NEW EXPLORATIONS
IN THEOLOGY

Foreword by Robert Kolb

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MARTIN LUTHER AND
THE RULE OF FAITH

Reading God's Word for God's People

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Scripture Against Scripture

An Introduction

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I**N THE FALL OF** 1511 or the spring of 1512, Martin Luther (1483–1546) received unwelcome news under the pear tree of the Black Cloister: he was to become a preacher and teacher of the Bible. In a panic he rattled off fifteen reasons why he couldn't do it. They all boiled down to this: he was unworthy of the high calling of speaking God's words. But the general of Luther's observant Augustinian order, Johann Staupitz (d. 1524), was unmoved. And so, desperate to escape the ministry of the word, Luther whimpered: "Lord Dr. Staupitz, you're going to kill me! I won't survive three months." Staupitz wasn't worried: "Well now, in God's name! The Lord our God has important matters to attend to; he could use some learned people in heaven, too!" Whether in life or death, the ministry of the word was Luther's vocation.[1]

Luther survived the three months—he lasted in the office of the word more than three decades. Day in and day out he confronted what he understood to be the most difficult battle: Scripture against Scripture. "I've often said it—and I'll keep saying it—the greatest and most difficult struggle is that we must struggle with Scripture against Scripture."[2] Luther was a

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[1] WATR 3:187.27–29, 188.1–27 (macaronic witness), 188.30–42, 189.1–18 (German witness), no. 3143b; quoting p. 189.6–7 (compare with p. 188.16–17), p. 189.7–8 (compare with p. 188.18–19). See also WATR 3:187.4–25, no. 3143a; WATR 5:98.21–29, no. 5371; WATR 5:654.34–36, 655.1–8, no. 6422. See Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 3 vols., trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985–1993), 1:125–26.

[2] The Gospel on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (July 30, 1525), WA 17,1:364.24–26 (print witness). On the battle of Scripture against Scripture, see also Sermon on St. Martin's (1530),

veteran of this ongoing battle. Early in his life it was one he waged against himself.[3] Later he waged it against the hierarchy of the Roman Church.[4] Soon it became a war on two fronts—against the Roman Church and against others who also opposed the Roman Church.[5] The enemy combatants changed, but the battle trudged along. And there was no getting out of it. As a doctor of the Bible, Luther had been commissioned for just this.

The struggle of Scripture against Scripture is a civil war. Enemy combatants do not wear distinctive uniforms; they often look and sound like brothers in arms. "Guard yourselves against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Mt 7:15).[6] Doctors of the Bible must constantly assess their allies, lest they be enemies, and their enemies, lest they be allies.[7] Satan is a subtle master of deception: he uses God's name and word to deceive. "[The enemy] snatches the sword out of your hand and tries to slay you with your own sword. You must anticipate this. You must fend off the sword, take back what is yours and strike him down. But no one can do this unless he is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that he can see this rogue."[8] Ultimately, like Jesus in the wilderness, doctors of the Bible do not struggle against flesh and blood but against Satan.

Reason is the double agent of the civil war of Scripture against Scripture. Submitted to faith it is a heavenly comrade-in-arms, but without faith it is

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WA 32:154.22–155.7; Gospel for the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (*Church Postil*, 1544), LW 78:286–90 (WA 17,1:362.29–366 with changes as indicated by WA 22:142–43; text original to the *Church Postil*, pp. 143.1–144.6.).

[3]On Luther's struggle with—even hatred of—Romans 1:17, see WATR 4:72.27–73.34, no. 4007 (LW 54:308–9); WATR 3:228.6–32, no. 3232a–c (LW 54:193–94); for a brief analysis and explanation, see Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 1:225–27.

[4]Here Roman Church is a technical term referring to the Roman Magisterium—the pope, his curia, and agents. For example, see Sermon on the Second Sunday after Epiphany (1545), WA 49:684.14–23, 685.3–4. On the church, see John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), 29–41.

[5]For example, on Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486–1541) and the "heavenly prophets," *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments* (1525), see LW 40:73–223 (WA 18:62–125, 134–214); Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 2:157–72.

[6]WADB 6:37.

[7]Luther says these enemies pray often, go to church often, preach often, and read the Bible often. Their sheep's clothing is God's name and word. See The Gospel on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (July 30, 1525), WA 17,1:362.31–363.25, here quoting lines 17–19.

[8]The Gospel on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (July 30, 1525), WA 17,1:364.26–29 I have rendered one of the third person singular's as *you*, to clarify the contrast Luther draws here.

a satanic enemy. For Luther the analogy of faith—interpreting Scripture according to the catechism of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Our Father—is the touchstone or shibboleth that reveals friend or foe in the battle for the word of God.[9]

Faith Kills Reason

Luther is infamous for allegedly rejecting reason.[10] He calls it "Lady Hulda," "Lady Jezebel," "the devil's bride," "the devil's whore"—even the devil's "archwhore"![11] But he also calls it "a part of the true light," "a beautiful, marvelous instrument and tool of God," "a kind of divine sun," "the greatest, inestimable gift of God."[12]

He's using reason in different ways in these lists of blame and praise. Luther distinguishes reason by its domain, temporal or spiritual, and by its state, unregenerate or regenerate. Luther praises unregenerate reason in temporal matters—ruling a state, building a house, cultivating crops. It's a common gift to all people, regardless of confession. And so he can speak highly of Cicero and even Aristotle's Ethics.[13] (Luther doesn't talk about regenerate reason in temporal matters, because it seems to be beside the point.)

But unregenerate reason in spiritual matters? That's what sticks in Luther's craw. It's dumb and blind but imagines that its darkness will bring light.

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[9]Sermon on St. Michael's (1539), WA 47:857.26–27, "But through the touchstone. Therefore whatever depends on the Ten Commandments, etc."; Sermon on John 2:24 (1538), WA 46:780.15–17 (compare with LW 22:265), "Let us go to the touchstone, and let us measure with the true yardstick and see if it fits with the Our Father and the articles of the Christian faith"; WATR 1:489.22, no. 966, "the catechism must rule"; House Sermon on the Creed (1537), LW 57:244 (WA 45:12.7–8), "these are the three greatest sermons: the Our Father, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments."

[10]On Luther's view of reason, see B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), esp. 10–27, 161–66, 168–71; Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 158–62. See also Lectures on Galatians 3:6 (1535), LW 26:226–35.

[11]Sermon on January 17, 1546, LW 51:374 (WA 51:126.6–7); *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1525), LW 40:174–75 (WA 18:164.24, 25–26); Gospel for New Year's Day (*Church Postil*, 1522, 1540), LW 76:39 (WA 10.1,1:505.4).

[12]The Gospel for the Third Sunday of Christmas (*Church Postil*, 1522, 1540), LW 75:290 (WA 10,1.1:203.8–9; E² 10:191); WATR 3:106.18–19; *Disputation Concerning Man* (1536), thesis 8, WA 39,1:175.18 (compare LW 34:137); Commentary on Isaiah Chapter 9 (1543–1544), WA 40,3:612.31.

[13]For example, see WATR 3:698.10–17, no. 3904; WATR 6:345.28–33, no. 7031; Commentary on Isaiah Chapter 9 (1543–1544), WA 40,3:608.11–24.

"When God speaks, reason, therefore, regards His Word as heresy and as the word of the devil; for it seems so absurd."[14] To read God's word or hear God's word preached by reason alone is no different from reading the Bible with your eyes shut or to listen with your fingers in your ears.

No amount of history and philosophy, linguistics and critical analysis can bootstrap human reason into discovering the gospel, Jesus Christ—true God and true man—given for you. "Faith comes from preaching, but preaching comes through the word of God" (Rom 10:17).[15] We must start with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that always means to die. "Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom 6:3).[16]

"Thus all devout people . . . kill reason, and say: 'Reason, you are foolish. You do not understand the things that belong to God (Mt 16:23). Therefore do not speak against me, but keep quiet. Do not judge; but listen to the Word of God, and believe it.' Thus devout people, by their faith, kill a beast that is greater than the world; and so they offer a highly pleasing sacrifice and worship to God."[17]

To see the light in spiritual matters, reason must be put to death, and that's just what the Holy Spirit does by God's word. This death and resurrection is not a one-time event. Just as the Christian life is a daily baptism of death and resurrection, so it is with Christian reason. By the power of the Holy Spirit and God's word our reason has become a mighty instrument of God.[18] Once blind and dead in spiritual matters, now reason can see and breathe.

And so Luther praises regenerate reason in spiritual matters—hearing God's word, be it in preaching, baptizing, absolving, or communing. As our

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[14]Lectures on Galatians 3:6, LW 26:228 (WA 40,1:362.12–13).

[15]WADB 7:61. Erasmus follows the Majority text here, giving ῥήματος θεου instead of ῥήματος Χριστοῦ. See "Epistolae Pauli Apostoli," *Novum Instrumentum omne*, ed. Desiderius Erasmus (Basel: Froben, 1516), 18; *Novum Testamentum omne*, ed. Desiderius Erasmus (Basel: Froben, 1519), 340. Here Luther's doctrine of the word is at work in translating: he renders ἀκοή ("hearing") as "preaching." This is unique to his German Bible translation, compare his correction of the Vulgate (1529), WADB 5:643.

[16]WADB 7:47.

