Luther's Catechisms - 450 Years

ys Commemorating the Small and e Catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther

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Essays Commemorating the Small and Large Catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther

Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

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The Layman's Bible: The Use of Luther's Catechisms in the German Late Reformation

by Robert Kolb

> Just as the best, most experienced alchemist draws forth the quintessence, that is the core, power, sap, and pith of a thing, so God in his great mercy has prepared in the precious catechism an extract, an excerpt, a brief summary and epitome of the entire Holy Scripture for people who are thirsty in spirit and hungry for grace. In the catechism he has brought together in clear, distinct words which everyone can understand everything a Christian needs to know and to believe for his salvation. If a teaching agrees with the precious catechism, every Christian may accept it in good conscience.[1]

Writing from his study of Meiningen in March 1573 the local ecclesiastical superintendent, Christoph Fischer (1520-c.1597), introduced his explanation of the catechism to his readers with this assessment of its worth. Fischer had studied under Luther and Melanchthon at the University of Wittenberg in the early 1540s. His expression of high regard for the catechism as an instrument of the Holy Spirit and as a handy guide to the central truths of Scripture is typical of the opinion of German Lutheran pastors in the second half of the sixteenth century.[2]

The word "catechism" for Fischer still referred to the basic elements of the Christian faith as comprehended in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments; "the catechism" had not yet, for him at least, become simply the equivalent of Dr. Martin Luther's exposition of the medieval catechism even though throughout his own explanation of the catechism Fischer's deep respect for Luther's texts is evident. For many Lutheran theologians in the years between Luther's death and the acceptance of the Book of Concord the catechism had not yet become exclusively Luther's comment on what the Middle Ages, too, had regarded as the heart of Christian doctrine. Yet because of the central place which the catechism played in Luther's own program for Christian instruction and the life of the church, his followers ascribed first to the traditional parts of the catechism, and then to Luther's own comment upon them, a central place in their own plans for

ecclesiastical life. This study surveys the role of the catechism, above all of Luther's catechisms, in the program for Christian teaching and living reflected in the writings of prominent German Lutherans of the Late Reformation period.

Because these authors regarded the catechism as the Bible of the laity,[3] a faithful extract of and guide to the teaching of Scripture, they could make rather extravagent claims for it, as did Fischer in the preface to his interpretation of the catechism. At the onset it is important to note, however, that the catechism, in general or specifically Luther's, did not assume in and of itself some independent authoritative status. It was universally regarded as no more and no less than the human words which, like streams from a fountain, convey to simple people the meaning of divine words which are set down in the Holy Scripture so that they may understand what pertains to true knowledge and worship of God and to salvation.[4] Tilemann Hesshus (1527-1588), Melanchthon's student, a pastor and professor in several places, summarized the factors that made the catechism useful to the church and to the individual believer. It can be used for prayer, against sin, and in all trials and troubles, for it contains in a few words powerful and rich instruction on God, His gracious will, and eternal salvation. Secondly, the catechism indicates what form the basic structure of the entire Christian faith takes. Thirdly, a knowledge of the catechism makes it possible to benefit greatly from reading the Scripture and listen to sermons with greater understanding. Finally, the catechism helps the Christian evaluate what he is taught.[5]

Luther's catechisms were not the only expositions of the chief articles of the faith available to late sixteenth century Lutheran pastors; for example, that of Johann Brenz (1499-1570), the Swabian Lutheran reformer, was widely used in south Germany and prescribed occasionally alongside Luther's, in ecclesiastical constitutions and mandates.[6] Other Lutherans developed more detailed or more advanced catechetical treatments of basic Scriptural teaching, facilitating what Luther himself had envisioned in the preface of the Small Catechism: the use of more advanced treatises for those who would master the basics which he was setting forth. Still others expanded on the text of Luther's Small Catechism in sermonic form or with extended questions and answers.[7] One of the more frequently published examples of the latter genre was the Small Corpus Doctrinae of Matthaeus Judex (1528-1564), composed shortly before his death. Judex had studied under Luther and Melanchthon, helped compile the Magdeburg Centuries, and served as pastor and as professor at Jena. Planned as an exercise book for catechetical instruction in school or home, Judex's work followed a simple format. Questions on topics ranging from God, creation, angels, sin, law, God's Word, gospel, justification, etc. through the Antichrist, adiaphora, offense, the cross, marriage, death, and the resurrection were answered very briefly. Next, the reader of the catechism was instructed to say, "Recite a passage on this," and a suitable Scripture reference was provided. The section concluded then with the question, "Where is this doctrine to be found in the catechism?" and the answer was given, directing attention to one or more of the chief parts or specific elements therein. The Small Corpus Doctrinae concluded with suitable catechetical references for opposing the heresies of the "papists, sacramentarians, Anabaptists, interimists, Osiandirans, Majorists," and others. Judex provided pastors and lay people with a finely honed tool for building upon catechetical knowledge and introducing the young to the Scriptural basis of the doctrine stated and implied in the catechism itself.[8]

Judex was one among many publishing catechists. Cyriakus Spangenberg (1528-1604), a Wittenberg graduate and a polymath of great intellectual stature as exegete and historian, felt compelled to defend his issuing yet another "catechism" — his own sermonic expansion of Luther's text — because of complaints that there were already too many. Spangenberg explained that the catechisms of Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, Rhegius, Corvinus, Aquila, Huberinus, Morlin, Gallus, Chytraeus, and his own father, Johann Spangenberg, were indeed all one catechism; just as there is but one gospel even though there are four gospels, so all those who treated the catechism — presumably also in print — were performing a commission entrusted to them by God as they sharpened the catechetical understanding in children and the common people.[9]

As the century wore on, ecclesiastical officials more frequently prescribed that Luther's catechisms, or often specifically the Small Catechism, be used exclusively in their churches. The appearance of the Wittenberg Catechism of 1571, a Latin catechism designed for use in secondary education, undoubtedly heightened the consciousness of a need for this specific prescription, as it is found, for instance, in the electoral Saxon constitution for the church written in 1580. The Wittenberg Catechism had been composed as a device whereby the so-called "crypto-Calvinist" wing of the Saxon Philippist party could spread its spiritualizing view of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and related Christological doctrine as well.[9] In reaction to this the new Saxon constitution directed that pastors "should present no other catechism to the people in the church, nor permit any other to be taught in the school, than that which was published by the highly enlightened man, Dr.

Martin Luther, of blessed memory, and is incorporated into his works."[10] It should be noted, however, that already in 1568, three years before the Wittenberg Catechism was issued, the problem of adultereated versions of the catechism appearing under Luther's name had drawn the attention of Johann Tetelbach (1517-c.1598), a Wittenberg graduate ill at ease with the Philippist direction of electoral Saxony's churches.[11]

Within the Lutheran churches of the second half of the sixteenth century few if any would have disagreed with a strong emphasis on Luther's catechisms, for in general Lutherans regarded not only "the catechism" but specifically Luther's catechisms as special gifts of God. To Luther's former student, who became superintendent in Braunschweig and bishop in Prussia, Joachim Mörlin (1514-1571), Dr. Martin of blessed memory was not only a holy, noble instrument of God but also a "pious little bee who had drawn forth noble saving honey from all the roses and lovely flowers of God's paradise and poured it into the tiny jar of his Small Catechism."[12] Hieronymus Mencel (1517-1590), Wittenberg graduate and pastor in Mansfeld, was convinced that the Holy Spirit had set Luther to the task of composing his catechisms, and Johann Wigand (1523-1587) concurred. While a professor at the University of Jena, between pastorates, this Wittenberg graduate published a textbook for pastors on catechetization, which contained an oration on Luther's catechetical work. Luther's catechisms served three vital functions, Wigand believed: nothing had proved more useful than Luther's catechism for preserving faith and morals, for bringing consolation and the hope of eternal life to those undergoing trials, and for preserving the teaching of the church in Thuringia, the land in which Wigand was serving. Its clarity, brevity, and eloquence commended it as a superb teaching device. Some might accuse him of praising Luther's catechism excessively, Wigand suspected, but he had a ready answer. He was not praising Luther's person but rather a work of God, and he felt that he was reflecting the judgment of God's church. For the rich fruits which that book was producing daily in Christ's church gave proper testimony to its excellence and superior worth.[13] One of Luther's first biographers, Johann Mathesius (1504-1565), agreed. If Luther had done absolutely nothing else of value than bestow his two catechisms upon homes, schools, and pulpits, the world still could never thank him or repay him sufficiently, Mathesius asserted at the end of his treatment of the development of Luther's catechisms. By the time he first preached his biographical sermons on Luther's life (1562-1564), Mathesius noted, more than one hundred thousand copies of the Small Catechism had been printed.[14] In an age in which few published works were issued in runs of more than a thousand, that figure alone testifies to the importance of Luther's catechetical work.

