

7-1-1968

Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608): Theologian, Mystic, Hymn Writer, Polemicist, and Missiologist: A Biobibliographical Survey

Arthur Carl Piepkorn
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Piepkorn, Arthur Carl (1968) "Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608): Theologian, Mystic, Hymn Writer, Polemicist, and Missiologist: A Biobibliographical Survey," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 39, Article 44. Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol39/iss1/44>

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.

Philipp Nicolai (1556—1608): Theologian, Mystic, Hymn Writer, Polemicist, and Missiologist: A Biobibliographical Survey

ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN

During Philipp Nicolai's lifetime the company of ministers in the city of Zurich referred to him as "this miserable person who goes thrashing around and biting like another wild boar, altogether without reason or Christian modesty." Others of his foes called him a lunatic who ought to be chained to a wall, and could not resist the temptation of twisting his surname Nicolai into "Nicolaitan."¹ His admirers, on the other hand, saw in him "a second Chrysostom."

His fame today rests securely on 2 hymns that have become an integral part of the divine praises of all of Western Christendom. But his importance for the Church of the Augsburg Confession and for the whole church is not exhausted by his reputation as a hymn writer. He stands as an end-of-the-16th-century figure who epitomizes many of the paradoxical tendencies in the complex that is classic Lutheran orthodoxy—a polemicist of so zealous an order that a landgrave of the Holy Roman Empire forbade his territorial university to give Nicolai a doctor's degree, a Christian mystic of the profoundest sort, a devotional writer with a perennial appeal, a missiolo-

¹ The reference is to Rev. 2:6.

The author is graduate professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This essay was prepared to mark the retirement of Prof. Buszin from the faculty.

gist with astonishingly ecumenical insights, a dedicated pastor, and a major (even though a long neglected) theologian of the Church of the Augsburg Confession.

He was born in Mengersinghausen in the county of Waldeck. The family name was Rafflenboel (or Rafflenbeul). His father's name was Theodoric; because his father's name in turn was Klaus (that is, Nicolaus in Latin), Theodoric (1505—1590) called himself Nicolai, "the son of Nicholas." Nicolai finally superseded Rafflenboel as the surname.

In 1559 Theodoric became rector of the collegiate church at Herdecke-an-der-Ruhr in the Westphalian county of Mark. Four years later he converted to the Augsburg Confession with a portion of his congregation. His refusal to accept the Augsburg Interim of 1548 led to his banishment from the county in 1550. Through the good office of Count John the Pious (died 1567), Theodoric received the parish of Mengersinghausen in 1552. Here he married a local blacksmith's daughter, Catharine Meyhan (1526—1576). Over the parsonage door he inscribed the exhortation of Malachi 2:7: "The lips of a priest should guard knowledge." Here his third child—out of a total of eight—was born Aug. 10, 1556, and received the name Philipp in holy baptism.

The boy combined a mighty physique with exceptional intellectual ability, and

his parents piously determined to dedicate him "to the good God and his church." Philipp's father was his first teacher. When pestilence broke out in Mengerlinghausen in 1567, Philipp and his brothers began their pilgrimage from school to school—first to Rhoden, then to Kassel (1568), to Hildesheim (1570), to Dortmund (1571 to 1572), to Mühlhausen (1572),² and to Corbach (1574). Philipp's considerable skill in fashioning poems and his early interest in theology found prophetic expression in a teen-age poem—in Latin, naturally—that he dedicated to the Count of Waldeck, *Certamen corvorum cohabitum columbis* ("The Contest of the Ravens with the Doves"). Each word in the 174-hexameter poem begins with the letter "c," no mean achievement!³ In it Nicolai chronicles the theological controversies of the time and defends himself against his defamers in the count's retinue.

Philipp was 18 going on 19 when he matriculated with his brothers Jonah and Jeremy (1558—1632) at the University of Erfurt in 1575. By serving as a kind of unofficial poet laureate to the community, turning out neatly phrased poems for every occasion from births to funerals, Philipp was able to supplement his meager re-

sources sufficiently to meet university bills. Philipp's stay at Erfurt was brief. The death of Jonah in April and his mother's death in May called the brothers home. It was not until late that year that he and Jeremy were able to return to academe, this time to the venerated *cathedra Lutheri*, the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg, where the secret supporters of Reformed theology had just been unmasked and ousted, to be replaced by committed defenders of the unaltered Augsburg Confession.

With their formal theological study behind them, Philipp and Jeremy returned in the spring of 1579 to Waldeck. They spent some time in the empty monastery of Volkhardinghausen, where they read during the week and on Sundays assisted their aging father especially by preaching in the village chapels-of-ease in the sprawling parish. Here Philipp completed his first published work, *Commentariorum de rebus antiquis Germanicarum gentium libri sex* ("A Six-Volume Memoir on the Antiquities of the German Tribes"). It has the virtue of being an effort to get back to the earliest accessible sources, and it fairly breathes the patriotic ardor of the youthful author.

The year 1582 brought him the opportunity to commemorate the marriage of Count Francis of Waldeck with a nuptial ode.⁴

² Louis Hembold (1532—1598), the poet and hymn writer, and Joachim Müller à Burgk (1540?—1610), the musician, were among Philipp Nicolai's teachers at Mühlhausen.

³ He repeated the performance with another poem in which every word began with the letter "p": *Pacis pietatisque periclitatio piis pectoribus paciferoque populo producta* (Wittenberg, 1574) ("A Venture of Peace and Piety Produced for Pious Hearts and a Peace-Bringing People"). Ludwig Friedrich Christian Curtze, *D. Philipp Nicolai's Leben und Lieder nach den Quellen* (Halle: J. Fricke, 1859), reproduces an undated 23-line Latin poem *Ad Messiam* in which all the words begin with "m."

⁴ *In nuptias inclyti, generosi, et illustris Dn. Dn. Francisci, comitis Waldeccensis, generosaeque et illustris D. D. Walpurgis, generosi illustrisque D. D. Christophori, comitis Plesse-sis prim. filiae, celebratas 9 et 10 Decembris anni 1582* (Marburg, 1582) ("In Honor of the Marriage of the Renowned, Noble, and Distinguished Lord, Lord Francis, Count of Waldeck, and the Noble and Distinguished Lady, Lady Walpurgis, Oldest Daughter of the Noble

Philipp took holy orders in 1583. The scene of his first labors was the very Herdecke where his father had once been rector. The fledgling cleric's situation was anything but easy. The community was still ambivalent toward the Reformation. The abbess Ida von Hafkenschaid was inclined toward Roman Catholicism. The town councilors were the obedient tools of the strongly Roman Catholic advisers of Duke John William of Cleve. The rector of the parish, John Tacke, and the curate, Matthias Tacke, were at best uncertain reeds rather than towers of strength as far as their evangelical convictions were concerned.

The same year saw the outbreak of the Cologne War that was to sweep into Herdecke before it ran its course. The dissolute archbishop-elect of Cologne, Gebhard II (1547—1601), Freiherr zu Waldburg, who was only in priest's orders, had announced in 1582 his intention of marrying his mistress, the Canoness-Countess Agnes of Mansfeld (at the insistence of her brothers!), of leaving the Roman Catholic Church, of becoming Evangelical, of secularizing the archiepiscopal lands, and of legalizing the Evangelical religion side by side with Roman Catholicism in his domains—all without resigning his electoral dignity. He married his Agnes in February 1583 at Bonn. Two months later Gregory XIII excommunicated Gebhard. On the recommendation of the Jesuits, the cathedral chapter dutifully elected to the now vacant see the runner-up in the previous election, Duke Ernest of Bavaria (1554—1612), prince-bishop of Liège,

and Distinguished Lord, Lord Christopher, Count of Plessis, Celebrated on December 9 and 10, 1582").

who was like Gebhard only in priest's orders but who could be depended upon not to scandalize the faithful by marrying *his* mistress. (Her name was Gertrude von Plettenberg.) An international Roman Catholic armed force marched against Gebhard with a view to driving him out of the electorate. Supported by the Elector Palatine, Gebhard mobilized his own army, and the bloody war was on.

The incursion of the Spanish troops into Herdecke in 1586 sent Nicolai fleeing discreetly to the town of Wetter. After three weeks he was able to return to Herdecke, only to have to leave again within six months because of his resistance to the rector's restoration of Roman Catholic practices in the parish.

One monument to Nicolai's stay in Herdecke survives, his first theological work, published at Tübingen by George Gruppenbach in 1586, *Fundamentorum Calvinianae sectae cum veteribus Arianis et Nestorianis communium detectio, qua collatis partium argumentis neminem Christianorum Calvinianis adhaerere posse demonstratur, quin una necessariam Arianismi et Nestorianismi suscipiat defensionem, adhaec quaemadmodum ab Arianis et Nestorianis procreatus est Mahumetanismus, ita eundem a sacramentariis hodie occulta haereseōn cognatione foveri et sensim in montes Israelitarum attrahi* ("Disclosure of the Bases that the Calvinian Sect Has in Common with the Ancient Arians and Nestorians, in Which It Is Shown by a Comparison of the Arguments of the Parties Concerned that No Christian Can Belong to the Calvinians Unless He Is Likewise Ready to Undertake a Required Defense of Arianism and Nestorianism, and in Addition How Islam Was Called

into Being by the Arians and the Nestorians, with the Result that It Is Being Fostered by the Sacramentarians Through Their Currently Concealed Relationship with [These Heresies] and Gradually Being Drawn to the Mountains of the Israelites"), to which the dean and the professors of the prestigious theological faculty of the University of Tübingen contributed a corporately subscribed preface.⁵

No coward, Nicolai now went to Cologne itself, where a paternal uncle lived. For a short time he was the pastor of the underground congregation of Christians of the Augsburg Confession in the archiepiscopal city, for whom he conducted clandestine services in private homes, hopefully safe from the watchful eyes of Ernest's police.

A new phase of Nicolai's career began early in 1587 with his recall to the county of Waldeck as curate of the parish of Nieder-Wildungen. His patroness was no less a person than the pious and theologically knowledgeable dowager countess Margaret. In November 1588 she had her protégé transferred to the rectorate of the city parish in Alt-Wildungen, where he could be of personal service to her as court preacher, father confessor, and tutor of her son, Count William Ernest, distinguished both for his piety and for his intellectual gifts.⁶

⁵ Another edition came out in Hamburg in 1609 under the somewhat more provocative title *Detectio fundamentorum Calvinianae sectae cum Arianis et Turcis*.

⁶ He died in 1598 at the age of 15 while a student at the University of Tübingen. The following spring Nicolai composed a funeral ode of 366 hexameters published at Tübingen in 1600, *Carmen exequis funebribus generosi et illustris comitis ac domini, Dn. Wilhelmi comitis Waldeccensis, sacrum* ("A Poem Dedicated to the Funeral Rites of the Noble and Distinguished

The reviving contest between the defenders of the theology of the Formula of Concord and the promoters of a Reformed approach to Christology and the Sacrament of the Altar continued to engage Nicolai's attention. Two clergymen, Justus and Henry Crane, father and son, had refused to concur in the excommunication of Nicolai's predecessor in Alt-Wildungen and soon came into conflict with Nicolai. Justus took a parish outside the county in 1588. Henry was excommunicated in 1592 for "sacramentarian" teaching. The sentence of deposition was executed in 1594. In the meantime, Nicolai became involved in another controversy because he had refused to admit a county councilor, John Backbier, to the Sacrament of the Altar on account of the latter's advocacy of Reformed views. Nicolai's zeal for orthodoxy evoked princely displeasure.

Although Nicolai had passed all the examinations for his doctorate in theology and had even published and defended his inaugural disputation,⁷ Landgrave William IV (1532—1592) of Hesse-Kassel in 1590 forbade the University of Marburg to confer the degree on Nicolai unless he disavowed his *Fundamentorum Calvinianae sectae detectio*. Things took an even worse turn after William's death and the accession of Landgrave Maurice (1572—1632). Maurice threatened Nicolai with deposition from office and imprisonment. Although in September 1592 Count Francis of Waldeck prohibited Nicolai and three of his like-

gushed Lord, Lord William, Count of Waldeck").

⁷ *De duobus Antichristis primariis, Mahumete et pontifice Romano, disputatio* (Marburg: P. Egenolphus, 1590) ("A Disputation on the Two Primary Antichrists, Muhammad and the Bishop of Rome").

minded colleagues from preaching, the prohibition was soon removed. What saved Nicolai was partly the continuing intercession of the dowager countess Margaret, and partly the reaction against Reformed theological tendencies that took place in the territories of the Augsburg Confession after the death of Elector Christian I of Saxony in 1591 and the suppression of Reformed theological views in the electorate.