[17]Lectures on Galatians 3:6 (1535), LW 26:228 (WA 40,1:362.23–27).

[18]"But in a believer—who now is reborn and illumined by the Holy Spirit through the word—there it is a beautiful, majestic instrument and tool of God." WATR 3:106.17–19, no. 2938b. "Reason illumined by faith receives life from faith, for it's been killed and brought back to life." WATR 3:106.22–23.

bodies will be glorified on the Last Day, so our reason is glorified when it submits to death and resurrection by God's word and Spirit. And just as our bodies will still be our bodies as God created them but with purity and power, so it is with regenerate reason. "It's like when cold iron becomes red hot, it's a different and hot iron. And that's the rebirth that happens by the Holy Spirit through the word."[19] As the psalmist says, "For in you is the source of life, and in your light we see light" (Ps 36:9).[20]

And so Christians—pastors and parishioners alike—need to test the spirits. Thankfully, Luther says, Scripture has given us the standard by which to do this. "Paul sets this limit: 'If anyone is a preacher and holds the office of teaching others what the word is, let him above all see to it that he preaches nothing which is not in accord with the faith.' "[21] Parishioners too should know the faith, comparing the preacher's sermon against it, so that they can say, "That fits very nicely with my faith."[22] If the sermon does not harmonize with the faith, it is not God's word.[23] Luther regularly holds up this rule as the rule of preaching. "It is good that one preaches only according to the analogy of faith. All preachers should accustom themselves to this simple manner of preaching."[24] Indeed by this measure, *according to the analogy of faith*, Luther judged the teaching of his opponents—Catholics, Reformed, and Radicals—finding them wanting.

WHATEVER INCULCATES CHRIST

The theological message Luther preached was simple, though not necessarily easy. "We cannot preach anything at all but Jesus Christ and faith. That's the general goal. . . . The poor Holy Spirit knows nothing else."[25] The person and work of Jesus of Nazareth as gift and example for all humans is the full form

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[19]WATR 3:106.30–31, no. 2938b. See the whole discussion, WATR 3:104.24–38, 105.1–10, no. 2938a; WATR 3:105.11–29, 106.1–10 (macaronic witness), 106.11–40, 107.1–15 (German witness), no. 2938b.

[20]WADB 10,1:213.

[21]Sermon on the Second Sunday after Epiphany (1545), WA 49:682.5–7 (LW 58:216).

[22]Sermon on the Second Sunday after Epiphany (1545), WA 49:682.10 (LW 58:217).

[23]"If you have the gift of prophecy, be sure that it fits the faith. If not, say: 'That the devil preached!' The Holy Spirit says that he reveals himself this way: that it fits with the faith." Sermon on the Second Sunday after Epiphany (1531), WA 34,1:107.8–10.

[24]WATR 4:447.4–6, no. 4719.

[25]Sermon on Monday after Pentecost (1532), WA 36:180.10–11, 181.9–10.

and content of the Christian gospel.[26] All doctrinal and ethical consider-
ations orbited around Luther's understanding of Christ. Thus, for Luther, to
preach meant to proclaim Christ: who he is, what he has done, what he
continues to do, and what his benefits are.

Many identify justification by faith alone as the center of Luther's Christo-
centrism.[27] But Ulrich Asendorf finds this distorting. He argues that
Luther's hermeneutic is first and foremost trinitarian. Thus, Luther's under-
standing of Christ is inseparably connected to the Trinity, Baptism, the Sac-
rament of the Altar, Confession, Absolution, justification by faith, sanctifi-
cation, and so on. Asendorf underscores that we do not understand Luther's
concept of justification by faith alone unless we understand his Christology
and emphasis on the believer's union with Christ.[28] Another popular filter
that enriches Asendorf's claim is the law-gospel dynamic, itself a restatement
of the gift-example distinction.[29] For Luther, all of Scripture contains these
two words of God: the law—his *no*, what he demands from us; and the

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[26]The distinguishable but inseparable character of gift and example is fundamental to Luther's
theology, see "Short Instruction: What Should Be Sought and Expected in the Gospels" (1522,
1544), LW 75:7–12 (WA 10,1.1:8–18; E² 7:8–13; compare with LW 35:113–24).

[27]Otto Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle of the Analogy of Faith," *Concordia Theological Monthly*
38, no. 4 (1967), 242–57, esp. 248–50; Elmer Carl Kiessling, *The Early Sermons of Luther and
Their Relation to the Pre-Reformation Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1935; reprint, New
York: AMS, 1971), 101–8. On Luther's doctrine of justification, see Paul Althaus, *The Theology
of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Shultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 224–50; Marc Lienhard,
Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ, trans. Edwin H. Robertson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), 269–
305; A. Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word: Martin Luther; Doctor of Sacred Scripture* (Grand
Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 51–72; Dietrich Korsch, "Glaube und Rechtfertigung," in *Luther
Handbuch*, ed. Albrecht Beutel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 372–81; Risto Saarinen, "Jus-
tification by Faith: The View of the Mannermaa School," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin
Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (New York: Oxford Uni-
versity Press, 2014), 254–63; Mark Mattes, "Luther on Justification as Forensic and Effective,"
in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír
Batka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 264–73. For a constructive clarification of
Luther's doctrine of justification, see Jack D. Kilcrease, *Justification by the Word: Restoring Sola
Fide* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022).

[28]Ulrich Asendorf, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers nach seinen Predigten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck
& Ruprecht, 1988), 418–24.

[29]See, for example, Mary Jane Haemig, "The Influence of the Genres of Exegetical Instruction,
Preaching and Catechesis on Luther," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed.
Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel and L'ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 453;
Sigurjón Árni Eyjólfsson, "Überblick über die Bewertung von Luthers Predigten in der Forsc-
hung," in *Luther Between Past and Present: Studies in Luther and Lutheranism*, ed. Ulrik Nissen,
Anna Vind, Bo Holm, and Olli-Pekka Vainio (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society,
2004), 17–25.

gospel—his *yes*, what he has done for us in Christ.[30] They must be differentiated but held together. Luther preached that the dialectic of law and gospel is a lifelong occupation that illuminates Scripture and our relationship with God.[31]

No one disputes that Luther practiced Christocentric exegesis.[32] But how he applies his Christocentric method is a different matter. What are the implications for allegory, the literal sense, and history? Gerhard Ebeling showed that Luther redefined rather than abandoned allegorical interpretation—as Huldyrch Zwingli (1484–1531) also recognized, chiding Luther as "an inept allegorist."[33] Nevertheless, scholars continue to posit a clean break between Luther and his exegetical forebears—usually rather dramatically, something like "he freed himself from the shackles of medieval exegesis."[34]

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[30]Luther illustrates this with the first commandment. On law-gospel, see Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 58–66, 74–77, 90–91; Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 120–36; Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*, 251–73; Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 65–66. For a short but careful statement of Luther's doctrine of law and gospel, see Gospel for the Third Sunday in Advent (*Church Postil*, 1522; 1540), LW 75:142–49 (WA 10,1.2:155–62; E² 10:92–101).

[31]See Sermon on the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity (1533), WA 37:174.13–20. See Asendorf, *Theologie Martin Luthers*, 67–73.

[32]See Helmut Zschoch, "Predigten," in *Luther Handbuch*, ed. Albrecht Beutel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 317–18; Fred W. Meuser, "Luther as Preacher of the Word of God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 136–40 (compare with *Luther the Preacher* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983], 16–25); Asendorf, *Theologie Martin Luthers*, 16–21, 418–24; Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 91–92; Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*, 72–102; Gerhard Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung: Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik* (Munich: Albert Lempp, 1942; rev. ed., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), 270–71; Kiessling, *Early Sermons*, 147. See further, Mickey L. Mattox, "Luther's Interpretation of Scripture: Biblical Understanding in Trinitarian Shape," in *The Substance of Faith: Luther's Doctrinal Theology for Today*, ed. Paul R. Hinlicky (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 14–22; Albrecht Beutel, "Theologie als Schriftauslegung," in *Luther Handbuch*, ed. Albrecht Beutel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 445–46; Mark D. Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand: The Relation of Authority and Interpretive Method in Luther's Approach to Scripture* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster, 2004), 185–88; Johann Anselm Steiger, "Martin Luthers allegorisch-figürliche Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 110, no. 3 (1999): 331–51. Bernhard Lohse awkwardly tries to modernize Luther's Christocentricism, see Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. and ed. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 189, 195.

[33]Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, esp. 44–89, 274–358; WATR 2:487.27–28, no. 2493 (1532).

[34]Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 78. Wood tones down this overstatement on p. 165. See also Beth Kreitzer, "The Lutheran Sermon," in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 45. In contrast, Kiessling labels Luther's allegories as "medieval in tone and strained in their application" (*Early Sermons*, 133–34). Of course,

Luther did not reject all allegories but only certain ones, namely those that do not conform to the analogy of faith. He straightforwardly states this in his lengthy excursus on allegory in the Genesis lectures: "When we condemn allegories we are speaking of those that are fabricated by one's own intellect and ingenuity, without the authority of Scripture. Other allegories which are made to agree with the analogy of faith not only enrich doctrine but also console consciences."[35] Elsewhere Luther extensively treats the definition of the analogy of faith; however, in this excursus he simply glosses it as an interpretation that fits with "Christ, the church, faith, and the ministry of the Word."[36] Such allegories are not wholly subjective; they are ruled by Christ who is himself the substance and Lord of Scripture. And yet allegories cannot be used to establish doctrine or the meaning of a text. Allegories persuade and illustrate; they belong to rhetoric, not dialectic.[37] Luther does not neatly distinguish allegory, typology, and figural interpretation.

