

HISTORY OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

VOLUME 3: RENAISSANCE, REFORMATION, HUMANISM



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Volume 3: Renaissance, Reformation, Humanism

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VOLUME 3: RENAISSANCE, REFORMATION, HUMANISM

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VOLUME 3: RENAISSANCE, REFORMATION, HUMANISM

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ABBREVIATIONS

PRIMARY SOURCES

<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i> (<i>Jewish Antiquities</i>)
ASD	Erasmus, <i>Opera omnia</i> . Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1969–.
CO	John Calvin, <i>Opera quae supersunt omnia</i> . Edited by Guillaume Baum, Eduard Cunitz, and Eduard Reuss. 59 vols. CR 29–87. Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1863–1900. Repr., New York: Johnson, 1964.
<i>En. 1 Cor.</i>	John Colet, <i>Enarratio in primam epistolam S. Pauli ad Corinthios</i>
<i>En. in Ps.</i>	Erasmus, <i>Enarratio in psalmum</i>
<i>En. Rom.</i>	John Colet, <i>Enarratio in epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos</i>
LB	Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, <i>Opera omnia</i> . Edited by Jean Le Clerc. 10 vols. Hildesheim: Olms, 1962–.
MSB	Thomas Müntzer, <i>Schriften und Briefe: Kritische Gesamtausgabe</i> . Edited by Günther Franz and Paul Kirn. Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 33. Gütersloh: Mohn, 1968.
<i>Par. ad. Cor.</i>	Erasmus, <i>Paraphrases ad Corinthos</i>
<i>Par. ad. Gal.</i>	Erasmus, <i>Paraphrases ad Galatas</i>
S	Huldreich Zwingli <i>Werke: Erste vollständige Ausgabe durch Melchior Schuler und Johann Schulthess</i> . 8 vols. Zurich: Friedrich Schulthess, 1828–1842.
SW	Huldrych Zwingli, <i>Sämtliche Werke</i> . Edited by Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider. 14 vols. CR 88–101. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1905–1962
WA	<i>Martin Luthers Werke</i> (Weimarer Ausgabe). Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanst; Weimar: Böhlau, 1966–.
WA.DB	Die deutsche Bibel (German Bible), 12 vols.

WA.TR Tischreden (Table Talks), 6 vols.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- ARG *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
BBKL *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*. Edited
by Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz. Hamm, Westfalia: Bautz,
1970–.
BHTh Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib *Biblica*
CR Corpus reformatorum
JSOTSup Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement
Series
TRE *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*. Edited by Gerhard
Krause and Gerhard Müller. 36 vols. Berlin: de Gruyter,
1976–2004.
ZHTh *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*
ZKG *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*

INTRODUCTION

With this third volume of our exposition we come to an epoch marked by significant major changes, as the interpretation of the Holy Scripture was set on completely new foundations by deep and far-reaching intellectual and faith-historical movements.

The first of these movements is humanism. Through the rediscovery of the writings of antiquity and their wide distribution enabled by printing, the humanists awakened to life a cultural heritage that had been largely buried for a long time. There had been similar upswings before—the Carolingian age and the thirteenth century are such times—but now a widespread effort involving an entire class of scholars opened up the tradition of antiquity in its full scope. This occurred, on the one hand, by philological work; critical editions of sources called for the text-critical method in particular. It also became the prerequisite for biblical exegesis; the work of Erasmus on the New Testament is an important proof of this. Knowledge of biblical languages—now also increasingly Hebrew—was recognized as a decisive prerequisite for it.

The intellectual-historical element of these developments has been characterized, especially since the Enlightenment, by the term *renaissance*. This age, which considered itself progressive, saw the reawakening of antiquity as the overcoming of the “dark” Middle Ages. Concretely, Platonism especially influenced the Italian Renaissance; the return to the original Aristotle, once again accessible by the publication of original sources, was another important factor. Although the Platonist stream never disappeared completely, its effects remained temporally and spatially limited. New initiatives in the sixteenth century changed biblical understanding decisively.

In the first place the Reformation is to be mentioned here. For it, the Bible as witness of faith was at the center of its theological viewpoints and efforts. Luther’s path to the knowledge gained by biblical interpretation, beginning with the Old Testament, can be traced through the young biblical professor’s lectures. Melancthon undertook to organize the results of

evangelical scriptural research systematically and thereby created a basic skeleton of Protestant doctrine. Zwingli and Calvin, two other “great” reformers, proceeding from similar theological knowledge, each proposed a way of his own to biblical explanation and implications for practice drawn from the Bible. Of the second rank of reformers, an entire group of well-known exegetes can be mentioned: Osiander, Bucer, Oecolampadius, Bullinger, and others. It would be interesting to present the distinct services and peculiarities of each. Their numerous commentaries are in many cases not yet critically edited. In the limited space of this volume, we must instead limit ourselves to tracing the special paths the so-called “radical reformers” took on the basis of each of their own interpretations of Scripture apart from the Great Church and the distinctive practical consequences for the life of their communities that each of them drew from the Bible.

In its third major section, our presentation turns to the Counter-Reformation and the exegesis developed in it for defense against the Protestants. Of the large number of Catholic interpreters of this period, we select Joannes Maldonatus as the exemplar, and with his figure can at the same time refer to the important role the Jesuits played in the study of the Bible established in this period.

Late humanism is represented by Hugo Grotius, important not only as a jurist and state-lawyer but also as a lay theologian. By his interest in historical considerations, he appears already as a transition figure to a later epoch in which history as background of biblical texts was to become the center of attention. The fourth volume of our exposition is reserved for describing this development, which will lead up to the present.

The Bible was no stranger to Lutheran orthodoxy either, but in many cases it represented only one locus within its dogmatic systems. The monumental work of Abraham Calov, however, will show that orthodox theologians also engaged in exegesis. It is impressive as a continuation of Reformation theology, although many of its statements make a rather fundamentalistic impression on today’s readers and apologetics is one of its primary motives.

This third volume of our series also follows the model of those preceding it. Again, no special knowledge in exegesis or church history is required for understanding it, and it will not be a handbook providing a seamless exposition. Here, too, the one presupposition that cannot be overemphasized is that only a reduction of the materials to the most decisive developments permits us insight into the motives behind the understanding of the Bible for the epoch. Likewise dispensed with is an

annotative apparatus as well as a comprehensive bibliography, although the author has drawn upon the available literature as fully as possible. The literature references at the end of the volume name the sources used and some important works of secondary literature that facilitate further study.

THE BIBLE IN RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

1. REDISCOVERING THE HEBREW ORIGINAL: GIANNOZZO MANETTI

In the early fifteenth century the larger part of Italy was divided into numerous city-states and several larger territories. Some, like Sicily and Naples, were monarchies; others, like Venice in particular, republics. Occupying an intermediary position were states like Florence, which had a republican constitution but was actually ruled by a powerful patrician class in a more or less authoritarian fashion. One special position—though frequently contested—was held by the vast state of the church with its capital at Rome, the seat of the curia. Giannozzo de' Manetti was born in Florence on 5 June 1396, the son of a rich merchant from a noble family. At first he took part in his father's business, but he broke away as early as 1421 in order to be able to devote himself completely to humanist studies. Thus he learned Greek with the learned Camaldolense monk Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) and studied logic, philosophy, and theology in particular in Santo Spirito, the Augustinian monastery of his home city, a meeting point of humanists. One special feature: he learned Hebrew from Florentine Jews, among them the well-to-do and respected Immanuel ben Abraham de San Miniato in particular.

Manetti had his descent and comprehensive education to thank for his early political and diplomatic career, which first began in 1429 with his acceptance into the Council of the “Twelve Nobles” (*Dodici Buonomini*). But he was also active as a money changer and acquired multiple properties and therefore led the life of a propertied, cultured citizen. Activity (evidently successful) as city commandant in municipalities dependent on Florence was among the tasks on occasion entrusted to him. Especially to be stressed, however, is his diplomatic activity: after a successfully concluded mission in Genoa in 1437, he was dispatched at regular intervals to various cities and courts, among them to the pope at Rome and to

King Alfonso V (I) in Naples, whose expansionary politics the city-states deemed dangerous to their security. Naples, which after the Norman victory over the Moors formed together with Sicily the Norman kingdom, had then passed into Hohenstaufen possession, and Anjou was finally separated from it in 1282 because of Sicily's revolt against Anjou (the so-called "Sicilian Vesper"). Sicily fell under the rule of Aragonese princes; Naples remained at first with Anjou. When the dynasty there extinguished its male line of descent and the land was ruled by the childless queen Johanna II, at her death the question of succession was raised. Naples was a papal fief, but who could lay claim to the investiture? Here René, head of the French branch of the Anjou family, who was named in Johanna's will as successor, stood over against Alfonso V of Aragon and Sicily, whom she had once adopted, as competitors. Indeed René first (1435) received investiture, but Alfonso, a shrewd power politician, did not acknowledge the pope's decision—which he was enabled to do because of the church schism at the time. He was able to play the pope and the antipope against one another. Instead, in addition to his diplomatic moves he set about the conquest of the land by force of arms, which he attained after military campaigns of many years with the capture of Naples in 1442. As a true renaissance prince, however, Alfonso was also a humanist and patron of humanists. Accordingly, he received Manetti because of his rhetorical gifts with full honors, much as Venice did later, differences of political opinion notwithstanding.

When Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464) rose to rulership in Florence, the influence of Manetti, who was a supporter of the republic form of state, fell considerably. He was finally driven into exile by fraudulent tax demands in 1453. He first went to Rome as papal secretary to Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455), a friend of humanists and the founder of the Vatican library, and, after his early death, to the court of Alfonso V in Naples, where he was active as a highly esteemed author until his death in October 1459. Giannozzo Manetti deserves our special attention as the preeminent representative of Florentine early humanism.

Since Jacob Burckhardt's work *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (*The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy*, Basel, 1860), there has been lively discussion about the terms "renaissance" and "humanism" and the significance of the period described by these catchwords. While Burckhardt saw in the humanism of the Renaissance a clear break with the Middle Ages and the beginning of modernity, in current discussion has emerged a far greater continuity between the two periods. It is true that in various lands, Italy and France first, a movement developed from the fourteenth

century on in which the rediscovery of antiquity went along a reawakened interest in the grandeur of humanity and nature, which were foreign to the Middle Ages. The poet Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) is the first representative of this new feeling toward the world. But it must be realized that the study of antiquity had its place before, in the medieval monastic schools and universities. Working in the “liberal arts,” among which rhetoric had an important place, was a component of the standard program of academic education that students of theology also had to complete. The term “humanist” for the teacher of classic literature arose in this context. Together with theology, although mediated by later scholastic education, the philosophical traditions of classical antiquity were cultivated. Beyond this were repeated emphatic turns back toward the untransmitted heritage of antiquity. Thus the thirteenth century has already been spoken of many times as a period of “renaissance”; at that time, and even earlier, in the Carolingian age, similar upswings could be observed. We encountered them many times in volume 2 of our study. Yet the fifteenth century can be said to have brought something decisively new in one respect: at the time there grew a strong interest in the authentic sources and their original wording. People set about searching for all the manuscripts with a zeal and joy of discovery. Therefore philological work also began, with the goal of coming closer to the original wording of the sources. Philological labors in particular characterized early humanism. The authors of classical antiquity and their writings were at first the primary concern in this regard, then later the Bible, too, as the decisive source of revelation. The fact that literary criticism was oriented at the start to pagan authors is certainly dependent on the pressure church censors exercised on publishing; to doubt the wording of the Holy Scripture could be considered an attack on the teaching of the church itself. In connection with the study of sources, then, interest grew also in the original languages in which these were written, first in classical Latin of antiquity, then Greek, then Hebrew as well, and later other ancient oriental languages.

With Giannozzo Manetti we encounter a pioneer from the early age of Italian humanism whose diverse literary works offer us a revealing insight into the intellectual interests of the educated renaissance citizenry. His *Orationes* (*Orations*) show him to be a prominent orator who endeavored with success to make use of Cicero’s Latin, considered as classical in the early Renaissance. Manetti combines a creation theology starting point with the postulate of human dignity, vested in one’s own potential acts of freedom, who is called even as a servant of God to an active life in civil society. By liberating humanity from “evil,” even Christ’s coming into

the world has contributed a new righteousness enabling this. Quotations from the Pentateuch, Aristotle, and Cicero alternate with one another harmoniously. Elements of Christian thought combine with elements of Aristotelian moral philosophy into a basically optimistic view of humanity. According to Manetti, Moses and the Greek sources speak as little of original sin as of an other-worldly hope. Manetti also presents the same image of humanity in his chief work, *De dignitate et excellentia hominis* (*On the Dignity and Perfection of Man*, 1452).

Manetti translated most New Testament writings (the four Gospels, Paul's epistles, the other canonical epistles as well as the Apocalypse of John) from the Greek original into Latin and also set about a similar translation of the Old Testament. For this above all, Manetti deserves our attention with regard to the history of the interpretation of the Bible. The significance of such a translation first becomes understandable when one considers that the edition of the Bible used in the Middle Ages and the early modern age in the West was the Vulgate (the term first arises, however, at the start of the sixteenth century in Lefèvre d'Étaples and Erasmus), that is, the Latin edition stemming from Jerome (published from 390 on). It was confirmed in 1546 at the Council of Trent as the authoritative edition for faith and morals in the Catholic Church, though the text was revised and simplified. It remained in force in this form until 1979, when a new official Latin translation (New Vulgate) was published. The situation with the Psalter was especially problematic: not the revised edition Jerome prepared on the basis of the Hebrew text but the older edition based on the Septuagint (Greek translations of the Old Testament, third century B.C.E.–first century C.E.), the so-called Gallican Psalter, had prevailed (see *History* 2:37). It was able to maintain itself, for example, in the breviary, until very recently. Manetti's program of a new translation of the Old Testament from the original text must have seemed outright revolutionary.

Manetti evidently had in mind translating the entire Old Testament into classical Latin by the use of rabbinical commentaries, which he valued especially because of their philological observations. Though his death prevented him from completing this project, the (unpublished) manuscript of his Psalms translation survives. Due to his knowledge of Hebrew, extraordinary among Christians, he was especially qualified for this task. A testimony to his studies is the Bible edition from his possession preserved in the original with Hebrew marginal notes into which he had inserted in its own hand the Hebrew equivalents to the Latin terms and etymologies of biblical names. The Psalms translation did not offer an

interpretation, but it reveals the effort made to reach a reproduction of the Hebrew (Masoretic) text as accurately as possible and in so doing present it in the suitable style of Latin language.