Undaunted by the rising opposition, Nicolai in 1590 published his *De controversia ubiquitaria . . . ad Daniele Hoffmannum epistola* ("Letter to Daniel Hoffmann on the Ubiquitarian Controversy")⁸ and his *Ad duos Antonii Sadeelis libellos, quorum alterum de spirituali alterum de sacramentali fruitione corporis Christi inscripsit, responsum Christianum, breve et placidum* ("Christian, Brief, and Calm Reply to the Two Little Books of Anthony Sadeel, One of Which He Has Entitled 'On the Spiritual Enjoyment of Christ's Body,' the Other, 'On the Sacramental [Enjoyment of Christ's Body]'").⁹

⁸ "Ubiquitarianism" was the growl word that Reformed theologians used to describe the view held by Luther, John Brenz, James Andrae, Polycarp Leyser the Elder, Giles Hunn, Nicolai, and other Lutherans that the humanity of Christ is omnipresent by virtue of the hypostatic union of the Godhead and humanity in the incarnation. Halle-born Daniel Hoffmann (1538—1611) became professor at the Lutheran University of Helmstedt in 1576. A doughty defender of the Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar against Reformed theologians like Theodore de Bèze of Geneva and John Piscator (Fischer) of Strasbourg, he was a vehement opponent both of the heretical view of original sin entertained by Matthias Vlačić (Flacius) and the view of the omnipresence of the humanity of Christ by virtue of the hypostatic union.

⁹ Sadeel was the pseudonym of Anthony de la Roche Chandieu (1534—1591). It may be a kind of punning equation of the Hebrew

In 1593 the Waldeck clergy accepted the Formula of Concord at a synod held in Mengerlinghausen.¹⁰ In 1594 the University of Wittenberg gave its alumnus the doctorate which the University of Marburg had been interdicted from conferring on him. There is mild irony in the fact that the same teacher who had presided over the 1590 disputation in Marburg, Giles Hunn (1550—1603), also presided over the Wittenberg disputation, in which Nicolai defended a new set of theses.¹¹

In 1596 Nicolai published his vernacular *Nothwendiger und gantz vollkommener Bericht von der gantzen calvinischen Religion auss jren eygenen Büchern und Schrifften gezogen, sampt derselbigen auss H. Schriftt Widerlegung, alles nach Ordnung des Catechismi Lutheri verfasset* ("A Needed and Wholly Complete Report on the Entire Calvinian Religion Drawn from Their Own Books and Writings, Along with a Refutation of Them out of

sādheb-'el or, more correctly, *s'ddheb-'el* ("field of God") with *champs {de} Dieu*. He was a French aristocrat in his twenties when Calvin won him for the Genevan Reformation. He subsequently became a Reformed minister in France and Switzerland, a chaplain to Henry of Navarre prior to the latter's conversion to Roman Catholicism, a Huguenot diplomat, and the author of a large number of tracts in which he defended Reformed theology of the Calvinian type with tenacity, energy, and acumen. Another edition of *Ad duos Antonii Sadeelis libellos* came out in 1594. Nicolai also added it as an appendix to his *Methodus controversiae de omnipraesentia Christi*.

¹⁰ Later they even accepted the strongly anti-Reformed *Saxon Visitation Articles of 1592 to 1593*. For the text of these articles in Latin, English, and German, see *Triglot Concordia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), part two, pp. 1150—57.

¹¹ *Theses de libero arbitrio . . . pro summo in theologia gradu consequendo* (Wittenberg, 1594).

the Sacred Scriptures, Everything Composed According to the Order of the Five Chief Parts of Luther's Catechism").¹² He paired this work with a Latin counterpart, *Methodus controversiae de omnipraesentia Christi secundum naturam eius humanam, qua praetermissis difficilium terminorum et argutiarum subtilitatibus totum hoc mysterium in simpliciorum gratiam praecipue solo Dei verbo adstruitur et illustratur* ("A Way of Engaging in Controversy About the Omnipresence of Christ According to His Human Nature, in Which the Delicate Distinctions of Difficult Terminology and Hair-Splitting Arguments Are Passed By and the Whole Mystery Is Built Up and Made Clear by Means of the Word of God Alone for the Special Benefit of the Less Instructed").¹³ Nicolai dedicated the latter work to his then about 13-year-old former pupil, Count William Ernest, whom he warns against the expanding threat of Reformed teaching.

¹² Frankfurt-am-Main: Johannes Spies, 1596. A second edition, revised and amplified, came out the following year.

¹³ Frankfurt-am-Main: Johannes Spies, 1591. Another edition came out in the year 1609. Among the replies that this work elicited were *Entsetz des ubiquitischen Hammerschlags D. Philippi Nicolai, Predigers zu Unna, durch etliche trewhertzige Bürger daselbst, welche der Ubiquitet nicht beypflichten* (Sigen-in-Nassau-Catzenelnbogen, 1597) ("Deliverance from the Ubiquitarian Hammer Blows of Dr. Philipp Nicolai, Preacher at Unna, by a Number of Sincere Citizens of That Community Who Do Not Accept Ubiquity") and *Matthias Martinius, Methodi de omnipraesentia carnis Christi concinnata a Philippo Nicolai . . . examen* (Sigen-in-Nassau, 1597) ("A Weighing . . . of the Method Concerning the Omnipresence of the Flesh of Christ Put Together by Philipp Nicolai"). Waldeck-born Martinius, or Martini (1572—1630), a Reformed theologian, was successively court preacher at the court of Nassau-Dillenburg, teacher at Herborn, pastor at

October 1596 saw Nicolai leave Alt-Wildungen to return to Westphalia, this time as rector of St. Catharine's Church at Unna. The Reformed immigrants from the Low Countries and East Frisia had almost swamped the Lutheran population of Unna. The latter had struggled back to a precarious preeminence and wanted the "archfoe of Calvinism" as their spiritual leader. Twice Nicolai refused the invitation, and it finally took a visit of the lord mayor of Unna, John Westphal, to persuade the dowager countess to part with her brilliant court preacher and confessor.

The year 1597 saw the publication of Nicolai's two-volume *Commentariorum de regno Christi vaticiniis prophetis et apostolicis accommodatorum libri duo, quorum prior hodiernam ecclesiae Christi amplitudinem propagationemque . . . explanat, alter tempora ecclesiae Novi Testamenti in Ezechiele, Daniele, et Apocalypsi revelata . . . commonstrat* ("A Two-Volume Memoir on the Kingdom of Christ, Adjusted to the Forecasts of the Prophets and Apostles, of Which the First Volume Makes Plain the Present Extent and Propagation of the Church of Christ and the Second Fully Shows the Times of the Church of the New Testament Revealed in Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Revelation").¹⁴

Emden, and rector of the *Gymnasium* at Bremen. He replied to the *Ad duos Antonii Sadeelis libellos* that Nicolai had appended to his *Methodus* with a second tract, *Excussio placidae responsionis cusae a Doctore Philippo Nicolai ad Antonii Sadeelis . . . tractatus de spirituali et sacramentali manducatione* (Sigen-in-Nassau, 1597) ("An Investigation of the Calm Response Put Out by Dr. Philipp Nicolai to the . . . Treatises on Spiritual and Sacramental Eating of Anthony Sadeel").

¹⁴ Frankfurt-am-Main: Johannes Spies, 1597. The first volume had been printed in 1596, but its issuance was held back for the comple-

Gotthard Artus of Danzig promptly provided a German version, somewhat abridged, under the title *Historia dess Reichs Christi, das ist, gründtliche Beschreibung der wundersamen Erweiterung, seltzamen Glücks, und gewisser bestimmpter Zeit der Kirchen Christi im Neuen Testament* ("History of Christ's Kingdom, That Is, a Thorough Description of the Marvelous Expansion, Extraordinary Fortune, and Certain Fixed Time of the Church of Christ in the New Testament").¹⁵

The Reformed community in Unna reacted promptly to the threat posed by Nicolai's coming. First they induced the ducal council of Cleve to advise the Unna town council not to approve the stormy petrel's installation. The town council was of another mind. It demanded and received a formal hearing at Düsseldorf for the new rector. The delegates of the ducal council

tion of the second volume. A second edition of the work came out in 1607 at Frankfurt, and in 1628 a third edition came out at Nuremberg.

¹⁵ Darmstadt, 1610. The popularity of this German adaptation can be gauged from the number of subsequent editions. The present writer has catalogued editions in 1624, 1626, 1627, 1628, 1629, 1639, 1651, and 1664. Nicolai's fairly positive assertion that the end of the world would come in 1670—although he hedged by saying that no one knows the time of the Lord's return and that it might happen before or after 1670—elicited some critical posthumous replies. An anonymous author wrote *Bedencken über das Buch Philippi Nicolai vom Reich Christi* (Hamburg, 1633) ("Misgivings About the Book of Philip Nicolai on the Kingdom of Christ"), and Daniel Springingut, archdeacon at Wismar, published *Theologische Prüfung der Zeit-Rechnung Philippi Nicolai, dass die Welt Anno 1670 ihr Ende erreichen werde* (Rostock, 1666) ("A Theological Testing of the Time Calculation of Philipp Nicolai, According to Which the World Will Reach Its End in the Year 1670").

were the Cleve court chaplain Winold and the Düsseldorf rector Muser. Both were Roman Catholics. In spite of their theological disagreement with Nicolai, the two priests submitted a favorable report on him. Thereupon he was duly instituted in his new office.

Nicolai responded to the harassment with what one of his biographers, Victor Schultze, has called the "coarsest of all [of Nicolai's] anti-Calvinist controversial works and in general one of the lowest products of interconfessional literary controversy in the 16th century." Published in 1598, it bore the title *Kurtzer Bericht von der Calvinisten Gott und jrer Religion in etliche Frage und Antwort, allen gotseligen, einfeltigen Leyen, so dieser Zeit an allen Orten weyt und breyt wider jr Gewissen mit solcher jrriger Lere beschweret und angefochten werden zu besser Nachrichtung und sonderm Trost verfasst und zusammen getragen* ("A Short Report on the God and the Religion of the Calvinists in a Number of Questions and Answers, Composed and Compiled for the Better Information and Particular Comfort of All Pious Uninstructed Lay People Who at This Time Are Everywhere and All Over Being Burdened and Tempted with Such Mistaken Teaching").¹⁶ An appendix con-

¹⁶ A second edition came out at Erfurt in 1598. A third edition had a different title: *Schaffs-Peltz dess calvinischen Läster-Teuffels: Von den gewlichen abschewlichen Gotteslästerungen, Christ-Schänderey und Verachtung dess höchsten allmächtigen Gottes, welche die ehrsüchtige, freche und grobe Calvinisten wider die höchste Maiestät Gottes Jesu Christi unverschämpt aussgiessen, allen frommen Christen, so in solcher gotteslästerlichen Lehre angefochten werden, zu Trost und Unterricht in Truck gegeben* (Frankfurt: Johann Ludwig Bitsch, 1605) ("The Sheep's Clothing of the Calvinian Blasphemy-Devil: On the Abominable and De-

tains a "short form for enabling an un-instructed Christian head of a household faithfully to warn his children and household against this impious Calvinism and to hold them back from it." It was this work which elicited the wrathful reactions cited at the beginning of this survey.