Luther taught his students to read the words of Scripture as they stood.[38] Still, by this he did not mean what most exegetes today mean by *literal*. Most modern biblical scholars define *literal* according to the grammatical, literary, and historical meaning of a text, what Luther would have considered the simple literal sense. But he understands *literal* in two ways: this simple literal sense and the spiritual literal sense, the meaning of the words according to the full form and content of Scripture.[39] The whole of Scripture, for Luther,

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Luther harshly condemned allegory without always clarifying that certain allegories are acceptable. For example, "An allegory is like a beautiful harlot who fondles men in such a way that it is impossible for her not to be loved, especially by idle men who are free from trial" and "I hate allegories" (Genesis lectures, LW 5:347; WA 43:668.3-5, 13).

[35]Excursus on Allegory at Genesis 9:12–16, WA 42:367.37–368.2 (compare with LW 2:151), as translated in Herman J. Selderhuis, "Introduction to the Psalms," in *Psalms 1–72*, RCS OT 7 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), xlviii.

[36]Excursus on Allegory at Genesis 9:12–16, LW 2:164 (WA 42:377.21–22).

[37]Commentary on Galatians 4:21-31, LW 27:311 (WA 2:550.29–34). On dialectic and rhetoric in Luther, see B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 46–47.

[38]Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor*, 126–27; Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 166; Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand*, 191–247; Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 342–43. Pelikan gives three exceptions to this rule: (1) the text indicates it shouldn't be interpreted literally; (2) another passage shows it shouldn't be interpreted literally; and (3) the text as it stands contradicts an article of faith.

[39]Mattox, "Luther's Interpretation of Scripture," 22–27; Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor*, 107–8; Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther und das Alte Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1948), 74–86.

is defined by its substance, which is Christ. "Christ is Lord, not servant; he is Lord of the Sabbath, the law, and everything. And Scripture is to be understood not against, but for Christ. Therefore it must either refer to him or not be considered true Scripture."[40] Luther studied resources like the *Glossa ordinaria*—expanded with the work of Nicholas of Lyra (1270–1349) and Paul of Burgos (c. 1351–1435); the grammars of Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), David Kimchi (1160–1235), and Moses Kimchi (1127–1190); Sebastian Münster's (1488–1552) digest of medieval rabbinical exegetical work; and Desiderius Erasmus's (1466–1536) critical edition of the New Testament as well as the latest editions of the Old Testament.[41] But Luther submitted these resources to the lordship of the faith; they are aids to interpretation, not lords over it.[42] "Indeed grammar is necessary for declining nouns, conjugating verbs, and construing syntax, but for the proclamation of the meaning

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Bornkamm calls Luther's understanding the *sensus literalis propheticus*, which is similar to the spiritual literal sense. For a concise treatment of the literal sense in the Reformation, see Selderhuis, "Introduction to the Psalms," in RCS OT 7:xlvi–lii, here xlvii. Authorial intent is another way of distinguishing the simple and spiritual literal senses: the human author's intent corresponds to the simple literal sense; the Holy Spirit's intent, the spiritual literal sense. See also Kathryn Greene-McCreight, "Literal Sense," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 455–56; Kathryn Greene-McCreight, "Rule of Faith," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 703–4; Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics Before Humanism and Reformation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[40]Theses Concerning Faith (1535), WA 39,1:47.1–4 (LW 34:112). A few lines down Luther states that "If our opponents press Scripture against Christ, we must press Christ against Scripture" (p. 47.19–20; LW 34:112). Usually, depending on his audience or opponent, Luther intends this use of "inculcate Christ" positively: you can and should find Christ in all of Scripture. He would not want this principle to be used to doubt Scripture or only to accept something as Scripture once *you* find Christ in it.

[41]See Johannes Reuchlin, *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* (Pforzheim: Thomas Anselm, 1506); Sebastian Münster, *Miqdaš YHWH*, 2 vols. (Basel: Michael Isinginius and Henricus Petrus, 1534–1535, 1546); *Novum Testamentum omne*, ed. Erasmus; *Biblia Hebraica* (Brescia: Gershom Soncino, 1494); *Biblia Hebraica*, 2 vols. (Venice: Daniel Bomberg, 1511, 1518). For the *Glossa ordinaria*, see *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa ordinaria, novisque additionibus*, 6 vols. (Venice: Magna Societas, 1603). See also Luther's letter to Georg Spalatin (January 18, 1518) on resources for Bible reading, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert, Library of Christian Classics 18 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960; reprint, Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 111–13 (WABr 2:132–34). Luther said if he could relearn Hebrew all over again, he would only use the best grammarians, David Kimchi and Moses Kimchi, see WATR 1:525.37–39, no. 1040.

[42]Mattox, "Luther's Interpretation of Scripture," 11–57, esp. 46–47; Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand*, 116–17. For more on Hebraic resources in the Reformation, see Stephen G. Burnett, "The Strange Career of the *Biblia Rabbinica* Among Christian Hebraists, 1517–1620," in *Shaping the Bible in the Reformation: Books, Scholars and Their Readers in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Matthew McLean (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 63–84.

and the consideration of the subject matter, grammar is not needed. For grammar should not reign over the meaning."[43] The substance determines the meaning; grammar only restricts the possibilities of expression.[44]

History receives a similar redefinition from Luther. He often talks about the importance of rooting interpretation in history.[45] "Faith is built on history."[46] Thus, the historical sense can even be called normative for Luther.[47] But by *history* Luther means the sacred history narrated by the Apostles' Creed. "The Creed—the confession of our holy Christian faith—is the history of histories."[48] This history—God's history—contains the history of the church, of every individual, and of the world.[49] And so history is not only a list of facts of when, where, who, and how; it is *for us.*[50] Until one understands this, one has not understood Jesus' history correctly. All modes and methods must be servants to Christ, the Lord of the Scriptures. Luther used grammar, (secular) history, literary methods, and culture as aids to interpretation, but only in service to faith in Christ for the purpose of inculcating the double love of God and neighbor.

So, contrary to the historical-critical guild, Luther argues that Christian faith through word and Spirit takes logical priority to everything in biblical interpretation. Luther is emphatic: biblical interpretation is impossible apart from the ministry and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Trying to understand God's word apart from God's Spirit would be like a blind man trying to see

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[43]WATR 3:619.28–30, no. 3794. See further Luther's discussion with his translation team about translating particular difficult verses in the Old Testament, WATR 5:218, no. 5533 (1542–1543); and see Luther's comments on Psalm 22:16, WA 5:633–34.

[44]On Luther's use and understanding of grammar, Gerrish's comparison between Luther and Erasmus is helpful. See Gerrish, *Grace and Reason*, 161–66.

[45]Bornkamm, *Luther und das Alte Testament*, 77–78; Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 225–39, 417–24; Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 165–66.

[46]Lectures on Isaiah 37:31 (1527–1530) WA 31,2:242.24. Luther says that history is firmer than allegories, "unless we transform them metaphorically into another substance according to the rule of faith" (p. 242.25–26).

[47]Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor*, 259, compare with 89–90; WADB 9,1:xxxvi–xxxvii. Pelikan acknowledges that Luther operates with a different definition of history "which seems to modern eyes allegorical or at least typological" (90).

[48]WATR 5:581.36–37, no. 6288.

[49]Ebeling, Evangelische Evangelienauslegung, 418–19, 453.

[50]Ebeling, Evangelische Evangelienauslegung, 423–24; Jin Ho Kwon, *Christus Pro Nobis: Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Passions- und Osterpredigtens bis zum Jahr 1530* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2008). See further, Sermon on Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (1546), LW 58:453; WA 51:183.10–15.

the sun: it doesn't matter what scientific tools and knowledge the blind man has, he's fully incapable of sight. Yes, God's word is light, and humans in their fallen state are incapable of seeing this light until the Holy Spirit opens their eyes. Luther argues that without the Holy Spirit even the biblical authors themselves would not accept Jesus' interpretation of their words. For example, Luther said this about Isaiah if he read Luke's use of Isaiah 9:6:

> Who would have been able to say this? That Christ is signified everywhere in Scripture? If the prophets themselves had come to the manger, they would have hesitated, unless the Spirit of the Lord illumined them. For this reason, a new light was necessary; the angel announced it after he lead them into the Scripture. In this way, Christ is known through the gospel; he is revealed through the Holy Spirit. Following this sign, it is Scripture so long as we find nothing in Scripture other than what presents Christ.[51]

It is a foundational mistake to try to read the Bible only in its original historical setting.[52] That would be to ignore, even to defy, the Holy Spirit's assistance and friendship. "The word of God reveals, the Spirit of God believes, the world and flesh neither see nor believe."[53] The Bible is a book of faith.[54]

But isn't this entirely subjective? For many today Luther's insistence on Scripture *for us*, its Christocentric focus, and its Spirit-led interpretation seem to have authorized infinite schisms, establishing the individual interpreter as the final court of appeals.[55] Worse yet, Luther seems to see himself

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[51]Sermon on the Feast of St. Stephen (December 26, 1523), WA 11:223.5–10.