Its importance is also reflected in the position which his catechisms, particularly the Small Catechism, occupied in the weekly rhythm of church life in the later decades of the sixteenth century. The catechisms were, first of all, standards of doctrine for the newly formed Lutheran churches of Germany. In 1554, as Luther's close friend Nikolaus von Amsdorf (1483-1565) and his colleagues in the church of ducal Saxony prepared to make an ecclesiastical visitation, they insisted that every pastor must be in command of the catechism. In the decades following Lutheran churches throughout Germany included the catechisms among their confessional standards as they drew up corpora doctrinae, culminating in the Book of Concord.[15] Not just pastors but also teachers, sextons, acolytes, and midwives were required to know the catechism to assume and to continue in their responsibilities in certain areas.[16]

The catechism served as an important element of the worship services as well. It was to provide the subject matter, the text, for regular sermons — often at an early morning or vesper service on Sunday, occasionally at a regular midweek service, or in some areas during Lent or in series twice each year.[17] The prescription of the electoral Saxon constitution of 1580 reflects universal practice among sixteenth century German Lutherans: "Because there is no more necessary preaching than that on the holy catechism . . . pastors and ministers shall employ special diligence in commending and presenting this preaching on the catechism to the common people."[18] The ecclesiastical constitution of Pomerania composed in 1569 prescribed punishment for pastors who neglected catechetical preaching, and this was apparently at least occasionally a problem. Heinrich Salmuth (1522-1576), superintendent in Leipzig, observed — on the same page on which he stated that knowledge of the catechism is necessary for salvation — that the very importance of catechetical preaching causes the devil to entice preachers away from this task. Those who succumb and are ashamed to preach on the catechism will receive judgement, Salmuth threatened.[19]

In addition to these sermons, many agendas prescribed the reading of the catechism as a regular part of certain worship services. In Amberg in the 1550s this reading was to come from Luther's Large Catechism. Apparently in Wolfstein both the reading of the Large Catechism and the recitation of the Small Catechism were integral parts of Sunday activity, for Thomas Stieber's Instruction, composed in 1574 for the principality, permitted omission of the reading of the Large Catechism — but not of the recitation of the Small Catechism — on days when it was extremely cold.[20]

Formal catechetical instruction was also universally prescribed. The ignorance of the people which Luther discovered in the Saxon visitation of 1527 had moved him to compose the catechisms, Mathesius reported as he urged his hearers to exercise diligence in promoting catechetical instruction. Wigand stressed the necessity of using Luther's introduction to Biblical teaching in building the foundations of Christian knowledge so that the children might be prepared to understand more weighty matters.[21] In the church building itself, particularly in the villages, catechetical instruction was given by the pastor in most areas each Sunday after the main service, or in some cases, at Sunday Vespers, or at Vespers on Wednesday and Friday. In Braunschweig-Grubenhagen in 1581 this instruction was transferred from a weekday service to one on Sunday because more people attended the Sunday service. Pastors were to conduct reviews of Luther's Small Catechism on summer evenings as well as each Sunday in the county of Wertheim. In most areas parents were required to have children and servants in church and in school for catechetical instruction on a regular basis. Pastors in electoral Saxony were instructed to visit the homes of the illiterate and others about whom they had suspicions to examine the children on the catechism. In the agenda issued for Mansfeld in 1580 specific hymns were prescribed for use in catechetical review, and the regular use of these hymns was to be a matter of concern in the visitations of the congregations.[22]

Schools were to be established in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel specifically for the purpose of catechetical instruction — among other reasons. In setting forth an ideal curriculum for schools the University of Jena theologian, Johann Friedrich Coelestin (d. 1578), suggested this core: God's Word, the Scriptures; the precious catechism; foreign languages; and all worthwhile subjects. Coelestin's profile of the ideal school teacher included that he know the catechism, that he pray diligently, that he teach his pupils the catechism and chief articles of the Christian religion purely and clearly without any error in a most diligent and faithful fashion, and that he hold his pupils to prayer. That this ideal profile was not fulfilled by every schoolmaster is indicated in Salmuth's sermon on the catechism; he criticized those teachers who believe it is enough to instruct their pupils in languages and the liberal arts but who neglect catechetical instruction.[23]

The catechism was not just to be learned; it was supposed to be remembered. In the Palatine country of Neuburg a yearly examination of catechetical knowledge was prescribed for everyone in the congregation, "so that the common people will not be afraid but be attracted to and be made enthusiastic over this teaching." Knowledge of the catechism was the subject of public examination of the young throughout German Lutheran churches. The electoral Saxon constitution of 1580 offered pastors guidance on conducting a formal examination of their young people on the Sundays of each Lent. Each quarter of the town had its Sunday on which its young publicly submitted to examination. This could be a frightening experience, so the authors of the constitution urged pastors not to shame the boys and girls or scold them harshly but rather to talk with them in a friendly, fatherly manner, "so that they may look forward to the examination with heartfelt desire and joy rather than fear." The examinations were to be conducted solely on the basis of Luther's catechism. More rigor was necessary in the examination of those with whom the pastor was less familiar; those whom he knew from school — if they had there exhibited a good command of the catechism — might be called upon simply to display what they could do with a few good examples. The constitution strongly suggests that parents attend these examinations, not just so that they may see how their children and servants answer but also so that they may be motivated to be more diligent in reviewing the chief articles of the catechism and their explanations with the young people in their own homes.[24]

A firm command of the catechism, a successful examination of this sort, constituted the essence of confirmation and was required for the formal ceremony in electoral Saxony. In some areas continued participation in the Lord's Supper required continued demonstration of an understanding of the catechism, as Luther had urged in the preface of his Small Catechism, and to that end catechectical examination became a part of private confession. In Mansfeld sponsors were required to know the catechism, again as Luther had advised in his preface to the Small Catechism.[25] Several late sixteenth century ecclesiastical constitutions also required bridal couples to demonstrate their knowledge of the catechism before the church laid its blessing on their marriage. Cyriakus Spangenberg supported this requirement when he wrote of the qualifications for marriage: those who wished to marry should diligently avoid and flee evil company, bad language, lascivious behavior, bad books and songs, and all such wantonness, and instead they should listen to and cling to God's Word, learn the catechism and the table of duties thoroughly, and pray God for purity.[26]

The catechism's usefulness for the bridal couple was just beginning, however, on the wedding day, according to their pastors. Above all, the catechism was supposed to serve as an instrument for carrying out Christian vocation in the hands of the lay people. It was a Bible for lay people, that is, the Word of God digested for lay

use. In two areas particularly the catechism provided support and aid for the lay exercise of Christian responsibility. It assisted lay people in determining the correct theological solution for the controversies which were plaguing the German church in the three decades after Luther's death. Furthermore, the catechism assisted parents in raising their children according to the command of the Lord.

