

10-1-1962

Brief Studies

Arthur Carl Piepkorn (Translator)
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Piepkorn (Translator), Arthur Carl (1962) "Brief Studies," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 33, Article 56.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol33/iss1/56>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

BRIEF STUDIES

TWO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY
POLEMIC LITANIESTranslated by
Arthur Carl Piepkorn

[The polemics of the Lutherans against the Roman Catholics and of the Roman Catholics against the Lutherans in the seventeenth century were generally carried on with a bitterness and ferocity that our generation finds difficult to imagine apart from concrete surviving examples. Early in the eighteenth century an appendix to an academic dissertation over which John Christopher Wendler presided and at which John Nicholas Schwarz was respondent brings the two German satirical "litanies" which follow¹ into sharp and illuminating juxtaposition. The introductory sentences are in Latin.]

With a deceitful litany couched in the following words the Jesuit Vetter² once held our Evangelical³ teaching up to ridicule:

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

¹ Johann Christoph Wendler [praeses], *Dissertatio . . . praeliminaris qua asseritur . . . Lutheranos in praedudicium doctrinae purioris neque suppressere neque corrumpere scriptores ecclesiasticos et profanos . . . respondente Iohanne Nicolao Schwarzio* (Jena: Vidua Meyeriana [1713]), pp. 52—57. A copy of this work is among the unaccessioned dissertations in the library of the Theological Seminary of the American Lutheran Church (Luther Theological Seminary) St. Paul, Minn.

² Conrad Vetter, S. J., born at Engen in Swabia, died at Munich in 1622 in his 76th year, held in high esteem by his coreligionists, prolific polemicist, and the indefatigable adversary especially of James Andreae (1528 to 1590), one of the authors of the *Formula of Concord*, and of Philip Heilbrunner (1546 to 1616).

³ That is, Lutheran.

Lord God, the Father in Heaven;
Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world;
Lord God, the Holy Spirit:
Have mercy upon us.

Be gracious to us:
Spare us, good Lord God.

Be gracious to us:
Help us, good Lord God.
From all castigation of the body;
From all self-control and discipline;
From all scourges;
From all whips;
From all strokes and blows;
From all hair-shirts;
From all sackcloth;
From all monastic cowls;
From all chastity;
From all celibacy;
From all fasting:

Preserve us, good Lord God.

From Ash Wednesday;
From the whole of Lent;
From Holy Week;
From the four ember days;⁴
From all vigils and eves of feasts;⁵
From all sleeping on the bare earth;
From the snow of St. Francis;⁶
From the cold water of St. Bernard;⁷

⁴ The Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after St. Lucy's Day (December 13), the First Sunday in Lent, Whitsunday, and Holy Cross Day (September 14).

⁵ Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, ember days, eves and vigils are all days of fasting and/or abstinence in the Roman Catholic Church.

⁶ St. Francis of Assisi (1181?—1226), founder of the Order of Friars Minor. Cf. *Apology* IV, 211; XXVII, 21. As a remedy against violent temptations to impurity Saint Francis reportedly leaped naked into ditches filled with snow (Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater [editors], *Butler's Lives of the Saints* [New York: Burns and Oates, 1956], IV, 25; hereafter cited as Buder-Thurston-Attwater).

⁷ St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090—1153), founder-abbot of the Cistercian abbey at Clairvaux, "the last of the Fathers," evangelical but

From the thorns of St. Benedict;⁸
 From the breast-plate of St. Dominic Loric-
 cate;⁹
 From the iron chains of St. Gall;¹⁰
 From the cross of [Henry] Suso;¹¹
 From the rod of St. Bavon;¹²
 From the heart-beater of St. Jerome;¹³
 From the isolation of the hermits;
 Preserve us, good Lord God.

By Thy discipline;
 By Thy loneliness in the desert;
 By Thy fasting;
 By Thy sleeping on the bare earth;
 By Thy cold and nakedness;
 By Thy scourging;
 By Thy whips and rods;
 By Thy crown of thorns;
 By Thy cross;
 We preachers¹⁴ beseech Thee:

severely orthodox in his theology, noted for the austerities and self-mortification that he practiced. Cf. *Apology*, IV, 211; XII, 74; XXVII, 21; *Large Catechism*, Baptism, 50.

⁸ St. Benedict of Nursia (480?—550?), who withdrew from the licentious life of Rome to become a hermit first at Subiaco, then at Monte Cassino, and, without so designing it, the founder of the Order of St. Benedict and the "patriarch of Western monasticism." To overcome the desire to forsake his hermitage evoked by the recollection of a woman he had once known, he once lacerated himself by rolling in a patch of briars and nettles (Butler-Thurston-Attwater, I, 652).