[52]Luther also argues that it's a mistake to read the Bible apart from its historical setting. See *How Christians Should Read Moses* (1525), WA 16:363–93 (LW 35:161–74). Scripture should not be applied in such a wooden fashion that "If I were to take up and keep every word of God, then I better build an ark too just like Noah!" Sermons on Exodus 20 (1525), WA 16:438.13–14. All Scripture is indeed for us, but it's not always a command for us. Christians must make careful distinctions in Scripture. "They are hopeless morons and true swine who want to be great teachers, write great books and yet know no distinction of the word of God." Sermons on Exodus 20 (1525), WA 16:439.13–15.

[53]WATR 5:398, no. 5921. See also WATR 1:601, no. 1205; WATR 2:243.10–11, no. 1871; WATR 5:385, no. 5871.

[54]See Jeffrey G. Silcock, "Luther on the Holy Spirit and His Use of God's Word," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 294–309; Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*, 16–19, 35–42, 341–44; Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator: Luther's Concept of the Holy Spirit*, trans. John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953).

[55]See Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2012). The accusation is common among Protestants, too; for

as judge over other individual interpreters—harshly censuring Erasmus, Zwingli, and Radical opponents. What else did Luther expect when he said "Here I stand"? By understanding one of the most neglected aspects of Luther's theology, the analogy of faith, we can understand Luther better as pastor, preacher, professor, polemicist, and doctor of the church.

The Analogy of Faith

In 1958 Bengt Hägglund mourned that the rule of faith or analogy of faith is addressed seldom—if it is, "it happens quite accidentally"—and used even less.[56] It continues to languish in obscurity and misunderstanding.[57]

Since the Enlightenment, exegetes have disputed the meaning of Paul's phrase "the analogy of faith" in Romans 12:6.[58] Everyone agrees that Paul sets a rule here, but scholars disagree whether Paul means *faith* in the

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example, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Biblical Authority After Babel: Retrieving the* Solas *in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), esp. 1–34.

[56]Bengt Hägglund, "Die Bedeutung der *Regula fidei* als Grundlage theologischer Aussagen," *Studia theologica* 12, no.1 (1958): 1–44, here 2. Hägglund thinks this neglect is because modern theologians tend to restrict faith to its subjective sense only (*fides qua creditur*). He states that the rule of faith embodies "the entire teaching of the church, the teaching that was proclaimed by the apostles and prophets and that is grounded in Scripture" (3–4, quoting p. 4). Therefore, development is an inappropriate term for talking about Christian doctrine; the substance of Christian faith remains unchanged, though applied through new leaders and expositors to new situations and cultures (37). Hägglund calls theologians and exegetes to judge new methodologies by their interpretive fruits: Do they fit with the faith (40)?

[57]There are signs of hope. Scholars like Peter Leithart, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Daniel Treier advocate and exemplify ruled readings of the Bible. See Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples Through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019); Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008). And there are groups of scholars and pastors like the Center for Baptist Renewal who are championing ruled and creedal readings for pastors and everyday Christians. For a brief overview of the rule of faith in history, see Everett Ferguson, *The Rule of Faith: A Guide* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015). Best yet, see John Kleinig, *God's Word: A Guide to Holy Scripture*, Christian Essentials (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022).

[58]Karl-Heinz Menke, "Analogia fidei," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 11 vols., 3rd ed., ed. Michael Buchberger, Walter Kasper, and Konrad Baumgartner (Freiburg: Herder, 1993–2001), 1:574–77. Menke states that the Eastern tradition took Paul's phrase as using the faith subjectively, while the Western tradition took it objectively. Basil of Caesarea, John Chrysostom, and Ambrosiaster seem to confirm Menke; Pseudo-Constantinius does not. See Gerald Bray, ed., *Romans*, ACCS NT 6 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 311–12. Origen isn't quite clear what he understands Paul to mean here, see Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* 4.5.3; 9.3.2–4. Nevertheless Daniel P. Fuller traces the content of the analogy back to Origen, see Fuller, "Biblical Theology and the Analogy of Faith," in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd*, ed. R. A. Guelich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 198n13. (Walter C. Kaiser Jr. misunderstands Fuller as saying that the first use of the phrase "analogy of faith" is in Origen's

objective sense or the subjective sense. Faith in the objective sense (*fides quae creditur*) is the core teaching of the church as handed down by the prophets and apostles; faith in the subjective sense (*fides qua creditur*) is the faculty of faith as exercised by an individual.[59] Before the Enlightenment, exegetes understood Paul as referring to the objective faith of Christian teaching; after the Enlightenment, the vast majority of exegetes understand Paul as referring to subjective faith. Exegetes assume this conclusion more than argue it. But Ernst Käsemann points out that if Paul intends to lay down a rule for the use of spiritual gifts, it makes no sense to have that rule be a subjective one measured by the gifted individual rather than an external measure.[60]

Most modern Protestant scholars see the analogy of faith as twofold: reading the dark passages of the Bible by the light of the clear passages of the Bible and reading the Bible according to its full content.[61] Some scholars

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De principiis 4.26; it is not. See Kaiser, "Evangelical Hermeneutics: Restatement, Advance or Retreat from the Reformation," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 46, no. 2–3 [1982], 172n20, 179.)

[59]Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 123. It is now a commonplace of modern commentaries to discuss whether Paul means *faith* subjectively or objectively.

[60]Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 341–42; see also Henri Blocher, "The 'Analogy of Faith' in the Study of Scripture: In Search of Justification and Guidelines," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 5 (1987), 25–27; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 647–48. In contrast, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985), 2:619–21; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament 38 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 765–66.

[61]Compare Blocher "The 'Analogy of Faith' in the Study of Scripture," 18–24. For the analogy as interpreting dark passages by clear passages, see Daniel J. Treier, "Scripture, Unity of," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic; London: SPCK, 2005), 731–34; John F. Johnson, "*Analogia Fidei* as Hermeneutical Principle," *Springfielder* 36, no. 4 (1973): 249–59; Grant R. Osborne, "New Testament Theology," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 3rd ed., ed. Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 591–95; Grant R. Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 28–29, 361–62; H. Wayne Johnson, "The 'Analogy of Faith' and Exegetical Methodology: A Preliminary Discussion on Relationships," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 31, no. 1 (1988): 69–80; Daniel A. Tappeiner, "Hermeneutics, the Analogy of Faith and New Testament Sacramental Realism," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1977): 40–52; David P. Scaer, "The Theology of Robert David Preus and His Person: Making a Difference," *Concordia Theological Quaterly* 74, no. 1 (2010): 75–91, esp. 80–85; Martin W. Flor, "The Free Conferences of 1903–1906 and the Concept of *Analogia Fidei*," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 40, no. 4 (1969): 218–27; William F. Arndt, "Hermeneutics," in *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis:

seem to use the phrase *the analogy of faith* as a general term for someone's governing idea, and so they emphasize its danger: foisting the human reader's ideas on the Bible, whether that's an artificial unity, a shallow Christological reading, or an arbitrary ranking of passages.[62]

There is disagreement about the relationship between the analogy of faith (*analogia fidei*), the analogy of Scripture (*analogia scripturae*), and the rule of faith (*regula fidei*). Many equate the analogy of faith and the analogy of Scripture but distinguish the analogy of faith and the rule of faith. For them, to read by the analogy of faith and Scripture is to read Scripture according to Scripture, but to read by the rule of faith is to read creedally.[63] But some even pit the analogy of faith against the rule of faith. For example, Walter Kaiser claims that the Reformers crafted the analogy of faith to combat the Roman Catholic rule of faith, which he thinks is the *Glossa ordinaria*.[64]

Concordia, 1954), 463–64. For the analogy as interpreting a passage according to the whole Bible, see Blocher, "The 'Analogy of Faith' in the Study of Scripture"; Henry M. Knapp, "Protestant Biblical Interpretation," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic; London: SPCK, 2005), 633–38; Hank Voss, "From 'Grammatical-historical Exegesis' to 'Theological Exegesis': Five Essential Practices," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 37, no. 2 (2013): 140–52; Iain Provan, *The Reformation and the Right Reading of Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 10–11; D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology," in *Scripture and Truth*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 65–95, esp. 90–93; D. A. Carson, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, but . . . ," in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Allen (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 196–97; Vanhoozer, *Biblical Authority After Babel*, 127–29; Flor, "The Free Conferences of 1903–1906 and the Concept of *Analogia Fidei*," 222–27.

[62]See Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 361–62; Osborne, "New Testament Theology," 593; Carson, "Unity and Diversity," 90–93; Calvin R. Schoonhoven, "The 'Analogy of Faith' and the Intent of Hebrews," in *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation: Essays Presented to Everett F. Harrison by His Students and Colleagues in Honor of His Seventy-fifth Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford LaSor (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 92–110. J. P. Koehler also sees the analogy of faith as a great threat to exegesis. His argument is tightly tied up in the American Lutheran controversy over election in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries. See J. P. Koehler, "The Analogy of Faith," in *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 3 vols., ed. Curtis A. John (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 1:221–68. In contrast to Koehler, see Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 4 vols., trans. unnamed translator (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950–1957), 1:359–67. Pieper distinguishes two uses of the analogy of faith: (1) interpreting unclear passages by clear passages; (2) Schleiermacher's use of "the whole of Scripture (*das Schriftganze*)," which requires every passage to be interpreted by numerous passages.