Nicolai had other troubles beside his contest with his Reformed opponents. Two of his sisters died at this time, and from July 1597 to January 1598 pestilence ravaged Unna, killing over 1,300 townspeople. The crisis brought out the pastor in Nicolai. He withdrew from all polemical activities and gave himself over completely to caring for his people, to intercession, and to meditation on the everlasting life that Christians already possess in this world and

testable Blasphemies, the Ignominy Heaped on Christ, and the Contempt of the Highest God Almighty, Which the Honor-Seeking, Insolent, and Coarse Calvinists Pour Out Shamelessly Against the Divine Majesty of Jesus Christ, Published for the Comfort and Instruction of All Pious Christians That Are Tempted by Such Blasphemous Teaching"). Other editions came out in Hamburg in 1609, in Leipzig in 1620, and in 1711 under the editorship of John Andrew Goebel (Flensburg: Christoph Vogel, 1711). The replies to the 1597 edition were entitled *Gegenbericht auff Philippi Nicolai Schmachbuch, das er under dem Titel, von der Calvinisten Gott und jhrer Religion, dies laufenden 97. Jars in offnem Druck aussgesprengt hat, gestellt durch die Diener zu Zürych* ("A Counterreport Made by the Ministers of Zurich Against the Book of Ignominy That Philip Nicolai Published in This Current 97th Year Under the Title, On the God of the Calvinists and Their Religion") and *Kurtzer Gegenbericht auff D. Philippi Nicolai jüngst ausgegangen Buch, welches er intitulirt Kurtzer Bericht etc., gestellt durch etliche trewhertzige Bürger dasselbst zu Unna* (Sigen-in-Nassau-Catzenelnbogen, 1597) ("A Short Counterreport Made by a Number of Faithful-Hearted Citizens of the Same City of Unna Against the Recently Published Book of Dr. Philipp Nicolai Which He Entitled A Short Report and so on").

on the state of the faithful departed in the place of celestial light and refreshment. Out of this came a work "fragrant with the pure aroma of heavenly flowers," *Freudenspiegel dess ewigen Lebens, das ist, gründliche Beschreibung des herrlichen Wesens im ewigen Leben, sampt allen desselbigen Eygenschaften und Zuständen, auss Gottes Wort richtig und verständlich eyngeführet* ("A Mirror of the Joys of Everlasting Life, That Is, A Thorough Description of the Splendid Existence in the Everlasting Life, Together with All of Its Properties and States, Correctly and Intelligibly Introduced out of the Word of God"),¹⁷ dedicated to

¹⁷ Frankfurt-am-Main: Johannes Spies, 1599. The present writer has catalogued subsequent editions in 1601, 1617, 1626, 1633, 1649, 1707, 1729, 1854, and 1909. Balthasar Mentzer the Younger (1614—1679) wrote the preface to an *Extract aus dem Freuden-Spiegel des ewigen Lebens* (Darmstadt, 1662) ("An Extract from the Mirror of the Joys of Everlasting Life"). Duke Ernst the Pious (1601—1675) of Saxony ordered the publication of *Andachten von dem ewigen seligen Freuden-Leben, genommen und zusammen gezogen aus dem Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens* (Gotha, 1674) ("Devotions About the Everlasting, Blissful Life of Joy, Taken and Drawn Together from the Mirror of the Joys of Everlasting Life"). Siegfried Schunke, *Philipp Nicolai: Ein Wächter der Kirche im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie* (Gladbeck: Schriftenmissions-Verlag, 1959), p. 30, citing E. Nolte, "Lebensbild des Unnaer Stadtpfarrers D. Philipp Nicolai, 1556—1608," in *Festblatt zur Nicolai-Feier in Unna 1956*, p. 7, lists an additional title without citation of further data, *Kurzer Bericht auf D. Philippi Nicolai Bericht von der Calvinisten Gotte, daraus neben anderen zu sehen, wie D. Nicolai unter dem lutherischen Namen die lutherische Lehre von der Vorsehung lästert* ("A Short Report on Dr. Philipp Nicolai's Report About the God of the Calvinists, from Which, Among Other Things, It Is Apparent How Dr. Nicolai While Claiming the Name of Lutheran Blasphemes the Lutheran Doctrine of [God's] Foreknowledge"). The work which initially triggered the *Kurtzer Bericht* was Eberhardus Blyttershagius, *Pseudo-*

his sorrowing parishioners and townspeople.

Two vehement polemical works by Nicolai came out in 1599. The first was a reply to the critics of his *Kurtzer Bericht von der Calvinisten Gott und jrer Religion*. It is another "mirror," over 1,500 pages long, *Spiegel des bösen Geistes, der sich in der Calvinisten Büchern reget und kurtzumb für ein Gott will geebret seyn, darinn der erste Theil des kurtzen Berichts von der Calvinisten Gott unnd Religion wider die zween unnütze Gegenbericht der Prediger zu Zürich unnd der Fledermäusen in Westphalen, so sich für Unnaische Bürger aussgeben, gründlich verantwort und starck befestiget wirdt* ("A Mirror of the Evil Spirit That Lurks in the Books of the Calvinists and Wishes in Short to Be Reverenced as a God, in Which the First Part of the Short Report on the God and the Religion of the Calvinists Is Even More Thoroughly Defended and Strongly Fortified Against the Two Valueless Counterreports of the Preachers in Zurich and of the Westphalian Bats That Claim to Be Citizens of Unna.")¹⁸

Christus: Grund- und eigentliche Beschreibung auch Gegeneinanderhaltung des einigen und wahren Christi . . . und dagegen des falschen und erdichteten Christi (Hanau, 1596) ("The Pseudo-Christ: A Thorough and Proper Description and Comparison with One Another of the Unique and True Christ . . . and by Contrast the False and Fictitious Christ"). Blyttershagius describes himself as a Reformed minister at Runkel.

¹⁸ Frankfurt-am-Main: Johannes Spies, 1599. A second edition came out with the title *Calvinus revelatus, das ist, Entdeckung und Offenbarung dess calvinischen Schwarmgeists, gewulcher und schrecklicher Gotteslästerungen, abschwelcher Verkehrung and Verspottung des götlichen Worts . . . alles auss ihren selbst eygenen Schrifften* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Johann Spies, 1604) ("Calvin Unmasked, That Is,

The second was the reply to the *Entsetz* of 1597: *Abtreibung dess webrlosen, nichtigen und mistfaulen Entsetzes, welchen die Calvinisten zu Unna wider den Hammer-schlag götliches Worts in dem streitigen Artickel von der Ubiquitet haben aussgeben lassen* ("The Driving Away of the Indefensible, Vain, and Dung-Putrid Deliverance Which the Calvinists of Unna Have Allowed to Go Forth Against the Hammer-blow of the Divine Word in the Controverted Article of the Ubiquity").¹⁹

The 44-year-old celibate entered holy wedlock on Jan. 8, 1600. His bride was Catharine von der Recke, the widow of the Dortmund doctor of theology Peter Dornberger and a mother of two children.²⁰ Once more Nicolai determined to abstain from polemics and began work on a major treatise about "God's mystical temple."

Nevertheless, 1600 saw the publication of a treatise completed the year before. It was a reply to the response of the Zurich company of Reformed ministers to the *Spiegel des bösen Geistes*, published in 1599 under the title *Kurtze Abfertigung des Lästerspiegels Philippi Nicolai durch die Diener der Kirchen zu Zürich gestellt, darinn der erst Theil des jres Gegenberichts von jrem Gott und Religion kurtz widerholet und bestättiget wirdt, darauss augenscheinlich zu sehen, dass Philippus Nicolai gäntzlich überwunden unnd sein Lehr auff*

Disclosure and Revelation of the Calvinian Enthusiastic Spirit, the Abominable and Terrible Blasphemies, the Detestable Perversion and Contempt of the Divine Word . . . All out of Their Very Own Writings").

¹⁹ Frankfurt-am-Main, 1599.

²⁰ His brother John, his sister Catharine, and other relatives of his at Wildungen were unhappy about their brother's selection. They would have preferred for him the rich and childless widow of a Matthew Wegener.

lauter Lästerung unnd Verkehrung evangelischer Lehr bestehet ("A Short Finishing Off of the Libelous Mirror of Philipp Nicolai, Written by the Ministers of the Church at Zurich, in Which the First Part of Their Counterreport About Their God and Religion Is Briefly Repeated and Confirmed, from Which It Obviously Appears that Philip Nicolai Has Been Totally Overcome and That His Teaching Is Based Entirely Upon Libels and Perversion of Evangelical Doctrine"). Far from feeling that he had been totally overcome, Nicolai responded with *Gott sey gelobt in alle Ewigkeit: Die erst Victoria, Triumph und Frewdenjubil der bittern und viel verhassten, aber doch Gottlob hocherhabener und unuberwindlichen Warheit uber dess calvinischen Geistes Niederlag, darinnen der Zürchischen Prediger repetirter elender Guckucksgesang under dem Titel, Abfertigung des Lästerspiegels Philippi Nicolai, . . . zur gnüge beantwortet und jhr verlorne Streitsache dem christlichen Leser hell und deutlich für Augen gestellt wirt* ("God Be Praised Forever: The First Victory-Cry, Shout of Triumph, and Joyous Celebration of the Bitter and Much-Hated, Yet Still — God Be Praised! — Highly Exalted and Invincible Truth over the Defeat of the Calvinian Spirit, in Which the Repeated Miserable Cuckoo Call of the Zurich Preachers Under the Title, A Finishing Off of the Libelous Mirror of Philipp Nicolai, . . . Is Sufficiently Answered and the Lost Cause for Which They Fight Is Placed Before the Christian Reader's Eyes Clearly and Plainly").²¹

In the summer of 1600 David Chytraeus (1531—1600) of Rostock, on the recommendation of Solomon Gesner (1559 to

1605) of Wittenberg, tried to have Nicolai called to Rostock either as *Superintendens* or as a theological professor; Chytraeus' death ended the negotiations, toward which Nicolai had shown himself positively inclined. But in 1601 Nicolai was called to St. Catharine's Church, Hamburg, where Joachim Westphal (1510 to 1574), Calvin's literary opponent, had once been pastor. "In the year of Christ 1601," a Low German manuscript chronicle of the city of Hamburg observes, "the doctor [Nicolai] was finally called, in a marvelous but legitimate way, to Hamburg, recommended to that city by strangers, especially Hollanders and others, who had read his published books."

Twice a week — on Sundays and Thursdays — Nicolai preached to congregations that regularly packed St. Catharine's Church. His preaching, his personal influence on his colleagues, his pastoral devotion to his congregation, his courageous concern for a lively orthodoxy, and his impact on the life of the entire city gained for him the reputation of a "second Chrysostom." During his Hamburg ministry he received three invitations to fill a theological professorship, once at Greifswald and twice at Wittenberg, but he refused to be allured from a form of service to the church to which he had now wholeheartedly committed himself.

In 1602 Nicolai published the work "on God's mystical temple" on which he had been working. It is his most significant contribution to systematic theology. It bears the title *Sacrosanctum omnipraesentiae Iesu Christi mysterium, commentariorum libris duobus solide et perspicue explicatum, ut ab omnibus veritatem amantibus facile possit intelligi, et Calvinianis*

²¹ Frankfurt-am-Main: Johann Spiess, 1600.

simul lectoribus amico et placido sit incitamento ad salutarem conversionem ("The Most Holy Mystery of the Omnipresence of Jesus Christ, Thoroughly and Clearly Unfolded in a Two-Volume Memoir in Such a Way That All Lovers of Truth Can Easily Understand It and That It May Be a Friendly and Calm Incitement to a Salutary Conversion on the Part of Calvinists as Well as of the Readers").²²

The year 1603 saw the beginning of Nicolai's controversy with Urban Pierius (Birnbaum) (1546—1616), the deposed professor and *Generalsuperintendens* of Wittenberg who had been freed from prison at the intercession of Queen Elizabeth I of England and who had become a Reformed minister, first in Amsterdam and more recently in Bremen. The genesis of this controversy is of more than passing historical interest. On the occasion of the funeral of the unhappy jurist and Saxon chancellor, Nicholas Crell (1550—1601), Nicholas Blume, a Lutheran clergyman, preached a sermon—subsequently published—in the Church of Our Dear Lady in Dresden. Crell had entered the administration of Elector August I (1526—1586) in 1580; under Elector Christian I he had become chancellor. During his tenure of the office he had attempted to restore the pre-1574 Reformed religious orientation of Saxony, to abolish the solemn obligation of the Saxon clergy to the Formula and Book of Concord, and to forbid the use of exorcism at baptisms. Politically Crell tried to tie Saxony to the pro-French and

anti-Habsburg policies of the Electoral Palatinate. All of this, plus his own tendency to arrogance and his autocratic behavior, made him extremely unpopular both with important segments of the electoral court and with the electoral estates. Upon the death of his patron, Christian I, in 1591, Crell was charged with treason, held in prison for ten years, and finally, after a sensational trial that cost 118,000 Gulden and that reflected credit neither on the justice nor on the church of Saxony, he was beheaded. Upon the publication of Blume's sermon, Pierius, who had received his appointment as court preacher and *Superintendens* at Dresden through Crell, felt an obligation of piety to defend his late patron. His attack on Blume—published in 1603—bore the title: *Examen und Erleuterung der in der Leichpredigt uber den enthaupteten D. Nicolai Crells fürgebrachten neuen Religions-Streitigkeiten und unerfindlichen Anklagen* ("A Weighing and Clarification of the New Religious Controversies and Unintelligible Accusations Advanced in the Funeral Sermon on the Executed Dr. Nicholas Crell"). Nicolai's reply is entitled: *Examen examinis Pieriani, das ist, Schulführung und Abfertigung des Examinis so D. Urbanus Pierius, calvinischer Prediger in Bremen, wider die zu Dressden bey der Begrebnis D. Nicolai Crellii gehalten Leichpredigt durch offenen Druck aussgesprenget, zu nothwendiger Verantwortung reiner Lehr der evangelischen Kirchen in Sachsen, als auch zu richtiger Entdeckung und gründlicher Widerlegung etlicher calvinischer Irrthumer* ("A Weighing of the Pierian Weighing, That Is, A Leading to School and a Finishing Off of the Weighing That Dr. Urban

²² Frankfurt: Matthaeus Beckerus, 1602. Another edition came out in 1609. The otherwise undocumented *Bericht von der Gegenwart dess Leibs und Bluts Christi im H. Abendmal* (Hamburg, 1603) may refer to the *Sacrosanctum omnipraesentiae Iesu Christi mysterium*.