As already indicated, the daring to make a Bible translation of one's own was not without danger in the fifteenth century. We will come across polemical disputes on the question in the case of Lorenzo Valla as well (see below, §1.2). Manetti had to defend himself against a number of opponents who accused him of arrogance in his translating work and maintained that the availability of Jerome's version made a new translation superfluous from the outset. Against this, Manetti stressed in the apologetical work (*Apologeticus*) he sent to King Alfonso that an accurate Latin translation of the Hebrew text was needed because the Jews based their arguments against Christian understanding of the Bible on errors in the available translation. He gave Jerome high praise for his pioneering achievement, as is understandable in view of the criticism of his own translation, for the appeal to the church fathers acknowledged by all protected him himself. But Manetti also points out that Jerome's translation (the Vulgate) meanwhile suffered many falsifications, and he highlights in particular the muddled situation with regard to the double psalm translation (*Apologeticus* 2.78–86). For this and other reasons a new translation from the original text would be required. He himself also refers critically to the legend of the seventy wise men in Egypt who supposedly translated the Septuagint in identical wording, in that he refers to a similar narrative in Peisistratos about the origin of the definitive Homer text (1.37–38). After listing in detail the divergences between the Septuagint version of the Psalms and the Hebrew original text as well as the biblical translations of late antiquity (books 3 and 4), he sets forth in his conclusion (book 5) the principles that in his opinion should be followed for an adequate translation of any text, but especially the Bible. These included, first, an exact knowledge of the language to be translated (5.23–26), as well as a likewise good knowledge of that into which it is translated (5.27–33). In addition, it is to be considered that a strictly literal translation is impossible, because of the lack of precise correspondence between the vocabularies of differing languages (5.34). On the other hand, the available translations (Greek) of authors of antiquity and of the Bible into Latin exhibit so many omissions and additions that they do not offer exact reproductions of the original text. What is quite readily tolerated in the case of profane authors is forbidden in the translation of the Bible principally because of its divine authority, which forbids any imprecision. Here the middle way between excessive literalness and an all-too-free paraphrase is neces-

sary for reproducing the intended sense adequately (5.81). Here, then, are stated important principles for humanistic translation work that were to determine not only Manetti's efforts. It is also particularly to be noted that the effort for a Latin in keeping with classic standards conditions most of Manetti's deviations from Jerome's original, to which he tried time and again to adhere with respect to content.

Also of interest is Manetti's incomplete work—available in only handwritten manuscript—*Adversus Iudaeos et Gentes* (*Against the Jews and Pagans*), which he published in the last years of his life between 1454 and 1459. The title is rather misleading, because here Manetti offers a wide-ranging overview of human and salvation history as a whole, beginning with the creation of Adam and ending at the present day. Starting with the primeval history, he comes to the confusion of language at Babel (Gen 11), which he considers the origin of paganism. There follows a section with fierce criticism of the pagan religions and cults, which are set over against "the Hebrews" (the Israelites up to and including the time of Moses). The Hebrews are described as righteous by nature, as the only people who acknowledged the true God and hence were the recipients of numerous privileges in the exodus from Egypt and the gift of the Torah. The Torah is divided into the Decalogue and other regulations. In keeping with this, a distinction is made between universal ethical and ritual (related to sacrifices and dietary regulations) commandments. While in the case of ethical regulations, and in the reverence of the one God, the Torah is exemplary and corresponds to natural morality, the ritual regulations are censured as servile and unworthy of human freedom. The standards, despite the criticism of the world of the pagan gods, are derived from the morality of antiquity. Manetti also criticized the purely this-worldly rewards and punishments tied with the Torah. Striking is the absence of any allegorical or typological interpretation of the Old Testament; Manetti's presentation is, in keeping with the standards of the time, totally oriented toward history. His criticism is not directed against contemporary Judaism, which had had long ago advanced beyond the assumption of purely temporal rewards and punishments and was no longer even able to sacrifice in the temple. The figure of Moses is characterized as that of an ethically exemplary individual; his qualities as orator, law-giver, and guide of the people, in tune with the humanistic ideal, are stressed. Moreover, the history of Israel can be praised as of greater antiquity than that of Athens and Rome.

It can be rightly claimed that, because of the great respect he received as one of the most prominent humanists of his age, Manetti delivered an

important impulse for a decisive turn in the evaluation of Hebrew studies in humanism. He was not the first humanist to concern himself with this language; among others to be mentioned would be the Venetian patrician Marco Lippomanno (1390–1438). But there was also great resistance. So, in a letter even Leonardo Bruni Aretino (1369–1444) could flatly deny the usefulness of Hebrew studies. But interest in the language of the Old Testament now clearly increased.

1.2. REDISCOVERING THE NEW TESTAMENT ORIGINAL TEXT: LORENZO VALLA

Lorenzo Valla was one of the best-known Italian humanists of the first half of the fifteenth century. He was born in Rome, either in 1405 or 1407, the son of a curial official and jurist. The noble family on his father's side came originally from Piacenza, but other relatives, such as his maternal grandfather Giovanni Scrivini and his son Melchiorre, were also in the service of the curia. Since his father died very young, Lorenzo and his siblings were raised by his mother, whom he honored as a model of wifely virtue. During his childhood Rome was in a desperate situation: many times captured and plundered, it offered visitors a desolate view with its churches and buildings largely in ruin. In the fourteenth century the popes had resided in Avignon for decades, after which there was a long-lasting schism that was finally ended by the Council of Constance (1414–1418). Martin V (1417–1431), elected at the council, first returned to Rome and began the reconstruction. Nevertheless, Lorenzo enjoyed a normal school education, but he was unable to attend high school, because the *Studium Urbis*, the papal university, closed since 1405, was not reopened until 1431, by Martin's successor Eugenius IV (1431–1447). Lorenzo was self-educated in philosophy and theology, but he had opportunity for further private education: in 1420–1421 he learned Greek from Giovanni Aurisopa, a manuscript dealer.

Lorenzo was introduced into the circle of Roman humanists, presumably by his uncle. Thus his later criticism of Aristotelians and scholastics were stimulated by the model of Leonardo Bruni, whom Lorenzo met while he spent several months as a Florentine ambassador in Rome in 1426. Lorenzo's own first work (lost), which he wrote in 1428 at twenty-one years of age, sparked lively discussion. In the *Comparatio Ciceronis Quaintilianique* (*Comparison of Cicero and Quintilian*), he ranked the rhetorician Quintilian (ca. 30–ca. 90), whose *Institutio oratoria* had been first rediscovered in 1416, over Cicero, who otherwise was

generally considered the linguistic and philosophical model. Here Lorenzo's rhetorical ideal already announced itself: (the Latin) language and classical rhetoric form the point of departure for his own contribution to contemporary philosophy, in distinction from the scholastic educational program based on logic, and finally for his search an adequate linguistic-form for the translation of the Bible.

In 1430, Lorenzo self-consciously applied—without success, due to his youth—for his deceased uncle's post as papal secretary. From 1431 to 1433 he held the sole teaching chair of rhetoric at the University of Pavia. The few professors of "liberal arts" there, like those in other Italian universities, had a difficult stand against the numerous traditional Aristotelian philosophers and jurists of Averroist stamp. The Averroists taught the eternity of the world, of matter, and of humanity as well. They denied God's activity as creator and contested the immortality of the soul (hence, fortune is tied to the temporal world alone), as well as the human freedom to act, which is tied from within through the influence of the senses and from outside by the stars. Especially problematic was the thesis of double truth: the one a "truth of things" tied to things and reason, the other a "probability," which is at home in faith. Valla had already written his dialogue *De voluptate* (*On Pleasure*) against the ethical tendencies of Aristotelian and Stoic provenance during his stay-over in Piacenza in the spring of 1431.

After fierce criticism of this work, he changed its title in the second edition (1435) to *De vero bono* (*On True Good*.) Against Stoic morality, also widespread among humanists, Valla first pitted Epicurean ethics; humans do not act in accord with abstract ideals, but the goal of ethical action is pleasure (*voluptas*). According to the third book, however, it is not earthly but heavenly pleasure in God that is the true goal of humanity. Despite furious attacks from various sides condemning Valla as an advocate of libertine morality, his concern was evidently Christian. Yet he pursued other, typically humanistic, goals as well. When a legal colleague claimed that the medieval jurist Bartolo di Sassoferato surpassed Cicero in his works, Valla called for (*Opera* 1:633–43) returning to the origins of Roman law and accused medieval jurists of not understanding and interpreting the law correctly because of their ignorance of Latin. Typically humanist in Valla is the frequent, for us surprising, stress on his universal knowledge. Thus he can state about his knowledge of law: "Observe ... in this material what I fault in the legal scholars so that you can see that I judge myself with precisely the greatest in every branch of science" (*Opera* 1:294). The powerful jurists did not succumb to this attack. Their

reaction forced Valla to submit his resignation. After stopovers in Milan and Florence, he went to Alfonso V of Aragon, at the time in the course of conquering the kingdom of Naples, and he accompanied him on his campaigns until the conquest of the capital. He remained with Alfonso as counselor, secretary, and confidant until 1448. Alfonso's support of him by benefices (though Valla never became a cleric) and later a salary assured him undisturbed work. At the Neapolitan court he met a group of humanist friends who made his stay even more enjoyable. Here he also wrote the first edition of his *Collatio Novi Testamenti* and composed among other things a theological work on free will (*De libero arbitrio*), in which he developed his own theory on the problem and—against Boethius—rejected philosophy (especially Aristotelianism and speculative thinking) as a tool of theology. He called instead for returning to the original methods of the ancient church fathers and the Bible itself. The humanistic “back to the sources” (*ad fontes*), although not yet coined, was his heart's concern. Yet his quarrelsomeness was ungovernable, leading him time and again into conflicts. In addition, he composed in Naples *Elegantiarum latinae linguae libri VI* (*Six Books on Elegant Expressions of the Latin Language*), a theory of language and above all the concepts of classical Latin in dialogue form that he, like other humanists, sought to bring again into currency. Of chief concern to him was an exact conceptuality suitable for a modern form of philosophy and all text interpretation. A sort of practical application is the *Dialecticum disputationum libri III* (*Dialectical Disputations*) written around 1440, which, in opposition to the Aristotelians and scholastic metaphysics, which speak abstractly of “being” (*ens*) and thereby become meaningless, attempts to return again to the “authentic” Aristotle according to his original text. There are only “things” (*res*) that are mediated by conversation. Rhetoric should take over the place of metaphysics. Valla seeks his own position in which language and reality are very intimately connected: only by language are things mediated to humans.

Certainly Valla's best known work is—although it arose from a momentary political need of his employer in conflict with the pope—that of 1440, in which he demonstrated the inauthenticity of the so-called “Donation of Constantine” (*De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio*), that is, the actually spurious original documents by which Constantine the Great (Roman emperor, 306–337) turned over primacy of the empire and the western half of the empire to Pope Silvester I as his area of dominion. An officially commissioned work of Valla as court historian is his *Historiarum Ferdinandi regis Aragonae libri III* (*History of*

King Ferdinand of Aragon), the father of his commissioner. The description of the monarch is not free of idealization, as is understandable in light of the author's situation. Nevertheless, Valla was by the standards of his time an accomplished historical-writer—as is evident as well in that shortly before his death (1456) Venice offered him the task of undertaking an official history of the republic.

Yet there were also problems. Two bishops accused him of heresy in 1444 because in a disputation with the popular Lenten preacher Antonio da Bitonto he questioned the traditionally accepted derivation of the so-called Apostles' Creed from the twelve apostles and because of a chapter about the Holy Spirit in the first edition of his *Disputationes*. A trial was averted only by the king's intervention.

After the conclusion of a peace between Alfonso V and Pope Eugenius IV, Valla's long-desired return to Rome seemed no longer impossible. But a first stay in Rome—where his mother and many relatives still lived—ended in the fall of 1444 with Valla's flight from his opponents, who tried again to restart the heresy trial. Because of his writing against the donation of Constantine, he would also have to explain himself before representatives of the curia, although he could credibly attest that the work was not directed against the pope presently in office. Yet evidently Valla finally succeeded in convincing Eugenius IV of his innocence in an apologetical work (*Opera* 1:795–800a). But the pope died in February of 1447, before Valla could make his return. This took place at last in 1448, under the humanist pope Nicholas V. Due to Nicholas's generous patronage, Valla was able once again to engage in full-scale activities in the final years of his life. He again became professor of rhetoric (1450), this time in *Studium Urbis* and, in addition, from 1448 on papal annalist (*scriptor litterarum apostolicarum*) and from 1455 papal secretary (under Calixtus III, 1455–1458). Taken together, all these occupations amply filled out his time. Thus as professor he had to give morning and afternoon lectures. During this period he wrote, among other things, the second edition of his *Collatio Novi Testamenti* (which he himself, however, probably did not consider the final edition), and on 7 March 1457, a few months before his death, he delivered for the Dominicans in their church S. Maria sopra Minerva the famous festival address about their saint, Thomas Aquinas: *Enconium S. Thomae* (*Praise of St. Thomas*). Here, too, quite contrary to what was expected of him, Valla was outspoken about his opinion. Instead of metaphysics and the philosophical-logical terminology as found in Thomas and contemporary theologians, one should return to the authority of ancient church theologians such as Cyprian, Lactantius, Hilary,

Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, who knew no such terminology but in their simple language “directed themselves solely toward imitating the apostle Paul, by far the first of all theologians and the master of doing theology” (*Encomium*, in *Opera* 2:393–94/349–50). Valla remained true to himself!

Lorenzo Valla died, apparently suddenly and unexpectedly, on 1 August 1457. We do not know the precise details of his death or its cause. The epitaph to him his mother placed in the church San Giovanni im Laterano states, incorrectly, the year of his death as 1455 and his age as fifty.