[63]See Provan, *The Reformation and the Right Reading of Scripture*, 10–11; Treier, "Scripture, Unity of," 731–34; Osborne, "New Testament Theology," 593; Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28; Voss, "From 'Grammatical-historical Exegesis' to 'Theological Exegesis,' " 146.

[64]Kaiser, "Evangelical Hermeneutics," 171, 173; Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 134–35; see also Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 28.

Lutherans tend to be the ones who see the analogy of faith, analogy of Scripture, and the rule of faith as the same thing—even though they might not agree on its meaning: interpreting unclear passages by clear passages or by justification by faith alone or by law and gospel.[65]

While historians have traced the phrase *the analogy of faith* to the medieval theologian William of Saint-Thierry (d. 1148), they have demonstrated the strong Reformation claim on it.[66] The Reformation use of the analogy may have been set up by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (d. 1536) when he corrected the Latin translation of Paul's phrase in Romans 12:6.[67] Many

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[65]For the analogy of faith as clear passages, see Arndt, "Hermeneutics," 463–64; Flor, "The Free Conferences of 1903–1906 and the Concept of *Analogia Fidei*," 222–27; but also Vanhoozer, *Biblical Authority After Babel*, 127–29. For the analogy of faith as justification by faith alone, see Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle of the Analogy of Faith," 249–52; Johnson, "*Analogia Fidei*," 249–59 (key to the analogy but not the analogy); Willem Jan Kooiman, *Luther and the Bible*, trans. John Schmidt (Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 219–20; not a Lutheran, but see also, Gerrish, *Grace and Reason*, 150–51. For the analogy of faith as law and gospel, see Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 97, 141, 223–24, 330–31. Carson understands the analogy of faith and the rule of faith to be the same, but he sees them both as extrabiblical, see "Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Yes, but . . . ," 196–97. Knapp distinguishes the analogy of faith from the analogy of Scripture: the analogy of faith is a corollary to the analogy of Scripture; the analogy of Scripture is to read dark passages by clear passages; the analogy of faith requires that a reading fit with the big picture of biblical faith. But he doesn't clearly address the rule of faith. See Knapp, "Protestant Biblical Interpretation," 633–38.

[66]William of Saint-Thierry, *Expositio in Epistolam ad Romanos* 12:6, PL 180:672–73. See Bernhard Gertz, "Was ist *analogia fidei*?: Klarstellungen zu einem Kontrovers-Thema," *Catholica* 26, no. 4 (1972): 309–24; Gertz, *Glaubenswelt als Analogia: Die theologische Analogie-Lehre Erich Przywaras und ihr Ort in der Auseinandersetzung um die* analogia fidei (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969); based on Gertz's work, see Menke, "Analogia fidei," 1:574–77; Thomas Marschler, "*Analogia fidei*: Anmerkungen zu einem Grundprinzip theologischer Schrifthermeneutik," *Theologie und Philosophie* 87, no. 2 (2012): 208–36. Marschler criticizes exegesis done with the analogy of faith as " 'dogmatically contaminated' interpretation of the Bible" (229–30). He affirms the bracketing of the analogy until the end of the exegetical process like Kaiser and Carson; see Kaiser, "Evangelical Hermeneutics," 176–77; Carson, "Unity and Diversity," 90–93. Marschler is responding to Joseph Ratzinger's condemnation of this two-step process, see Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today," in *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*, ed. Richard John Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1–23; Ratzinger, "Handing on the Faith and the Sources of Faith," in *Handing on the Faith in an Age of Disbelief*, by Joseph Ratzinger et al., trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2006), 13–40; Ignacio Carbajosa, *Faith, the Fount of Exegesis: The Interpretation of Scripture in Light of the History of Old Testament Research*, trans. Paul Stevenson (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2013).

[67]Lefèvre translated Paul's phrase as *secundum analogiam, id est rationem fidei* rather than merely *secundum rationem fidei*. Gertz, "Was ist *analogia fidei*?," 312; Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, *Epistola ad Rhomanos* (Paris: H. Stephanus, 1515), 9r; no comment on Romans 12:6, see p. 92v. Gertz claims that Erasmus also contributed, but Erasmus translated Romans 12:6 into Latin as *iuxta portionem fidei* instead of *secundum rationem fidei*. See "Epistolae Pauli Apostoli," in *Novum*

historians believe Luther defined the analogy of faith as justification by faith alone, and so his followers used the analogy of faith as a battle cry against their papal opponents.[68] The Reformers would have used it to ward off Roman Catholic teaching that presented church tradition as normative (for example, Purgatory and Masses for the dead). In contrast, they saw themselves as holding Scripture as the highest authority, which interprets itself by its own light.

Richard Muller is one of the few to recognize that many of the Reformers defined the analogy of faith more specifically: it meant that the Bible must be read according to the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer.[69] Even Robert Preus in his learned examination of Post-Reformation Lutheranism doesn't see this. "The analogy of faith, according to all the old Lutheran theologians," Preus writes, "was simply the articles of faith that could be summarized under the categories of Law and Gospel."[70] And yet all the Lutheran scholastics he cites state that the analogy of faith is

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Instrumentum omne, ed. Erasmus, 21; *Novum Testamentum omne*, ed. Erasmus, 343. In contrast, Luther revised the Vulgate to *ut consentiat fidei* (WADB 5:645.12).

[68]Gertz, "Was ist *analogia fidei*?," 311–13; Marschler, "*Analogia fidei*," 220; Menke, "Analogia fidei," 575; Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle of the Analogy of Faith," 249–52. Gertz cites Melanchthon's commentary on Romans 12:6, see Philipp Melanchthon, *Enarratio Epistolae Pauli ad Romanos* (1556), in *Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*, 28 vols., Corpus Reformatorum 1–28, ed. C. G. Bretschneider (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1834–1860), 15:1009. Robert C. Fennell also sees justification as one of six parts of Luther's definition of the analogy of faith (Christocentricisim, justification, faith, the nature of God and human nature, the reality of Satan, and pneumatology). Fennell has a near miss with Luther's actual definition of the analogy of faith: the catechism. See Fennell, *The Rule of Faith and Biblical Interpretation: Reform, Resistance, and Renewal* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018), 47n56, 49–59. Fennell limits himself to examining Luther's second Galatians lectures and the *On the Bondage of the Will*.

[69]Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 2:493–97, esp. 493. Muller cites Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590), William Whitaker (1548–1595), Moïse Amyraut (1596–1664), Francis Roberts (1609–1675), and William Perkins (1558–1602). Francis Turretin (1623–1687) and Gulielmus Bucanus (d. 1603) also talk about the analogy of faith in these terms, see Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols., trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992–1997), 1:53; 2.19.18); Gulielmus Bucanus, *Institutiones Theologicae, seu Locorum Communium Christianae Religionis* (Bern: Le Preux, 1605), 46; 4.23; English translation, William Bucanus, *Institutions of Christian Religion*, trans. Robert Hill (London: Snowdon, 1606), 44; 4.23. Although elsewhere Muller distinguishes between the analogy of faith and Scripture: the analogy of Scripture reads unclear passages by clear ones; the analogy of faith reads the Bible according to its basic meaning, and some people understand that in a ruled sense. See Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 25.

[70]Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 330.

the Apostles' Creed (and some include the Ten Commandments).[71] Some historians, such as Derek Cooper, have misunderstood the analogy of faith as a post-Reformation development or as solely a Reformed hermeneutical tool.[72] Sujin Pak takes a mediating position: she recognizes that Luther uses the analogy of faith, but she mistakenly asserts that he doesn't tie it to the Apostles' Creed—that move, she claims, was made by second generation Reformers who needed to reassert clerical power.[73]

As a result of the Enlightenment turn, Protestant exegetes increasingly saw the analogy of faith as a logical fallacy (*petitio principii*, it assumes the conclusion); they replaced it with the standards of historical criticism and reason.[74] In contrast, the Reformers would see the standards of

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[71]Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575) and Salomo Glassius (1593–1656) explicitly cite the Creed and the Ten Commandments: "All interpretation of Scripture and all doctrine or dogma . . . should agree with the sum of faith or Christian teaching, which is already contained in the Ten Commandments, the gospel, the Creed or in the catechism." (Flacius, *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*, 2 vols. [Frankfurt and Leipzig: Paulus, 1719], 1:36); "It's nothing other than the analogy or rule of faith, which is the sum of heavenly doctrine, gathered from the clearest passages of Scripture. There are two parts: first, of faith, whose principal topics are set forth especially in the Apostles' Creed; second, of love, whose sum the Ten Commandments show." (Glassius, *Philologia Sacra* [Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1713], 498). Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) and Abraham Calov (1612–1686) imply the Creed: "The articles of faith is what the apostle understands by *pistis* in this passage [Rom 12:6]" (Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 9 vols., ed. Eduard Preuss [Berlin: Schlawitz; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1863–1876], 1:238); "The analogy of faith is the agreement of the doctrine of faith brilliantly shown forth in holy Scripture, which is in those passages especially, where each doctrine has its proper seat." (Calov, *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata*, 2 vols. [Dresden and Leipzig: Zimmerman, 1719], 2:207). I was unable to access Leonhard Hutter's *Loci Communes Theologici* (1619). And I only located the phrase but not its definition in Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627): "All true interpretation of the Scriptures comes from the analogy of faith, Romans 12:6" (Mentzer, *Disputationes Theologicae et Scholasticae XIV* [Marburg: Egenolphus, 1606], 76).