Treatises of several genres which dealt with marriage at least alluded to parental responsibilities for training children. As Luther noted in the preface to the Small Catechism, parents were commanded to teach the Word of the Lord diligently to their children. The citation of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Ephesians 6:4 most often supported this admonition. In the legal treatise which formulated society's marriage law after the abolition of canon law's jurisdiction; in the theological treatise, both learned and popular, on the essence of marriage; in the catechism prepared for the secondary school; and in the collection of wedding sermons, Wittenberg graduates mentioned this parental obligation — sometimes briefly, taking it for granted, sometimes in some detail.[27]

Frequently, specific references to parental use of the catechism in the instruction lent concrete form to the detail which these authors provided. In some cases these references did not prescribe Luther's catechism but made general comments on the core curriculum of parental instruction: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments. In a massive collection of wisdom on holy marriage Erasmus Sarcerius (1501-1559), a student of Luther's and Melanchthon's who ended his ministry in the superintendencies of Mansfeld and of Magdeburg, cited a passage which urged parents to be sensitive to their own children's development as they determined the point, around age five or seven, when the child's mind could grasp the significance of prayer, the Commandments, the Creed, his own baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Such catechetical instruction should continue to the twelfth year and beyond. Perhaps Sarcerius and certainly many of his readers were thinking of Luther's Small Catechism as they read this passage even though Sarcerius was citing the words of the Reformed theologian of Zurich, Zwingli's successor, Heinrich Bullinger.[28]

Luther's Small Catechism was intended for home use in the suggestions and prescriptions of visitation programs and ecclesiastical constitutions which described the ideal Lutheran family program of education. First, parents were to see to it that their children learned their catechism through attendance at catechetical instruction in school and church. Beyond that, some official prescriptions urged that parents read and review the catechism with their children and servants. The electoral Saxon constitution of 1580 suggested that pastors urge fathers and mothers from the pulpit to examine the young in their homes on the catechism and to set aside certain hours in the week, particularly after meals or before bedtime, for the recitation of the catechism.[29]

Individual writers expressed their conviction that catechetical instruction should begin at a tender age. "As soon as your little feet could take a few steps and you began to talk, your parents led you diligently to pray," the beginning of the process that resulted finally in the study of the catechism, Bartholomaeus Wolffhart told his pupils in the preface to his question and answer guide to Luther's Small Catechism.[30] Spangenberg agreed, urging that children begin learning the basic articles of faith as soon as they could begin to grasp them and then be taught Luther's explanations to the chief parts.[31] Spangenberg set forth five reasons why parents should take seriously their calling to teach the catechism to their children and servants. First, God has commanded them to do so. Their children, created in God's image, must be led to know God and His word, and God has appointed parents to begin this instruction. Cattle are fed daily, Spangenberg lamented, but nobody thinks the whole week long about feeding children with the Word of God. Parents are concerned that their children have money, property, and other temporal blessings, but they pay little attention to instruction in the faith and to provision for divine comfort. Without such instruction children cannot perform their most important function: the praise of God. Secondly, the gracious promises and assurances which God connects with catechetical instruction should encourage parents to perform this duty. Thirdly, the child's need for this knowlege should move parents to give catechetical instruction. A sick person needs to know what illness he has, where medicine and treatment for the illness are to be found, and how to obtain the medicine. The Ten Commandments diagnose the sinner's illness; the Creed points him to his heavenly physician; and the Lord's Prayer teaches him how to ask God for healing. Fourthly, the benefits of knowing the catechism motivate parental instruction, for such knowledge enables lay people to judge what they are taught. Fifthly, parents should teach the catechism for the fun of it. It is regarded as a great thing if someone is a very important person who can lead a magnificent parade, but how much more pleasure is there for parents to lead their children, to care for them, and to proclaim to them what they need to hear. Finally, the grace of the Holy Spirit arouses parents to teach their children the catechism.[32]

Christoph Fischer echoed Spangenberg when

he wrote that children do not really belong to parents but are God's gifts, who must be taken care of not as parents please but as God pleases. Thus, they should daily recite the chief parts of the catechism and its wonderful, noble explanation by the precious man of God. Dr. Luther, and parents should lead them and assist them in this recitation. For, Fischer believed, parents are truly bishops in their own homes. What the preacher is for the church, every father should be for his own house. Because he was exercising such responsibilities over his family, Abraham was privy to God's plans for Sodom. Asaph commanded that parents not withhold from their children the story of the Lord's glorious deeds as they had heard them from their fathers (Psalm 78:4), and Paul recalled the example of Lois' and Eunice's instruction of Timothy as a pattern for parents to follow in passing on their faith to their children.[33] The concept of parents as pastors is found also in Jakob Andreae's sermonic studies of the catechism, which he designed to aid fathers in carrying out their office as preacher in their own homes. A graduate of the University of Tübingen and still pastor and superintendent in Goppingen when he wrote these sermons, Andreae (1528-1590) shared Spangenberg's and Fischer's conviction that parents must instruct their children in the catechism because God has commanded them to do so. Furthermore, he reasoned, in an age when universally the complaint was raised that children would not let their parents raise them properly, the Biblical pattern of parental instruction commended itself to the Christian parents' use. If they wanted to enjoy honor, happiness, fortune, and a sense of well-being, they should raise their children in the fear of the Lord, training them both by examples and by instruction in God's Word. To facilitate that, Andreae composed his book of catechetical sermons.[34]

Neglect of this responsibility by parents would have dire results, Spangenberg warned: without instruction in God's Word and the catechism children would be liable to grow up wild and wanton. Parents earn hell for their children when they fail to teach them God's Word, the Gospel, and do not make them learn the catechism and how to pray.[35] But great are the benefits of proper catechetical instruction. Caspar Huberinus (1500-1553) suggested that the catechism provides the basis for discipline and the maintenance of order within the household. Andreae noted that children who have learned the catechism can give account of their faith and cannot be misled into error — even if they can neither read nor write. Mathesius offered an example of the benefits of knowing the catechism. He observed that those who had been taught the catechism by their parents and who kept it firmly in their hearts would always know how to live the Christian life and die a blessed death, even if caught under the papacy or the Turk. Such was the case of a young man who was led into captivity in the first siege of Vienna. During the second siege of the city he sent his parents a letter, which a Turk threw over the city wall. In it the captive child confessed his faith as he had learned it from them and promised his parents that he would remain steadfast in that hope of eternal life through crucified Jesus Christ in his imprisonment.[36]

It is interesting to note that theologians provided relatively few concrete suggestions for the process of worship and instruction in the home alongside their encouragement and admonition that parents should exercise these responsibilities. In a manuscript prepared for publication — but never actually printed — Nikolaus von Amsdorf commented on the proposition, "that God has commanded that parents repeat and explain at home the sermon which they have heard in church to their children and servants." Amsdorf did not weave catechetical instruction on the basis of Luther's texts into his outline for weekly meditation. Following Luther's advice in the preface of the Large Catechism, Amsdorf urged fathers to examine children and servants on the content of their pastor's sermon, repeating the main points of the sermon so that he might review in their minds its essential message. Each sermon would have two essential points, Amsdorf believed. It would first remind its hearers of God's wrath against their sin, and it would then apply grace and mercy, forgiveness for Christ's sake, to the sorrowing and repentant hearer. Amsdorf suggested that parents drive home these points by amplifying them with Scriptural examples, such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah or of Jerusalem, and Christ's compassion for Peter, Mary Magdalene, and the thief on the cross. From this regular instruction children should learn to live in hope as God's children and as brothers and co-workers of Christ in their daily lives. Review of the Word of God should extend beyond just the review of the sermon, however, according to Amsdorf. He urged that parents conduct a time of meditation morning and evening. Before retiring in the evening the Christian should use the Ten Commandments as a guide to confession and then pray for forgiveness and for strength in sanctification. Each morning again he should confess his sinfulness and pray for God's grace, help, and support during the day.[37] Christoph Fischer, too, urged a review of the sermon be conducted at home along with catechetical review, and he suggested that parents refuse food and drink to their children until they could remember what the pastor had preached. Wittenberg graduate and superintendent in Weimar and Regensburg, Bartholomaeus Rosinus (1520-1586), also suggested a program for instruction and worship

in the home as he introduced his question and answer explanation for the Small Catechism. Rosinus' questions and answers were designed to be used by parents as they conducted the morning review of Luther's catechism. In the evening Rosinus recommended a program of prayer from David's catechism, the Psalms, joined with the singing of specified catechism hymns. He further recommended that God-fearing families should pray from Judex's Small Corpus Doctrinae and from other psalms and should daily reach a chapter of the Scripture. Fischer agreed that parents should use catechism hymns in training their children, considering them an excellent alternative to the love songs that young people like to sing. Spangenberg composed an entire volume on Luther's catechismal hymns and urged their use in the home as well as anywhere a Christian might go.[38]