Pierius, the Calvinian Preacher in Bremen, Has Disseminated in Public Print Against the Funeral Sermon Preached in Dresden at the Interment of Dr. Nicholas Crell, by Way of a Necessary Accounting for the Pure Doctrine of the Evangelical Church in Saxony, as Well as for the Correct Disclosure and Thorough Refutation of Some Calvinian Errors").²³

Pierius himself replied with an *Abfertigung des Ubiquistischen Predigers D. Philippi Nicolai zu Hamburg, wegen seiner unbefugten Zunötigung über das Examen der Crellschen Leichpredigt* ("A Finishing Off of the Ubiquistic Preacher Dr. Philipp Nicolai of Hamburg, on Account of His Incompetent Challenge in Connection with the Weighing of the Crell Funeral Sermon"). Nicolai responded with

²³ Hamburg: Philipp von Ohr, 1603. The second edition came out in 1611. Since Nicolai had addressed himself only to the first two parts of Pierius' book, the three Saxon clergymen involved undertook to complete the task with a continuation, reprinted in Nicolai's collected German works under the title *Examen examinis Pieriani, das ist, Schulführung und Abfertigung dess vermeinten Examinis, so Urbanus Pierius D., . . . wider die Leichpredigt, so dem entheup-ten D. Nicolao Crellen nachgehalten und von dreyen Predigern unterschrieben worden, durch öffentlichen Druck aussgesprenget, unnd wird darinnen fürnehmlich der dritte Theil refutirt, und die Historica gehandelt, alles der lauterer Wahrheit zu Stewer, gestellt durch die drey Prediger, so auff churfürstlichen Befehlich bey dem gerechtfertigten D. Crellen auffgewartet haben.* ("A Weighing of the Pierian Weighing, That Is, A Leading to School and a Finishing Off of the Supposed Weighing That Dr. Urban Pierius Has Spread Abroad in Public Print Against the Funeral Sermon Which Was Preached over the Beheaded Dr. Crell and Subscribed by Three Clergymen, and in It the Third Part [of Pierius' Work] in Particular Is Refuted and the Historical Matters Discussed, All in the Interest of the Truth Alone, Prepared by the Three Clergymen Who by Electoral Command Waited upon the Executed Dr. Crell").

Freidige Widerkunfft D. Philippi Nicolai . . . auff die faule Abfertigung von D. Urbano Pierio ("Happy Comeback of Dr. Philipp Nicolai . . . to the Putrid Finishing Off by Dr. Urban Pierius").²⁴ Pierius' next move was the issuance of his *Apologia und abgenötigte Verantwortung dess über D. Nicol Crellij nach gehaltener Leichenpredigten angestellten Examinis wider die Schulführung D. Philippi Nicolai* ("A Defense and Necessitated Accounting of the Weighing Undertaken After the Funeral Sermon Preached over Dr. Crell, Against the Leading to School by Dr. Philipp Nicolai").²⁵ Anticipating the publication of a further installment of Pierius' reply, Nicolai waited until 1608 before answering with his 727-page *Von Gottes Gnaden Sieg und Frewdentritt der Wahrheit christlicher Religion in der evangelischen und gut lutherischen Kirchen durch Sachsen, auff die faulstinckende Apologi, damit der daumelwitzige Mammeluck zu Bremen, D. Urbanus Pierius, das wolbe-gründet Examen examinis zur vergeblicher Beschirmung seines todsüchtigen Calvinismi feindlich anschnattert und anmäulet, mit angehengter kurtzen Abfertigung dess ehrenrürigen Lesterbuchs von einem lichtshewenden Injurianten . . . wider die Dressdische Leichpredight* ("By the Grace of God the Triumph and Joyous March of the Truth of the Christian Religion in the Evangelical and Solidly Lutheran Church Throughout Saxony, in Reply to the Foul-Smelling Defense with Which the Dull-Witted Mameluke in Bremen, Dr. Urban Pierius, Gabbles Away and Bares His Teeth at the Well-Founded Weighing of

²⁴ Hamburg: Philipp von Ohr [1603]. Voigt in Leipzig published a second edition in 1604.

²⁵ Bremen, 1604.

the Weighing in a Vain Effort to Conceal His Lethal Calvinism, Together with an Appended Short Finishing Off of the Defamatory Book of Libels of an Anonymous Defamer . . . Against the Dresden Funeral Sermon").²⁶

Another Reformed target of Nicolai in this period was Peter Plancius (1550 to 1622), the Amsterdam geographer-

²⁶ Hamburg, 1608. A second edition came out in 1609. For the major publications in the Pierius-Crell controversy, which involved a considerable number of theologians, see John George Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 2 (Jena: Vidua Croeckeriana, 1758), 593—94. Among posthumous defenders of Nicolai's *Examen* was John Christian Adami (1622—1715), rector of Luckau and later *Generalsuperintendent* of Lower Lusatia. In 1701 he published at Zwickau as his contribution to the "terministic" controversy which John Georg Böse (1662 to 1700) of Sorau had precipitated in 1698 *Freudiger Zugang zur Gnade Gottes bis ans Ende menschlichen Lebens, bey Gelegenheit der Frage: Ob allen Sündern die Gnadenthür bis an den Todt offen stehe? von Herrn D. Philipp Nicolai in seiner so genannten Schulführung des Pierii 1603 erwiesen und bey jetziger neuen Erregung dieser hochwichtigen Frage mit einigen Erläuterungen wiederholet und dargestellt* ("Joyous Access to the Grace of God Until the End of a Human Being's Life, in Reference to the Question If the Door of Grace Is Open to All Sinners Until Death, Demonstrated by Dr. Philipp Nicolai in 1603 in His So-Called Leading to School of Pierius and Now Repeated and Set Forth with Some Clarifications in Connection with the New Raising of This Highly Important Question"). Separately published in Leipzig the same year was an extract from the *Examen examinis* under Nicolai's name and the title *Antwort auf die Frage: Ob die Gnadenthüre allen Sündern bis an den Todt offen stehe?* Theodore Oswald Weigel, *Corpus dissertationum theologicarum* (Leipzig: Theodorus Oswaldus Weigelius, 1847), at No. 8657 lists the same title as published in Leipzig in 1603; this is probably an incorrect dating, resulting from a misreading of the data in the title. On the extensive literature generated by the "terministic" controversy, see Walch, op. cit., 2, 783 to 802.

preacher, against whom Nicolai defended the Lutheran community in the Netherlands in his *Verantwortung der Evangelischen Kirchen in Hollandt wider die Lästerung Petri Plancii, Calvinischen Predigers zu Amsterdam, und seiner Consorten* ("An Accounting on Behalf of the Evangelical [that is, Lutheran] Church in Holland, Against the Libel of Peter Plancius, the Calvinian Preacher at Amsterdam, and His Associates"), published in both High and Low German in Hamburg in 1603.²⁷ Plancius assayed an answer, and Nicolai attacked it in 1604 with his *Bericht von der evangelischen Christen Widerwertigkeit zu Amsterdam in Hollandt, dem strengen Calvinisten Petro Plancio daselbst zur Nachrichtung und der bedrangeten Gemein zu Trost und heylsamer Vormanung kürtzlich verfasst* ("A Report on the Adversity of the Evangelical Christians at Amsterdam in Holland, for the Information of the Rigid Calvinist Peter Plancius in That City and for the Comfort and Salutary Admonition of the Oppressed Community Briefly Composed").²⁸

²⁷ The Low German version at least came out again at Hamburg in 1604.

²⁸ Hamburg: Philipp von Ohr, 1604. Another—but posthumous—Reformed opponent of Nicolai was John Lampadius, M. A., who in 1609 published at Marburg his *Censura ubiquitatis, hoc est, succincta confutatio argumentorum ubiquitariorum et omnium Philippi Nicolai, ubiquitatis acerrimi propugnatoris, librorum quibus ille corporis Christi omnipraesentiam defendere conatur* ("An Evaluation of Ubiquity, That Is, a Succinct Refutation of the Arguments of the Ubiquitarians and of All the Books of Philipp Nicolai, the Most Bitter Proponent of Ubiquity, in Which He Tries to Defend the Omnipresence of the Body of Christ"). John Affelmann (1588—1624) of the University of Rostock rose to Nicolai's defense with his *Censura censurae Lampadianae . . . seu invicta assertio doctrinae catholicae de omnipraesentia*

A related target was John Cuno of Perleberg, whom Nicolai attacked in his *Trewhertzige Warnung . . . für Meister Johan Cuno, Perlebergischen Superintendenten in der Prignicierischen Landschaft, wegen der calvinischen Dünsten, Grillen und Natterstichen, die er in seinem Buch dess Tittels Passion Warnung und Oster-trost aussgeust, durchführt und lossdruckt* ("A Faithful-Hearted Warning . . . Against John Cuno, Superintendent at Perleberg in the Prignitz Territory, on Account of the Calvinian Vaporings, Fancies, and Adder-Stings Which He Pours Out, Carries Through, and Squeezes Off in His Book Entitled The Warning in the Passion and the Comfort of Easter").²⁰

Also a target was the Socinian Christopher Ostorodt (1550—1611), aimed at in Nicolai's *Pro divina Jesu Christi gloria adversus Ebioniticos Christophori Osterodi latratus libri tres* ("Three Books on Behalf of the Divine Glory of Jesus Christ Against the Ebionitic Barkings of Christopher Ostorodt").³⁰

Nicolai's *Grundfest und richtige Erklerung dess streitigen Artickels von der Gegenwart unsers Seligmachers Jesu Christi nach beyden Naturen im Himmel und auff Erden* ("The Foundation and the Right Explanation of the Controverted Article of the Presence of Our Savior Jesus Christ According to Both Natures in Heaven and

Christi secundum naturam ejus humanam et de ea libellorum beati D. Philippi Nicolai (Rostock, 1610) ("An Evaluation of the Lampadian Evaluation . . . or, The Invincible Affirmation of the Catholic Doctrine of the Omnipresence of Christ According to His Human Nature and of the Booklets of the Late Dr. Philipp Nicolai About It").

²⁰ Hamburg, 1603. A second edition came out at Hamburg in 1605.

³⁰ Hamburg: Frobenius, 1603.

on Earth"), (1604), dedicated to Princess Catharine of Sweden, dowager countess of East Frisia, is a translation and a reworking of the *Sacrosanctum omnipraesentiae Iesu Christi mysterium* of 1602.

When the Zurich theologians published their reply to Nicolai's *Spiegel des bösen Geistes in den calvinischen Büchern*, Samuel Huber (1547—1624), the ex-Reformed professor at the University of Wittenberg, entered the lists on behalf of Nicolai with his stern *Sendbrieff an die ehrvesten . . . Bürgermeister und Rhat der löblichen Statt Zürich, darinnen sie erinnert . . . werden, was ire Kirchendiener unter dem Schein einer Antwort auff D. Philipp Nicolai Buch für ein Werck wider Jesum Christum . . . unter Handen haben* ("Letter to Their Honors, . . . the Lord Mayor and the Council of the Praiseworthy City of Zurich, in Which There Is Called to Their Attention the Kind of Action Against Jesus Christ Which Their Ministers . . . Have Taken in Hand Under the Pretense of a Reply to Dr. Philipp Nicolai's Book"). This made it all the more painful for Nicolai to have to oppose his erstwhile defender because of what appeared to be the latter's universalistic teachings in the areas of the divine choice of human beings to everlasting life and of the regeneration and justification of human beings. Nicolai's *Ad D. Samuelis Huberi confessionem de universali electione responsum breve et Christianum* ("A Short and Christian Reply to Dr. Samuel Huber's Confession About Universal Election") came out in 1605.