[72]Derek Cooper calls this ancient principle "a post-Luther approach to theology and exegesis" ("The Analogy of Faith in Puritan Exegesis: Scope and Salvation in James 2:14–26," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 12, no. 2 [2009], 249).

[73]Sujin Pak, "The Protestant Reformers and the *Analogia Fidei*," in *The Medieval Luther*, ed. Christine Helmer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 227–45. See also Sujin Pak, "Scripture, the Priesthood of All Believers, and Applications of 1 Corinthians 14," in *The People's Book: The Reformation and the Bible*, eds. Jennifer Powell McNutt and David Lauber (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 48–50. In a 2017 essay, Pak implies that the analogy of faith was solely a Reformed principle, tying the analogy of faith to John Calvin and his heirs in contrast to Philipp Melanchthon, but in a 2020 essay she revised these claims to say: Luther indeed used the analogy of faith (but without the Creed), and second generation reformers, especially among the Reformed, wielded the analogy to reassert clerical power. See Sujin Pak, "The Protestant Reformers and the *Analogia Fidei*," in *The Medieval Luther*, ed. Christine Helmer (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 227-45. See also Sujin Pak, "Scripture, the Priesthood of All Believers, and Applications of 1 Corinthians 14," in *The People's Book: The Reformation and the Bible*, eds. Jennifer Powell McNutt and David Lauber (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 48-50.

[74]Gertz, "Was ist *analogia fidei*?," 313; Menke, "Analogia fidei," 1:575.

historical criticism and reason as circular reasoning that assumes its conclu-
sions and does not understand the Bible as a book authored by the Holy
Spirit. Vatican II's proclamation about the analogy of faith, ironically enough,
would fit the Reformers' interpretive approach much better: "Holy Scripture
must be read and interpreted in the sacred Spirit in which it was written."[75]
Again, the default bias for historical criticism and reason surfaces in modern
exegetical discussions of Romans 12:6 *and* modern historical-theological
discussions of the analogy of faith. For example, Skevington Wood writes,
"The use of this term [the analogy of faith] by Luther and the Reformers
generally was in fact a misapplication of its original occurrence in
Romans 12:6."[76] And Leland Ryken: "[The analogy of faith] is an awkward
phrase, based on a misinterpretation of Romans 12:6."[77]

After Protestants consigned the analogy of faith to the trash heap, Roman
Catholics picked it up. They generally understood the analogy of faith in a
similar way to the Reformers (that the Bible is one harmonious book written
by God, thus obscure passages are interpreted by clear passages) but with
the added twist of Roman Catholic tradition.[78] Discussions of the analogy
of faith have since been further confused by Karl Barth's (1886–1968) po-
lemic against the analogy of being (*analogia entis*), related to his diatribe
against natural theology.[79]

Concerning Luther's use of the analogy, Otto Hof offers the most sub-
stantive treatment.[80] Only examining Luther's sermons on Romans 12:6, Hof

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[75]*Dei verbum* 12.3; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 112–14. See also Joseph Ratzinger, *God's Word:
Scripture—Tradition—Office*, ed. Peter Hünermann and Thomas Söding, trans. Henry Taylor
(San Francisco: Ignatius, 2008), 58–67, 91–99; Ratzinger, "Foreword," in *Jesus of Nazareth: From
the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* by Joseph Ratzinger, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New
York: Doubleday, 2007), xi–xxiv. For a helpful description and analysis of Ratzinger's doctrine
of Scripture, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Expounding the Word of the Lord: Joseph Ratzinger on
Revelation, Tradition, and Biblical Interpretation," in *The Theology of Benedict XVI: A Protestant
Appreciation*, ed. Tim Perry (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 66–86.

[76]Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 163.

[77]Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 147.

[78]*Dei Verbum* 12.3; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 112–14; Joseph Ratzinger, *The Transforming
Power of Faith*, trans. L'Osservatore Romano (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2013), 10–11, 23; Marschler,
"*Analogia fidei*," 222–29; Gertz, "Was ist *analogia fidei*?," 313–16; Menke, "Analogia fidei," 576.

[79]See Gertz, *Weltglauben als Analogie*; Gertz, "Was ist *analogia fidei*?," 318–24; Gottlieb Söhngen,
"The Analogy of Faith: Likeness to God from Faith Alone?," trans. Kenneth Oakes, *Pro Ecclesia*
21, no. 1 (2012): 56–76.

[80]Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle." David Starling also handles Luther's use of the analogy of
faith, but misdefines Luther's understanding of prophecy as predicting the future. Nor does he

shows that Luther employs around a dozen different phrases when speaking about the analogy of faith—sometimes even just "the faith."[81] Outside of these sermons, Luther uses even more expressions for it. Hof recognizes that Luther uses faith here in the objective sense and subjective sense. He identifies the gospel of justification by faith as Luther's definition of faith.[82] But Hof is not quite right; Luther defines the analogy of faith as understanding Scripture according to the catechism, that is, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, and the sacraments—all of which he trusted as God's word. Moreover, Luther wanted this method to have a positive and negative function. Positively, we can only understand Scripture by the analogy of faith; negatively, it guards against heresy.[83] He commends learning the catechism as the task of a Christian, whether pastor or parishioner.

> Daily I find that there are now only a few preachers who truly and correctly understand the Our Father, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments and who are able to teach them for the poor common people. All the same, they dash into Daniel, Hosea, John's Apocalypse, and other such difficult books. The poor rabble are drawn in, listen to, and gawk at these jesters with great wonder. And when the year's through, they still can recite neither the Our Father nor the Creed nor the Ten Commandments. But it is these things

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recognize that the tradition before the Reformers understood prophecy in three ways: (1) interpreting Scripture, (2) predicting the future, often associated with dreams, and (3) reading the stars. Starling "The Analogy of Faith in the Theology of Luther and Calvin," *Reformed Theological Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 5–19; for a strong treatment of Calvin's use of the analogy of faith, see Peter Opitz, *Calvins theologische Hermeneutik* (Neukirchener-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1994), 227–90. For passing references to Luther and the analogy of faith, see Steiger, "Martin Luthers allegorisch-figürliche Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift," 339; Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 163; Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*, 79, 96 n. 90, 340; Bornkamm, *Luther und das Alte Testament*, 79; Ebeling, *Evangelienauslegung*, 342–43, 346, 354. Mattox's article "Luther's Interpretation of Scripture" assumes the importance of the analogy of the faith for Luther, showing how worried he was about an unruled interpretive methodology.

[81]For example, "similar to the faith," "in accordance with the faith," "it must harmonize with the faith," "it must be in agreement with the faith," "it must be subject to the faith," "judged and directed by the faith," "must submit to the faith." Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle," 244, 248.

[82]Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle," 245–48.

[83]Hägglund recognizes this dual function in the tradition ("Die Bedeutung der *Regula fidei*," 38–40); Mary Jane Haemig intimates this for Luther and demonstrates it for his heirs ("The Living Voice of the Catechism: German Lutheran Catechetical Preaching, 1530–1580" [PhD diss., Harvard University 1996], 104). Mattox also points out the positive feature of the rule of faith, "Luther's Interpretation of Scripture," 56. Richard Muller points out the negative function, while intimating the positive role of the rule, see Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:493–97.

that are the ancient, true Christian catechism or common education for Christians![84]

There's a modern reluctance to state the rule or analogy of faith in a set formula. This tendency undercuts the historic use and goal of the analogy of faith: it is the Bible's own faithful guide to the Bible. To learn the analogy of faith, simple Christians—in particular, the illiterate majority of the church throughout the centuries—require a set formula. A set formula does not mean that there's only one way to state the analogy of faith. Luther, for example, is clear that there are many ways to say the same thing (*res*), but good pedagogy requires memorization. The Christian faith isn't something you know when you see it; the Christian faith is explicit and public, open to all by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (and *only* by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!).

That is how Luther understood the analogy of faith. He defined it as the catechism: the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, and the sacraments of Baptism, Communion, and Absolution. Martin Luther interpreted the Bible according to the analogy of faith.

On Sources and Method

The Weimar edition holds more than two thousand sermon transcripts, spanning all of Luther's preaching career from 1512, delivered to the Augustinian chapter in Erfurt, to 1546, in Eisleben days before his death.[85] Still,

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[84]Preface to the *Commentary on Zechariah* (1527), WA 23:485.28–486.1. See further the Preface to the *Large Catechism* (1529), BoC 1959, 359–60; WA 30,1:126.4–127.20. Also: "The holy fathers or apostles arranged [the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Our Father] this way, so that they would embrace the chief parts of Christian teaching for common people," Sermon on May 18, 1528, WA 30,1:2.21–23.

