottes gebot erfullet und alles than was man thuen soll, und also bistu rechtfertig.¹⁷

Solch freundlich und gnedig Wort bringet nu Christus mit seinem Euangelio, Und darumb fehete er sein Reich an, das die hertzen solches fassen und in also lernen kennen, das er von Gott Gnade und barmhertzigkeit durch sein leiden und tod uns bracht habe und schencke und dazu den H. Geist gegeben und also regierte, das wir widerumb Gott Lieb gewinnen und anfahen mit liebe und lust im gehorsam zu sein.¹⁸

Also hat der hailig gaist allain ausz gestrichen die geschriffte und Christus und haben die klar gemacht. Also die erkandtnus ist gnugsam, die macht das ich dann erfuelle Gottes gepot, Darnach bin ich nit meer schuldig.¹⁹

Luther does not think of us growing in external activity without a growing in faith first. Both result from a use (Uebung) of the external word and sacraments and the Holy Spirit's working in them.

dadurch sie von Gott angenommen und nu sein Haus heissen und sind und inmerdar zubereitet werden durch ubung des Worts und den heiligen Geist an verstand, weisheit, Glauben, Gaben, tugenden zunemen und stercker werden.²⁰

Luther can omit the Spirit when he speaks of faith leading to external activity and only mention the word. Luther's tendency to bring the Spirit's working through faith to external activity does not have priority in his sermons on John 14. 15. 16. Here the prominent emphasis is the Spirit's creation of faith through the word. Yet, often he mentions faith and faith's activity together.

¹⁷ Luther, "Predigt 302. 1523," op. cit., XII, 547.

¹⁸ Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 452.

¹⁹ Luther, "Predigt 216. 1522," op. cit., X, 3, 160.

²⁰ Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 462.

CHAPTER VII

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER

The purpose of this chapter is to present the burden of Luther's theology of the Holy Spirit according to the sermons examined. From the title it is obvious that we wish to say that the Holy Spirit is Consolator Spiritus for Luther, at least according to his sermons on John 14. 15. 16. This cannot be disconnected from the Spirit's coming with the inner Gospel or the Spirit's unveiling of the Gospel.

Thut aber solches nicht durch eitel offenbarliche mechtige beweisung grosser krafft und stercke, sondern, weil sie noch irsuende und unwirdigkeit fuehlen, tregt er die selbigen und decket und troestet sie der Gnaden und Vergebung in Christo.¹

But this presentation of Luther's essential theology of the Spirit cannot continue until we have once again qualified it by referring to Luther's doctrine of the Trinity.

So oft er ueber die Trinitaetslehre als solche spricht, betont er dann freilich auf das staerkste die Einheit Gottes.²

To be sure Luther emphasizes the oneness of God, all the more because he is an Old Testament exegete.

Therefore, in all that the Holy Spirit does He brings the Father and the Son with Him according to Luther.

sampt dem Vater und Christo.³

¹Martin Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1883-1939), XXI, 463.

²Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1952), I, 191.

³Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 563.

Writing an independent theology of the Spirit would be just as impossible for Luther as writing an independent theology of the Son or the Father. Therefore, this is not meant to be an independent theology of the Spirit. To everything that is said we can add the words: together with the Father and the Son.

In Luther's writings--also in his sermons on John 14. 15. 16. --- he is almost constant in his reference to God, the Triune God, and the God-man, Christ. Of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit Luther says much, but he says it by speaking of "God."

Luther's frequent reference to the Spirit in his sermons on John 14. 15. 16. usually comes from the text or a discussion of the word, and even then such reference is dwarfed by Luther's reference to God, the Triune God.

Prenter says:

The Holy Spirit is the Triune God personally present in our distress as spiritus creator.⁴

We would say:

The Holy Spirit is God personally present in our distress together with the Father and Christ.

With this background we can present a theology of the Spirit in Luther. And it is true that in this sense Luther has quite a bit to say about the Spirit. He can speak extensively about that working which is especially the Spirit's before he adds "together with the Father and Christ."

⁴Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. 197.

This is a presentation of the major burden of Luther's thought on the Spirit. There are many minor emphases which may or may not be reconcilable.