Another period of pestilence evoked a Hamburg counterpart of the *Freudenspiegel*, written in 1605 for the spiritual fortification of Nicolai's parishioners and

published in 1606, *Theoria vitae aeternae, oder, Historische Beschreibung dess ganzen Geheimnuss vom ewigen Leben* ("The Contemplation of Everlasting Life, or, A Historical Description of the Whole Mystery of Everlasting Life") in five volumes.³¹

Another Christological inquiry came out in 1607: *Synopsis articuli controversi de omnipraesente Christo, qua totum hoc mysterium ad necessariam ejus cognitionem intelligenter assectandam succinctis et perspicuis thesibus breviter explicatur* ("An Overview of the Controverted Article About the Omnipresent Christ, in Which for the Sake of Intelligently Attending Upon Getting to Know This Whole Mystery It Is Briefly Unfolded in Succinct and Transparent Theses"). The work is dedicated to the bishop of Hólar in Iceland, Gudbrandur Thorláksson (1542—1627).³²

To promote an accommodation between the Lutheran and the Reformed communities in the face of the Roman Catholic threat to both, the Reformed theologians of the Electoral Palatinate published their *Friedbietung der Theologen in der churfürstlichen Pfaltz an alle lutherische Kirchen* ("An Offer of Peace from the Theologians in the Electoral Palatinate to All Lutheran Churches"). Nicolai replied in 1607 by reprinting the olive branch with his own appended critique — *mit treubertiger Antwort zu hochnöthiger Wegräumung aller Friedenshindernisse* ("with a

³¹ This writer has recorded subsequent editions from 1609, 1610, 1611, 1612, 1615, 1628, 1651, and 1707. In 1693 a section of the *Theoria* was translated into Icelandic and was published as part of a book by Erasmus Vinther at Skálholt.

³² Hamburg: Philippus ab Ohr, 1607.

Faithful-Hearted Answer, with a View to the Highly Necessary Removal of All Barriers to Peace.")³³

In 1607 Landgrave Louis V (1577 to 1626) of Hesse-Darmstadt founded the new University of Giessen — the Ludoviciana — to provide an academic home for the Lutheran tradition in his domains after the Hesse-Kassel University of Marburg had become wholly Reformed. Nicolai — as ready as ever to turn out an appropriate ode — celebrated the venture with his 612-line *Panegyricus in novam Giessenae urbis academiam carmen ad Ludovicum Landgravium Hassiae* ("A Eulogistic Poem on the New University in the City of Giessen, to Louis Landgrave of Hesse") and had it printed in Hamburg.

Also in 1607 Nicolai wrote a preface to a work by a pastor of Soest, John (or F. J.) Schwartz, *Schulführung und Widerlegung dess stockmeister'schen Gesprächs, welches ein Jesuwiter zu Paderborn . . . mit dem Bürgermeister . . . Liborio Wichard . . . gehalten zu haben sich berühmet* ("A Leading to School and Refutation of the Jailer-Type Conversation, That a Jesuit of Paderborn . . . Boasts That He Had . . . with the Lord Mayor . . . Liborius Wichard").³⁴

Later in the summer a casual social contact that Nicolai had with a Florentine Roman Catholic precipitated a controversy between Nicolai and Henry Never (1560

³³ *Fortgesetzte Sammlung von alten und neuen theologischen Sachen*, 1733, pp. 541—42, reproduces Nicolai's "Vorschläge, welcher Gestalt ein Vergleich zwischen denen Lutheranern und den Reformirten könnte getroffen werden" ("Proposals with Reference to the Form in Which an Agreement Between the Lutherans and the Reformed Could Be Achieved").

³⁴ Hamburg, 1607. Wichard had died in 1604 as a Lutheran martyr of the counterreformation.

to 1617), a Jesuit missionary in near-suburban Altona who provided Roman Catholic ministrations to foreign visitors to the Hamburg area. Nicolai died before he had completed the work, but his brother Jeremy published it posthumously in 1609 under the title *Cum Loyoliana societate et ejus ordinis hierophanta quodam in Altona conflictus de antichristo Romano, perditionis filio* ("The Clash with the Society of Loyola and a Certain Hierophant of His Order in Altona on the Roman Antichrist, the Son of Perdition").³⁵

In mid-October 1608 a severe illness greatly handicapped Nicolai's speech and activity. His exemplary end came on the 26th of the month. He participated in the morning prayers of the household, made a final confession of faith to his devoted friend and assistant, George Dedeken (1564—1628), and died quietly at six in the evening.³⁶

Nicolai was buried in St. Catharine's Church under the memorial tablet erected to his great predecessor as rector of the parish, Joachim Westphal. There was a kind of propriety in the fact that these two men whose theological concerns had been so similar in their lifetimes should be thus united in death.

II

In 1617 Dedeken edited Nicolai's surviving works in six folio volumes, four in German, two in Latin.³⁷

³⁵ Rostock: Prelum Reusnerianum, 1609. Subsequent editions came out in 1610 and 1611.

³⁶ Dedeken's account of Nicolai's last hours is reproduced in Walter Lacher, *Philipp Nicolai* (Leipzig: Gustav Schloessmanns Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1937), pp. 36—38.

³⁷ See the appended bibliography for the exact titles. The present writer has tried to list all of the works of Nicolai in this biobiblio-

graphical survey. The date of two of his works that Dedeken printed cannot be determined, *De coena Domini* ("On the Holy Communion") and *Tractatus de persona et officio Christi* ("Treatise on the Person and Office of Christ"). In 1629 Dedeken published Nicolai's *Praxis vitae aeternae* ("The Practice of Everlasting Life"). Martin Lipenius, *Bibliotheca realis theologica* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Johannes Friederici, 1685), which cannot always be trusted, lists a number of works not otherwise documented: *Testamentum novum, graece et latine* (Leipzig, 1578 and 1594); *Bericht von der Gegenwart dess Leibs und Bluts Christi im H. Abendmahl* (Hamburg, 1603) ("A Report on the Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion"); *Sieben Bücher vom ewigen Leben* (Hamburg: Philipp [von] Ohr, 1604) ("Seven Books on the Everlasting Life"); and *Drey Predigten von der englischen Schildwacht* (Erfurt, 1604) ("Three Sermons About the Angelic Sentries"). Christian Gottlieb Jöcher, *Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexicon*, 3 (Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Gleditschens Buchhandlung, 1701), 911—12, attributes to Nicolai *Grund heiliger Schrift von dem allgemeinen Genaden-Willen und der daraus entspringenden Genaden-Wahl Gottes* ("The Biblical Basis for the Universal Gracious Will of God and the Election of Grace That Springs Forth from It"), as well as two works that Jöcher himself lists as the work of Philipp's brother Jeremy (ibid., p. 905): *Theologiae sacrae ad naturalis methodi leges conformatae libri quatuor* ("Four Books of Sacred Theology Conformed to the Laws of the Natural Method") and *Flos biblicus, hoc est, theologiae cum sacris literis conformatae libri octo* ("The Flower of the Bible, That Is, Eight Books of Theology Conformed to the Sacred Writings"), which is presumably identical with the *Theologia e solis sacris literis* to which Willy Hess, *Der Missionsgedanken bei Philipp Nicolai* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962), p. 231, refers and to which Philipp Nicolai wrote the foreword.

³⁸ Part One of Nicolai's collected German works reprints *Von Christo Jesu dem Baum dess Lebens und seinen edlen Früchten: Eine christliche Predigt über die Wort dess Herrn Hose. 14{,9} . . . gehalten in der fürstlichen Hofcapellen zu Winstsheim-an-der-Lube in dem*

THE PREACHER

As a preacher Nicolai was a man of his age. There is sometimes in his sermons a bewildering wealth of metaphor, a strong tendency to allegorize, and a too cheerful willingness to carry his polemics into the pulpit, but there is also homiletical competence and facility of a high order and a stimulating imaginativeness. It is not difficult to understand why Nicolai's contemporaries found his sermons so attractive.

THE HYMN WRITER

To a degree almost unprecedented in hymnological history, Nicolai's reputation as a hymn writer depends on two hymns.

As far as diligent research has been able to determine, he wrote only four. If the hymn of which Jeremy Nicolai heard their sister Margaret sing a snatch in the summer of 1596 is really a fifth hymn and the snatch is not—as the meter suggests—from a later discarded draft of the Morning-Star hymn, it has not survived. Again, subsequent research had not sustained the ascription of additional hymns to Nicolai by hymnologists of the past.

Indeed, one can say that Nicolai wrote only three hymns. It is difficult to imagine

Hertzogthumb Lüneburgk (Hamburg: Michael Hennig, 1607), ("Of Christ Jesus, the Tree of Life, and Its Noble Fruits: A Christian Sermon on the Words of the Lord in Hosea 14[, 9] . . . Preached in the Chapel of the Princely Court at Winsheim-an-der-Luhe in the Duchy of Luneburg"). Part Two contains 28 sermons that Nicolai preached on Easter Day, Easter Monday, Quasi Modo Geniti, Misericordias Domini, Jubilate, and Whitsun-Monday, and a series on Revelation 1—5.

³⁹ On Nicolai's correspondence see Alfred Uckeley, "Die Briefe Philipp Nicolais gesammelt und herausgegeben," *Geschichtsblätter für Waldeck und Pyrmont*, 19/20 (1921), 73—80.

a worshipping congregation at any time singing the 12 stanzas of "Mag ich Unglück nicht widerstahn," an autobiographical ballad, even though Nicolai labeled it "A Complaint of the Christian Church to God About the Calvinists and the Sectarian Spirits."⁴⁰

"So wünsch ich eine gute Nacht" also runs to 12 stanzas. It is a *Parodie-Lied*⁴¹ written to be sung to a well-known secular tune of the period ("So wünsch ich ihr ein gute Nacht"). The title reads: "Der Welt Abdanck für eine himmeldurstige Seele, gestelt uber den 42. Psalm Davids" ("Renunciation of the World, for a Soul That Thirsts for Heaven, Based on the 42d Psalm of David").⁴² It was published in 1599 as an appendix to the *Freudenspiegel* and has enjoyed modest popularity in German Lutheran and Reformed hymnals.

The other two hymns, "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern" and "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme," with their perennially evocative content, their superb

⁴⁰ It was published as an appendix to his *Nothwendiger und gantz vollkommener Bericht von der gantzen calvinischen Religion* (1596).

⁴¹ Friedrich Blume, *Die evangelische Kirchenmusik* (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1931), p. 15.

⁴² The hymn is an acrostic on the names of the two noblewomen to whom Nicolai dedicated the *Bericht*: M[argaretha] Geborn G[räfin] Zu Gleich[en] Und T[onna] G[räfin] Und F[rau] Zu W[aldeck] ("Margaret, née Countess of Gleichen, and Tonna, Countess and Lady of Waldeck"). The first stanza is lifted verbatim—not an infrequent custom of the time—from a hymn written by Queen Mary of Hungary, the sister of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The Morning-Star hymn and "Wachet auf" are also acrostics; the former has initial letters referring it to Wilhelm Ernst, Graf und Herr zu Waldeck, while the latter when reversed spells out Graf zu Waldeck.

metrical structure, and their extraordinarily successful wedding of the text to the magnificent tunes—the “Queen” and “King” of chorales—require no praise.

They are not the first of their genre, but they are such splendid examples of their type that they can rightly be called epochal, and they provided a firm precedent for a new type of hymn which laid greater stress on the author's subjective religious experience than on the availability of the hymn as a vehicle for the expression of corporate conviction. In this way they helped determine the direction that German hymnody was to follow for the next two generations, through the lifetimes of Paul Gerhardt (1607—1676), John Franck (1618—1677), and John Schefler (1624—1677). The other area where they exercise decisive influence is in the introduction of new metrical patterns.

Both hymns are in their primary intention eschatological. Only in this sense can they rightly be understood. It is true that the Morning-Star hymn rapidly became the *de tempore* hymn for the Second Sunday After the Epiphany and for the Twentieth Sunday After Trinity. The former association reinforced passages in the text that could be construed as referring to holy matrimony. It thus became a favorite at weddings, to the point where John Avenarius III (1653—1713) could report in 1711 (possibly with a little exaggeration) that bridal couples “superstitiously believed that if the Morning-Star were not performed at their nuptials, they were not rightly married and could expect no fortune or blessing in their wedded life.”⁴³

⁴³ Quoted in Johannes Kulp, *Die Lieder unserer Kirche: Eine Handreichung zum Evangelischen Kirchengesangbuch*, edited by Arno

But, as their original publication as appendices to the *Freudenspiegel* and their reflection of the eschatological language of this work of Nicolai clearly show, the real thrust of the Morning-Star hymn as well as of “Wachet auf” is eschatological.