Valla’s most significant contribution to biblical interpretation is his *Collatio*, or also *Adnotationes*, on the New Testament. The latter title is not from Valla himself but the one Erasmus gave the first published edition of the work. In spring of 1504 the famous scholar had by chance discovered in the Parc Abbey near Leuven a manuscript that he immediately put into print. It appeared the following year in Paris with a foreword that defended Valla to Erasmus’s friend, the apostolic chief notary Christopher Fischer, and was later included in the Basel edition of Valla’s collected works (*Opera* 1:801–95). But missing here is the dedication to Pope Nicholas V and a second foreword that are contained in another edition, first rediscovered in 1967 in a Parisian handwritten manuscript (and an identical one in Valencia). This edition was first mentioned at the start of 1443 in the work against Antonio De Ro (*Adnotationes in Raudensem*) and in December of the same year in a letter to Aurispa, and was therefore completed in that year. But it is (because of the dedication to Nicholas V) not the first but an intermediate edition that is preserved in the two handwritten manuscripts (meanwhile critically edited). Likewise, the edition Erasmus published would not be the final one. It was part of Valla’s method of working that he worked on his larger works over and over again, corrected, expanded, and revised them, so that they were never completely finished. The second edition is distinguished from the first not only in that it is the first containing all the New Testament writings (even the epistle to Philemon and the Revelation of John, which—perhaps because of copyists’ errors—the earlier edition had lacked), but also in that Valla’s method of working had meanwhile become more refined. The edition Erasmus published was a thorough-going revision. Numerous sections are added, others omitted or essentially changed. The annotations are more wide-ranging and in-depth, knowledge of the church fathers and scholastic theologians is more thorough; references to various handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament that were used and to suggestions by contemporary Greek theologians are included.

(The Byzantine theologian Bessarion, 1403–1472, who lived as a cardinal in Rome, was especially helpful.) Now, too, not only Latin but Greek handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament as well were consulted for comparison, a sign that Valla's knowledge of Greece had meanwhile grown considerably.

Found again in the treatment of the New Testament are all the principles Valla had already established in contrast to the prevailing view of his time. First off it must be remarked that for him it no longer had to do basically with anything other than a revision of the Vulgate text that Jerome had once prepared, but had been corrupted at numerous passages by the long process of tradition. This becomes clear as well by the title *Collatio*, which in the expanded formulation, as we find it at the end of the older edition (Perosa, 273) reads: *Collatio Novi Testamenti cum greca veritate* (*Comparison of the New Testament [of the Latin Text of the Greek] with the Greek Truth [of the Original Text]*). It must have become clear to him only in the course of his work on the text that a fully new translation from the Greek original would be desirable. He had to defend himself from the very start against the accusation that his criticism, which was uncontroversial in dealing with pagan authors, if he directed against the Vulgate text of the Holy Scripture, which was considered authentic, would do harm to the wording of the Word of God itself.

Already after the appearance of *Elegantiae*, in which his first critical remarks about the wording of the Vulgate are found, Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), one of the most famous humanists of the age, in a polemical work composed at the start of 1452 that he directed against Valla (*Invec-tiva* 1) expresses a widespread opinion when he cried out in full outrage: “This profane man hates Holy Scripture so much that he claims much in it is not written correctly!” (*Opera* 1:199). Further, while complaining of disdain for other authorities, “The arrogant Valla dares to open his mouth even against Jerome, the saintly and learned man who received the approbation of every century, of all peoples” (*Opera* 1:200; cf. 210, 231, 233). At the time—long before its establishment as the official text by the Council of Trent—the authority of the Vulgate was already so great that it was utterly equated with the Holy Scripture.

Valla immediately answered these accusations in an *Antidotum*:

What, then, is ... the Holy Scripture. Is not everything an interpretation of the Old and New Testaments? It is even multifaceted and diverse and highly contradictory one to another. Or do you not know that the first translation from the Hebrew into Greek was that of seventy translators,

the second that of Aquila, the third of Theodotion, then on up to the sixth, and that so in the Greek and Latin was not everything uncertain? What, then, do you say the Holy Scripture is? Certainly nothing other than a translation. But if this is uncertain what this is, is that in any case so with the New Testament that has many translators, as is plain from the ancient authors.

Against Poggio's objection that Jerome translated the entire Bible anew, Valla countered: "If only we still had it unadulterated!" But at times parts were not used, such as the original translation of Psalms from the Hebrew original. Moreover, Jerome did not himself translate the New Testament but merely revised it, in part also mistakenly, which, because it was in the meantime distorted and corrupted, "he would correct himself if he returned to life.... Therefore, if I improve something, I do not improve the Holy Scripture but its interpretation." For the Holy Scripture cannot be a translation, but in actuality only "that which the saints themselves wrote in Hebrew or Greek, for a Latin (version) is not the same" (*Opera* 1:268). By the way, Valla lets it be known at some passages that he is not at all so certain of Jerome's authorship of the Vulgate. He states, for example, in the *Adnotationes* on Luke 16:2 (*Opera* 1:827) and 1 Cor 2:9 (1:861) that Jerome offers in his own works another rendering of the pertinent passages: "So it is clear either that Jerome is not the translator or his translation has been corrupted" (1:861). He clearly expressed his position toward Jerome in the *Prooemium*: "In any case, I would dare neither say nor think anything at all against Jerome, an extraordinarily saintly and learned man who has done a service for Christian faith in such an excellent way."

In his invective, Poggio also took up Valla's *Collationes* on the New Testament. The second version had been sent to Pope Nicholas V with a dedication in light of which it can be dated to 1450. Apparently, however, Valla had worked further on the work up to his death. Bracciolini, without having read the work himself, had complained that Valla accused Jerome of errors of translation at numerous biblical passages. To this Valla answered what he had already written in his dedicatory letter to Nicholas V: Jerome for his part already indicated to his translation's sponsor, Pope Damasus, that there were as many differing handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament as there were exemplars. "But if after nearly four hundred years the river flows so cloudy from the spring, what surprise is it if after a thousand years ... this river, which was never pure, carries some mud and dirt along with it." He did not wish to criticize Jerome, but he

had to undertake his work “for the benefit of my century and posterity” (*Opera* 1:270).

Valla approaches the Bible above all as a philologist, grammarian, and rhetorician, though in so doing he is aware of the text’s uniqueness. In his dedication to Nicholas V he writes: “That is, the individual words of Scripture are as it were individual gems and jewels from which the heavenly Jerusalem is built.” Thus the task involves comprehending these words as exactly as possible. Proceeding from the Vulgate, he sees it his task to approach in his Latin wording that of the Greek original as closely as possible. The work is not a new translation but a commentary: it includes annotations (Erasmus, *Adnotationes*) on individual verses. This procedure is methodologically not new, but found in earlier medieval commentaries (see *History*, vol. 2). New, however, is the concentration on the meanings of the words of the Greek original text, to being as exact as possible in Latin correspondence, and to the possibilities of a rendering of the wording in classical Latin style. Also, it is concerned exclusively with the literal sense. Precisely this, however, has the grandeur of the Holy Scripture; indirectly, then, the commentary definitively serves a theological purpose as well.

The disagreement among researchers, in the nineteenth century particularly, who saw Valla in opposition to churchly Christianity, and Roman Catholic authors (e.g., Foïs) who stressed his orthodoxy, is recognized today as anachronistic. For their part, the liberal Protestant observers sound paradoxically in accord with the Catholic classification of Valla’s work as heretical at the time of the Counter-Reformation. Valla considered himself a believing Christian, a Roman. Indeed, he himself wished for and finally even received a position in the curia! This dispute does not bring us closer to an understanding of his work.

Interestingly, Valla expressly stressed his high esteem of the Old Testament as well. “As for me, each time I take the books called canonical to hand in which the holy history of the origin of the world is told, I realize so very much the great grace of God toward humans, the care, and I would almost say the haste with which he seems to leave heaven to me in order to care for human affairs” (*De vero bono*, *Opera* 1:983). That he exclusively expressed himself about questions of New Testament interpretation goes only with his linguistic presuppositions in which the reference back to the original text is decisive for understanding the Bible. Valla frequently points to—in so doing, he comes very near the formulation in Jerome—wanting to reproduce *Graeca veritas*, that is, the authentic Greek wording of Scripture. An example of his way of working is found in the commentary

on Matt 4 (*Opera* 1:807–8), such as verse 4, the word of Jesus, “one does not live by bread alone.” This translation corresponds to the Vulgate edition: *non in solo pane vivit homo*. Valla remarks, however, that the Greek original text indicates a future, “will live”; this occurs in the parallel passage in Luke (4:4) also. It is noteworthy that Valla uses as a method the comparison between the Synoptic Evangelists. Here it is upheld by this determination. Otherwise at verse 6: “The Vulgate reads, ‘for he has commanded his angels over you.’” On this, Valla: “In Greek it reads ‘will command,’ which I consider the fault of a copyist or a careless corrector here like in the psalm, for this passage from a psalm (Ps 91:11–12) is taken.” In his view, then, the text should be corrected. Somewhat further below, on verse 10 (not all of the phrases will be discussed, but only those to be criticized) “and serve him alone,” Valla discovers the Greek verb *latreuein* is not used in Latin but perhaps the substantive *latria*: a service that in the interpreter’s opinion (*nostri* = “ours”) is due God alone. But this is incorrect: evidence from earlier Greek authors such as Xenophon—a quotation follows—showed rather that the term had been originally used of worldly relations. “And certainly, whether the earlier authors are pagan or believers, whether Greeks or Latins, they have much more authority than the authors of a later time, whether believers or nonbelievers, and to the extent anyone speaks correctly, to that extent he does not deviate from them.” Here the philological principle is clearly defined that the original word meaning is the correct one. This is typically humanist: later word usage is always a deterioration. Even a profane usage, if it is more original, is authoritative for biblical translation, too. Valla explicitly emphasizes that the religion to which an author belongs can play no role with regard to linguistic-philological considerations. In this respect the language of the Bible is put on a level with other literature. The opinion of some (*quamquam sint, qui...*) “who deny that theology is of service to the laws of grammar” is rejected. These discussions take up what Valla had already introduced in the foreword to book 4 of the *Elegantiae* (*Opera* 1:117ff.). There he had rejected the complaint raised against him by “some, especially those who present themselves holy and religious” (117) that the reading of secular authors is not permitted for Christians. Although these people could appeal to the example of Jerome, who after his famous dream (see *History* 2:33) had given up secular reading, he had contradicted them energetically and emphasized the uses of rhetoric for theology as well. “Not the language of pagans, not dialectics, not the other arts are to be condemned (although indeed even the apostles wrote Greek), but the teachings, the religions.... The other sciences and arts, however, stand in the center that

you can use for good or evil (*Opera* 1:120). For the early fifteenth century these are epoch-making principles that were to have wide-reaching consequences for later development of biblical interpretation. In addition to what is spoken, Valla opines, the spoken language is also to be considered, for nothing is more absurd than to corrupt the language so that one cannot understand of whom or to whom one is speaking.

Valla applies a new method when he compares the various handwritten manuscripts available to him with one another. So at verse 16, "The people who wander in darkness" (*ambulabat*), the handwritten manuscripts in which one reads "sat" (*sedebat*), *kathemenos*, have it better. This is actually the reading in Matt 4 and most of the Septuagint handwritten manuscripts of the Old Testament passage cited, Isa 9:1, while the Hebrew original version—which Valla could not read (he expressly regretted this; *Opera* 1:626)—refers to a "wanders" (*holechim*). At another passage (on Matt 27:22; *Opera* 1:822; see also on Matt 28:8; *Opera* 1:823; John 7:29–30; *Opera* 1:842), Valla points out that he has three Latin and three Greek handwritten manuscripts and draws on more while he writes. This more random comparison could of course not yet lead to a methodologically reliable result, yet in it the foundation stone for a scientific text criticism of the Bible is laid. Still, Valla distinguishes already between old or rare, and therefore venerable, handwritten manuscripts and more recent ones, less valuable for the ascertainment of the original text (on Matt 7:37, *Opera* 1:826; on Luke 1:29, *Opera* 1:830; on Luke 1:50, *Opera* 1:830). One other principle seems to us almost pedantic: Valla puts great worth in that a given Greek word cannot be reproduced on the basis of stylistic variations with various Latin expressions. So in John 9:31, "we know that God does not hear sinners, but those who are God-fearing and do his will, he does hear." The Vulgate says in the first occurrence *audit*, in the second, *exaudit*. To this Valla remarks: "The translator seems to me to play in a very important business, and indeed seems to do so frequently" (*Opera* 1:843). Evidently his concern is for as much precision as possible, and for this he is even prepared to disregard the rules of a most elegant style. Of course, whether he does so only because of dealing with the text of the Bible is not so certain. On the other hand, it can occasionally be necessary for the sake of greater clarity of content to add a word that is not in the Greek original. At Matt 5:22, "whoever hates his brother," he agrees with the Latin handwritten manuscripts that add "without reason," even though it is not in the original text, evidently, because he considers it important for understanding. But precisely in this case Valla's decision about the content is questionable because it blunts the radicality of the statement.

There are cases when a Greek word has different meanings and therefore can only be rendered by different Latin equivalents. An example is the particle *hos*. Then considerations of content tip the scale, as at Mark 1:22, where it is said that Jesus taught like one who had authority: "*Tamquam* ... would have had to be said, not *quasi* (as if), which is nothing more (he would have said) than if he had authority that he did not have" (*Opera* 1:824). The old method of comparing parallel texts at times leads to an incorrect revision, in our view. So at Matt 3:16, in the narrative of the baptism of Jesus, where the Vulgate had translated "(Jesus) saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming over *himself* [*se*]," Valla suggested "over him" (*eum*) instead, because according to John 1:32–33 it was John the Baptist who saw the Spirit descend on Jesus like a dove. Higher criticism was still beyond the purview of the day.

Considerations of content and text criticism can also go hand in hand. One example is John 18:28 (*Opera* 1:845), where the Vulgate reads: "They led Jesus to [*ad*] Caiaphas in the praetorium." Valla maintains that Augustine sought in vain to communicate the sense "against the truth of the Gospel" because he did look at the Greek text. In addition, there are numerous Latin handwritten manuscripts respected by their age that read "*from* Caiaphas" (from the house of Caiaphas). He expressly wished to praise authors such as Cyriacus of Ancona and Johannes of Tivoli, who would have already discovered similar handwritten manuscripts. Actually, this reading alone tallies with the original text and gives sense to its content. In this and other passages we can see how Valla deals with the commentaries of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas; he has thoroughly studied them—and the *catena aurea* of Thomas Aquinas on the Gospels—before he sets about making his own commentary.