Jakob Andreae urged that the worship and instruction in the Christian home include a review of the sermon, in which parents sharpen for children and servants the concepts on which the pastor preached. They should also use the catechism to aid their charges in recognizing their own sins through proper use of the Ten Commandments, which serve as a mirror to show them how dirty they are and how to avoid getting dirty. Then the Creed should be used to show them the true water which cleanses from sin. Andreae urged parents to practice the catechism with their children, that is, to ask them what the catechism's various parts mean and how to apply its meaning to their lives. During such reviews parents should not permit the young to gape about and day dream but rather help them concentrate on the text. For the goal of such training and meditation is not simply the memorization of the catechism but rather a pious and God-fearing life. Echoing Luther's comments in the preface to the Large Catechism, Andrae noted that in such a life that catechism never grows old or too familiar; it always offers something more to those who use it. It is a source of continual learning for the Christian; it is a fountain which cannot be drunk dry.[39]

Luther had composed the Small Catechism in an effort to create such a scene: the pious family gathered around this digest of Biblical teaching, praying and studying it together in preparation for daily service to God. He had included as part of the catechism orders for family prayer and the table of duties. His students continued to take also these parts of the Small Catechism seriously; for example, both Spangenberg and Fischer touched upon them in their treatments of the catechism.[40]

Luther had created in the text of the Small Catechism not only a summary of Christian doctrine but also a pattern for Lutheran piety. To what extent was Luther successful in imprinting upon his followers this way of life? It is clear that both in official regulations and in the writings of theologians this pattern of piety received strong support. However, the theologians also suggest that sixteenth century Lutherans had some difficulties in practicing this idea in their homes. Writing in his seventy-eighth year, the naturally pessimistic Amsdorf said flatly that he was moved to compose his admonition on parental review of the sermon because there was not a father left in Germany who was carrying out his God-given responsibility of instructing his children. Fischer shared Amsdorf's concern. Many parents were raising their children not for the Lord but for the devil, he lamented at the conclusion of a passage in which he had stressed the catechism as one means by which children are raised for the Lord. Spangenberg, too, regretted parental apathy over instructing their children, contrasting this apathy with their concern for their children's temporal welfare. The same complaint was voiced by Salmuth. In the absence of statistical reports it is not possible to assess precisely how effective the call for worship and instruction in the Lutheran home of the later sixteenth century actually was. That some parents in Amsdorf's Eisenach or Salmuth's Leipzig were neglecting their roles as pastors and teachers for their children within their home is clear, but the question of how seriously to take a clergyman's complaints about the sins of his own people must be raised. Gerald Strauss takes those complaints quite seriously — although he recognizes the methodological problem involved in the interpretation of such clerical complaints — and he links these complaints with the pessimistic reports of Lutheran ecclesiastical visitors at the end of the sixteenth century and in the early seventeenth century to conclude that both at home and in school Lutheran catechetical instruction failed to create pious Lutherans in the vast majority of cases. In spite of the great amount of evidence for his conclusion in both the published works of theologians and in the reports of visitors, it seems likely that many families did practice the pattern of piety which Luther had laid down in his catechism and which his heirs were urging upon their parishioners and their larger reading public. For such people escape the notice of visitors more often than those who break with the prescribed pattern of piety and the standards of the theologians.[41]

Pious and impious alike were being invited to read the vollies fired back and forth in the several controversies which engulfed German Lutheranism between Luther's death and the composition of the Formula of Concord. Lay people as well as theologians took an interest in these controversies, and theologians suggested that these lay people could determine which side held the correct position by examining the disputed issues on the basis of their knowledge of

the catechism — which the theologian was always ready to interpret for his reader to aid understanding of the issue on which he was writing. In explaining why he was writing his own catechism in sermonic form Nikolaus Gallus (1516-1570) told his Regensburg parishioners that the catechism served as a Loci communes, a basic text of Christian doctrine, by which pure doctrine and proper use of the sacraments could be preserved against the perversions which confronted Luther's followers in the 1550's. Fischer assured his readers that the catechism served as an "accurate scale, touchstone, level, and plumbline, an unerring and certain compass," by which all doctrine could be weighed and judged. For whoever denies or takes offense at the chief parts of the catechism is attacking the first principles of the Christian faith; such a one is an enemy of God.[42] A student of Luther's and Melanchthon's who served almost forty years in Frankfurt an der Oder, both as superintendent and professor, Andreas Musculus (1514-1581), composed a catechism of quotations from the church fathers of the first four centuries, the aim of which was to demonstrate that on the law (the Ten Commandments), the Gospel (the Creed), prayer, and the sacraments the Roman church had corrupted Biblical and patristic teaching. That could be determined through an examination of the catechism. A decade later, in 1568, as one benefit of the instruction in the catechism which he was offering, Tilemann Hesshus listed the ability to stand firm against the winds of doctrine blown by the guile and deception of men who would like to sneak up on the Christian to lead him astray. In 1597 John Aumann praised Luther's Small Catechism for jabbing heretics in the eye as it gave even the most simple Christian a secure defense behind the light of truth. For the catechism provides every Christian with a precise, clear primer which can test and refute all error.[43]

In his oration on Luther's catechism Wigand demonstrated that antinomians, synergists, Anabaptists, sacramentarians, papists, and enthusiasts, who deny the efficacy of the external Word, can be refuted from the catechism. Enthusiasts may be proved wrong, for instance, by reference to the explanation of the first petition: God's name is hallowed when his Word is taught purely and truly and we live piously, as befits God's children in accordance with it. Thus, it is mad and destructive blasphemy to disparage and have contempt for God's Word. Such an argument is obviously designed not to assist in personal confrontation with the enthusiast: if he would not trust the Scripture, he would not listen to the catechism. It was designed to strengthen and bolster the Lutheran lay person's faith as he considered the confounding arguments he heard rather than to equip him for offense against heresy. This fact reflects the pastoral concern for his own people which Wigand felt. Similarly, he argued, papists, including those who were teaching within the Evangelical churches that good works are necessary for salvation, could easily be repudiated on the basis of the Creed or in the Lord's Prayer. For in the Creed the Christian confesses simply, "I believe in Christ as redeemer; I believe in the remission of sins." In the Lord's Prayer he prays, "Forgive us our trespasses." Wigand knew that Georg Major would dismiss immediately as malicious misunderstanding that kind of argument if the two of them had met to discuss Major's proposition, "good works are necessary for salvation," at a theological level. But Wigand also know that lay people confronted with that proposition would most likely think that it meant they could merit forgiveness. To deal with that threat to their faith, the catechism served admirably, Wigand was convinced.[44]

Andreae gave detailed instruction by way of example to parents regarding how to use the catechism to examine doctrinal propositions. Andreae voiced the layman's assertion: "I am stupid; I do not understand all these things. I cannot read or write. How can I judge what is preached?" "You can if you have learned the six chief parts," Andreae replied. If a preacher were to proclaim that it is a sin to eat meat on Friday or on fast days, the Christian could check the Ten Commandments, Andreae pointed out. Since they say nothing about abstinence from meat, that must be the devil's doctrine, as Paul stated in 1 Timothy 4:3. If the preacher would say that making pilgrimages, reciting the rosary, and going to mass frees the sinner from sin, a quick check of the Creed would demonstrate that only the blood of Christ frees from sin, as 1 John 1:7 also states. Similarly, the Lord's Prayer repudiates those who would teach that Christians should pray to the Blessed Virgin or the saints, for it speaks only of praying to God.[45]

During the controversies which erupted within the Wittenberg movement after Luther's death the catechism was occasionally used as basis or support for an argument, particularly by the Gnesio-Lutheran party. In a dispute between Nikolaus von Amsdorf and a number of his fellow Gnesio-Lutherans over the rights of the clergy and the rights of the city council of Magdeburg, Matthaeus Judex offered the people of Magdeburg an evaluation of Amsdorf's criticism on the basis of God's Word and the holy catechism. In the dispute over Matthias Flacius' proposition, "original sin is the substance of man," some pursued the dispute with catechetical arguments. Johann Wigand examined that proposition on the basis of the catechism, and his colleagues at Jena issued a repudiation of the "patchwork" put together by Flacius' disciple, Christoph Irenaeus, because it was contradictory to God's Word and the catechism. Andreas

Schoppe issued a "salvation of the holy catechism from the swarm of new Manichaeans and Substantists."[46]