In the first place, Luther's idea of the Spirit as Comforter does not seem especially prominent till 1522. In 1520 Luther gives the Spirit a long list of titles and his sermons of that year seem to have the same breadth.

parakletos, exhortator, animator, Impulsor, inspirator, incitator.⁵

In 1522 Luther says:

Also hat der hailig geist allain ausz gestrichen die geschriffte unnd Christus und haben die klar gemacht.⁶

der gaist ueberwindet und underdruckt die bloedigkait und die forcht und fuert uns hyndurch.⁷

With this is begun Luther's concentration on the superiority, vast superiority or necessity of the Spirit's inner word and gift of inner faith. There is quite a bit of range in Luther's thinking, though, and he will not always use the easy distinction of inner and outer.

Although this thought pattern, that the Spirit is comforting with the inner Gospel, unveiling of the Gospel, seems most prominent in Luther's sermons after 1522, --when Luther is talking about the Spirit active for works after faith, we meet a variety of expression which sometimes lacks explicit reference to this thought pattern.

Luther's doctrine of the Spirit as indwelling inner love which

⁵Luther, "Predigt 104. 1520," op. cit., IX, 466.

⁶Luther, "Predigt 216. 1522," op. cit., X. 3, 160.

⁷Luther, "Predigt 215. 1522," op. cit., X. 3, 150.

creates works is evident in 1520.

qui amor est spiritus sanctus.⁸

Thereafter Luther will speak of the Spirit's coming in connection with the gift of inner love. He can say that the gift of inner love is a result of the Spirit's coming with the Gospel. Or he can say that the Spirit comes with the Gospel to strengthen faith so that it loves. But this variety is only met when Luther thinks of the Spirit active for works after faith. And in this variety the Spirit's coming with the Gospel is still prominent.

When Luther thinks of the Spirit active for faith, he consistently emphasizes the Spirit's coming with the Gospel. However, here Luther's thought on the Spirit is qualified by that thought pattern in which Luther speaks of only the word active for faith. When Luther says that God is active with the word for faith, we are closer to his statement that the Spirit comes with the inner Gospel, unveiling of the Gospel for faith.

When Luther deals with the Spirit explicitly in connection with faith, then we have a consistent thought pattern of the Spirit as Consolator Spiritus. Since Luther's thought on faith and inner faith is prominent in his theology, we say that Luther's theology of the Spirit as Consolator Spiritus is one of his most important thought patterns. It might be called the most immanent portion of Luther's favor Dei and Reich Christi theology.

For Luther the Spirit is Comforter with the Gospel. This is the

⁸Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 562.

emphasis he places first and makes prominent.

Darumb muessen wir den heiligen Geist also lernen kennen und gleuben, wie er in uns fuerbildet und beschreibet, nemlich, das er nicht ein Geist des zornig und schreckens, sondern ein Geist der gnaden und trosts sey.⁹

We do not see Luther's references to the Spirit's coming with the Law as contradicting this, for Luther has often enough said that this coming of the Spirit involves his working with the Gospel afterwards; otherwise, it is not the Spirit working at all but the devil.

Sondern wer es thut, ob er auch meinen namen fueret oder des Vaters, das ist gewislich der Teuffel.¹⁰

It is in this sense that Luther can so often say that the Spirit is only Comforter and only comforts.

In this essential theology of the Spirit as Comforter the Spirit's whole work is making the word the Gospel either by bringing the Gospel inwardly through the word or unveiling the word as Gospel. When we have said this, we have given a summary of Luther's whole theology of the Spirit as Comforter.

Denn so der heilige Geist sol Christum verkleren, so mus er seiner klarheit viel andere liechter vertunckeln, Gleich als wenn die liebe Sonne am Himmel auffgeheth, alle ander fewr, liechter und sterne fuer irer klarheit vertunckelt werden, das man ir nicht achtet, Also, wo Christus durch des heiligen Geists predigt leuchtet und erkand wird, das wir durch in haben Gottes gnade und ewiges leben, Da muessen alle nebenliechter von inen selbs verleschen, die uns inn unser nacht und finsternis den weg der seligkeit zeigen wollen.¹¹

Luther's emphasis on the Spirit comforting with the Gospel grows and grows so that it seems most prominent and clear at the end of his

⁹Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 562.

¹⁰Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 561.

¹¹Luther, "Predigt 1686. 1538," op. cit., XLVI, 66.

life.