The not infrequently expressed view that Valla was purely a philologist does not do justice to the significance of his interpretation. His careful examination of New Testament terminology leads also to important theological knowledge. So at Luke 1:2, 4, where he questions that in verse 4 the Vulgate certainly renders *logôn* by *verborum* (words), but in verse 2 by the singular, by *sermo* (speech). Certainly Jesus is meant here, "who so far as I know is called '*sermo*' by no one except Lactantius" (*Opera* 1:829). It is worth noting that he does not make the same observation in John 1, and the exegesis of Luke 1:2 is probably incorrect. Yet here—even against the later frequent church language usage, which used *sermo*—a theological significant observation is made. On occasion he explicitly discusses theological problems (especially when they appear in the commentaries he used). So, on the phrase in 2 Cor 8:19 "for (proof)

... of our goodwill”: “Some interpret this passage ridiculously: ‘Certain [acts of] the will’: ‘predetermined by God who predetermines from eternity that we would have such a will’” (quotation from the commentary of Thomas Aquinas). “Babbling this nonsense are those who, ignorant of the Greek language, interpret from the translated Greek text” (*Opera* 1:873). While the doctrine of predestination is touched on here, another theological problem is expressed in 1 Cor 15:10: Here the Vulgate offers the translation: “But not I, but the grace of God with me.” Valla remarks that a rendering in accord with the original text would be “but not I, but the grace of God *that* is with me.” He adds: “Those who refer this [Thomas is meant] to the cooperating grace of God should keep quiet. Paul ascribed this namely not to himself but reports having received it completely from God (*Opera* 1:868; see also 2 Cor 4:7; *Opera* 1:871). In the more recent edition (*Opera* 1:868) Valla treats the passage John 21:22 (about the beloved disciple of Jesus) in detail, evidently because Bessarion had addressed the problem in public shortly before (1448 or 1449). Instead of the Vulgate edition, “Thus I will let him remain...” (*Sic volo eum manere*), one would have to read according to the Greek text, “If I will have him remain...” (*Si volo eum manere*). This produces a different sense entirely! Yet more important than these individual observations is that Valla sets the New Testament exegesis on an altogether new foundation, for with the required recourse to the original text as the starting point, every understanding of content shifts quite considerably.

Valla’s work had its temporal-conditioned limits, too. One is that he was unaware of the distinctiveness of the language of the New Testament—the Semitic influenced so-called Koine Greek—and he therefore always took classic Greek as the standard. Moreover, he knew only classicism, not the biblical-oriental world. He was therefore astonished, for example, that the magi of Matt 2:11 prostrated themselves before the child in the manger (*Opera* 1:806). There were also problems of literary criticism: the question of the authors and origins of the biblical writings, their “authenticity” or temporal origin, had not yet entered in the circle of view at the time. Still, initiatives for this are already found in Valla. For instance, he considered the Bel narrative (Dan 14:1–21) in the Septuagint version secondary and once even expressed historical doubt about the stories of Susanna, Tobias, and Judith.

All in all, Valla’s investigations are without question among the most important contributions that established a new stage of biblical interpretation.

1.3. READING THE BIBLE WITH PLATO: MARSILIO FICINO

Marsilio Ficino was by his own testimony born on 19 October 1433 in Figlione in the Arno Valley, not far from Florence. His father Diotifeci was then a medical student, later became surgeon in the hospital of Florence and physician of Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), who returned from exile in 1434 and belonged to the clients of this grandee who ruled the Republic of Florence like a Renaissance prince. Marsilio, who had previously called himself merely “from Figlione” (“Feghinensis”), first used the name Ficino, perhaps an abbreviation of Diotefeci, in 1456 after his father had accepted it. Not much is known of Marsilio's youth except that his father wanted him as his successor and therefore sent him after attending school in Florence (1449–1451) to study at the University of Pisa-Florence, where after the customary basic philosophical study he studied medicine. While he published two well-known works in this field—*De triplice vita libri tres* (*On the Threefold Life*) and *Epidemiarum antidotes* (*Antidote against Epidemics*), medicine was not his sole interest. Early on he was drawn into the orbit of Platonist (Neo-Platonist) philosophy. One stimulus for this was doubtless the Unity Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439), the last—and only temporarily successful—attempt at a reconciliation between the Eastern and Western churches. It failed because of internal resistance in the Eastern Church and finally because the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks (1453) quickly brought the undertaking, born solely out of political need, to its end. Afterward, a group of scholarly Greeks came to Florence in the train of the Byzantine emperor Johannes VIII Palaeologus (1392–1448). Foremost among them were the Platonist Georgius Gemistus Plethon (ca. 1360–1452) and his student Bessarion (ca. 1403–1472), who ultimately went to Rome, became a cardinal in 1439, and through his large circle of students did much to make Greek antiquity and theology known in the West. Plethon's lectures in particular aroused enthusiasm for Platonism in Florence, which seized even Cosimo de' Medici and moved him in 1459 to found a “Platonist Academy.” Possibly he had already early on paid attention to the young Marsilio and introduced him into a circle in which he discussed (Neo-) Platonist philosophy with some confidants. Already in 1456 Ficino wrote a youthful work *Institutiones ad Platonicam disciplinam* (*Instructions for a Platonic Education*) that Cosimo de' Medici and his friend Cristoforo Landino (1424–1498), who held the philosophical teaching chair at the university, read and rejected. He still lacked adequate knowledge of Greek language in particular and so also the original texts. This spurred him to

seek what was lacking and to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of language and Platonic literature.

In the country house Cosimo gave him in 1463 along with properties in Careggo near Florence—next to the castle of the Medici and the town-house of the father in Florence, a meeting place of the so-called “academy,” which probably never became a legally established institution but existed as a humanist circle by its host’s initiatives and the participation of Cosimo and later his uncle Lorenzo—Ficino translated numerous writings, beginning with the *Corpus hermeticum* (published 1471), to the five *Dialogues of Plato* (with commentaries, published 1484) and the *Enneads* of the Neo-Platonist Plotinus (likewise with commentary, published 1492). This is in keeping with the Neo-Platonist viewpoint that traced Platonist teaching back beyond Pythagoras, Orpheus, Hermes (Mercurius) Trismegistus, Homer, and on to Zoroaster. He also published his own writings, including the important apologetic work *De Christiana religio* (*On the Christian Religion*) in 1474, still in that same year in Italian translation published for all citizens unfamiliar with Latin, and likewise in 1474 *Theologia Platonica de immortalitate animarum* (*Platonist Theology on the Immortality of Souls*). By the title one can recognize the special, that is, traditional, main focus of Ficino in the context of the Neo-Platonist worldview. Ficino developed his philosophy against the background of the Neo-Platonist schema of the emanation of the divine into the world and the return of spirit from its imprisonment in matter to the heavenly sphere. The human soul becomes the true center of the world in the rank-order of Being (God, angel, rational souls, quality, bodies) and at the same time the mediator between the heavenly realm, in which it already participated by its immortality, and the world. Humanity’s knowledge of God is indeed clouded and requires an internal purification, but the orientation toward the good is not lost; thinking and active willing lead one finally to God. Ficino takes over the Neo-Platonist tradition from its Christian transformation since Augustine and seeks to bring it to validity once again, as a Christian theo-philosophy in a context marked by an Aristotelian, Averroist materialism. With this, a trace of Stoic morality is also clearly recognizable.

The “Christian religion” serves, according to Ficino’s own words in the writing of that name, the reconciliation of philosophy and religion: “Let us, I swear you, liberate philosophy, the holy office of God, from unbelief ... the holy religion from lamentable ignorance, by our powers!” (*Opera* 1:1). There is, according to Ficino, a natural religion; all the religions of humanity participate in true religion, for God never wished to allow himself to be unhonored (ch. 4; *Opera* 1:4). Alongside the mystical doctrine of the

soul is morality. How Ficino sees the role of Christ is characteristic: "What was Christ except a sort of moral (text)book, one, that is, of a divine philosophy, sent living from heaven and itself a divine idea of virtues revealed to human eyes?" (ch. 23; *Opera* 1:25). Humanity, good by nature, is in the position to live in keeping with Christ's example. This also dovetails with a trait extending throughout medieval theology. The work contains a good deal of church-traditional material, too, such as the demonstration of prophetic witnesses to Christ (ch. 27; *Opera* 1:30–46) and apologetical remarks against doubters, against Jews, Muslims, and pagans. Ficino also knows church theology; for him it does not stand over against Platonizing philosophy but in harmonic accord with it. This is clear also when Ficino draws on the testimony of the Sibyllines for the same purposes (chs. 24–25; *Opera* 1:26–29); the ancient and biblical worlds are not to be separated.

To this corresponds definitely his decision to enter the clerical order in 1473. After his ordination to the priesthood, he received benefices in two communities from Lorenzo de' Medici "the Magnificent" (1449–1498; in office from 1469 on), Cosimo's grandson, and he later became a canon at the cathedral. He seems to have administered the duties of his church offices fully and preached as well, as the few surviving examples of his sermons (*Opera* 1:473–93) show.

Ficino also remained faithful to his home city in critical times, for example, when Charles VIII of France (ruled 1483–1498) in 1494 marched through Tuscany to enforce hereditary claims in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Pietro de' Medici, the son and successor of Lorenzo, attempted to deny him passage and therefore was driven from Florence. This crisis coincided with the activity of the penitential preacher Savonarola (1452–1498), who had supported the expulsion of the Medici because of his sermons against the powerful and the curia in 1497, was banned by Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503), and was burned in 1498. Ficino seems to have been a secret follower of Savonarola for a time, but he held back from the disputes. On the whole, he remained undisturbed, despite his Medici sponsorship, which he could be attacked for, and died peacefully on 1 October 1499.

In the last years of his life he began the work that remained fragmentary because death took the pen from his hand: an interpretation of the Pauline letters. Perhaps he planned a commentary on the whole Bible. Only the interpretation of Rom 1–5, with a *prooemium* in which Ficino summarizes his hermeneutics, is preserved (*Opera* 1:425–72). Here (1:425; Nolte, 275–76—a sermon?) he proceeds from the ecstatic experience of being taken up to the third heaven, which Paul speaks of in 2 Cor

12:2–4. Since such a heavenly vision does not seem possible to people who still live on earth, we have to try to transcend earthly limits and ask Paul to “lift us up with himself to a heavenly and angelical step.” The mention of the “third heaven” in Paul goes along with the Neo-Platonic image of humanity. Through the lowest region, divided into three spheres (bodies, senses, bodily affections), and the second, likewise in three spheres (practical reason, physical reason, and theological or contemplative reason) can one still ascend by his one’s power. The highest level of reason is the mind (*mens*) that “considers divine things, which are higher than the world, with theological reason.” But mind by itself is also not in the position to penetrate to divine things. A rapture (*raptus*) is therefore necessary in order to gain the third heaven. In this, for true knowledge of the divine—and here Ficino alludes to 1 Cor 13—faith, hope, and especially love (*charitas*) are necessary. “For in seraphic love that inexpressible sanctifying Spirit in us will be kindled. In this blessing-spreading fervor, light and wisdom of the divine word will constantly illumine ... through which we the mysteries that were revealed to the divine Paul by God will be in a position to recognize.” Now what is meant by this, however, is not merely a purely emotional acceptance of the Pauline biblical statements: as in the opinion of philosophers, “the warmth in bodies proceeds in a natural way from light, so in spirit, the will from mind.” But as the warmth of the sun at the beginning is dampened by the dense material and then first penetrates deeper when vapors ascend from it, so “God infuses love into the ideas separated from the body through the mind.... Purified and turned toward God by this love, they reach the light of mind.” In a way distinctive for Neo-Platonist thinking, here then reason and “mystical” feeling are joined with one another. In the central role of love (*charitas*, which is linked through the god-effected purification with *amor* for God), Ficino is obligated to Augustine especially; he sets out from a Neo-Platonism that is already Christianly adapted. But reference is also made to the (Pseudo-) Dionysian speculation on angels, which distinguishes three spheres of angelical natures, as parallels. At the summit is the divine trinity toward which all mystical-rational knowledge is directed but that remains concealed in its innermost essence. As one sees, Ficino’s theology is by no means revolutionary. Rather, it stands in connection with a wide stream of mystical-spiritual theology, whose representatives we have already met in the Middle Ages. But to be mentioned as humanistic traits would be the recourse to Plato himself and the Neo-Platonist sources and the extensive commentary on them. Ficino had thought of the planned commentary on the Bible as the crowning conclusion of the whole.

If we consider the commentary in detail, we ascertain in comparison with other humanists, such as, say, Valla (whose work Ficino does not mention but should have known), that criticism of the form of the Vulgate text also plays a role in Ficino, and he frequently corrects the Latin text by the Greek original text. One example is Rom 5:2, where he replaces the “through faith” of the Vulgate by “in faith,” in keeping with the Greek texts, since otherwise—against the testimony of Thomas Aquinas—it would be said that faith is a basis of grace, when indeed faith is effected by grace.

Ficino had used the commentary of Aquinas on the Epistle to the Romans throughout, without always mentioning it explicitly; his own commentary in this respect, following medieval convention, also stands in a tradition. But he also develops his own views of the significance of the Holy Scripture generally and the Pauline letters especially. The form of Paul he sees, in interpretation of the prologue in Rom 1:1–5 and by drawing on statements from Acts, as especially outstanding: he stands out from all the apostles in natural aptitude, keen intellect, eloquence. “For this reason he calls himself also among the pagans ‘Mercury’ [cf. Acts 14:12]. God chose such a man so that he would be judged as one who not only educated the uncultured in marvelous way but converted even the most cultured and Spirit-filled” (ch. 1, *Opera* 1:427). But Paul is unsurpassable in another respect: of the threefold possibility of knowledge of God—God can be known in things, the things can be known in God, God can be known in himself, in his essence—the philosophers, especially the Platonists, progressed through the first two ways of knowledge. They recognized divinity in things and the idea of the world that has its origin in God. But what God himself is in his essence is, as Plato himself in his *Parmenides* admitted, not to be known. This Paul alone has seen, when he was taken up into the third heaven (see above), and he promises us that in another life we, too, will see him face to face (see 1 Cor 13:12; ch. 7, *Opera* 1:436–38). The reconciliation of philosophical and biblical knowledge of God is, therefore, in the spirit of Neo-Platonist thought, reached by gradual increments. It has to do with the same sort of knowledge, only a higher level, by which the philosophy that has come before is not devalued. Ficino saw no contradiction between the statements of the Bible and Platonic philosophy. A witness to this is a brief essay in the form of a letter, *The Harmony of Moses and Plato* (*Concordia Mosis and Platonis*; *Opera* 1:896–97), in which Ficino rediscovers the most important statements of the Old Testament, indeed, even christological basic statements (about the “Word” according to John 1) in Plato (and the Neo-Platonists) as well.