THE MYSTIC

Both hymns are likewise the product of a major mystic of the Lutheran tradition. This too is an essential datum for the understanding of the hymns. The obvious meaning of the text does not immediately disclose and far less exhaust the experience of which the hymns are expressions. It is true that mysticism—even when it refers to a theocentric and Christocentric mystical experience that consciously bases itself on the Word of God and on the Christian sacraments—has been a bad word for some Lutherans since the 17th century and has become a worse word since the mid-19th century. It is particularly discomfiting and threatening for those who define religion wholly in cognitive and intellectual terms. Those who hold this view are likely to deny that authentic Lutheran theology can allow a place for mysticism. In opposition to this view it must be stipulated that mysticism of the type described is an indispensable part of the Catholic heritage that the Church of the Augsburg Confession shares with every century of the church that preceded the 16th.

Philipp Nicolai does not stand isolated within the Church of the Augsburg Confession in this respect. On the contrary, he is only one representative of a considerable company that has existed in the

Büchner and Siegfried Fornaçon (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958) p. 86.

Church of the Augsburg Confession from its beginning as an autonomous fellowship. His partners in this company include Martin Luther himself; Andrew Musculus (1514—1581), an author of the Formula of Concord and one of the channels through whom the medieval mystical tradition was transmitted to the post-Reformation church; Nicolai's contemporary Martin Möller (1547—1606), Saxon-born pastor and devotional writer, remembered for his influential *Meditationes sacrum patrum* ("Meditations of the Holy [Church] Fathers") that he began to publish in 1584; and Nicholas Herman (1481?—1561), the cantor-teacher colleague of John Mathesius at St. Joachims-thal. After Nicolai the movement includes, among others, John Arndt (1555—1621), John Gerhard (1582—1637), John Heermann (1585—1647), and Paul Gerhardt. Concretely, in Nicolai's case we have the demonstrable influence of a series of treatises that his time—and he—attributed to St. Augustine, the *Manuale*, the *Meditationes*, and the *Soliloquia*. The *Manuale* draws heavily on the 66 sermons of St. Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs, the *Meditationes* originate largely from the pen of St. Anselm of Canterbury,⁴⁴ while the *Soliloquia* preserve

⁴⁴ They include the famous passage that begins *Mater Hierusalem, civitas sancta Dei*, which Nicolai quotes at length in the *Freudenspiegel* ("Of the Sixth Property of Everlasting Life," sec. 2), as well as in the *Theoria vitae aeternae*, and of which echoes are present in all three of the hymns appended to the *Freudenspiegel*. Kulp (op. cit., pp. 84—85) cites some of the more apposite sentences: "O Jerusalem, holy city of God, most worthy bride of Jesus Christ, I love you with all my heart and I have a very heartfelt longing for your loveliness. . . . Your walls are of precious stones, your gates of the best pearls, your streets of pure gold and on

the *Arca animae* of another great medieval mystic, Hugh of St. Victor. Nicolai's own mystical experience in connection with the production of the Morning-Star hymn is worth recalling also.⁴⁵

Linked with the fact that both hymns reflect the continuing mystical element in the Western Christian tradition is the further fact that both are "Jesus hymns." They are not the first. Elisabeth von Meseritz Cruciger (died 1535) had written "Herr Christ, du einig Gotts Sohn." There are more than traces of Christ-mysticism in John Walter (1496—1570) and Nicholas Herman. In 1571 Martin Schalling (1532 to 1608)—the ascription to him goes back to 1627—had written a "Jesus hymn" even more in the Nicolai style, "Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, O Herr." But

them a joyous alleluia is sung in chorus without intermission. . . . There are the choruses of angels pronouncing their hymns. There is the society of the citizens of heaven. . . . There is the prescient chorus of the prophets. There is the twelfefold company of the apostles. There is the victor army of innumerable martyrs. There is the sacred assembly of holy confessors." See also William T. Brooke, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home," *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, ed. John Julian, rev. ed. (London: John Murray, 1915), p. 580.

⁴⁵ In the preface to the *Theoria vitae aeternae*, edited by John Daniel Arcularius (1650 to 1710) at Frankfurt in 1707, Nicolai is quoted as stating that "in the production of this hymn he was so occupied and filled with a foretaste of everlasting life and with the sweetness of the powers of the age to come that he forgot his regular meal, and when he was called to it by his household he had refused to come, explaining that he was now so satisfied with an inner spiritual joy that he felt neither physical hunger or thirst, and that he would neither eat nor drink nor rest until he had ordered and completed his thoughts of spiritual joy in connection with this hymn" (quoted in Curtze, op. cit., p. 96).

Nicolai introduces the vogue for hymns of this type, although few of the later constructions are comparable to his own two great chorales.

Nicolai's Christ-mysticism in these hymns as elsewhere is deliberately Biblical. The Morning-Star hymn draws not only on Psalm 45 and the Song of Songs but also on Eph. 5:22-32 and on Rev. 22:13, 16. "Wachet auf," which shows the influence of earlier *Tagweisen* and of the *Tag- und Wächterlieder* that go back to Wolfram von Eschenbach,⁴⁶ uses not only the parable of the Ten Maidens but also Is. 51:17; 52:8; 62:6;⁴⁷ 1 Cor. 2:9; 15:55; and Rev. 19:6-9.

Of the two hymns, the corporate character of "Wachet auf" gives it an edge over the more individualistic formulation of the Morning-Star hymn.

THE HYMN-TUNE COMPOSER

The meters and tunes show the same talent for creative adaptation of inherited patterns and motives.⁴⁸ The influence of Nicolai's old teacher Helmbold is strong, that of the latter's colleague and Nicolai's preceptor in music at Mühlhausen, à

⁴⁶ Johannes Westphal, *Das evangelische Kirchenlied nach seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 6th. ed. (Berlin: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1925), p. 94; Kulp, op. cit., p. 197.

⁴⁷ The watchman motive had appeared in two *Wächterlieder* in John Walther's *Gesangbüchlein* of 1551. Paul Althaus, *Der Friedhof unserer Väter: Ein Gang durch die Sterbe- und Ewigkeitslieder der evangelischen Kirche*, 4th ed. (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1947), pp. 119—20.

⁴⁸ If one assigns a dash to each syllable of the Morning-Star hymn and centers the lines over one another, the shape of a chalice emerges clearly (see Kulp, op. cit., p. 86).

Burgk, highly probable.⁴⁹ In the Morning-Star hymn the reminiscences of the setting of Psalm 100, "Jauchzet dem Herrn, alle Lande," by James Dachser (1486—1567) in the *Psalter* that Wolf Köpphel published at Strasbourg in 1538 are obvious, as are the echoes of *Resonet in laudibus*. "Wachet auf" exhibits affinities with Hans Sachs' *Silberweise* (*Salve, ich grus dich schone*) and a Magnificat setting by Luke Lossius in the fifth Gregorian mode.⁵⁰

Noteworthy is the way in which the music reinforces the strong note of joy and adoration that distinguishes Nicolai's hymns from many others in the Lutheran tradition.⁵¹

Since the two hymns first found their way into the Hamburg *Melodeyen-Gesangbuch* of 1604, they have achieved all

⁴⁹ Otto Brodde, "Philipp Nicolai," *Monatschrift für Gottesdienst und christliche Kunst*, 42 (1937), 92—93.

⁵⁰ See Walter Blankenburg, "Die Kirchenliedweisen von Philipp Nicolai, gestorben am 10. August 1556," *Musik und Kirche*, 26 (1956), 172—76, and *Geschichte der Melodien des Evangelischen Kirchengesangbuches: Ein Abriss* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), pp. 92—94.

⁵¹ See Paul Gabriel, *Das deutsche evangelische Kirchenlied* (Leipzig: Qudle und Meyer, 1935), pp. 48—49. Oskar Söhngen, "Theologische Grundlagen der Kirchenmusik," *Leiturgia: Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes*, ed. Karl Ferdinand Müller and Walter Blankenburg, 4 (Kassel: Johannes-Stauda Verlag, 1961), 249, n. 619, observes that in Nicolai's hymns there is a repeated paraphrastic expression of what the New Testament calls *agalliasis* ("joy"). As examples he cites: "Singet, springet, jubiliert, triumphiert, dankt dem Herrn!" "Des klopf ich in die Hände," and "Des jauchzen wir und singen dir das Halleluja für und für." Considering the circumstances in which Nicolai wrote these hymns, this stress on spiritual joy is doubly significant.

but universal acceptance in Western Christendom.⁵³

THE POLEMICIST

As a polemicist Nicolai is typical of the era. One needs only to read the complete titles of his published polemical works to catch their acid flavor. But the counter-barrages of his adversaries used no kinder or less vulgar language. The ecumenical temper of our times finds this kind of polemics embarrassing. The 16th and 17th centuries did not. In part, the age was accustomed to the use of language of this kind and rarely reflected on its propriety when Christian theologians took it on their lips. In polemics theologians simply used — unsmilingly — words that they would probably have avoided in normal discourse. In a sense, the vocables of this theological billingsgate had lost some of their meaning, just as other and non-professional profanities, obscenities, and vulgarities (then as now) were not intended to be taken with strict literalness.

Nicolai's intrepid opposition to the Reformed and Roman Catholic religions received enthusiastic praise from his coreligionists, few of whom seem to have seen anything improper either in his method or in his vocabulary. By the same token, his adversaries — especially the Reformed theologians — were vehemently critical of both. In his own defense against their accusations, Nicolai urged the seriousness of the issues at stake and his own concern for the divine truth as he understood it and

⁵³ The half a hundred imitations of the Morning-Star hymn that came out by 1650 is an impressive indication of its appeal. See Wilhelm Nelle, *Geschichte des deutschen evangelischen Kirchenliedes*, 4th ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1962), p. 89.

as he had committed himself to it both at his ordination and through his oath as a doctor of sacred theology. It must not be forgotten that as he saw them the Reformed and Roman Catholic religions led with logical inevitability to a denial of the very fundamentals of the historic Catholic faith. At stake for him were ultimately the essential nature of God, the reality of the incarnation, the truth of the atonement, the kingly rule of the incarnate Word, and the accessibility of the grace of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God that Nicolai and his colleagues preached and the sacraments that he and his colleagues administered.⁵⁴ With this understanding of Nicolai's mindset his vehement polemics are no less scandalous, but they do become more intelligible.

One need not extenuate or exculpate either the vocabulary or the vehemence of Nicolai's polemics to stress that it does not depict the image of the total man or of even a significant part of that image. One can likewise concede that his determination and steadfastness of purpose some-

⁵⁴ In the preface to the *Spiegel dess bösen Geistes* he concludes that "according to Calvinian theology our good Lord has in the Decalog neither covenant nor mouth nor virtue; in the articles of the Creed God the Father is powerless, fatherless, and graceless; Jesus Christ has no person, no salvation, no scepter, no crown, no throne; the Holy Spirit is defenseless, peaceless, and groundless; in prayer they make Mary's Son heedless, unhearing, and thoughtless; in holy baptism they make Him without blessing, without juice, without might; in the Holy Communion wordless, bodyless, bloodless. From which it follows that the poor layman who is taken in by the Calvinian religion can and must finally end up as nothing but godless, Christless, ruthless, heavenless, and comfortless." *Teutsche Schriften*, ed. George Dedeken (Hamburg: Heinrich Carstens [Michael Hering], 1617), 3, 225.

times through excess bordered on inflexibility. But he was also gentle, modest, friendly, and humble, a dependable friend and a trusted colleague, free of inordinate ambition and lust for glory, a faithful pastor who reinforced his admonitions with a life that was consistent with them, conscientiously dedicated to his priestly service, marked by devotion to truth, honesty, and integrity as well as by prudence, and devoted in his personal life to the expression toward his fellows of the love that he found to be God's inmost essence. It is not without its significance for the evaluation of his pacific Christian character that his colleagues in the ministry in Hamburg applied to him the self-description of the *Doctor mellifluus* of Clairvaux:

Nullum turbavi, discordes pacificavi;
Laesus sustinui, nec mihi complacui.⁵⁵

THE MISSIOLOGIST

Although Nicolai's concern for the mission of the church is part of the ground bass of all his writing, even of his polemical works, it comes out most clearly in his *Commentarii de regno Christi*. To dismiss this work as only the deplorable aberration of a theologian-turned-apocalyptic-date-setter⁵⁶ would miss its real importance. Actually it is a document with significant insights into the missiological and

⁵⁵ "Statement of the Senior of the Ministerium, the Pastors and All the Clergy of Hamburg," *ibid.*, 1, folio biiij verso. The Latin can be rendered: "I upset no one, I brought peace to those in discord; when I was wounded, I contained my soul in patience, nor did I please myself."