Another Gnesio-Lutheran, Hieronymus Mencel, in the preface to Spangenberg's explanation of the catechism, affirmed that the catechism can be used to prove false the proposition that good works are necessary for salvation, the practice of invoking the saints, and the rejection of infant baptism. In more detail, he demonstrated this use of the catechism in judging the errors of synergism and "sacramentarian raving." Luther's explanation of the third article shows that the free will has no power in matters of faith because it confesses that we cannot of our own reason or strength come to faith in Christ but must be enlightened by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. Thus, synergism is to be rejected because it deviates from the simple meaning of the catechism and has no basis in Scripture, because it confirms the papist abomination, because it nullifies the doctrine of justification, because it gives honor not just to God but also to our own powers, and because it diminishes the worth of Christ's merits. Mencel was hereby teaching a technique to his readers, leading them from a simple decision made on the basis of the catechism's text into more elaborate common sense arguments which would strengthen their conviction. Similarly, he pointed out that the denial of the Real Presence can be answered simply and squarely by a reference to Luther's first question on the Lord's Supper. What could be clearer than its simple confession, "The sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine," Mencel asked his readers.[47]

When in 1573 Jakob Andreae adopted Gnesio-Lutheran methods for seeking Lutheran concord, offering detailed discussions of the disputed points and introducing specific condemnations of false teaching and false teachers, he also employed catechetical analysis as the plumb-line and compass for demonstrating the correctness of the positions which he was endorsing. The break-through in the impasse which was separating Luther's heirs into hostile camps developed out of Andreae's publication in sermonic form of his evaluation of ten key disputes among the Lutherans. In six sermons he discussed divisions among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession and how to prevent them from becoming an offense to pastors and lay people on the basis of the catechism. Andreae had used the catechism to help lay people evaluate the errors of the Roman Catholics, Zwinglians, Schwenckfelder, and Anabaptists in 1567, and he continued that approach in his Six Christian Sermons of 1573. Again, he had the layman express his inability to decide doctrinal disputes — for example, in regard to the dispute over Christ's righteousness raised by Andreas Osiander:

> I hear that both parties attribute our righteousness in God's sight to the Lord Christ, but they have different interpretations. I hear, to be sure, that both parties cite Holy Scripture. Who will tell me which party speaks correctly or incorrectly about this matter? For I am a simple layman and can neither write nor read. Whom should I believe or follow?[48]

A review of the Ten Commandments points out to the layman that the law's righteousness only accuses him, Andreae stated. But in the Creed he recites, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." That confession gives him the assurance that even as a poor sinner, justly condemned because of his sins, he has forgiveness from God, who will not let him suffer for his sins. The second article of the Creed clearly states why the Christian is righteous in God's sight: it is because of the obedience, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ, who atoned for human sins and justified the believer thereby.[49] The absence of any indication that good works play a role in salvation in the second article of the Creed proves the error of Major's proposition that "good works are necessary for salvation." In one of his most dubious lines of argumentation from the catechism Andreae urged his readers to reject Flacius' view that original sin is the substance of man since the first article does not state that God created original sin. It states that he created everything in heaven and on earth, including our body and soul, eyes, ears, etc. — but not our sinfulness. Since Andreae had conducted extensive negotiations with Flacius on the subject of original sin, he knew that he was talking past Flacius' point and ignoring his intention. But Andreae was trying to help the lay person deal with the controversy — and deal with it in such a way that he approved Andreae's own position.[50] The third article was useful for combatting synergism in Andreae's mind, also, and the first commandment clearly forbids compromise even in adiaphora at a time in which confession is called for. In coming to a decision on the proper distinction of law and Gospel, in answer to Johann Agricola's error which defined the Gospel as a call to repentance, Andreae pointed out that a review of each of the six chief parts proves that only the Ten Commandments reprimand and accuse the sinner. Even the communication of attributes is not too difficult for the layman to fathom. The second article confesses one Christ, not two, and it affirms that this one Christ is truly the Son of God, who, as Son of God, was conceived in Mary's womb, was born from her, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died, descended into hell, etc.[51]

Andreae's catechetical arguments offered only simplistic solutions to serious and complex theological problems. At times he was guilty of misrepresenting — by oversimplifying or misfocusing — his opponent's position. Helpful as his approach may have been and commendable as his concern for the laity was, his catechetical solutions were not adequate to stem the tide of controversy. Such was the conviction of the theologians of his day as well. Thus, as Andreae, David Chytraeus, Martin Chemnitz, and others worked at revising and reframing Andreae's sermons, the catechetical evaluation of the disputes vanished.[52] But Andreae did not completely discard his catechetical arguments. In November 1577, as the campaign to win support for the Formula of Concord among the people of Saxony was progressing, Andreae preached a sermon in Weimar, the former Gnesio-Lutheran stronghold, on the gospel for the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity, dealing with the seductions of the end time. The sermon treated the first eleven articles of the Formula of Concord under the stated purpose of showing how each lay person could make a judgment on the disputes among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession on the basis of the holy, simple catechism for children, that they might thus be protected from all seduction by false teachers. Andreae repeated some of the catechetical arguments which he had used in the Six Christian Sermons of 1573 and added others. For instance, against Flacius he argued that since the Ten Commandments distinguish between the sinful creature and his sin, sin cannot be the substance of man. Andreae applied the catechism to the questions raised in Lutheran circles over Christ's descent into hell: Did Christ descend into hell just in his soul, or just in his body, or in both body and soul? Did the descent take place before or after his death? Did he suffer in the flames of hell, or did he proclaim his power over the devil, hell, and damnation without suffering? The catechism teaches, Andreae stated, that Christ descended into hell and that by his descent he secured the Christian's freedom from hell and redeemed the Christian from hell. Since the Creed goes no further, and neither does Scripture, Andreae continued, the layman, too, should be satisfied with that simple confession which offers comfort because Christ overcame the devil and hell and redeemed his people from its prison. In discussing the doctrine of election Andreae was primarily concerned to counter the opinion of the "sacramentarians, who have taught that God has resolved in his eternal counsel that many, the greater part of mankind, must be damned and cannot be saved." When the Christian hears that, Andreae said, he turns to his catechism and finds in its treatment of baptism that Christ commanded the apostles to baptize and teach all people and that whoever is baptized and believes will be saved. Thus, the lay person can see that it is wrong to teach that God does not want some to be saved but determines in his eternal counsel that they must be damned. The response to this sermon was so great, Andreae claimed, that he was placing it into print, for many urged him to do so to make it available to the reading public as a summary of the catechism.[53]

Two years later Andreae preached a series of sermons on the task of bringing concord to German Lutheranism, the task which he was bringing to a close as the Book of Concord moved toward its first publication. There he referred to the catechism as the true and unerring rule by which Christian government could determine how God's Word should be preached among its people. He defended August's ouster of the crypto-Calvinists from electoral Saxony because — among other reasons — their positions could not be reconciled with Luther's catechism.[54] Andreae continued to believe that the catechisms were vital in the process which had led to the restoration of Lutheran harmony.

Once again, it is difficult to ascertain at this distance just how significant catechetical arguments were in setting to rest the fear and agitation raised in lay people's minds by the controversies which dominated the Late Reformation in Germany. Some lay people in the sixteenth century did take very serious interest in the controversies of their theologians,[55] but we do not know to what extent they read and were influenced by Andreae's arguments. Some of his arguments appear so patently simplistic to the twentieth century reader that it seems the more sophisticated townspeople in his audience would have been capable of more detailed theological reasoning although Andreae was apparently hoping to speak not only to the merchant or artisan of the town but also to his country cousin and the village pastor. Andreae's experiences as pastor, professor, and ecclesiastical diplomat, and his wide travels throughout Evangelical Germany, had given him opportunity to know his brothers and sisters in the faith as well as anyone of his era, and he apparently was certain that Lutheran lay people would be most effectively convinced through this kind of argument based on the catechism. This much can be said for Andreae's efforts: he did not want lay people to throw up their hands in despair when faced with the complex theological problems which were shaping the life of their church. He wanted them to exercise their intellectual faculties in spiritual discernment to the degree that they were able, and he believed that many were able to do this only on a somewhat simple level. Andreae was certain that the catechism was an excellent tool to facilitate their proper examination and understanding of the controversial issues under discussion.