Ficino approaches the specifically Pauline statements about justification by faith from his own humanistic presuppositions. Thus he distinguishes, in his explanation of Rom 1:17 and the quotation there of Hab 2:4, "the just will live by faith," between the Mosaic law and the evangelical law. The former by its liberation led to righteousness but not to divine righteousness, because it was given to still-dependent, uncultured people and, like the pagan law, was accommodated to the circumstances of people's lives (see also *De Christiana religione* 34, *Opera* 1:69–71). "But the evangelical law leads to righteousness, that is, all-embracing virtue." The prophet Habakkuk already lived in this sort of righteousness (commentary, ch. 5, *Opera* 1:434). In characteristic fashion, he briefly defines, with Plato (*Republic*), before "righteousness" as "the harmony of the whole soul, which arises from all virtues together." The Pauline understanding of justification cannot come into view from such presuppositions. Also typical is the explanation of Rom 3:28 ("we hold that people are justified by faith without works of the law"): "The faith living and working through love that is shown by Christ confers perfect righteousness to every believer, although he has not moved himself in the works of the law. It is nevertheless necessary that the believer performs thereafter actions in accord [*legitima*] with the law, so that the faith will not be found to be dead without works." This combination of Rom 3:28 and Jas 2:17 corresponds to the traditional compromise in medieval moral teaching (as it can be found in Ficino as well as Thomas), which lack the depths of the Pauline message but is at least still stamped by anti-Pelagianism. In addition, Ficino can say: "This faith prepares us for grace" (ch. 21, *Opera* 1:459). Although he then also mentions this is faith in that God has saved us through Christ, the total statement remains unclear. For in another place (ch. 26, *Opera* 1:469) the idea is encountered that Ficino takes over from Pseudo-Dionysius, which speaks of the "movement of the spirit toward the highest God," who does not reach this because of the limitedness of human virtue, "but proceeding precisely from the unlimited good, impelled to this that the goal ultimately corresponds with the beginning" (ch. 26, *Opera* 1:469). To this, Ficino opines, if our love for God has as its starting point God's love (*charitas*) for us, it is necessary that it is set in motion by God against all resistance of the earthly and mortal. This agrees with Plato's statement that, through the constant dealing of our soul with divinity, an inner flame is, so to speak, kindled like a glimmering flame (*Opera* 1:469–70).

If one looks back over the commentary as a whole (to the extent it is finished—it ends at Rom 5:12 with the editor's remark "no more could

be found”), one notes a remarkable imbalance. Relationship to a personal God, guilt and forgiveness, grace and justification, everything that makes up Pauline theology—given his Neo-Platonist presuppositions, Ficino was unable to understand, though he could read the words and use at least the commentary of Thomas Aquinas. Another image of humanity guides him; hence awareness of sin, Paul’s inner struggles, which are expressed in his letter, finally remain hidden to him. It is typical that, instead of this, he refers back in the *prooemium* of the commentary to Paul’s ecstatic vision; this moment—revealed by Paul only against his own will—lets the apostle seem to him closely related to his world of ideas. The reconciliation between (Platonic) philosophy and the Christian religion was only apparently successful, the proximity of the two an illusion.

1.4. LEARNING FROM JUDAISM: JOHANNES REUCHLIN

Johannes Reuchlin was born in 1455 in Pforzheim (then a residence of the Margrave of Baden), the son of the administrator of the then Dominican monastery St. Stephan. After attending the Latin school in his home city, he moved at only fifteen years old in 1470 to the University of Freiburg, first founded in 1460, and studied there a short time in the faculty of arts. Early on he gained notice for his knowledge of language. He soon returned to his home city. By his participation in the church choir, he is said to have gained the attention of the Margrave (Karl I, 1453–1475), who enlisted his services for music performances at the court. In any case, in 1473 Reuchlin was sent to the University of Paris as the companion of a third son Friedrich, who was destined for a spiritual estate. There Johannes Heynlin from Stein near Königsbach (Johannes de Lapide; ca. 1430–1496) became his most important teacher. Heynlin, who became the university’s rector in 1469, was the leading mind of the so-called “realists.” The conflict between the philosophical schools of the realists (whose mistakable name means the philosophical school that saw reality in ideas and merely their images in concrete things) and the “nominalists” (who found the real in concrete things; see *History* 2:263–64), or also between the “ancients” and the “moderns,” had been decided in France by King Louis XI (1461–1483) with the prohibition of nominalism in 1473. A restless fellow, Heynlin not only busied himself, as one of the last masters of scholasticism, with philosophy and theology; as a humanist he had a lively interest in the rediscovery of antiquity, too, and became Reuchlin’s teacher in Latin grammar. Reuchlin studied Greek with the humanist Rudolf Agricola (1443/4–1485). Wessel Gansfort (ca. 1419–1489) encour-

aged him in Hebrew studies. With Heynlin, Reuchlin relocated in 1474 to Basel, where he continued his Greek studies particularly (with a Greek, Andronikos Contoblakas) and remained until 1477. He received his baccalaureate of liberal arts in 1475; he became a master (with the right to lecture in this field) in 1477. This was the normal course of study. There he presumably also came to know the writings of Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), whose profound theological-philosophical speculation influenced him deeply. In Basel he wrote—as an anonymous work commissioned by the publisher Johannes Amorbach (Amerbach)—a Latin dictionary, the *Vocabularius breiloquus*, which appeared in no less than twenty-two editions and was therefore a great publishing success. Finally, Reuchlin returned for a short time to Paris. There he continued his studies of Greek (with Georgios Hieronymus) but canon law as well. Then in Orleans and Poitiers he studied Roman law, which France adopted earlier than Germany. He received his licentiate in law in Poitiers, in 1481, with explicit permission to gain the doctor-title at any place of his choosing.

As a jurist, Reuchlin settled in Tübingen first. The university there had opened in 1477; perhaps he sought a professorship. Yet the call of Count Eberhard im Barte (“the Bearded”) for Württemberg (1457–1496, from 1495, Duke) soon reached him to come to Stuttgart as private secretary and public speaker (orator). The count also appointed him, because of his knowledge of Latin, to be his companion on his trip to Italy. It began in February 1482 and led beyond Florence to Rome, where Count Eberhard had negotiations with the Vatican. His later well-developed familiarity with Ficino may have been due to this trip. Tied to it was the firm settlement in Stuttgart, where Reuchlin became lawyer, privy counselor of the count, and in 1484 associate justice in the state court. He also gained the title of doctor in law in this time. He married a citizen’s well-propertied daughter who brought to the marriage landholdings that made him economically independent. After the death of his first wife, he married a second time in 1500/1501; his second wife also died before him (1519). He had no children who survived him from the two marriages. His sister was a distant relation and for a time the landlady of Melanchthon, who gave his eulogy. His sovereign sent him on diplomatic missions several times. So in 1486 to the Reichstag in Frankfurt am Main, where the later Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519; emperor from 1493 on), was elected Roman king, and to the consequent coronation ceremony in Aachen. In Frankfurt he met the humanist Ermolao Barbaro (1453–1493), who was present at the event as Venetian ambassador. Later, the second trip to Italy in 1490 (with the young Count Ludwig, an

illegitimate son of Eberhard's), included Reuchlin's longer stays in Florence and Rome, where he again met Ermolao as Venetian ambassador to Rome and renewed the friendship. Since the name "Reuchlin" sounded barbaric to humanist ears, Ermolao gave him the name "Capnion" ("the smoky")—which he very rarely used, however. On this second trip Reuchlin met not only with Ficino but with Count Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), the most famous Renaissance-philosopher. The latter clearly infected him with his enthusiasm for Jewish mystical speculation, kabbalah.

Soon after returning from the Italian trip, Reuchlin was again entrusted by his sovereign with a diplomatic mission, this time to Emperor Friedrich III (ruled 1440–1493), who lived at the time in Linz. After the successful negotiation, the ruler appointed him to the imperial count palatine; he and his brother were elevated to nobility and granted a coat of arms. This, not the title, Reuchlin used on occasion. The stay in Linz was also the start of his study of Hebrew, which he took up with the Jewish imperial physician Jacob ben Jehiel Loans and after a brief report continued on his own the following year during his mission in Linz. As an imperial gift he received a Hebrew biblical manuscript with Targum Onqelos (Aramaic translation), which today bears the scholarly name *Codex Reuchlinianus*.

After the death of Duke Eberhard, whom Reuchlin had accompanied to the Reichstag of Worms in 1495, his cousin, the licentious Eberhard VI (II), became his successor at the start of 1496. Rather hastily—leaving his wife and his house in Stuttgart—Reuchlin took flight from the new elector's favorite in particular, the Augustinian monk Conrad Holzinger, who had been jailed by Eberhard im Bart with Reuchlin's assistance and now gained his freedom, and went to Heidelberg to Johann von Dalburg (or Dalbert, 1455–1503), the bishop of Worms and a councilor of electoral Prince Philip (the Upright) of the Palatinate. Dalberg was at the center of the "Rhenish Society" of scholars founded in 1491 by the humanist Conrad Celtis (1459–1508), some of whom lived in Heidelberg, among them the humanist Jacob Wimpheling (1450–1528), famous for his plans for educational reform. Reuchlin was given a friendly reception; the elector appointed him to his council for a year and the tutor of his sons and sent him on an embassy to Rome in 1498. Following a successful mission, Reuchlin remained there for a while in order to take Hebrew lessons from the Jewish physician and philosopher Obadiah Sforza. Upon his return home, the situation in Württemberg had changed decisively. The intolerable Eberhard VI had been removed from the estates, with the

emperor's consent, and exiled from the land. His successor was Duke Ulrich (1498–1550), still in his minority and therefore under a regency. Reuchlin was able to return to his wife in Württemberg. He now, in 1502, assumed office as one of the three judges of the Swabian Confederation (an alliance of Swabian princes, knights, and cities; Reuchlin represented the first class), which he held until the end of 1512.

The best known episode of Reuchlin's life is the Pfefferkorn dispute. Johannes Pfefferkorn, a baptized, uneducated Jew, had, after his conversion, in an attempt, using ineffectual means, to win over his former associates in faith for Christianity, first composed several popular anti-Jewish writings. He also found a hearing among influential people such as the members of the Dominican convent in Köln, including the grand inquisitor Jacob van Hoogstraten. In 1509 he even gained the hearing of the emperor for his plan of compelling the Jews to turn over their writings, especially the Talmud, who issued a mandate to this effect. When resistance to the initial confiscations arose in Frankfurt am Main, however, the emperor in 1510 first rescinded the decree and commissioned several faculties and various individuals, including Reuchlin, to submit expert opinions on the proceedings. Of all the expert opinions prepared, only that of Reuchlin spoke out against a universal confiscation of Jewish literature. It was impermissible, Reuchlin argued, on legal grounds. Only two books, both containing polemics against Christianity, ought to be confiscated; the others were nonpolemical. Reuchlin therefore argued—which is important—as a jurist, but also as a solid expert on the writings under concern. Like most of his contemporaries, he explicitly distanced himself from Judaism theologically. Reuchlin was successful with his expert opinion with the emperor; the anti-Jewish measures were suspended. Yet there arose a long-lasting literary debate between Pfefferkorn (*Handspiegel* [*Hand Mirror*], 1511), Reuchlin (*Augenspiegel* [*Eye Mirror*], 1511), and the Köln faculty, which, under the direction of Professor Arnold von Tungern, was commissioned to examine the *Augenspiegel* and gain its prohibition by the emperor. A more prolonged, and legal, dispute followed, leading first to Reuchlin's acquittal, but then, from 1520 on, already influenced by the struggle against the Reformation, ending with a condemnation of the *Augenspiegel*.

This dispute became widely known as the so-called “letters of obscure men.” Reuchlin had published a series of letters in support of him as a collection under the title *Clarorum virorum epistulae* (*Letters of Famous Men*) in 1514. To this title was added first off, in 1515, an anonymous volume of fictitious letters to Reuchlin's opponent, the Köln professor

Ortwin Gratius (ca. 1480–1543): *Epistulae obscurorum virorum ad venerabilem virum Magistrum Ortvinum Gratium* (*Letters of Obscure Men to the Venerable Man, Master Ortwin Gratius*). After a new, enlarged edition in the same year, a second volume followed in 1516. It contained satirical writings in caricatured monks' Latin about the dispute between Reuchlin and Pfefferkorn, in which Reuchlin's enemies were subjected to ridicule as obscure men and enemies of true scholarship. The ingenious collection (it stemmed from the humanist circle in Erfurt, with Crotus Rubianus [ca. 1480–1539] the chief author of the first volume and Ulrich von Hutten [1488–1523] of the second), became world famous in a short time. It remains a classic of world literature to this day as a paradigm of humanistic satire. Although the *Letters of Obscure Men* had a mixed reception among serious humanists, in this stage of the dispute Reuchlin was rehabilitated in the eyes of a wide public; broad circles, including scholars and princes, declared solidarity with him.

After he resigned from his judge's office in 1512, Reuchlin had more time for his writing, yet the times were not favorable for him. The luxury-loving Duke Ulrich angered the peasants of his land by high taxes; this led in 1514 to a rebellion of the "Armen Konrad." He embittered the nobles by the murder of the knight Hans von Hutten (1515). Twice he was outlawed by the emperor. The feud with the Swabian Confederation, which Ulrich had instigated, ended in 1519 with his expulsion (lasting until 1534). Even Reuchlin suffered income losses from the war. Since Stuttgart was spoiled for him due to political circumstances, he moved in 1519 to Ingolstadt, where he applied for a professorship in Greek and Hebrew, which he received in 1520. Numerous hearers attended the famous scholar's lectures there. But already in 1521 he fled from the plague back to Württemberg and assumed a professorship in Tübingen.

Reuchlin remained loyal to the old faith to the end of his life. This went along not only with the situation in Württemberg, which came under Hapsburg administration after Duke Ulrich's expulsion and was not reformed until after his return in 1534, but with his personal stance as well. Reuchlin was close, initially, as a member of a prayer fellowship of the Dominicans, for whom he frequently served as a lawyer as well. In 1516, after the dispute with the Dominicans in Köln, he was accepted as a layman into the third order (tertiaries) of the Augustinians. As we learn from an original document, during the final years of his life (evidently after his second wife had died) he joined the Stuttgart Salve-Regina-Brotherhood; there he is presented as a priest! Although the date of his ordination to the priesthood is unknown and we know nothing of the

matter otherwise, this conclusion of his journey does not seem improbable. Reuchlin died in Stuttgart on 30 June 1522.