Darumb sol man lernen den heiligen Geist recht kennen und wissen, das er nichts anders ist und thut, denn warhafftig troestet durch die Predigt des Euangelli in Christo. ¹²

According to Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. the Spirit is the Comforter because the text gives the Spirit such a title. However, Luther's emphasis on the Spirit as Comforter for this reason alone would not be significant. It is because of Luther's seeing the unveiled Christ as Gospel and because of the Spirit's bringing the unveiled Christ, word. Gospel, that Luther's essential theology of the Spirit is Consolator Spiritus. Luther knows no Spirit which does not harmonize with the comforting Spirit Who works with the Gospel. The Spirit as the Giver of gifts, especially inner love, and the Spirit Who preaches Law before Gospel has the essential description of being the comforting Spirit Who works with the Gospel.

For Luther the Spirit is in action. He does not wish to dispute about the Person of the Spirit. For him the Person of the Spirit is always working and this is a working with the Gospel.

Whoever regards the Spirit as Creator, as creating faith and love and works, as creating the Church, i. e. Christ's spiritual reign in comforted hearts, must first see that He is the Comforter bringing the Gospel. At least this is the way Luther speaks in his sermons on John 14. 15. 16. Luther thinks of the new creation being brought about evangelically. The Spirit bringing the Gospel leads us through faith to want the destruction of our old self and work for it, to attempt

¹²Luther, "Postille 244. 1544," op. cit., XXI, 477.

gladly the truly good works which are the will of God.

er sol¹³ inn euch bleiben und regieren, leben, wircken und alles thun.

This is nothing other than the Gospel working and doing everything in us, for the Spirit rules and works through the Gospel. Thus, Luther's theology of the Spirit is Christo-centric and permeated with Christ and His work. Christ for us is the source of the Spirit's preaching and working and finally Christ for us is expressed in the Spirit's preaching and working.

Speaking of Christ's going to the Father, Luther says:

Der gang das ist unser iustitia und quel born und heubstuck, per quod coram deo ivisti, per quod omnis quell, das wird Christus, Euangelium, spiritus sanctus predigen.¹⁴

Because the Holy Spirit works with the Gospel, and because we believe the Gospel, the Spirit's creation of the true, spiritual Church through the Gospel is immediately a matter of faith.

Denn das muessen wir selbs gleuben und sagen, das der heilige Geist sey bey der Kirchen, und das sie gewislich auff erden sey und bleibe.¹⁵

One can speak of something new in Luther's theology of the Spirit. It is Luther's most close connection of the Spirit with the Gospel, the most close connection of the Spirit with Christ - - even as Luther has a most close connection between all the Persons of the Trinity.

With Luther's most close connection of the Spirit with the Gospel,

¹³Luther, "Predigt 1685. 1538," op. cit., XLV, 574.

¹⁴Luther, "Predigt 1530. 1535," op. cit., XLI, 67.

¹⁵Luther, "Predigt 1684. 1537," op. cit., XLV, 575.

there is a new intenseness with regard to the Spirit's working with holy love. At least according to the sermons on John 14. 15. 16. the Spirit is essentially for Luther Consolator Spiritus.

In Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. there does not seem to be an independent doctrine of the Spirit. The Father and the Son with the Spirit. There is the doctrine of the Trinity. In this doctrine Luther says:

1. There is no independent doctrine of the Person of the Spirit. He is God, but inseparable from the Father. The Holy Spirit is known to us only as He is actually revealed here.
2. The activity of the Spirit is the coming to light the spiritual realm according to truth. In this realm the Spirit rules and works with His power.
3. The Spirit's working with the Church is a working with the law, not with the Gospel, the external word and sacraments. A working with light in the world, an enlightening of the world. It is working with a Spirit, a working with power, a working of Christ into the world.
4. The working of the Spirit with the Church can be viewed as a strengthening of faith which the word has created, or as a creating of faith, or as a bringing of faith into the heart without which faith would be external and vain. These views are not to be separated.
5. The chief work of the Spirit's activity is good works. The Spirit strengthens faith with the Gospel so that it yields works. For the Spirit can be said to dwell in us for works. These views are not to be separated.