Luther's catechisms commanded the respect of

his students and immediate heirs not because they were precious antiques which recalled the past but because they were found to be useful documents. The leaders of the church in the Late Reformation period recognized their usefulness for preaching and teaching above all for aiding lay people in carrying out their Christian responsibilities. These late sixteenth century theologians believed that Luther's "Bible for the laity" conveyed to the common people what they needed to know to teach their children the fundamentals of the faith and to evaluate the claims put forth by disputing theologians. This respect for and use of Luther's catechisms cut across the party lines of Late Reformation Lutheranism. The Gnesio-Lutherans Wigand and Spangenberg, the Philippists Salmuth and Fischer, the Swabian Andreae, and those not closely associated with any party, such as Mathesius and Huberinus, all agreed that God had given the church a tool which was to be prized highly when He guided Luther to compose his catechisms.[56]

Luther's catechisms won immediate acceptance among Evangelicals; by his death and the advent of the Late Reformation period the catechisms had been established in Lutheran ecclesiastical life. The catechisms have maintained this place over 450 years because of their own instrinsic worth, for they do convey succinctly and effectively the power of Luther's insights through the grace of his formulations of the Biblic message. Yet they have become the possession of the church of the twentieth century through a chain of witnesses and users which extends now over nearly twenty generations. A key link in that chain is the company of Luther's students and their contemporaries who built upon his foundation as they constructed the framework for Lutheran thought and life in the Orthodox period.

It is difficult to imagine the Anglican Reformation without the Book of Common Prayer or the Calvinist Reformation without the Institutes. It is impossible to imagine the Lutheran Reformation without Luther's catechisms. For 450 years they have shaped the understanding of Christian teaching and Christian living for countless people around the world. This is true in part also because the church in the Late Reformation period used and treasured Luther's Bible for the laity.

[12] Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol XLIII, pp. 11-12, WA, X, I, 375.

[13] The preface to the complete edition of Luther's Latin writings in 1545 is an outstanding example. The Luther's Works has it in XXXIV, beginning at p. 327.

[14] Large Catechism — The Lord's Prayer, Introduction, Second Last Paragraph.

[15] The one occurs repeatedly in the Augustana; the other is the conclusion of the Athanasian Creed.

[16] Large Catechism — The Lord's Prayer, First Petition, Final Paragraph.

[17] Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. XLVII, pp. 52-53. WA, XXX, III, 317.

[18] WA, XL, III, 192. See note 6 for a larger quotation.

Kolb Essay

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[1] Christoph Fischer, Auslegung der Fünff Heuptstück des heiligen Catechismi (1573; Leipzig: Rambau, 1578), lf. [)(vj]r.

[2] Ibid., lf. [)(vij]r.

[3] This phrase is used fairly frequently in the period, e.g. in Johann Mathesius, Historien Von des Ehrwürdigen in Gott Seligen thewren Manns Gottes, D. Martin Luthers Anfang, Lehre, Leben . . . (1565; Leipzig: Lamberg, 1621), lf. 58, and Bartholomaeus Rosinus, Kurtze Fragen vnnd Antwort vber die sechs Heubtstück des Heiligen Catechismi Doctoris Martini Lutheri (Regensburg: Burger, 1581), lf. A2, reprinted in Johann Michael Reu, Quellen zur Geschichte des Katechismus-Unterrichts (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1904), I, 743.

[4] Johann Wigand, Catechisticae, Explicationes, breviter et methodice recitatae in Enarratione Catechismi (Strassburg: Jobin, 1576), p. 10; cf. Cyriakus Spangenberg, Der Dritte Theil der Citharae Lutheri, Die Heuptstücke des Heiligen Catechismi In Gesangweise gefasset (Erfurt: Bawmann, 1570), lf.)(ij.

[5] Tilemann Hesshus, Christlicher in Gottes Wort gegründet Glaub in Frag und Antwort kurtz verfast (Lauingen: Saltzer, 1568), lvs. B2v-(B6), in Reu, Quellen, I, 646-647.

[6] Brenz first issued his catechism in 1528 under the title Fragstuck des christenlichen glaubens für die Jugendt zu Schwebisch Hall; it was revised and frequently reissued during the course of the sixteenth century.

E.g., in the Schulordnung for the Hohenlohe issued in 1549, both Brenz's and Luther's catechisms were prescribed, see Emil Sehling, Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts (Leipzig: Reisland, 1902-), XV, 51; cf. the ecclesiastical constitution of Nördlingen of 1579, Sehling XII, 360ff.

[7] Reu discusses the translations of Luther's Small Catechism and the various kinds of commentary on it produced in the sixteenth century in his Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, A History of Its Origin, Its Distribution, and Its Use (Chicago: Wartburg, 1929), pp. 62-93. Examples of these genre are included in the notes of this essay.

The most recent study of Luther's catechisms in English is Gerald Strauss's Luther's House of Learning, Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), chapter 8, "Techniques of Indoctrination: Catechisms," pp. 151-175. This provocative work suffers from a lack of a clear delineation of Luther's distinction between law and gospel and his two kingdoms analysis of the Christian life, and therefore its discussion of the theological principles on which Lutheran pedagogy was based in the Reformation era is not as precise as it should be.

[8] Reu, Quellen, I, 3, 469-472, lists more than seventy-five editions, several in translation, of Judex's work; I have used Das Kleine Corpus Doctrinae. Das ist, Die Heuptstücke vnd Summa Christlicher Lehre für die Kinder in Schulen vnd Heusern Fragweis auffs einfeltigst gestellet (Regensburg: Burger, 1573).

[9] On the "crypto-Calvinist" movement, see Robert Calinich, Kampf und Untergang des Melanchthonismus in Kursachsen in den Jahren 1570 bis 1574 und die Schicksale seiner vornehmesten Häupter (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1866), and Jürgen Moltmann, Christoph Pezel (1539-1604) und der Calvinismus in Bremen (Bremen: Einkehr, 1958), pp. 60-75.

[10] Sehling, I, 423.

[11] Das güldene Kleinot. D. Mart. Lutheri Catechismus In kurtze Frage vnnd Antwort gefasset (Frankfurt am Main: Bassaeus, 1577), preface dated October 31, 1568, lf. (A8)r; Reu, Quellen, I, 670.

[12] Enchiridion. Der Kleine Katechismus Doct. Martini Lutheri. Sampt der Haustaffel, in mehr Fragstück verfasset (Leipzig, 1566), lf. A2; Reu, Quellen, III, 2, 858-859.

[13] Mencel wrote in the preface to Spangenberg's Catechismus, Die Fünff

Heuptstück der Christlichen Lere, Sampt der Hausstafel vnd dem Morgen vnd Abendt Gebet, Benedicite vnd Gratias, etc. (Magdeburg: Kirchner, 1573), preface dated March 1, 1564, lf.) (ijr; Wigand, Catechisticae, p. 17.

[14] Mathesius, Luther, lvs. 60r, 58r.

[15] Instructions for the ducal Saxon visitation, 1554, in Sehling, I, 222; cf. Reu, Small Catechism, pp. 66-67.

[16] See, e.g., the ecclesiastical constitution of the Grafschaft Hoya, 1581, Sehling, VI, 2, 1143, 1173.

[17] Countless examples could be cited, among them the ecclesiastical constitutions of electoral Saxony (1580), Sehling, I, 423; Anhalt (1562), II, 562; Henneberg (1582), II, 310, 330-346; Pomerania (1569), IV, 385; Prussia (1568), 79, 84-85; Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1569), VI, 1, 142.

[18] Sehling, I, 423.

[19] Sehling, IV, 385; Heinrich Salmuth, Das ist, Die Fürnembsten Heuptstück der heiligen Christlichen Lehr (Bautzen/Leipzig: Wolrab/Gross, 1581), lf. Ciijv.

[20] The Amberg ecclesiastical constitution (1555/1557), Sehling, XIII, 289; Stieber's Instructio, XIII, 569.

[21] Mathesius, Luther, lvs. 57v-59r; Wigand, Catechesticae, p. 11.