Over the course of his life, long given the conditions of the time, Reuchlin published numerous works. He was a humanist also in the sense that he translated a multitude of ancient writings, some from Greek into Latin, others from Greek or Latin into German. Among them was secular literature such as speeches of Demosthenes, Xenophon's *Apology of Socrates*, a piece by Lucian, but writings of church fathers such as Athanasius as well. The translations into German were especially progressive, at a time when the native language was still considered unsuitable for scholarly purposes. In addition, Reuchlin also published some Greek text editions (speeches of Aeschines and Demosthenes) and even wrote two Latin comedies.

Of special interest is Reuchlin's concern—in *De verbo mirifico* (*On the Miracle-Working Word*, 1494) and *De arte cabalistica* (*On the Kabbalistic Art*, 1517)—with Jewish theosophical mysticism, the so-called kabbalah (actually "tradition" used since the Middle Ages for esoteric literature), which had found its repository in the Zohar (thirteenth century) in particular. He valued the teachings of this very positively because they lifted up the spirit for considering divine things and took into their purview the spiritual, other-worldly, while the talmudists remained this-worldly. Much of the spiritual heritage of the Middle Ages can be found in these presentations, even an element of theological anti-Judaism—since in the discussion, cast in dialogical form, Christianity appears as the ultimately superior religion.

But Reuchlin has become important for the history of biblical interpretation above all by his major work on grammar, *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (*On the Fundamentals of Hebrew*, 1506). It represents—after only few late medieval preparatory works—the first Latin textbook of the Hebrew language. (It was also the first to be published in the common Hebrew print.) The grammars of David Kimchi (Radak, 1160–1235) and his father Joseph were Reuchlin's foundational texts. In the foreword Reuchlin expresses his fear that, by expelling the Jews from Christian lands, knowledge of Hebrew will disappear, too, but Hebrew is necessary in order to understand the foundations of Christian doctrines. The work, divided into three books, begins in book 1 with Hebrew writing and pronunciation (including reading exercises). Then in books 1 and 2 comes an extensive lexicon. Book 3 covers grammar. By this textbook Reuchlin became the founder of modern Christian Hebrew language scholarship. Because he adopted the structure of Latin grammar (*Institutiones gram-*

maticae) of the late antique grammarian Priscian (sixth century C.E.) along with the Latin grammatical categories (case; tense-scheme of past, present, future, etc.), he shaped the later development of Hebrew study for a long time. Not until the twentieth century has there been any serious discussion—and with it various proposals—about a system of categories more adequate to the Hebrew language.

It is worth noting that this grammar was by no means a bookseller's success. Sales were small, and Zwingli and Martin Luther were among the few to recognize the work's significance. Only with the distance of time does it become clear that the *Rudimenta* ushered in an entirely new epoch of biblical scholarship, in that recourse to the original text could be a methodological starting point for the Old Testament, even in Christian exegesis. This became a matter of significance as early as the Reformation.

Of Reuchlin's other works on the Hebrew language still to be mentioned are his edition of seven penitential psalms with Latin translation and simple grammatical elucidations (Tübingen, 1512), as well as the investigation *De accentibus et orthographia linguae hebraicae* (*On the Accents and the Orthography of the Hebrew Language*, 1518). His translation and exposition of Pss 110–114 remain unpublished.

1.5. LIVING WITH THE BIBLE: JOHANNES FABER STAPULENSIS

Jean Lefèvre was born around 1455–1460 in Étaples in Picardy (south of Boulogne). The precise year of his birth is uncertain. We know hardly anything about the years of his youth either. He attended the University of Paris, where in 1479 he gained his baccalaureate of liberal arts and later the master's degree as well. As master he taught at the college of Cardinal Lemoine, where he lived during the second half of his study. It was reserved for students from Picardy. The date of his ordination to the priesthood is not known. He never became a doctor of theology. At the University of Paris one could learn scholasticism of both directions, realist and nominalist, along with the mystical theology of Flemish or French direction (stamped by John Gerson [1363–1429]), which spoke of a “imitation” (*imitatio*) of Christ, but finally, too, the Italian humanism (represented by the Greek teacher George Hieronymus of Sparta, the historian Paolo Emili [ca. 1460–1529], and not least Janus Lascaris [ca. 1445–1535], whom Lefèvre expressly calls his “teacher and special friend”). In 1492 he took an educational tour to Italy, visiting the cities of Padua, Bologna, Florence, and Rome. He remembered his meetings with Ermolao Barbaro, Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola for a long time. From Barbaro he took

over the goal of regaining the original Aristotle; from Ficino, the interest in (Pseudo-)Dionysius and the hermetic writings.

For a time—after reading the *Contemplations* of Ramon Lull (1235–1316), which he acquired in 1491 and edited in 1505—Lefèvre toyed with the idea of entering a monastery. In the end, he let the counsel of friends and especially his poor health keep him from it, although he never gave up the wish.

In the following years, Lefèvre dedicated himself, in the context of his teaching activity at the college of Cardinal Lemoine, to Aristotle especially, to whom he dedicated introductions, commentaries, and already-available translations of his writings from 1592. He intended by this—against scholastic obscurations of the original teaching—to return to the “authentic” Aristotle, whose principles he sought to share with his readers in concise, clear language. He was very successful at this; the works appeared in numerous editions in various places and became very popular. He considered the metaphysics of Aristotle, however, a pathway to mysticism and theology as well. In this respect, he virtually developed a pedagogical program. Along this line lies also the edition of the hermetic writings, Platonic-religious literature of gnostic impress, and the Latin translation of (Pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite by Ambrosius Traversari (d. 1439). Lefèvre had no doubt that this work came from the student of Paul (Acts 17:34) and considered it inspired because of its apostolic descent. Here we already see the transition to a special interest in the content of Holy Scripture that Lefèvre was later to develop. In the Jubilee year of 1500, he once again visited Rome.

But he also edited and translated (1507) the systematic-theological writing *De fide orthodoxa* (*On the Orthodox Faith*) by the Byzantine theologian John of Damascus (ca. 670–ca. 750).

A turn in Lefèvre's life came when (around 1505) he gained powerful patrons in the person of Guillaume Briçonnet the Younger (1472–1533), from 1489 bishop of Lodève, and his like-named father (d. 1514), the bishop of St. Male from 1493 and archbishop of Reims and cardinal from 1497. The Briçonnets were a wealthy family and influential in politics. The younger Briçonnet took over the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés from his father in 1507 and announced a reform of the monastery. He invited Lefèvre to come to live in the abbey. The reform, also supported by the court, finally in 1514 led to thirty monks from Saint-Sulpice-de-Bourges moving into the abbey, while the rest of the monks, unwilling to reform, moved out. He also sought to involve Lefèvre in the reform efforts. Lefèvre was himself active, apart from 1516–1517,

when a lengthy illness from which he only slowly recovered interrupted his work.

In the years of his stay in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Lefèvre engaged in extensive editing activity. It encompassed numerous patristic works, many of which were printed with the publisher Josse Bade (1462–1537), who published Erasmus's works also. Lefèvre also turned, like other humanists, beyond the scholastic theology of the Middle Ages—which he rejected as distorted by dialectics—back to the church fathers, in whom the original uncorrupted theology could be found. He also edited medieval writings such as the work of Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173). In addition, he published mystical literature as well, such as the work *De ornatu spiritualium nuptiarum* (*On the Adornment of Spiritual Marriages*, 1512) by Jan van Ruysbroeck (1293–1381) and a collection of literature of visions, the *Liber trium virorum et trium spiritualium virginum* (*Book of Three Men and of Three Spiritual Virgins*, 1513). Also noteworthy is the 1514 edition of the works of Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464).

Briçonnet the Younger was named bishop of Meaux at the end of 1515. In 1517 he resolved to take up residence in his diocese—an unusual step at the time—and there he began a thorough-going reform of church life, especially the priesthood, through appeal to diocesan synods and by regular visitations. After Lefèvre, who led a restless life of travel during these years, temporarily settled in Meaux in 1518/1519, Briçonnet asked him in 1521 to take up his permanent residence there and to support him in his work of reform.

Preserved from the years 1521–1524 is a regular correspondence between Briçonnet and Marguerite d'Angoulême (1492–1549), the duchess of Alençon, sister of Francis I, who was interested in pious readings of the Bible. Soon after Lefèvre's arrival, in the fall of 1521, Marguerite personally made a visit to Meaux with her mother, Luise of Savoy. The "circle of Meaux" was together. Among those belonging to it were William Farel (1489–1565), later Reformer of French Switzerland who already in 1522 had to flee beyond Paris to Basel, plus Vatablus (François Guasteblié, d. 1547), after 1530 reader in Hebrew at the Royal College (later, College of France) in Paris, and Lefèvre's students Gérard Roussel (ca. 1480–1550) and Michel d'Arnade (d. 1539), as well as Jean Lecomte de Laçois (1500–1572), the pastor and Reformer in Grandson (Switzerland) from 1532 on.

The religious ideas cultivated in Meaux have been characterized as "quietist mysticism." We recognize them especially from Briçonnet's letters to Marguerite d'Angoulême, in which a hazy mystical piety is developed

in prolix style. A large distance from Reformation thinking is unmistakable. The bishop's reforming activity remained within the framework of late medieval reform efforts: its most important goal was the restoration of morality, order, and discipline in the church. The Bible, pushed far back in church life, was ascribed an important role in it, which led to an important task for Lefèvre. He went a step beyond Briçonnet in his efforts. In his task as vicar of the bishop in spiritual affairs (*in spiritualibus*: from 1523 on), he made an effort to introduce the people to an evangelical life. The edition of the commentaries on the Gospels is one part of this undertaking. It is a *lectio divina* of humanistic hue.

The reform work in Meaux proceeded undisturbed for only a brief time. After Lefèvre around 1519 had risen to the height of his fame, he was already from 1520 involved in the controversies triggered by the Reformation. Luther's Latin writings, which found many readers in France, were condemned by the theological faculty at the University of Paris (Sorbonne) and their sale forbidden by order of the Parliament and a royal decree to all booksellers. Lefèvre writings also, in which Reformation ideas were said to be found and which were already suspect because they put the Bible in the foreground, were placed on the Index. Only through the intervention of the king was a persecution of Lefèvre himself prevented. He was unjustly accused of Lutheran inclinations. He was never an adherent of the Reformation but abstained from an energetic defense and instead evaded the attacks more and more in the seclusion of the scholarly life in Meaux. From 1523 on, Briçonnet himself came under suspicion of heresy because Lutheran ideas had circulated in his diocese. He therefore put his orthodoxy on public display in sermons and stormed against the Lutherans.

Meanwhile, the situation soon intensified unexpectedly and brought the reform movement to a quick end. In February 1525 Francis I was taken prisoner in the battle of Pavia in the course of the long war against Charles V. The people's opinion blamed the heretics in the land, and measures were taken even against Lefèvre. By parliamentary decree he was ordered to answer personally, together with the bishop and other suspects from the diocese of Meaux, in Paris before the papal commissioners. This he avoided together with Roussel by flight to Strassburg, where the two lived under false names with Wolfgang Capito (1478–1541) for half a year. The return of the king to France, who recalled Lefèvre from exile, made his homecoming possible in March of 1526; the charges against him were quashed. Francis I even appointed him the tutor of his third son Charles and his sister Madeleine; as such, he lived in the castle in Blois and had the

royal library under his care. Yet the danger of a condemnation increased after the inquisition proceeding from the Sorbonne closed in on them. He still found the support of the king against one attack by the powerful Noel Beda (ca. 1470–1536; after 1520, syndic at the theological faculty of the Sorbonne and representative of its conservative theology), but he defended himself only cautiously, remaining more and more silent. In view of the threatening situation, Marguerite, the queen of Navarre beginning in 1527, arranged for Lefèvre's departure from office in 1528 and invited him to join her in Nérac, then the residence of the king of Navarre, where he was removed from the arm of the Sorbonne. He spent the last years of his life there in peace. One memorable event was Calvin's visit with Lefèvre on his way through in 1533. He died, rich in years, in 1536.

Lefèvre's real significance lies in his works on the Bible. It is necessary now to turn to them. Lefèvre first published in 1508 the *Quincuplex Psalterium, gallicum, romanum, hebraicum, vetus et conciliatum* (Fivefold Psalter) he worked on in St.-Germain-des-Prés. Starting upon a biblical commentary evidently went along with the new surroundings in which Lefèvre now found himself. There were no longer students of "liberal arts" from the college to whom he had to explain Aristotle, but monks, some broad-minded and open to reform, to whom he wanted to share the spiritual sense of Scripture. He first had to produce the most reliable text possible, beginning with the Psalter. In this it was natural to proceed from the Latin text of the Vulgate. Therefore Lefèvre first put the versions ascribed to Jerome alongside each other in three columns: the Gallican Psalter (a version based on the old Latin that Jerome had corrected by the Septuagint, produced in Gaul and from there accepted throughout the West as part of the Vulgate); the Roman Psalter (an old Roman version, in reality not by Jerome); and the "Hebraic," that is, the text Jerome revised in accord with the original text. After each psalm Lefèvre provided a *titulus*, that is, a brief statement of background, occasionally historical but more frequently spiritual. After this followed a verse-by-verse paraphrase (*expositio continua*), in the beginning (up to Ps 25) a *concordia* in which parallel passages were presented, and finally a section with the heading "Note" (*Adverte*), in which differences among the readings were indicated.

In a second part Lefèvre put two other versions next to each other: the old Latin (in use before the Vulgate) and a "reconciled" Psalter, an attempt at a harmonizing edition in which he usually gives priority to one version, most often the "Hebraic." In this regard, one must consider that he did not possess knowledge of Hebrew himself; he was dependent in his preference

on the Septuagint, with which he compared the text, and on Jerome. In this part of the work each psalm is followed by an *argumentum* in which Lefèvre offers a generally brief interpretation. At the conclusion comes yet another line in which he lists which psalms should be said for a particular pious purpose.