⁵⁶ Comparable to Luther's venture into prophetic historiography near the end of his life in his *Supputatio annorum mundi* (Weimarer Ausgabe, 53, 22—184), which sees the end of the world probably coming around the mid-16th century.

ecumenical thinking of Nicolai and of his Lutheran contemporaries.

Nicolai shared the conviction of his time that the divine injunction to the apostles to go into the world and teach all nations the Gospel had been fulfilled. The demonstration that he provides in the opening section of his *Commentarii de regno Christi* illustrates this.⁵⁷ Defective as further experience proved Nicolai's world-picture to be, it represented the best geographic and cartographic information accessible to a German clergyman of the last decade of the 16th century for writing his chronicle of the *magnalia Christi*, and more recent research attests the conscientious and critical use that Nicolai made of his available sources.

The line that leads to the 20th-century missiological interest in the *Commentarii de regno Christi* represented by such persons as Werner Elert (1885—1954), Walter Holsten, and Willy Hess runs via Wilhelm Löhe (1808—1872), who in his time derived mighty insight and inspiration from them.

The *Commentarii de regno Christi* are an integral part of the rebuttal of the contention that 16th and 17th-century Lutheran orthodoxy was not interested in the mission of the church. Essential to an understanding of Nicolai's predenominational concern is the realization that for him the Church of the Augsburg Confession is an integral part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church of the Creeds, not a new denomination with about a human lifetime of history behind it. As a part of the universal church, the

⁵⁷ The German version of Gotthard Artus regrettably abridges the Latin at a number of points.

Church of the Augsburg Confession participates in the total mission of the church. The ecumenicity of the church is in turn a function of the divinely ordered means of salvation through which God communicates the Holy Spirit to human beings. Wherever the Gospel is communicated in such a way that it is recognizably still the Gospel of God's redemptive and reconciling act in Christ and the sacraments are administered in such a way that Christ's intention in instituting them is conserved and the faithful respond with their confession of the catholic faith, there is the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. To the extent that these criteria of the church are present in the Roman Catholic ecclesial community, in the Eastern Orthodox communion, and in the "Nestorian" and non-Chalcedonian churches, these are for Nicolai part of the church. By that token the missionary activity in which they engage—even though none of them is *the* church and all of them are only particular churches—is authentic missionary activity. Nicolai's overarching eschatological orientation gives this insight an added dimension. The entire reality of the church never appears within a single narrow time frame but must be seen in the total—partly still future—history of the holy community on earth. Again Nicolai recognizes, as he observes in his evaluation of the Eastern Orthodoxy of the time, that the world that the church must conquer may sometimes be limited by external circumstances to the world within the empirical church.

While Nicolai sees political factors limiting the foreign missionary activity of the Lutheran territorial churches within the

Holy Roman Empire, he is sensitive to the missionary opportunities that exist within Lutheran lands, notably Sweden-Finland and Denmark-Norway-Iceland, where the evangelization of unconverted tribes is still a possibility.

Nicolai has a sturdy faith in the evangelistic effectiveness of the one mass medium of the times, the printing press, and he takes heart from the efforts of Primoz Trubar (1508—1586)⁵⁸ and from the translation of the Augsburg Confession into Georgian at the request of Joachim von Sintzendorff for the information and instruction of the Georgian prince Qarqaras Hodabeg.⁵⁹ He also sees the Lutheran community as being able to engage in an international mission of evangelization and renewal through the foreign students attending the Lutheran universities of the empire. Through the Reformation and its stress on the forgiveness of sins by grace for Christ's sake through faith, God, as Nicolai views the situation, made the Church of the Augsburg Confession the spiritual center of the church and the theological arsenal for the church's mission to the world.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ A Roman Catholic priest who converted to the Lutheran religion and became the creator of literary Slovenian through his translation of Lutheran literature into that language.

⁵⁹ Nicolai adds the touching suffrage: "I pray for the Georgians with my whole heart, and I have nothing so much in my prayers as that the unalloyed doctrine of the Gospel might be spread far and wide throughout Asia and the whole world." *Opera latina*, ed. George Dedeken (Hamburg: Henricus Carstens [Michael Heringius], 1617), 2, 10.

⁶⁰ See Willy Hess, *Das Missionsdenken bei Philipp Nicolai* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962), especially pp. 159—65.

THE THEOLOGIAN

While the eschatological stress for which Nicolai is best remembered may be lacking somewhat in appeal for segments of the church whose theological concern is exhausted in an activist program of renewal and service—essential as such programs are to the church's life—it is far from precluding a theological concern with the here and now. Possibly it is the added dimension of Nicolai's eschatological stress that the church most direly needs precisely when the times require it to involve itself in activist programs.

Although Nicolai receives only the barest mention in anything but highly specialized histories of religious thought,⁶⁰ he is no mean theologian.⁶² He possessed exceptional qualities of mind and spirit. As a scholar he drew on a rich store of class-

⁶⁰ Otto W. Heick, *A History of Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 1, 471 and n. 3, merely mentions Nicolai's name in connection with "the classic period of the Lutheran chorale." Eight lines farther on he continues: "The chorale, as well as the music of Schuetz and Bach, have [sic!] a mystic undertone. As a matter of fact, the language of Nicolai's hymn, 'O Morning Star, so Pure and so Bright,' is so saturated with the erotic language of Bernardian mysticism that, in an unaltered form, it is totally unacceptable today. But at the same time Nicolai ranks among the foremost defenders of Lutheranism over against Calvinism." To this the footnote adds that Nicolai is also the author of the *Freudenspiegel*, "a devotional book written in the same erotic language." Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), does not even refer to Nicolai.

⁶² The most recent survey of Nicolai's theology is that by Martin Lindström, *Philip Nicolais kristendomsolkning* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1937), translated into German as *Philipp Nicolais Verständnis des Christentums* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1939).

ical and patristic learning and he was thoroughly acquainted with the theological literature of the times. He had an avid curiosity and a bent for originality that did not shrink from novel theories or from new positions. His writings gained wide currency and exerted demonstrable influence.⁶³

Nicolai is in many ways the kind of theologian that we should expect in the second last decade of the 16th century in Germany. His humanistic formation, his philosophical and theological training at Erfurt and Wittenberg, and his contacts with Marburg under Giles Hunn show through even in such works as the *Freudenspiegel*. To cite one instance, he begins this work with the questions *An sit vita aeterna?* ("Is there such a thing as everlasting life?") and *Quid sit vita aeterna?* ("What is everlasting life?"). He discusses the *causa finalis* of the divine indwelling in God's chosen ones under the third property of everlasting life. Under the fourth property the section headings are all in Latin—God as *objectum visus, auditus, laetitiae, gustus, odoratus, tactus, summi amoris, beatissimae cognationis* ("the object of sight, of hearing, of rejoicing, of taste, of smell, of touch, of the highest love, and of the most blissful knowledge"). The third book of the *The-*

⁶³ Sven Göransson, for instance, sees the impact of Nicolai's theology on the politically and ecclesiastically influential Danish Chancellor Holger Rosenkrantz (1575—1642) as a tangible factor in the transition of Danish-Norwegian Lutheranism from the moderate Melanchthonianism of Nicholas Hemmingsen (1513—1600), Curt Aslaksen (1564—1624), and Bishop Mogens Madsen (1527—1611) to the Formula of Concord type orthodoxy represented by Bishop Hans Poulsen Resen (1561 to 1638) and Bishop Jasper Rasmussen Brochmand (1585—1652).

oria vitae aeternae, to cite another example, which treats of rebirth, asks *an et quid sit regeneratio?* and inquires into the father (Christ) and the mother of rebirth (the holy catholic church), the "matter" of rebirth (the law and the Gospel), the *causa administra* ("the assisting cause") of rebirth (the sacred ministry), the "form" of rebirth, the *causa finalis* of rebirth, the "effect" of rebirth, which it describes as "the life of the reborn in the lap of the church," the "object" of rebirth, the "accidents and concomitants" of rebirth (the daily bread of the Christians and the cross that befalls them), the *adversantia* of rebirth (Belial and his hosts), and the *tempus et exitus* ("time and final departure") of rebirth.

But Nicolai is no dry-as-dust theologian operating with inherited methods on inherited questions to which he gives inherited answers. He has a healthy awareness of the limitations of the theologian's knowledge; the frequent use of "mystery" in the titles and subtitles of Nicolai's works is a significant attestation of this. In his stress on the implications of the primordial Biblical affirmation that God is love, Nicolai follows Luther in emphasizing that God is not an original or self-impelling cause of His fiery wrath by His own will or pleasure, but that it is the viciousness and sinfulness of the world in its acts against love that, as it were, coerce and compel God to such anger. His basic theological orientation in the locus on the person of Christ determines his rejection of an idea of "heaven" which makes it the top level of a three-deck universe. He rejects the idea of soul-sleep and, wholly in the spirit and letter of the Lutheran symbolical books, he sees the faithful departed in the fatherland praying not only for the

church in general but for specific persons whom they knew in life and who are still on the way. He naturally operates with the body-soul terminology, and his analogies of theological truth that he derives from the science of his day are as opaque and unpersuasive to the 20th century as those of the ancient fathers or of the 16th-century reformers, but the process of the individualization of the faith and of religion has not in Nicolai as yet crowded out the sense of community, even with reference to his doctrine of the last things. The theory of two primary Antichrists to which Nicolai stands consistently committed and which sees not only the Roman papacy but also Islam as a primary Antichrist is a significant qualification of the view that reads classic Lutheran thinking in the 16th and 17th centuries as demanding the exclusive identification of the Antichrist with the Roman papacy.

It would of course be quite feasible to take any set of treatise headings from a late 16th- or early 17th-century Lutheran dogmatics and to distribute among them pertinent paragraphs and sections from Nicolai's theological works. The document that would emerge through this process would be very much like the system that contributed the outline. There might be a few — but only a very few — chapters missing. Difference in theological accent might make some of the chapters fairly brief. Other chapters again would reflect the private genius of Nicolai, but the general effect would be that of an orthodox Lutheran manual of systematic theology of the period.

This procedure, however, would occlude the specific contribution that Nicolai made to Lutheran theology through his gift for the unconventional organization of theo-

logical data. Nicolai's concerns center in two areas, partly by personal inclination, partly by circumstances, the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the last things. But what he has written are not merely treatises on Christology and on eschatology but total theologies that take their organizing principle from Christology and eschatology. It is instructive to see him devise a theology that is genuinely Lutheran—in the main impeccably Lutheran—without making the justification of the sinner before God by grace for Christ's sake through faith the center around which the whole system is built up. Not that he omits or slights the doctrine of justification, but rather that he gives it its proper ancillary and instrumental place within a system that is organized either around the person and work of Christ or around the total and final salvation of mankind as represented in God's holy community.