[22] Numerous citations could be offered, e.g. the ecclesiastical constitutions of electoral Saxony (1580), Sehling I, 392, 423; Kurland (1570), Reu, Quellen, III, 1, 70; Brandenburg (1572), Sehling, III, 103; Pomerania (1569), IV, 385, 401; Hoya (1581), VI, 2, 1150-1151, 1176-1177, 1180; Regensburg (1567?), XIII, 464-465; Braunschweig-Grubenhagen (1581), VI, 2, 1046; Wertheim (c. 1555), XI, 718; electoral Saxon visitation instructions (1555), I, 313; Mansfeld agenda (1580), II, 232-233, 236.

[23] Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel ecclesiastical constitution (1569, Sehling, VI, 1, 226; Coelestin, Von Schulen (Strassburg: Emmel, 1568), lvs. Aijv, Hiijv; Salmuth, lf. Ciiijr.

[24] The ecclesiastical constitution of Palatinate-Neuburg (1576), Sehling, XIII, 177; of electoral Saxony, I; 424-425; cf. the Mansfeld agenda, II, 232-234; the Pomeranian constitution (1569), IV, 441; those of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1569), VI, 1, 165; and Hoya (1581, VI, 2, 1162-1163, among others.

[25] See the ecclesiastical constitutions of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen (1581), Sehling, VI, 2, 1050; Hoya (1581), VI, 2, 1184; Palatinate-Neuburg (1576), XIII, 176, for example; on sponsors, cf. the Mansfeld agenda (1580), II, 232-234, following Luther in the Small Catechism Preface 11, Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, 5. ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), p. 503; The Book of Concord, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), p. 339.

[26] The ecclesiastical constitutions of Hoya (1581), Sehling, VI, 2, 1197; Palatinate-Neuburg (1576), XIII, 176; Freudenthal and Goldstein in Silesia (1584/1591-1592), III, 480; and the Mansfeld agenda (1580), III, 232. Cf. Spangenberg, Ehespiegel, Das ist, Alles was von heiligen Ehestand nützliches, nötiges, vnd tröstliches mag gesagt werden. In Siebentzig Brautpredigten zusammen verfasset (1562), if. xixr.

[27] Niels Hemmingsen, Libellus de Coniugio, Repudio & Divortio (Leipzig: Steinmann, 1578), p. 148; Wigand, De conjugio doctrina (Jena: Richtzenhan, 1578), lf. Q4v-Q5r; Joachim Magdeburg, Die Ware, vnd in Gottes wort gegründte Lere, I. Vom rechten Adel der Fürstinnen . . . II. Von allen nötigsten stücken den heiligen Ehestand belangend. III. Von Christlicher Haushaltung vnd Narung (Eisleben: Gaubisch, 1563), lvs. [A8] v, L5r, Mv-M3r; David Chytraeus, Catechesis (Lübeck: Jauch, 1611), preface dated 1568, lf. A3v; Josua Opitz, Epithalamion, Das ist, Ein Christliche Brautpredigt (Regensburg: Burger, 1572), lvs. E4v-E5r; Spangenberg, Ehespiegel, lvs. xxv/r, xxixr, and clxxv/r; in the first of these references Spangenberg also requires grandparents to exercise concern for the proper training of their grandchildren. Cf. Luther, Large Catechism, Shorter Preface 4-5, and Small Catechism Preface 19; Bekenntnisschriften, pp. 554, 505; Book of Concord, pp. 362, 340. Strauss treats the role of the family in sixteenth century Lutheran catechetical instruction, chapter 6, "Pedagogy and the Family," pp. 108-131. Strauss believes that Lutherans shifted from an almost exclusive stress on parental education in the early 1520s to an emphasis on education in the school thereafter. It seems to me he makes too much of that shift, for at least from 1524 Luther called for catechetical instruction in the schools; see his An die Radherrn aller Stedte deutsches lands: dass sie Christliche schulen auffrichten und halten sollen, 1524, D. Martin Luthers Werke (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-), 15, 27-53, Luther's Works 45 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1962), 347-378. Strauss notes the ambiguity which beset the later reformers who praised Christian education in the home and yet exhibited a deep distrust of the individual parent's judgment. Strauss believes that the Lutheran clergyman ultimately turned away from private instruction, p. 123. Although some of the references listed at the beginning of this note are so perfunctory that they could support such a judgment, the writings of others, including Spangenberg, Fischer, and Amsdorf, e.g., indicate that they at least did expect parents to conduct worship and instruction in their homes.

[28] See, e.g., Wolff Rus, Der Weiber haushaltung (Wittenberg: Lufft, 1561), lvs. 25v-26r; Mathesius, Vom Ehestandt, Vnd Hausswesen, Fünfftzehen Hochzeytpredigten (Nuremberg: Berg and Neuber, n.d.), lf. [Zziiij]r.

[29] E.g., the visitation ordinance for Brandenburg (1573), Sehling, III 111, and the electoral Saxon constitution (1580), I, 423-424.

[30] Wolffhart, Der kleine Catechismus Lutheri durch etliche kurtze vnd kindische fragstück erkleret (Leipzig: Vögelin, 1561), preface dated August 12, 1559, lf. A2, printed in Reu, Quellen, III, 2, 928.

[31] Spangenberg, Vnterricht: Wie man die Kinder zu Gotte tragen vnd nach jhrem Exempel für Gotte wandeln solle (Erfurt: Bawmann, 1570), lf. Biijv, and Catechismus, lvs. Av, Zzr.

[32] Ibid., lvs. Aiijv-Av/r. Spangenberg may have borrowed the sickness metaphor from Luther's Eyn kurcz form der zeehen gepott. D.M.L. Eyn kurcz form des Glaubens. Eyn kurcz form dess Vatter vnszers (1520), in D. Martin Luthers Werke, 7, 204.

[33] Fischer, lf. Cv/v.

[34] Andreae, Zehen Predig von den sechs Hauptstucken Christlicher Lehr (Catechismus genant) allen Christlichen Haussuättern nutzlich zulesen (Tübingen: Morhart, 1561), lvs. (Aiv)r-v/r. This work is typical of a wide number of helps prepared in the period, such as Sarcerius, Hausbuch Fur die Einfeltigen Hausueter von den vornemesten Artickeln der Christlichen Religion (Leipzig, 1555), and Zacharias Praetorius, Sylva Pastorum . . . Frommen Hausuetern nützlich . . . von Catechismo, Postillen, Psalmen . . . (Magdeburg: Giseken, 1575).

[35] Spangenberg, Catechismus, lf. Aiijv, Ehespiegel, lf. Ijr.

[36] Huberinus, Spiegel der Hauszucht (Nuremberg: Berg and Neuber, 1554), lf. [Ffvj] v; Andreae, Zehen Predig, lvs. lxxvjv-lxxvijv; Mathesius, Luther, lf. 59v.

[37] "Das got gebotten hat das die eldern ihren kindern vnd haúsgesinde, die predigt (so sie in der kirchen gehort) da heim inn hause widerholen vnd erclern sollen. Nichlas von Amsdorff. 1562," a manuscript prepared for printing in Amsdorf's own hand, in the Goethe-Schiller Archiv of the Nationale Forschungs- und Gedekstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur in Weimar, volume 41, of the collection of the

Ehemalige Thüringische Landesbibliothek, lvs. 219r-228r; see specifically lvs. 223v-226v. On this manuscript see Robert Kolb, "Parents Should Explain the Sermon, Nikolaus Von Amsdorf on the Role of the Christian Parent," The Lutheran Quarterly, XXV (1973), 231-240. Cf. Bekenntnisschriften, p. 554; Book of Concord, p. 362.

[38] Fischer, lvs. Cv/v and [Cvj]r; Fischer's suggestion that food and drink be withheld was probably borrowed from Luther's Small Catechism Preface 12, Bekenntnisschriften, p. 504, Book of Concord, p. 339. Rosinus, lvs. A2-A3; Spangenberg, Citharae, lf.)(iij.

[39] Andreae, Zehen Predig, lvs. ix, xxiijr-xxiiijr, lxxxjr-lxxxiiijr; cf. Bekenntnisschriften, pp. 547-548, Book of Concord, p. 359, Large Catechism 7-8.

[40] Special sections in Spangenberg's Catechismus and Fischer's Catechismus are given over to the Table of Duties, and Spangenberg treats the appointed daily prayers as well; see Spangenberg's title in note 13.