Luther visualized the Spirit's activity as a working with the Gospel. This was prominent in his sermons of 1517. The spirit became stronger and clearer until it is very pronounced in the sermons of 1526. At the same time the spirit seems to give in the appearance of such spiritual mode expression. But there are also other definite thoughts concerning this presentation of the Spirit. We have elsewhere told the Spirit

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

In Luther's sermons on John 14. 15. 16. there does not seem to be an independent theology of the Spirit. The Father and Son are with the Spirit. There is one theology of the Trinity. In this theology Luther says:

1. There can be no full treatment of the Person of the Spirit. He is God, incomprehensible and hidden. The Holy Spirit is known to us only in His activity toward man.
2. The activity of the Spirit is His coming to begin the spiritual reign of Christ on earth. In this reign the Spirit rules and works with the Gospel.
3. The Spirit's working with the Gospel is a coming with the inner word through the external word and sacraments, a coming with light to the word, an unveiling of the word. It is coming with a flame, a coming with power, a pressing of Christ into the heart.
4. The working of the Spirit with the Gospel may be viewed as a strengthening of faith which the word has created, or as a creating of faith, or as a bringing of faith into the heart without which faith would be external and valueless. These views are not to be harmonized.
5. The final fruit of the Spirit's activity is good works. The Spirit strengthens faith with the Gospel so that it yields works; or the Spirit can be said to dwell in us for works. These views are not to be harmonized.

Luther emphasizes the Spirit's activity as a working with the Gospel. This was prominent in his sermons of 1522. The motif becomes stronger and clearer until it is very pronounced in the sermons of 1544. At the same time the motif seems to grow in the appearance of much synonymous expression. But there are also other dynamic thoughts surrounding this presentation of the Spirit. We have sometimes said the Spirit

is Comforter under tension.

In evaluation of Luther's reference to the Spirit his interpreters have gone their separate ways. Luther's thought on the Trinity has been called scholastic, Augustinian, modalistic and erratic. For a true evaluation of Luther it would seem necessary to remember he is expounding different texts. His theological affirmations form a position which is wide in its range. In many instances Luther has actually maintained two opposing extremes with vigor.

An example of Luther's breadth is his use of the term "justified." For Luther "justified" can be used in the realized sense or in the futuristic sense just as Paul uses the term. This fact prohibits scholars from defending only the realized view or only the futuristic view as has been done in the past. We are justified. Yet we await justification, too.

Another example is Luther's varying presentations of justification. The latest Luther research will not succeed in removing forensic justification from Luther. It is in Luther along with the other presentations.

Now in this thesis we have not harmonized Luther's varying presentations of the Spirit's activity for faith and works. We do not think this is possible. We reject Regin Prenter's opinion:

There is a very definite order in the relation between faith in Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit which cannot be changed: The preaching of the gospel, faith in Christ, the outpouring of the Spirit with love and its fruits.¹

¹ Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, translated by John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), p. 84.

In opposition to this we have shown that faith can be said to precede or follow the outpouring of the Spirit. This variance can be resolved in those passages which speak first of outer faith and then of the Spirit working inner faith, but this resolution will not harmonize with Luther's other discussions of faith.

In this thesis we have also refused to harmonize Luther's affirmations that we feel the power of the Spirit and that we do not feel it. This diversity does not seem capable of resolution. Both are true, and they may be partially true at the same time. In the past, though, Luther's thought on the Spirit's coming has been evaluated as exclusively experiential in the joyful experience of forgiveness. It has been seen as transcendental in the activity of rejecting human thought and experience. Regin Preter called it faith, which must include the inner conflict between the old and the new.² However, all these emphases of the interpreters seem to be together in Luther. It seems we should not reject them, but we should rather learn in what context they are valid for Luther.

The evaluation of Luther's theology of the Spirit as experiential has raised the great issue of subjectivity and objectivity. This issue would seem to have little relation to Luther's thought. We have shown the dynamic nature of his thought. Its consequence is that nothing can remain objective since it acts. What is subjective has been created by something. It is not considered subjective in a static fashion.

Evaluation of Luther's certainty of faith has likewise divided

²Ibid., p. 56.

scholars. Luther attributes it to the Spirit. Possession of the Spirit is acknowledged in the ability to be confident against errorists. Here Luther follows the New Testament in saying that the Spirit may be seen in external faith and works. Yet Luther may well attribute certainty to the Father, the Son or the Gospel, too. The mediate cause of his certainty may be the scriptures, the good thoughts which come after the use of the scriptures, sermon or sacrament, faith, works, etc.

Luther is comprehensive. He does not eliminate everything which fails to fit a pattern. He rather declares it dynamically as working, happening or accomplished. In the future it would seem that evaluations of Luther will be helpful when they recognize those affirmations and insights which are in tension with a specific understanding of Luther. We have attempted to do this faithfully as we presented one of Luther's emphatic assertions: the Spirit is the Comforter. We hope that we have succeeded in a small measure.

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