The focus where these two concerns merge and where Nicolai makes his major constructive contribution is in the doctrine of the mystical union of Christ and the believers. Here he develops a parallel between the hypostatic union of the deity and humanity of Christ and the "spiritual union" (*unio pneumatica*) of believers with Christ. This enabled him to give the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* ("exchange of properties or qualities") an ethical significance and to extend the Lutheran exception to the principle *finitum non est capax infiniti* ("that which is infinite exceeds the capacity of that which is finite") beyond the incarnation of Christ to the mystical union of the believers with Christ.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Nicolai's contribution was appreciatively recognized in the mid-19th century by the Erlangen theologian Gottfried Thomasius (1802

The *unio mystica* is a major theme of Nicolai's theological work at least as far back as 1599, when he published his *Freudenspiegel*. With the publication of his *Sacrosanctum omnipraesentiae Christi mysterium* in 1602 and of *Theoria vitae aeternae* in 1606 he developed his position further. The locus of the mystical union for Nicolai is the image of God—strictly understood as the human being's primordial holiness—lost in the "fall" but restored in Christ, so that in Christ the human being has a capacity for the divine

to 1875) and more critically analyzed by Isaak August Dorner (1809—1884). Thomasius in his *Christi Person und Werk: Darstellung der evangelisch-lutherischen Dogmatik vom Mittelpunkt der Christologie aus*, 2d ed., (Erlangen: Theodore Bläsing, 1857), 2, 493—514, takes special cognizance of Nicolai's *Grundfest von des streitigen Artikels von der Gegenwart Jesu Christi nach beiden Naturen im Himmel und auf Erden* (1604). "In [this work]," Thomasius says, "Lutheran Christology returns to the profound inwardness of its beginning and at the end of its movement it once more gathers together in itself in the most lively fashion all the practical motives out of which it was born and all the blossoms which it has brought forth. I know of no other book out of a later period that offers anything similar, although its methodology finds an echo in the great ascetic writers of our church, like John Arndt and others" (p. 514). Thomasius also hears echoes in John Andrew Quenstedt (1617—1688), John Hülsemann (1602—1661), and John Meisner (1615 to 1684). Dorner in his *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die neueste Gegenwart*, 2d ed., 2 (Berlin: Gustav Schlawitz, 1853), 1779 to 87, cites especially the *Grundfest* and the *Verantwortung der Evangelischen Kirchen in Holland* (1602). A 19th-century theologian whom Nicolai influenced profoundly was his biographer, Rudolf Rocholl (1822—1905), a pastor successively in the territorial Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck, the territorial Church of Hanover, and the Old-Lutheran Church (Breslau Synod). Rocholl argued for a biblical-theological realism in the doctrines of God, creation, redemption, the Eucharist, and the last things.

essence. Nicolai thinks of the God with whom the believer is united both as the Trinity-in-essential-Unity and Christ as the celestial bridegroom.

While the ultimate objective of the mystical union is rest in God, the achievement of this objective begins already in the present age. The properties that Nicolai finds in everlasting life participate in this simultaneous-eschatological quality, this already-but-not-yet existence. These include the mutual love of God and his chosen ones, the likeness of the chosen ones to God, the perfected love that a Christian ideally has for his neighbor, and the perfect union that exists between Christ and his people. The indwelling of God in his chosen ones is marked by mutual love and mutual "knowledge." This mutual ardent love is like the love of a newly married couple who will not rest until they have achieved perfect union in marriage. "We who are believing Christians in this present time live both *ab extra* and *ab intra*, that is, externally in the world and internally in the Holy Spirit. . . . In my spiritual walk and in my interior celestial life I am in heaven and in the city of God that is above together with all the citizens of heaven."⁶⁵

Nicolai sees the mystical union as involving analogously the same three aspects that the incarnation involved. Thus he affirms of the mystical union that in it "God and the human being grow so closely together, are so closely joined, attached, and united that they are not only one Spirit, one lump, and as it were one body, but also that out of this union and spiritual connection of the two there emerge three

necessary consequences, three mystical effects, or three kinds of mutual exchange. The first it pleases me to call a spiritual appropriation (*idiopoeia*) on the part of God, who takes the believer into himself, the second a spiritual transmutation (*metapoeia*) on the part of the human being whom God takes into himself, and the third a spiritual communization (*koinopoeia*) of God and the human being."⁶⁶

In the mystical union the *idiopoeia* involves that God takes on Himself as if they were His very own both the sorrows of the Christian and his godly words, works, and affections. The *metapoeia* imparts to the Christian a share in the activity and powers of God and of Christ. The *koinopoeia* so involves God and the human being in a pneumatic community of activity that the one constantly thinks and acts along with the other. (It goes without saying that in Nicolai's system none of this involves a rejection of the essential difference between God and human beings, between the Creator and His creatures, nor is any kind of absorption of the individual into an All either suggested or implied. God remains God, and the human being remains the individual human person that God created him to be.)

For Nicolai there is a direct link be-

⁶⁶ *Sacrosanctum omnipraesentiae Jesu Christi mysterium*, Book I, Ch. 4, *Opera latina*, 1, 210. The three nouns, *idiopoeia*, *metapoeia*, and *koinopoeia* that Nicolai uses both for the three *genera* of the incarnation and the analogous *genera* of the mystical union do not occur in classical or patristic Greek, but the verbs from which they are derived, *idiopoeiō*, *metapoeiō*, and *koinopoeiō*, are not uncommon. It is instructive to study the patristic use of these verbs at the hand of Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, fascicle 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 664, 760—61, and 859—60.

⁶⁵ *Theoria vitae aeternae*, Book IV, Ch. 2, *Teutsche Schriften*, 1, part 2, pp. 216—17.

tween the Sacrament of the Altar and the mystical union of the believer with Christ. The Sacrament of the Altar nourishes the mystical union. By receiving Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar the communicant is united more intimately not only with all the other members of Christ's body but also with the body's Head.

In all of these emphases Nicolai is not unconsciously the heir of the medieval mystical tradition mediated to the community of the Augsburg Confession through Luther himself and through the stream of mystical experience and expression that linked the post-Reformation church with the pre-Reformation well-springs of piety.⁶⁷

NICOLAI'S CREDO

The three quotations with which this survey closes may serve as a summary of the private and public credo of Philipp Nicolai.

The first is from a letter—half Latin, half German—that he wrote to his brother Jeremy about six months before his death: "I am in truth exhausted by the extent of my work. But I trust altogether in the Lord my God and in my most beloved Savior Christ who dwells through faith in my breast. His hand is not shortened. It is His teaching, His majesty, His glory and honor that are at stake. I am involved with floods, the ocean, tempests, and the ditch of my literary labors. . . . Pray diligently for me, just as I and mine pray for you. God help me through this! My 51st year

⁶⁷ In this connection see Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums*, 2d ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1952), 1, 135—54, esp. pp. 140—46.

is past, and the powers of my body are no longer increasing. . . . But in the meantime I exult, I am triumphant (if I look at my good cause against the devil and his scaly fish), and I rejoice in God my salvation."⁶⁸

The second is his confession of faith from *Die erst Victoria* (1599):

"I believe in [Christ's] holy name, and because I believe, I speak, and I will not be ashamed of Him before His enemies. I believe that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge lie hidden in Him, that the Spirit of the Lord rests on Him, and that the entire fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him. I believe from my heart and I confess with my mouth that He is a giant of twofold substance (*Gigas geminae substantiae*), a person of two voices, true God and true man, our Redeemer and Savior, our Mediator and faithful Advocate before God in high heaven, who on the tree of the cross poured out His precious blood for the sin and the misdoing of all human beings descended from Adam; that He has atoned for them all and has borne the wrath of His heavenly Father for them all; and that, according to the literal meaning and the proper sense of the words of the Holy Communion, He gives His true body and His true blood (in every place where this venerable sacrament is simultaneously celebrated and observed) along with the consecrated bread and wine to all the communicants, worthy and unworthy, to eat and to drink with their mouths; that He is in all places present to His church on earth not only as a God, but also according to His assumed human nature by virtue of the hypostatic

⁶⁸ Quoted in Curtze, op. cit., pp. 257—58.

union and the limitless power of the Almighty; [and] that He fills all things and has heaven as His throne and the earth as His footstool. . . .

"I have recalled the great mercy, faithfulness, and acts of kindness that I encounter from my faithful Savior, how in ardent love He humbled Himself so low for my sake and poured out His precious blood for me, how He forgives me my misdeeds, and acknowledges me as His beloved brother, how He protects me from all misery, lives through faith in my heart, and concerns Himself about my wretchedness and my adversity as if the apple of His eye were being touched, how together with the Father and the Holy Spirit He is one mass with me, one Spirit, one body, and in addition my mighty fortress, my shield, my place of refuge, my salvation, my life, the joy of my heart, my crown, my peaceful rest, [and] my everlasting good, to whom I am forever bound, united, and obligated through the covenant of His everlasting love and through the reciprocal

love, faith, and cordial confidence that I owe Him."⁶⁹

The third is the voice of hope speaking against hope from the preface to *Sacrosanctum omnipraesentiae Jesu Christi mysterium* (1602):

"I do not wholly despair of the reunification of the dissenting churches, no matter how embittered the hearts of the contending theologians on both sides may seem. Christ still lives, and the Lord God of hosts can bring it about that when the souls of those who oppose one another are penetrated, filled, and occupied by the light of truth, all doubts, darkness, and controversies will be cleared out of the way, and the Belgian[-Dutch], Swiss, French, English, Scottish, and Polish churches can be joined together in one body with the churches that receive the Augsburg Confession and the Christian [Book of] Concord as their symbols."⁷⁰

St. Louis, Mo.

⁶⁹ *Teutsche Schriften*, 3, 580.

⁷⁰ *Opera latina*, 1,188.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Nicolai, Philip. *Erster (Ander, Dritter, Vierdter) Theil aller Teutschen Schriften des weyland ehrwirdigenn hochgelarten Herrn Philippi Nicolai . . . fleissig colligiret und in Ordnung gebracht durch M. Georgium Dedekennum*. Hamburg: Heinrich Carstens (Michael Hering), 1617.

Nicolai, Philip. *Tomus primus (secundus) operum latinorum reverendi et clarissimi viri Dn. Philippi Nicolai . . . collectorum et in ordinem redactorum per M. Georgium Dedekennum*. Hamburg: Henricus Carstens (Michael Heringius), 1617.

Secondary works

Buszin, Walter E. "Nicolai, Philipp," *The*

Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, ed. Julius Bodensieck. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965. Vol. 3, pp. 1751—52.

Curtze, Ludwig Friedrich Christian. *D. Philipp Nicolai's Leben und Lieder nach den Quellen*. Halle: J. Fricke, 1859.

Dedeken, George. *Trauerpredigt für Philipp Nicolai, Pastor zu St. Catharinen, Hamburg*. [Hamburg:], n. p., 1608. A Latin version of this sermon is printed in Henning Witte, *Memoriae theologorum nostri seculi clarissimorum renovatae decas prima* (Frankfurt: Martinus Hallervord, 1674), pp. 31—37, under the title "Memoria viri reverendi et clarissimi Dn. Philippi Nicolai . . . die 26. Octobr. . . ."

- 1608 . . . denati, renovata et translata ex Germanica concione funebri habita."
- Hess, Willy. *Das Missionsdenken bei Philipp Nicolai*. Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962.
- Holsten, Walter. "Die Bedeutung der altprotestantischen Dogmatik für die Mission." In: Walter Holsten, editor, *Das Evangelium und die Völker: Beiträge für Geschichte und Theorie der Mission*. Berlin-Friedenau: Gossner'sche Buchhandlung, 1939.
- Hübner, Heinrich. *Philipp Nicolai, ein Sänger, Tröster, und Wächter der lutherischen Kirche*. Elberfeld: Verlag des Lutherischen Büchervereins, 1908.
- Kirchner, Johannes. *Philipp Nikolai, der Sänger des letzten Wächterliedes: Ein Bild seines Lebens und Wirkens*. Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1907.
- Koch, Eduard Emil. *Geschichte des Kirchenlieds und Kirchengesangs der christlichen, insbesondere der deutschen evangelischen, Kirche*. 3d edition. Stuttgart: Chr. Belser'sche Verlagshandlung, 1867. Vol. 2, pp. 324—41.
- Lacher, Walter. *Philipp Nicolai*. Leipzig: Gustav Schloessmanns Verlagsbuchhandlung (Gustav Fick), 1937.
- Lindström, Martin. *Philipp Nicolais kristendomstolkning*. Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelsens Bokförlag, 1937. The German version appeared under the title *Philipp Nicolais Verständnis des Christentums* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1939).
- Rocholl, Rudolf. *Das Leben Philip Nicolais, weiland Pfarrherrn zu Wildungen, Unna und Hamburg*. Berlin: Gustav Schlawitz, 1860.
- Rupprecht, Oliver. "Two Giants of Lutheran Hymnody." In *Lutheran Education*, 94 (1958), 191—94.
- Schultze, Victor. "Nicolai, Philipp," *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 1 (1904), 28—32.
- Schultze, Victor. *Philipp Nicolai: Zum Gedächtnis seines 300 jährigen Todestages*. Mengerlinghausen: Weigelsche Hofbuchdruckerei, 1908.
- Schunke, Siegfried. *Philipp Nicolai: Ein Wächter der Kirche im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie*. Gladbeck: Schriftenmissions-Verlag, 1959.
- Überhorst, Karl Ulrich. *Die Theologie Rudolf Rocholls: Eine Untersuchung zum Universalismus der göttlichen Heilsveranstaltung*. Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1963. Part I, Chapter 2, Nicolai, pp. 47—61.
- Wendt, Hans Heinrich. *Dr. Philipp Nicolai, Hauptpastor zu St. Catharinen in Hamburg: Vorlesungen gehalten auf Veranlassung des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte*. Hamburg: Nolte, 1859.