⁹ St. Dominic Loricata (995—1060), an Italian priest who, upon learning that his parents had procured his ordination by means of a simoniacal gift of goatskins to the ordaining bishop, refused to exercise his priesthood further and undertook to expiate his parents' sin by a lifetime of penance. He constantly wore a cuirass (Latin, *lorica*, whence his name) next to his skin, burdened his limbs with chains, flagellated himself intemperately, slept in a kneeling position, and lived on bread, herbs, and water. Cf. Butler-Thurston-Attwater, IV, 110—111.

¹⁰ St. Gall (550?—645), an Irish missionary who went to Gaul with St. Columban and later became a hermit in what is now Swiss Swabia.

¹¹ Bl. Henry Suso (1295?—1366), German Dominican, pupil of Meister Eckehart, famed mystic and spiritual director.

¹² St. Bavon or Allowin (died 653?), a nobleman from the region of Liège who led a somewhat dissolute life until the death of his wife brought him to repentance; he retired to a forest hermitage and died there.

¹³ St. Eusebius Jerome of Stridon (342? to 420), ascetic, hermit, secretary to St. Damasus of Rome, Biblical scholar, translator of the Vulgate. A picture of this contentious saint shows him striking his breast with a stone; this prompted Sixtus V to say, "You do well to

That Thou wouldest preserve our backs and shoulders from all discipline;

That Thou wouldest preserve utterly free and clear of chastity all superintendents, preachers, assistants, and Lutheran slaves of drink;¹⁵

That Thou wouldest root out and destroy all uncomfortable clothing and hair-shirts:
 Hear us, good Lord God.

That Thou wouldest graciously take away from us and abolish the Lenten and all other fasts;

That Thou wouldest tread down under our feet and crush all the processions of penitents;

That Thou wouldest provide us with good, long, and juicy sausages and with many good banquets, no less than with breakfasts and good nightcaps;¹⁶

That Thou wouldest preserve and strengthen us in this our present purpose;

That Thou wouldest preserve our wives, our children, our servants and our maids from all self-discipline [?], hair-shirts, fasting, hunger, and thirst;

That Thou wouldest provide and preserve to us good wine and beer;

carry that stone, for without it the church would not have canonized you" (Butler-Thurston-Attwater, III, 691).

¹⁴ Roman Catholic polemicists assiduously avoided the term "priest" (*Priester*, *sacerdos*) to describe the Lutheran clergy, the validity of whose orders and ministry they denied, and regularly used the term "preachers" (*Praedicator*) to refer to them.

¹⁵ *Prost-Knecht*.

¹⁶ This suffrage reads in the original: *Dass du uns gute, lange und fette Würste beschere wollst, und viel guter Schlamposia, nicht weniger Jentacula, und gute Schlaftrünck.*

That Thou wouldest accept this our holy pleading and praying:

Hear us, good Lord God.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world:

Have mercy on us.

O Christ, hear us.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

But Dr. Theodore Hyselius (under which name Dr. Matthias Hoe¹⁷ is hiding) took justifiable exception to this and with a most truthful parody published at Leipzig in 1608 gave a true-to-life expression to the prayers of the Jesuits and the monks:

From the Sacred Scriptures;

From all of the Old and New Testaments;

From the prophet Daniel;¹⁸

From the Gospel and the Revelation of St. John;¹⁹

From the Letters of St. Paul to the Romans and the Galatians;

From the works of St. Augustine;

From the invocation of God alone;

From the extirpation of idol-images;

From pure, ancient, catholic doctrine;

From Christ's own bloody sacrifice;

From His merit and salvation;

From His holy blood in the Communion;

From bread and wine in the Sacrament;

From strong and confident faith in Christ;

From the hope of everlasting life;

From ordinary food and vegetables;

From less than elegant meat;

From the holy estate of matrimony;

¹⁷ Matthias Hoe von Hoenegg (1580 to 1645), Austrian nobleman, Imperial count palatine, total abstainer, a zealously orthodox Lutheran theologian and polemicist whose detestation of Roman Catholicism was exceeded only by his antipathy to the Reformed religion, prolific author, Electoral Saxon court preacher at 22, director general of the German Lutheran churches in Prague, from 1613 on the influential senior court preacher, adviser, and confidant of the Saxon Elector.

¹⁸ Daniel 11, 31—38; 12, 11; cf. *Apology*, VII, 24 (German paraphrase); XV, 19—21; XXIII, 25; XXIV, 45.

¹⁹ Possibly Hoe has Revelation 13 and 17 in mind.

From obedience to parents;

From obedience to government;

From labor, anxiety, cross, and work;

From much preaching;

From devotion and a penitent heart;

Preserve us, good Lord God.