If we consider how Lefèvre interprets the Psalter, we find predominately medieval-traditional traits. One distinctive feature, however, is its one-sidedly christological emphasis. He takes over this Christocentrism, along with a mystical outlook, from Nicholas of Cusa. First he proceeds from the assumption, undoubted since Augustine especially, that the verses of the Bible all harmonize with one another. In Lefèvre's words in the foreword to the *Fivefold Psalter*, it is the "harmony of the Scriptures" (*concordia scripturarum*) that made the most difference in his interpretation (folio A III r). If the center of Scripture is Christ alone, for whom the Old Testament contains the promise and the New Testament reports the fulfillment, then it can be said of the Psalter in a special degree that it announces humanity's salvation in Christ. This sense of Scripture is according to Lefèvre the real "literal" sense. One must distinguish between two sorts of literal. There is first, the true literal sense, "which so to speak (contains) the intent of the prophet and of the Holy Spirit speaking in him. And this I call the literal, which agrees with the Spirit." In addition, there is another literal sense, "of certain of their rabbis, who interpret the divine hymns of David for the most part of him himself: over his suffering under the persecution of Saul and other wars he led; which do not make him a prophet in the psalms but one who narrates what he saw and did" (folio A II r). This, however, is not the life-giving sense of the Spirit but the dead letter (cf. 2 Cor 3:6). "Although he indeed says of himself: 'The Spirit of the Lord speaks through me!' [cf. Isa 61:1]. Therefore I would like to believe in a doubled literal sense: the tropical, of the blind and unseeing ... and the proper, of the seeing and illumined" (folio A II v). On the one hand, there is a strictly christological interpretation, on the other, a denial of the "historical" interpretation of the "Hebrews." Lefèvre deviates from this only in two instances, both of which go along with his orthodox Christology: since Christ is *true God* and true man (at Ps 67:16; folio 98 r), he does not refer to Pss 7 and 50 (51) as purely human petitions.

By way of example, the customary understanding of a psalm can be read in the *titulus* of Ps 2: it is "a psalm of the Lord Christ. The prophet speaks in the Spirit. The heathen: the Roman soldiers. The people: the scribes, Pharisees, and the crowd of followers. The kings of earth:

Herod and Pilate ... The princes: the chief priests Annas and Caiaphas ... Against the Lord: God the Father and his Christ ... All the blessed who trust in him: apostles, disciples, and those coming to faith through them" (folio 2 v). In more detailed way this actualization is continued in the *Expositio continua*. The *concordia* quotes as parallels Acts 4:24ff. (where Ps 2 is quoted in the christological sense), Matt 12:14, John 11:47–48, Prov 1:24–26, Jer 12:14 and 23:5, Ps 109 (110):3, Heb 1:5 (quotation from Ps 2:7); Acts 13:32–33 (quotation from Ps 2:7), Ps 71 (72):8; Luke 13:29, Rev 2:26–28; Wisd 1:1a and b; 6, 9, and Eccl 3:66. From this christological approach, which Lefèvre consciously bases on the christological interpretation of the Old Testament in the New, the result is a thorough-going unity of Scripture in which the immediate context of a biblical passage is of little importance. Only in the final section "Note" does Lefèvre note differing text variants between various versions and refer especially to Jerome's version "from the Hebrew." Nothing decisive for content, however, occurs there. Psalm 1, too, deals with Christ: he is "the man" (Vulgate) who is there praised as the law of Moses (to be understood spiritually) incessantly mediating (folio I r). Psalm 118 (119) is "a praise and thanksgiving of the believing people in Lord Christ. The prophet in the Spirit introduces the believing people" (*titulus*, folio 169 v), and so forth.

Lefèvre published, as his next, a commentary on the Pauline Epistles (*S[ancti] Pauli epistolae XIV ex vulgata: Adiecta intelligentia ex graeco cum commentariis*, 1512, 1515²; also in still other editions). It therefore deals with a Vulgate text corrected from the Greek and commented on, in which Lefèvre, still uncritically, considered fourteen letters as authentic. In addition, he adds the (false) epistle to the Laodiceans and the alleged correspondence between Paul and Seneca (both in reality from the fourth century).

In the dedicatory letter to Briçonnet, Lefèvre explains the hermeneutical principle that guides his interpretation of the Pauline Epistles. It cannot have to do with hearing the words of Paul, "for Paul is merely the instrument.... This is the teaching of Christ, not of anyone else. If Paul is only the instrument of this divine knowledge, what could be said later of anything ... if not a very thin and flimsy secondary instrument, that is yet smaller and less significant than that instrument?" (folio a II r). Here two elements are combined: a strict doctrine of inspiration and an extreme humility on the part of the interpreter, who wants to understand himself as only a "secondary instrument" of the "teaching of Christ." What is meant by the "teachings of Christ"—it is at the same time identical with

the “divine knowledge,” the theology—can be discovered by a look back at the interpretation of Ps 118 (119) in the *Fivefold Psalter*: Scripture is not itself the divine law but a “certain expression” (*quaedam legis expressio*) of it (folio 183 v). “Law,” “commandment,” order, and the “word” of Christ are synonyms. Lefèvre learns the meditation of the law from the psalmist of Ps 118 (119): “If the law is not (the object) of my meditation, then I would be virtually cast down in my baseness (folio 187 v). The goal is—again, with Nicholas of Cusa—“conformity to Christ” (*Christiformitas*), Lefèvre writes in his commentary on Col 3:2–3 (folio 185 v). This means living and feeling not in an earthly way but “toward above” (*sursum*) so that “we sojourn in our spiritual condition in heaven” (*in statu spiritali in coelo versamur*). The aim of biblical exegesis is to penetrate into the mystery of Christ: “If you believe to have attained any important knowledge outside the knowledge of God the Father and his mystery Christ, you err” (on Col 2:2–3, folio 183 v). Here and at other passages (as at 1 Cor 6; folio 114 r) Lefèvre proceeds from the belongingness of Christians as members of the body of Christ, from which follows participation in his Spirit. From this, the goal of conformity to Christ emerges as a task, but so also does viewing Christ with the eyes of the Spirit. In all this Lefèvre shows himself as a late medieval theologian whose piety is close to the *devotio moderna*. The content of his exegesis is meditative-spiritual; it serves the up-building of an internalized piety of commandment. His thinking is not Reformational.

This can also be seen in how he deals with Pauline theology. Let us take the key verse Rom 3:28: “Thus let us now consider that one is justified without works of the law, but only through faith.” Lefèvre first finds this statement confirmed a thousand times over. The pagans, the publicans, who flee to the bathwater of baptism, all become justified without prior good works and arise justified from the waters. “And if they were to die at the very moment they arise from the water, who would doubt that they attained to the life of blessedness without works?” Newborn baptized children, the hagglers at the cross, it is the same for them all. “But perhaps someone might say: ‘If we are not justified by the works of the law, then we act in vain!’” Answer: By no means! “If we do not work, so long as there is the possibility and opportunity of acting, we lose the grace of justification.... We are therefore to do whatever good we can, and indeed it is imperative: so that we may retain justification. And not only retain, but with it increase it in us.... You should also not believe that it suffices that you are constantly justified if you only have faith. This is by no means the case.” For Lefèvre recalls the statement in Jas 2:19 and at the end comes

to the conclusion: "Neither faith nor works justify, but they prepare for justification" (folio K III r). The pedagogue is speaking, not the reformer!

On the other hand, there is the concern of the humanist. Lefèvre first prints the Pauline epistles in two columns: a Latin translation of the Greek original text and the Vulgate version. In the attached commentary is found at each a detailed section for examination of the text. Here are copious quotations from the original Greek text, delving into its differences from the Vulgate edition, as well as corrective suggestions. This is still a daring undertaking at the time! How dangerous it was can be seen in the condemnation stated by the Parisian theological faculty of even new Latin translation of the Scripture according to the Greek texts!

In 1522, already in Meaux, Lefèvre published his commentary on the four Gospels (*Commentarii initiatorii in quatuor evangelia*). The foreword (in Bedouelle, *Lefèvre*, 152–57) is revealing. It clearly shows once again Lefèvre's position between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformation. Lefèvre speaks of the gospel as the word of Christ, which is the word of God, and quotes 1 Tim 2:4, by which God wills "that all are saved and come to the knowledge of truth." In this the priests and the high priest (the pope) particularly would have the highest and first places. The position of the hierarchy is fully acknowledged. There follow kings, princes, magnates, and, finally, the people: they should all have the gospel as their goal. This stance agrees with dogmatic statements in other passages, where Lefèvre concurs with orthodox views such as the immaculate conception of Mary (on Rom 7:14, folio 84 v) or purgatory (on Matt 5:21–22, Gospel commentary, folio 24 r and v). On the other hand, he can say: "The word of God suffices. This alone is enough to find life that knows no end. This alone is the ruling rule of eternal life; the other things of which the word of God does not enlighten are not necessary, are without doubt superfluous." Here one expects to encounter the Reformational "Scripture alone," the more so since Lefèvre points to the early church, which lived by the Word alone. On the other hand, he maintains for the present a reduction of the light that proceeds from the gospel: it is called forth by the return of the knowledge of Latin and Greek. But these would have begun their return at the time of the conquest of Constantinople with the immigration of some Greeks (he mentions Bessarion, T. Gaza, G. Trapezunt, E. Chrysolaras; the study of Hebrew is to reemerge later by Capnion [Reuchlin]).

Here the theoretical engagement of the humanists for the original text of the Bible becomes clear, the knowledge of which could not be gained without mastering the original languages. But in practice he reproduces

only the text of the Vulgate and provides in his notes on the text only the Greek equivalents to the Latin terms.

But this does not mean that his understanding of content has altered as well. Of interest in this regard are some other sections of the foreword, in which Lefèvre expresses himself on the relationship between faith and knowledge. He discusses this question in dialectical fashion by setting theses over against antitheses: "But someone could say 'I would there like to understand the gospel in order to believe the gospel...'" Answer: "Christ ... did not teach that the gospel is to be understood, but that it is to be believed." "Believe," he said, "in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). But he also commands that a change of mind is to be observed beforehand, when he said, "Repent" (Matt 4:17). "The flesh and everything human is to be set aside so that we can believe the gospel." Lefèvre later asks the question: "But now if the Lord commands ... to believe the gospel but not to understand it, will not one then (nevertheless) strive to understand it?" The answer is: "Why not? But so, that the belief occupies the first place, understanding the later.... But there are many things that are believed by people, yet cannot be understood." Then after he referred to the numerous available older commentaries, sermons, and other writings, he explains that his own new commentary is nevertheless not superfluous. Also, they are not simply like a new stone from heaven. Rather, their task is first to drive away the clouds before the light, the darkness by the spirit, and to purify it. Purification, illumination, and perfection—these are the three steps along which it is necessary to advance. He wants to ascribe his commentaries only to purification. Purification—this, however, means repentance, good works, pious living. Here a still completely basic stance rooted in medieval piety shows itself. "We also meet [though he supposes to find the three catchwords in Paul: Heb 1:1; 3:2; 2 Cor 4:4; Heb 6:1] the characteristic schema of steps for the spiritual ascent of the soul that ultimately goes back to Origen. Only in a very limited respect can Lefèvre be seen as a "pre-Reformer." It is not accidental—by no means only out of fear of persecution—that he remained within the womb of the Roman Church.

Yet to be mentioned is Lefèvre's dispute with Erasmus over Heb 2:7 (= Ps 8:6). Lefèvre had proposed translating these verses in 1512 (by appeal to a reading in accord with the "Hebraic truth" of Jerome): "You have made him a little less than God" instead of the usual "than the angels" going back to the Septuagint. Presupposing the christological interpretation of the Psalms, theological reasons had motivated Lefèvre toward this: he was concerned about reducing Christ's position too much. In his *Adnotationes* to the New Testament (see below) and later in a writing against

Lefèvre (*Apologia in Fabrum*), Erasmus, by contrast, had referred to the incarnation of Christ, which had brought him, according to Phil 2:7–8, to emptying and humiliation and therefore remained with the Septuagint reading. In the second edition of the Paul commentary, Lefèvre rejects in a long excursus (folio 225 v–229 v) the arguments of Erasmus, which he found sacrilegious, as reducing Christ's dignity.

In addition, Lefèvre occupied himself with several small writings with special exegetical problems. Thus he turned toward a popular veneration of Mary Magdalene and some authors in agreement with it, who maintained that the three Marys of the Gospels (Mary, the sister of Martha [Luke 10:39; John 11:2]; Mary Magdalene [Luke 8:2; Matt 27:55–56 par.; John 19:25; Matt 27:61 par.; Mark 16:1 par.; John 10:11–18]; and the Mary identified as a sinner [Luke 7:37–50]) were one and the same person (*De Maria Magdalena disceptatio*, 1518). A tractate attached to it about Christ's "three-day" stay in the grave attempted to reconcile the apparently differing biblical information (Mark 8:31; 10:34; Matt 12:40), which was better explained by the ancient measurement of time in which a day once begun counted as a full day. Appended in the second edition of the tractate was another work, *De una ex tribus Maria* (*On One Mary Instead of Three*), in which Lefèvre refutes a popular legend according to which St. Anne, the mother of the mother of Jesus, had had three husbands one after another and had another Mary as a daughter with each.

In several respects Lefèvre paved the way for the Reformation. Especially to be mentioned in this regard is his French translation of the Bible (from the Vulgate; consideration of the original texts would have been too offensive). The Psalms followed in 1525. Lefèvre, however, worked on. In 1530, he published a translation of the entire Bible; in 1534, a revised edition. While his was not the first French translation (it was preceded, e.g., by the edition of Jean de Rély [d. 1499], the father confessor of Charles VIII), it was the first to be conceived for a wide readership. In the Admonition Letter Lefèvre placed at the beginning of the first part of the New Testament translation, he referred to the fact that the simple people often understood the gospel better than the educated; it therefore would have to be offered to them in their vernacular language. Olivétan (1506–1538) linked his translation (1535), which Calvin and his friends later revised, with Lefèvre's. But while Lefèvre had translated the Vulgate more sentence by sentence, Olivétan already had attempted a translation that gave greater consideration to the sense and the original text.

In the Admonition Letter placed before each part of the translation, Lefèvre speaks energetically of the right, indeed, the duty, of every Chris-

tian to read and learn the Bible personally. There is no other rule of faith than the Holy Scripture, which is the word of God and the testament of Christ through whom alone there is salvation. Likewise, for the same purpose of bringing the Bible to the community was Lefèvre's participation in the collection of Sunday Gospels and Epistles for the Sunday and festival days of the church year with edifying explanation (1525), which were designed for the readings in the diocese of Meaux (and later forbidden by the Sorbonne). He never lost sight of the pastoral-practical aim of his work. Although Lefèvre moved within the precincts of the Catholic Church with all these efforts, they were felt to be provocations by the orthodox party, particularly in Paris. Without being impelled by Reformation theology, his aim was solely to make the Bible accessible to the church, a step in the direction taken up by the Reformation, too.