[85]Luther's first extant sermon could be from 1510; Erich Vogelsang seems to prefer that date himself, though he asserts that the date must remain an open question. Most scholars accept 1512, which avoids the awkward historical intimation that Luther began preaching before Johann Staupitz (c. 1460–1524) called him to do so in 1511 (Ulrich Asendorf, "Martin Luther als Prediger: Anmerkungen zur Bedeutung seiner Predigten im Rahmen seiner gesamten Theologie," in *Kirche in der Schule Luthers: Festschrift für D. Joachim Heubach*, ed. Bengt Hägglund and Gerhard Müller [Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1995], 11; Zschoch, "Predigten," 315). See Erich Vogelsang, "Zur Datierung der frühesten Lutherpredigten," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 50 (1931): 112–45, esp. 112–16. For the first extant sermon and the final sermon, see LW 51:5–13, 371–92 (WA 4:590–95; 51:123–34), respectively. For the number of extant sermons, see Kurt Aland, *Hilfsbuch zum Luther Studium*, 3rd ed. (Wittenberg: Luther-Verlag, 1970), 205–62.

scholars believe that we are missing about as many sermons as those contained in the Weimar edition—an enormous total, resulting from Luther's regular schedule of preaching two to three times a week.[86] "Often I preached four sermons in one day," Luther reminisced about his early preaching career.[87] After 1521 the record of extant sermons is more complete—approximately 90 percent—thanks to Luther's increased platform and the activity of faithful transcribers like Georg Rörer (1492–1557) and Johann Stolz (c. 1514–1556), among others.[88] Early in his career Luther would at times try to write down what he had preached after the fact, yet most of the records are from others' hands.[89]

Rörer has long been reputed as Luther's most accurate amanuensis.[90] His notes, as well as those of other clerks, are a hodgepodge of Latin and German. Despite Luther's slow manner of speaking, Rörer had to resort to a customized abbreviation system to capture even "the very bare bones" of Luther's sermons.[91] Rörer managed to capture Luther's very speech; however, he often elided words or phrases that he thought could be easily supplied— even entire sentences, especially proverbs, and biblical citations—and

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[86]Asendorf, "Martin Luther als Prediger," 12; Fred W. Meuser, *Luther the Preacher* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983), 18; Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 86; Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 14-16. Meuser estimates that Luther preached about four thousand sermons, which seems reasonable. Two to three sermons a week over thirty-four years would give a range of 3,500–5,300 sermons.

[87]WATR 3:655.7–8, no. 3843 (LW 54:282).

[88]Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 16; Kiessling, *Early Sermons*, 42. On Rörer and Stolz, see LW 58:xxiv–xxviii; Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 18–21.

[89]Jonathan Mumme, *Die Präsenz Christi im Amt: Am Beispiel ausgewählter Predigten Martin Luthers, 1535–1546* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 41–45; Zschoch, "Predigten," 316; Wood, *Captive to the Word*, 88–89; Kiessling, *Early Sermons*, 55–56.

[90]See Bengt Löfstedt, "Notizen eines Latinisten zu Luthers Predigten," *Vetenskapssocieteten i Lund: Årsbok* (1985): 24–42. Löfstedt trusts Georg Buchwald's evaluation of Rörer's accuracy, while adding three reasons. First, Luther and Rörer are contemporaries with similar education and training. Second, Rörer admired Luther and likely could and would imitate Luther's speech. Third, Löfstedt finds that the style in Rörer's notes parallels Luther's letters and lectures (p. 37). For the bulk of the article Löfstedt explains the oddities of Rörer's Latin notes (27–40). See further Axel Wiemer, *"Mein Trost, Kampf und Sieg ist Christus": Martin Luthers eschatologische Theologie nach seinen Reihenpredigten über 1. Kor 15 (1532/33)* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 19–23.

[91]Buchwald's introductory assessment of Luther's sermon series on 2 Peter and Jude, WA 14:2–3, quoting p. 2. Buchwald also finds the published version of these sermons "frequently toned down." Despite Luther's strong condemnation of using languages other than the vernacular, some of the Latin phrases and their German glosses are likely original to Luther, namely, technical terms and well-known proverbs (Löfstedt, "Notizen eines Latinisten zu Luthers Predigten," 26).

he suppresses transitions.[92] Luther talked about the analogy of faith and the catechism so often that his transcribers regularly patch over these references with a terse "u." (*und so weiter*, "and so on") or "etc.," or they abbreviate it by only naming one or some parts of the catechism.[93] Happily for us, Rörer taught his idiosyncratic system to Andreas Poach (1515–1585), who expanded the notes for publication for an early critical edition of Luther's works (Eisleben edition, 1564–1565).[94] Additionally, for many of the sermons we have other revised published versions, so we can compare Rörer's staccato versions of Luther's sermons against Poach's expansions and these other records.[95]

Luther's sermons will be the primary focus of this book. To show Luther's *teaching* on the analogy of faith, I will digest his sermons on Romans 12:6 (the reading for the Second Sunday after Epiphany), supplemented with other key sources. Luther is adamant that to read the Bible rightly is to read it according to the analogy of faith or the catechism. Before turning to Luther's use of the analogy of faith in interpretation, I will summarize Luther's explanation of the catechism. His explanation of the catechism is not limited to the *Small* and *Large Catechisms* (1529). I will especially focus on the records of Luther's quarterly catechetical sermon series—out of which the *Small* and *Large Catechisms* were born.

To show Luther's *use* of the analogy of faith, we will examine his exegesis of five passages from the five parts of the canon. Luther never exhaustively named and numbered the genres of the Bible. While he was sensitive to the Bible's literary nature, some scholars stretch his summary description of a

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[92]Paul Pietsch's introductory comments to Luther's 1529 sermons, WA 29:xvi–xxx; see also WA 27:xix–xxiv. Pietsch also provides a table of Rörer's most common, non-Tironian abbreviations, WA 29:xx–xxiv.

[93]For example, Sermon on Pentecost Tuesday (1529), WA 29:376.15; Sermon on the Second Sunday after Epiphany (1536), WA 41:510.36–38, 511.1; Sermon on St. Michael's (1539), WA 47:857.26–27; Sermon on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (1544), WA 49:533.22, 534.1–3; WATR 2:303.5–8, no. 2047.

[94]See LW 58:xxvi–xxvii; LW 69:136–40.

[95]See LW 58:xxvii. Clearly this complicated transmission history presents difficulties for text criticism. For an example of such careful text criticism, see Susanne Bei der Wieden, *Luthers Predigten des Jahres 1522: Untersuchungen zu ihrer Überlieferung* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1999). I do not intend to pursue explaining the text-critical nuances in my own work; the scholarship has shown that we can trust the ideas, if not the very words, as Luther's own.

book into its genre.[96] But he was attentive to canon. He published his German translation of the Bible by canon divisions: Law (1523), History (1523), Wisdom (1524), Prophets (1532), and New Testament (1522).[97] I have selected representative passages for each part of the canon: Genesis 22; Judges 14:14; Psalm 72; Isaiah 9:2-7; and Luke 24:13-49. These passages are well represented in Luther's teaching and preaching.[98] Altogether this book examines about 10 percent of Luther's sermons (185 out of 2,082 sermons) and 4 percent of Luther's postils (16 out of 412 postils), supplemented by lectures, tracts, and prefaces.[99] This will give us a full picture of Luther and the analogy of faith: the theory and the practice and whatever differences there might be between the two.

This book is not structured chronologically. Historians often have anxiety about such projects, and this is especially the case with historians of Luther and the Reformation. Luther was an occasional writer and speaker, and so his writing and speaking was heavily inflected by his current circumstances. This fact is often used to resist harmonization of Luther's views and statements over his lifetime. While Luther surely

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[96]For example, Proverbs is a book of good works; Ecclesiastes, a book of comfort; Song of Songs, a book of praise. See "Preface to the Books of Solomon" (1545), LW 35:258, 260 (WADB 10,1:7.3–4, 8.24–25); Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God: The Wittenberg School and Its Scripture-Centered Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 164–65.

[97]And the Apocrypha was published in 1534. Luther accepted the Jewish canon delimitation instead of the Septuagint, but he followed the Septuagint's fourfold division of the Old Testament: the Law, History, Wisdom, and Prophets. See Rune Imberg, *Bibelläsaren som förändrade världen: Om Martin Luther som bibelteolog—bibelöversättare—bibelutgivare*, Församlingsfakultetens småskrifter 5 (Gothenburg: Församlingsförlaget, 2017), 48–49. (Thank you to Tomas Bokedal for sharing this article with me and summarizing it for me!) The *Glossa ordinaria* divides the Old Testament in the same way; *Glossa ordinaria*, 1:†5r. Luther rejected contemporary subdivisions of the New Testament (that paralleled the Old Testament subdivisions), see "Preface to the New Testament" (1522), LW 35:357–58 (WADB 6:2.14–21, compare with p. 3.16–21). Luther omitted this portion of the preface in complete editions of the Bible and all editions of the New Testament after 1537.

[98]I also used the *Luther im WWW* database to locate relevant passages, searching key terms like *analoga fidei, secundum analogiam fidei, Röm 12, 7, iuxta praescriptum Ro. 12., iuxta analogiam fidei, so sollen sie dem Glauben ehnlich sein, das sie sich zum Glauben reimen, dem Glauben ehnlich, dem Glauben gemes, secundum fidei regulam, ad regulam Apostolis, ad regulam et normam fidei, reimt (reymt) sich mit dem glauben, reimt cum fide*. Also Luther tends to cluster other prooftexts around Romans 12:6, like Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 14:5; Galatians 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Peter 1:16-21; 1 John 4:1.