We poor sinners and Esauites²⁰ beseech Thee:

That the Pope at Rome would preserve alive all bishops, cardinals, abbots, monks, and priests;

That all our treatises and councils may continue to enjoy their dignity;

That the Roman antichristian church may retain the whip-hand in matters of religion;

That the reading of the Bible be forbidden to the laity;

That all debates and discussions of the question if the Pope at Rome is the Antichrist be prohibited:

Hear us, all Saints.

That no one may peep into our heretical hand of cards;

That the veneration of images and the acquisition of indulgences may increase daily;

That our mistresses and cooks will long retain their good looks;

That other mistresses will always be available;

That our penitents in the confessional will make us happy by keeping their answers to our questions brief;

That they will gladly undertake the satisfactions that we impose on them;

That our bastards and illegitimate children may be promoted to high honors;

That the emperor, kings, princes and lords may be brought under the power, coercion, and obedience of the clergy;

That we may receive the red hats of cardinals and the croziers of bishops;

That we may possess fat prebends and rich livings;

²⁰ *Esauit*, Latin *Esauita*, a Lutheran pun on *Jesuita*, "Jesuit," that had the Old Testament picture of the hated Edomite descendants of Esau in view. It occurs at least as early as 1560, for example in James Andreae's *Bericht von der Einigkeit und Uneinigkeit der christlichen Augspurgischen Confessions verwandten Theologen* etc. (Tübingen: n. publ., 1560).

That the living will make generous provision for masses and vigils;

That on every fast-day we may have good pike and dainty morsels in place of meat;

That our days may be good and lazy;

That we may be able to speak unabashedly against Christ and His merit;

That we may slander, vituperate and persecute the Lutheran preachers one and all;

That our nightcaps in monasteries and our well-appointed snack-times do not decrease;

That the people be misled and blinded by us ever more and more;

That the Lutheran churches all be destroyed;

That all Lutheran books — as Dr. Gretser²¹ proposes in his book — be burned and all Lutheran preachers be killed;

And that their parishes and incomes be turned over and given to us to spend on high living:

Hear us, all Saints.

That the Jesuwits,²² Capuchins,²³ monks, and other priests will be listened to unhindered in the churches throughout the whole empire;

That we may all be promoted to the advantages of purgatory and there become somewhat accustomed to the everlasting fires of hell;

That we may not be severed from our captains, Beelzebub, the Roman antichristian papists, and their whole company:

Here us, all Saints.

²¹ James Gretser, S. J. (1562—1625), professor at Ingolstadt, author or co-author of 233 titles that fill 17 volumes, participant in the Regensburg Colloquy, and the unrelenting adversary of Giles (Aegidius) Hunn(ius) (1550 to 1603) of Wittenberg.

²² German *Jesuwiten*, another Lutheran pun on *Jesuiten*. Sometimes *Jesuit* was reproduced as *Jesu-wider*, "opponents of Jesus."

²³ These bearded Franciscans — possibly to atone for the defection of their third general, Bernardino Ochino (1487—1564), to the Reformed religion — were, next to the Jesuits, in many ways one of the most energetic monastic forces at the disposal of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Through your chilblains and your lice-infested cape:

Hear us, good St. Francis.

Through your cold water:

Hear us, good St. Bernard.

Through your thorns:

Hear us, good St. Benedict.

Through your breastplate:

Hear us, St. Dominic Loricata.

Through your iron chains:

Hear us, good St. Gall.

Through your unholy cross:

Hear us, good Suso.

Through your rod:

Hear us, good St. Bavon.

Through your heart-thumping:

Hear us, St. Jerome.

Through your merits, the masses you have ordered said, and your pilgrimages:²⁴

Hear us, all Saints.

O holy virgin Mary, have mercy on us.

Virgin Susanna,²⁵ have mercy.

Virgin Margaret,²⁶ have mercy.

Virgin Ursula,²⁷ have mercy.

Pontiff, have mercy. Amen.

²⁴ The German reads: *Durch euer Verdienst, Mess-Stiften, und Wallarten*. This may mean: Through your merits, the masses said in your honor, and the pilgrimages made to your shrines.

²⁵ St. Susanna is the subject of a very unreliable legend that was extremely popular in the Middle Ages. The kernel of truth in the account is that on her refusal to marry a pagan relative of the Emperor Diocletian she was put to death about 190.

²⁶ St. Margaret, who enjoyed great veneration throughout Europe and whose history has been encrusted with almost impenetrable layers of medieval legend, was martyred at Pisidian Antioch during the last general persecution in the third century.

²⁷ St. Ursula, a British chieftain's daughter and a Christian, fled from England with a number of her compatriots (medieval legend makes them out to have been 11,000 virgins) before the invading Saxons in the fifth century, only to be martyred by the heathen Huns when they ravaged the country about the mouth of the Rhine, where the British emigrés had settled. The shrine of St. Ursula and Her Companions in Cologne was famous throughout the Christian world.