[41] Amsdorf, lf. 220; Fischer, lvs. Riijv-Riiijr; Spangenberg, Catechismus, lvs. Aiijv-Aiiijr; Salmuth, lvs. Ciiijr-Cv/v; Strauss, especially chapters 12 and 13, "Visitations and Visitation Records," and "Religion and Society," pp. 249-299.

[42] Gallus, Catechismus, Predigsweise gestelt, für die kirche zu Regenspurg, zum Methodo, das ist, ordentlicher summa Christlicher lere, wider allerlei newerung vnd verfelschung (Regensburg: Kohl, 1554), lf. *ij; printed in Reu, Quellen, I, 735; Fischer, lf. [Bviij]r.

[43] Musculus, Catechismus, Glaub, Leer, vnd bekentnis der heiligen alten Leerer vnd Merterer . . . inn allen punckten mit vnserm Catechismo vnd jtzt lautender reinen Leer dess heiligen Euangelij einstimmig vnd gantz einhellig (1557; Frankfurt an der Oder: Eichorn, 1559); Hesshus, lvs. (B5) v-(B6)r, Reu, Quellen, I, 647; Aumann, Je Lenger . . . Der herrliche, schöne, vnd Güldene kleine Catechismus (Magdeburg: Donat, 1597), lf, A5, Reu, Quellen, III, 2, 960.

[44] Wigand, Catechisticae, pp. 22-25.

[45] Andreae, Zehen Predig, lvs. 1xxvijr-lxxxjr; for a discussion of Andreae's further use of the catechism, see Robert Kolb, "Jakob Andreae's Concern for the Laity," Concordia Journal, 4 (1978), 58-67.

[46] Judex, Einfeltiger vnterricht für die Christen in Magdeburgk was von des Herrn Amssdorffij vormeintem Vrteil nach Gottes Wort vnd dem heiligen Catechismo zu halten sey (1564); Wigand, Bericht Ob die Erbsünde sey ein Wesen Aus dem Catechismo (Jena: Richtzenhan, 1571); Jena faculty, Vom Flickwerck M. Irenaj, Wie gar vngereimpt wider Gottes Wort vnd den Catechismum Lutheri er sich vntersteht zu beschönen der Manicheer Schwermerey (Jena: Richtzehhan, 1572); Schoppe, Rettung Des Heiligen Catechismi wider den Schwarm der newen Manicheer vnd Substantisten (Jena: Richtzenhan, 1572). Gallus gave aid in approaching controversies current in the early 1550s to the fathers of the young in his Ein Kurtze Ordenliche summa der rechten Waren Lehre vnsers heiligen Christlichen glaubes, Welche lere ein yeder Christliher haussvatter nit allain für sich selb zewissen, sonder auch seine Kinder vnd Ehalden zuleren, oder leren zulassen schuldig ist (Regensburg: Kohl, 1552).

[47] Spangenberg, Catechismus, lvs.)(ijv-)(v/v.

[48] Andreae, Sechs Christlicher Predig Von den Spaltungen so sich zwischen den Theologen Augspurgischer Confession von Anno 1548, biss auff diss 1573. Jar nach vnnd nach erhaben, Wie sich ein einfältiger Pfarrer vnd gemeiner Christlicher Leye so dardurch möcht verergert sein worden, auss seinem Catechismo darein schicken soll (Tübingen: Gruppenbach, 1573), p. 15; translated in Robert Kolb, Andreae and the Formula of Concord, Six Sermons on the Way to Lutheran Unity (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), pp. 74-75. Cf. Andreae, Drey und dreissig Predigten von den fürnembsten Spaltungen in der christlichen Religion, so sich zwischen den Bäpstischen, Lutherischen, Zwinglischen, Schwenckfeldern, und Widerteuffern halten (Tübingen: Morhart, 1568). On Andreae's change of method in 1573, see Kolb, Andreae, pp. 43-56, and Jobst Ebel, "Jakob Andreae (1528-1590) als Verfasser der Konkordienformel," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 89 (1978), 102-107. Werner Schütz also treats Andreae's controversial sermons in "Jakob Andreae als Prediger," ibid., 87 (1976), 234-239.

[49] Andreae, Sechs Predig, pp. 16-17; Kolb, Andreae, p. 75.

50 Andreae reported on his efforts at winning Flacius to his position on original sin and on creating Lutheran concord in Colloquium de peccato originis. Inter D. Jacobum Andreae et M. Matthiam Flaccium Illyricum Argentorati Anno 1571 institutum (Tübingen: Gruppenbach, 1574). See Andreae, Sechs Predig, pp. 33-34; Kolb, Andreae, p. 84.

51 Andreae, Sechs Predig, pp. 37-39, 51-53, 59, 84-87; Kolb, Andreae, pp. 86-87, 94-95, 98-99, 112-113.

52 See A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord, ed. Robert D. Preus and Wilbert Rosin (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), pp. 71-82.

53 Andreae, Eine Christliche Predigt Vber das Euangelium auff den xxv. Sontag nach Trinitatis, Matthei am 24. Von vielen vnd mancherley verfürungen in der Kirchen Gottes vor dem Jüngsten tage. Wie die eingefallene streitige Artickel vnter den Lehrern Augsp. Confession dieser Landen Christlich verglichen, Vnd ein jeder Leye, aus seinem heiligen einfeltigen Kinder Catechismo gründlich dieselbe vrtheilen, vnd vor aller verfürung möge bewaret werden (Leipzig: Steinman, 1578), lvs. (Eiv)v-(Fiv)r, Hijr-Hiijr, Jijv-Jiijr, (Aiv)v.

54 Fünff Predigen: Von dem Wercke der Concordien (Dresden: Bergen, 1580), lvs. Cijv, i/ijr.

55 The numerous tracts aimed at a lay level in these controversies suggest as much; furthermore, in certain instances, e.g. the Osiandrian controversy in Königsberg, lay people die become involved, demonstrating in behalf of Joachim.

Scaer Essay

1 Quotations throughout the essay are taken from The Small Catechism in Contemporary English (Slightly Revised; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968). Hereafter abbreviated CE. In 1960 a preliminary version of this new translation was copyrighted by three agencies of the Lutheran Church in America, The American Lutheran Church, and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The 1960 translation was published in Study Edition of the Intersynodical Translation of Luther's Small Catechism (Enchiridion) (St. Louis: Board of Parish Education, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1963). When the 1963 publication is cited it will be abbreviated SEIT. The 1963 SEIT was published under the authorization of the 1962 LCMS convention. It contained the Synodical Version used in the LCMS since 1897, the proposed translation, and Luther's German text as now contained in Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelish-lutherischen Kirche (Fourth Edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959). Direct citations from the Bekenntnisschriften in the essay will be made from the 1967 edition and will be abbreviated BK. The 1963 Study Edition contained several essays and evaluation forms along with the parallel texts of German and English. The Preface mentions that this Study Edition (1963) was prepared at the request of the 1962 convention of the Missouri Synod (p. 3). The Historical Introduction indicates that the initiation for the new translation did not come from the synod convention but from the Board of Parish Education. "In 1956 the Board of Parish Education reported to the synodical convention that two staff members were participating in the development of an American version of Luther's Small Catechism (Proceedings, 1956, p. 282)" (p. 4). The Missouri Synod representatives, Dr. A. C. Mueller and Dr. A. H. Jahsmann, participated with representatives with church bodies which in the 1960's would establish The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America. The initiative for the new translation seems to have come from the Board of Parish Education or its staff without explicit synod approval. Its production in those years before the consolidation of most of Lutheranism into three major bodies and formation of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. would suggest that the new translation was part of the movement to bring Lutheran groups together in the 1950's and 1960's. The Missouri Synod representatives were clergymen, but their expertise in the Study Edition and the two evaluation forms virtually avoid discussing the new translation's doctrinal or confessional content. Questions center around such matters as language and memory. Pupils and teachers were interrogated about their feelings. Several places (pp. 4, 8, 28) make mention of using the 1531 German edition of the Small Catechism for the translation. In many places the translators paid little or no attention to any German or Latin edition.

2 CE, p. 3., SEIT, pp. 8-9, BK, p. 507.