[99]For the full list of sermons and postils, see Aland, *Hilfsbuch zum Luther Studium*, 205–62, 187–204, respectively.

developed and changed his mind, scholars tend to portray Luther as erratic and volatile, changing his mind willy-nilly. (Think of how the "older Luther" is treated—as if he wasn't still one of the sharpest theologians and philosophers of his era after 1521.[100]) Often this seems to result from confusing Luther's rhetoric for dialectic—as if the way he's trying to persuade his audience is the same as what he's trying to persuade them of.[101] To apply core concepts and doctrines in different settings requires verbal adornment fitted to the audience.

Luther talks about the importance of the catechism and the analogy of faith over his entire career. So much so that in a sermon in 1530, he excuses himself from explaining a catechetical topic: "You've often heard about this command in the catechism, and you know what it says: *Love God and neighbor*. Therefore I won't say a lot about it now."[102] He published on a part of the catechism (the Ten Commandments) as early as 1518 and on the entire catechism as early as 1520; he published multiple works on the catechism as a whole as well as each of its parts.[103] He doesn't use the catechism merely as an occasional solution. The catechism is the principled, animating logic to his theology. He gives no indication that he thought he had discovered the catechism. It's an ancient Christian tool that he knew by heart ever since he began school (just over the tender age of four).[104] Throughout his life he presents the catechism as the key to reading the Bible, whether one is a pastor, seminarian, or simple layperson. Of course, key experiences

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[100]H. G. Haile shows the accusations of the elder Luther as senile for what they are: ridiculous. See H. G. Haile, *Luther: An Experiment in Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 31–43.

[101]For example, consider the reception of Luther's views of reason and allegory. (To be fair, Luther is particularly forceful with his rhetoric.) Gerrish shows that Luther distinguishes three types of reason: reason exercised in temporal matters, reason exercised in spiritual matters, and reason submitted to the word of God and faith. Luther only condemns reason exercised in spiritual matters. Because Luther doesn't give these three types different names, one must closely examine the context of his bombastic statements. See Gerrish, *Grace and Reason*, 10–27. Similarly Luther distinguishes two types of allegory: those ruled by reason and those ruled by the faith. He only rejects allegories ruled by reason.

[102]Sermon on the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity (1530), WA 32:127.6–8.

[103]See *A Short Explanation of the Ten Commandments* (1518), WA 1:250–56; *A Short Form of the Ten Commandments, Creed, the Our Father* (1520), WA 7:204–29.

[104]See Brecht, *Luther*, 1:14–15; E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and his Times: The Reformation from a New Perspective* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 111; Johann Michael Reu, *Luther's German Bible: An Historical Presentation Together with a Collection of Sources* (Columbus, OH: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1934; reprint, St. Louis: Concordia, 1984), 76; James MacKinnon, *Luther and the Reformation*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1925–1930), 1:5, 4:318–23.

reinvigorated the intensity of Luther's advocacy of the catechism—particularly, the radicalization of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486–1541) and the shocking Church Visitations of 1528–1529.[105] And so, later in his career he can be especially clear: the catechism is the touchstone, the true cubit, the master, and the greatest sermon.[106] This isn't a development in dialectic but in rhetoric.

Because this book is not structured chronologically, it is much less repetitive than it otherwise would be, and it can focus on the inner logic of Luther's teaching.

On Translation and Terms

Translation always presents difficulties. Luther is no exception. Here I want to address Luther's spelling, the Bible version used, and some key words. Typical of his era, Luther's spelling is inconsistent and at times erratic. I have preserved his text according to the Weimar edition (and in some cases certain sixteenth-century editions). This includes unusual capitalization, which I have preserved in English translation only in one case: his use of *nomina sacra*.[107] Luther used capitalization to differentiate when *Herr* ("Lord") translated the Tetragrammaton (יהוה) or אֲדֹנָי: "HERR" for the Tetragrammaton; "HErr" for אֲדֹנָי. Luther applies this typographical solution across both testaments.[108]

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[105]The Church Visitations were what drove Luther to reintroduce the catechism himself. Even after Karlstadt and the "heavenly prophets," Luther was still waiting for someone else to take up the task. See *The German Mass and Order of Service* (1526), LW 53:64–67 (WA 19:75.15–78.24). In contrast, see Preface to *The Small Catechism* (1529), TAL 4:212 (WA 30,1:264–65; BoC 1959, 338.

[106]Sermon on St. Michael's (1539), WA 47:857.26–27, "But through the touchstone. Therefore whatever depends on the Ten Commandments, etc."; Sermon on John 2:24 (1538), WA 46:780.15–17 (compare with LW 22:265), "Let us go to the touchstone, and let us measure with the true yardstick and see if it fits with the Our Father and the articles of the Christian faith"; WATR 1:489.22, no. 966, "the catechism must rule"; House Sermon on the Creed (1537), LW 57:244 (WA 45:12.7–8), "these are the three greatest sermons: the Our Father, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments."

[107]For examples, of Luther's unusual capitalization, see "DU aber nach deinem verstockten und unbusfertigen Hertzen"; "DEnn es ist kein ansehen der Person fur Gott"; "SIhe aber zu"; WADB 7:35 (Rom 2:5, 11, 17). This tends to happen at the beginning of a new thought.

[108]See "Preface to the Old Testament" (1523), LW 35:248–49 (WADB 8:30.20–28); Christine Helmer, "Luther's Trinitarian Hermeneutic and the Old Testament," *Modern Theology* 18, no. 1 (2002): 49–73; Heinrich Assel, "Gottesnamen und Kernstellen in Luthers Bibelübersetzung 1545: Eine systematisch-theologische Perspektive," in *"Was Dolmetschen für Kunst und Arbeit sei": Die Lutherbibel und andere deutsche Bibelübersetzungen*, ed. Melanie Lange and Martin Rösel (Leipzig: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft und Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014), 107–35.

Rather than use an English Bible version that approximates Luther's Bible translation, I have translated his version or have preserved his free rendering from the relevant sources. Luther had several editions of the Hebrew Bible on hand but used Gershon ben Moses Soncino's Brescia Biblia (1494) as his base text for the Old Testament.[109] Luther used Erasmus's critical edition of the New Testament as his base text for the New Testament, and in some passages Erasmus's base text differs from the modern critical editions (Erasmus only had seven incomplete manuscripts on hand, all from the Majority text tradition).[110] Where relevant, I've noted these differences and summarized modern discussions of the issue in the notes. Luther's Bible did not have verse numbers, though the Weimar editors have inserted the German versification, which is sometimes different from English versification; I have used English versification.

Some explanation is required for about half a dozen words in Luther's text. I have preserved the tone of Luther's labels for other groups. I have let their impoliteness remain not because I agree with these labels, but because it's accurate history. For example, *papistae* is consistently rendered "Papists," because Luther distinguished between Catholics like himself and Catholics who were ultimately—in his eyes—committed to the pope and his authority (hence, Luther's use of "Romanist"). *Anabaptistae* and *Widerteuffer* are rendered "Rebaptizers." Anabaptist has taken on a technical sense, but Luther in no way was trying to be fair; he meant the name as an insult. *Rotten* has been translated as "fanatic"; I used to do the same with *Schwärmer*, but Amy Nelson Burnett has changed my mind. She argues that *Schwärmer* should be left untranslated and un-disambiguated, because translating *Schwärmer* and disambiguating the various parties obfuscates the core reason Luther opposed these groups: they rejected—in his judgment—the ordained order of God. Modern scholars tend to understand *Schwärmer* as only referring to the

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[109]A. Schleiff, "Theologisch-exegetische Einleitung," in WADB 9:xiii. Luther also had a copy of one of Daniel Bomberg's Bibles. See Stephen G. Burnett, "Luthers hebräische Bibel (Brescia, 1494)—Ihre Bedeutung für die Reformation," in *Meilensteine der Reformation: Schlüsseldokumente der frühen Wirksamkeit Martin Luthers*, ed. Irene Dingel and Henning P. Jürgens (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2014), 62–69.

[110]William W. Combs, "Erasmus and the Textus Receptus," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1, no. 1 (1996), 45–48

Radicals, but Luther often refers to the Reformed by this term.[111] And so I have left *Schwärmer* untranslated.

When referring to the Apostles' Creed, *symbolum* has consistently been translated "Creed." The chief Christian creeds—the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds—were often called "symbols" by the tradition, because these watchwords help us to distinguish true preaching from false preaching.[112] I use "analogy of faith" and "rule of faith" interchangeably. I do this for two reasons: (1) Luther uses them interchangeably (although he would prefer "analogy of faith" because of its biblical origins in Rom 12:6), and (2) "rule of faith" is now much more common than "analogy of faith," so I have tried to mix them together to minimize how foreign "analogy of faith" will sound to many. Finally, I have capitalized Baptism, Communion, and Absolution to indicate their status in the catechism. The word *sacrament* remains lowercased to distinguish the general use from the typical Lutheran use of "the Sacrament," meaning "the Sacrament of the Altar" or Holy Communion (Luther rarely uses the term "the Eucharist").

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[111]See Amy Nelson Burnett, "Luther and the *Schwärmer*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 511–13, 521.

[112]See Esther Chung-Kim and Todd R. Hains, *Acts*, RCS NT 6 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 213n34.