1.6. MEETING PAUL AGAIN: JOHN COLET

Little is known of John Colet's early years. He was born in 1466 or 1467 in London. His father was the merchant, later ennobled, Sir Henry Colet (died 1505), who was twice (1486 and 1495) mayor of London. His mother Christianne, born Knevet, grew very old; she is said to have survived her son. Of eleven sons and eleven daughters of the parents, only John, the oldest son, did not die in childhood. Which school John attended in London can only be guessed. Even the long-cherished opinion that Colet spent his study up to his bachelor and Master of Arts in Oxford is proved false. Documented is his stay in Cambridge, where he completed the two academic grades in 1484/1485 and 1487/1488. Nothing is known of the following years. Presumably around 1492 Colet began, in keeping with the custom of the time, an educational tour that took him to France and Italy. We know little of this trip except that on returning he visited Paris, where he first heard of Erasmus, with whom he later was to be closely connected. Against the wishes of his influential father, he sought a church career. Without yet being a priest, he had already received some benefices. He was ordained a deacon in 1497 and a priest immediately afterward. Somewhat earlier he had settled in Oxford and—without having gained either an official position or a theological degree—started a lecture series given gratis on the letters of Paul. As a well-to-do young man from a good family, he was in every respect independent. Due to his new mode of interpretation, he always drew numerous hearers into his orbit, not only students, but abbots and directors, theological and juristical doctors as well. In the winter of 1497/1498

Erasmus, who was then visiting Oxford for the first time, mixed with them, too. Colet sent him a warm letter of greeting, for Erasmus was already a well-known scholar. From this developed—despite many differences of opinion—a lifelong friendship. From Erasmus also comes the only contemporary biography of Colet we have (in a letter to Jodocus Jonas, 1521).

Colet continued his lecture activity until 1504. In that year King Henry VIII (ruled 1485–1509) appointed him Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He served in this office until his death in 1519. His most important accomplishment during this time was the founding of St. Paul's school, a secondary school in which he invested a large amount of his vast fortune. It survives to this day. He sought to promote Latin instruction in particular there. In addition, he attempted a reform of the cathedral with its numerous priests and servants, though with little success because of strong resistance from those concerned and his bishop (Richard Fitzjames, ca. 1140–1522). The reform statute worked out in 1518 was no longer enforced. In an important festival sermon—before the synod (convocation) of the Southern province in 1512; before the king and court in 1513; at the induction of Archbishop Thomas Wolsey (ca. 1474–1530) to office as cardinal in 1515—he called for reform of the church leaders and members, which for him had to do with the removal of abuses and lax discipline. The Reformation message was foreign to him. His early death in 1519 prevented him from having to take a stand on it.

Colet presumably lectured on all the Pauline letters. Much of this material is lost. The extant manuscripts in total were brought to publication in the last century by J. Lupton, a later successor of Colet's in the post of director of St. Paul's school and are now easily accessible in reprint. In addition to these commentaries there is also a short essay on the biblical primeval history (Gen 1–3) in the form of four letters to a certain (unidentified) Radulphus (in *Opuscula quaedam*, ed. Lupton, 167–82). Some even consider this Colet's most important exegetical work. Radulphus had read the first chapter of Genesis without any offense and, first becoming puzzled by the words of Lamech in Gen 4:23, sought Colet's counsel. In his answer Colet expressed his surprise that Radulphus had not already gotten bogged down in the overall obscure presentation about creation in the three first chapters, which are even less understandable to someone who, like himself, does not know any Hebrew and therefore cannot use the Hebrew commentaries of the Middle Ages (see *History* 2:219–43). He nevertheless wanted to attempt an interpretation. So he first went into the first five verses of Gen 1. A presupposition of explanation for him is that

God in his eternity could have created the universe all at once. Here at the same time is shown a strong philosophical handicap. Moses calls at the beginning, in one breath, the creation of heaven and earth. Meant by this is—and we now encounter typically Aristotelian terms—form (heaven) and matter (earth). “For there was never matter without form.” The formulations that follow (“the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the deep”) indicates the formlessness of matter. “Water” is an image for formless matter. The sentence “The Spirit of God hovered over the waters” intends to say that God ended the formlessness of matter. Likewise, the words “light” and “day,” also mean “form”; therefore, God also called the light day and the darkness night. The concluding remark, “And there became from evening and morning, one day,” points once again to the eternity of the events of creation, “in which all time is one and undivided time, *each day one day*.”

Among these presuppositions of thought, the mode of narration of Moses, who lets the days and acts of creation follow one another, presents itself as a pedagogical process. “This he does, in my opinion, because he seems to have had care for the views of the people and the untrained crowd he taught” (Lupton, 170). By putting things into a sequential order, such as the creator can never do, Moses tried to make clear the order governing the world. He therefore descended to visible things. In reality, however, “God” is “unchangeable, without feeling and absolutely immobile, completely without matter” (171).

It is striking in this interpretation how strongly the understanding is stamped by Aristotelian modes of thought. What is modern in it, however, is the idea of accommodation, of adaptation. In this, too, Colet is certainly dependent on precursors (Origen, Macrobius), but he brings it here to new currency.

Of his interpretations of the Pauline letters, the commentaries on Romans, the two Corinthian letters, and another, earlier commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (the *Exposition*) are preserved. Colet presumably began with 1 Corinthians. The excitement Colet aroused by his lectures is due first of all especially that someone undertook to read about biblical writings at all. Colet, like many others, used the Vulgate as his basic text. He several times regretted not knowing Greek or Hebrew (we know he started to learn it in 1516). Nevertheless, his plan was unusual. The normal lectures conducted in the theological faculty were concerned especially with Lombard’s *Sentences* or the scholastic *Questions* of Duns Scotus (ca. 1270–1308). We unfortunately know too little about biblical exegesis at the time to be able to characterize Colet’s procedure as unique.

There may also have been biblical lectures of another sort. Likewise, new was the view that the final theological authority was to be sought in the Bible. In addition, Colet proceeded methodologically in a rather novel way. Of first concern to him was illumining the historical background of a Pauline letter. Thus at the beginning of his interpretation of Romans he describes the situation in Rome when Paul wrote his letter. There are three debates in Rome: between Jews and pagans, between Christians and pagans, and between Christians strong and weak in faith (*En. Rom.* 135–136). He also expressed a conjecture about the letter's original dating: it was written around the end of the reign of the emperor Claudius (10–54) in Paul's twentieth year of activity (*En. Rom.* 200–201). Paul's summons to be subject to authority (Rom 13), according to Colet, is to be seen against the background of the capricious, vicious character of Claudius, who persecuted the Jews for their constant revolts (201). Colet draws this information from the Roman historian Suetonius. Likewise, in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians he goes into the historical context of the letter. Thus he describes in his treatment of 1 Cor 3, where Paul censures the worldly wisdom of the Corinthians, the viewpoint of the Corinthians, which is an example for the Greeks as such: "The Greek nation was always ready to argue back and forth in these arguments of human understanding." Before God, however, they would have been at a disadvantage in precisely this regard (*En. 1 Cor.* 177). Emphasis on the *Sitz im Leben* of the Pauline letters evidently goes along with the interest in the literal sense of the Bible that Colet expressed many times, without directly denying the fourfold sense of Scripture. But this, as we have already seen in the example of the interpretation of the primeval history, did not prevent him from frequent allegorizing, as, for instance, in the interpretation of Jewish circumcision, where the traditional interpretation of foreskin and circumcision of the Spirit and a number of other traditional figurative expressions are fully given a chance to speak (*En. 1 Cor.* 223–226).

Historical interest, however, is only one side of this interpretation. It is also strongly stamped by Colet's basic theological stance. This was decisively determined by his encounter with Neo-Platonism, which was determined in part through the influence of Pico della Mirandola and Ficino, yet even more by work on Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a summary of whose work he composed early on (ed. Lupton, 1869). In 1501 Colet's friend William Grocyn (ca. 1446–1519) gave a lecture in St. Paul's cathedral in which he disclosed the work as a forgery. This, of course, Valla had done back in 1455, but Colet does not seem to have known anything about it. Grocyn's arguments were so convincing that

Colet reluctantly had to go along with his view thereafter. Pseudo-Dionysius, whom he (like Lefèvre) considered a student of Paul, was an important authority to him during his early time as a lecturer. Neo-Platonism—many speak of “mysticism,” too—further stamps his piety as well and remains a determinative factor for his biblical interpretation. In his interpretation of the letter to the Romans, Colet speaks, in keeping with Neo-Platonist ideas of a person’s journey to God, of it as a reascent, beginning with the total depravity of humanity, who had lost all sound reason and all right willing by the fall (*Opuscula*, 258–59). Its beginning is hope, and it is a “union of the soul and a unification and a drawing into God, so that it is illumined and set aflame” (*En. Rom.* 182). This journey also consists in the process from multiplicity to simplicity (*simplicitas*). The coming of the divine in Christ into the world is like the lighting up of the sun, which illumines humanity wandering in the darkness “and purifies it into the simplicity of one’s own nature and the truth, in that it thoroughly drives away all multiplicity and corrupting evil in which people, vicious and miserable, are sunk.... And the more simple, upright, and harmonious with it each one is, in short, each more distant from the world and all earthly things, and finally the more separated from self and fully surrendered to God, one attains to this—that one is no longer in the world but is in God alone and has one’s being and doing in God alone” (*En. 1 Cor.* 200–201). The apostles whom God established at the origins of the church were such marked men, “who had not fallen into such deep darkness, were rather and more easily reached by divine light, who were such who had not descended so far down into the valley of the world and misery, who stood higher than the others, who after deserving to be first by the rays of the rising sun of justice, were illuminated, who over the multiplicity, differentiations, and war of this lower world stood as simple men, in pure balance, and stillness, all the more close to God the farther they had themselves removed from the world” (*En. 1 Cor.* 175). Colet summons his audience to go the same way: “The more simple, upright, the more pure and ... distant from the world and all earthly things, [and] finally the more separated from oneself anyone is, the more devoted to God, that one is no longer in the world, but only in God, and has one’s being and acting in God” (*En. 1 Cor.* 201). Alternatively, however, this way and this unification is also described as a unification with Christ and the Holy Spirit (e.g., *En. 1 Cor.* 197); the Neo-Platonist idea, then, is more highly Christianized. The whole consists in a form of inner piety rather than in external ascetism or monasticism, though in treating 1 Cor 7 Colet expressed the view that Paul permitted marriage only as a

concession to overpowering lust, and it would be better for it one day to become completely unnecessary, when all humanity came to faith and therefore no further reproduction was any longer necessary, since everyone would have become like the angels (*En. 1 Cor.* 225–226). Indeed, Colet himself did not marry but never entered a monastic order. Monks had lost a great deal of prestige at the time because of their decline in discipline.

Colet, it is true, can occasionally say that salvation is attained by faith alone, without works (*Exp. Lit. Rom.*, in *Opuscula*, 208–9). On the other hand, he explicitly emphasizes the necessity of works. By appeal to 1 John, but to a passage in Paul such as Gal 5:7 as well, he explains that “faith without works is not only futile, but altogether worthless, and those of the sort who say they know Christ and do not do his works are complete liars” (*En. 1 Cor.* 199). The idea of the imitation of God and the imitation of Christ belong in the same context: “For when he [Christ] imitated in all these things the Father who is in the highest, means nothing other than to persist in these virtues to ascend to the Father in the Highest.... We therefore have such a leader on the way into heaven who is dead to the world, who is raised by God, who ascended to heaven...; without doubt, if we do not follow this one with all our powers we are able, we will never ascend to heaven” (*En. 1 Cor.* 210–11). This way leads, in accord with the Neo-Platonist idea, to a third level (*stadium*): perfection. Its outflow is love. “Paul,” Colet says on Rom 13:10, “wants the Christian society that is called the church burning within so fully and fiercely with love that the pure and authentic warmth of love in it is so perfectly powerful that it also warms ... all the neighboring cold people outside, purifies [them], ... and so itself grows more and more by the flaming fuel, that is, by the number of believers and lovers that it spreads throughout the entire world” (*En. Rom.* 204–5). Connected to this are ideas of divinization: the fact that Christ has inserted divinity into human nature has the effect that “through this gracious purification and as it were fermentation by divinity a person is finally divinized, becoming one in God, true and good” (*En. 1 Cor.* 200).

These discussions from the voice of a man who himself led an exemplary, although by no means ascetic, life made a deep impression on his hearers. Of course, they are also an example of how biblical interpretation can be stamped by preestablished patterns of thought that by no means point forward but back to antiquity: the body of philosophical thought that received a Christian varnish yet is unable to deny its origin.

1.6. FOLLOWING "THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRIST":
DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Erasmus was the second illegitimate son of the priest Gerhard Roger and the physician's daughter's Margarethe of Gouda. He was born in 1466 or 1467 in Rotterdam, at the time an insignificant place in Holland belonging to Burgundy. He sought mostly to conceal his descent; it made his life one of considerable difficulties, since many paths were closed to someone who came from a union in violation of celibacy. Hence we know next to nothing about his childhood. He apparently first, between 1475 and 1478, attended a school in Gouda directed by the "Brethren of the Common Life," a group of laity, men and women, who sought to lead a life in imitation of Christ. In 1478 Erasmus presumably moved with his mother to Deventer. (A brief stay in Utrecht, where he is said to have worked in the cathedral choir, is uncertain). He attended the chapter school in Deventer. Both of his parents died of the plague in 1485. Nothing is known of where Erasmus stayed in the years that followed. The three guardians selected by his father urged the two orphans to enter a monastery. The older brother, Peter, soon entered the Augustine monastery of Zion in Delft, where he remained until his death in 1528. In 1487 Erasmus likewise became a regular canon in the Augustinian regular convent at Steyn, near Gouda. To become a cleric or monk was the only possible way for the son of a priest to rise to the priesthood himself. His ordination followed in Utrecht in 1492. Evidently a small humanistic circle formed in the convent in which Erasmus was able to participate. He took interest in ancient literature (*bonae litterae*) and wrote a few poems and essays of his own. Nevertheless, his stay in the convent seemed to him, in retrospect, a dreary time. When, in 1494, the possibility arose of leaving the convent by the call of the bishop of Cambrai, Heinrich von Bergen, who wanted him as his secretary for the preparation of a planned trip to Rome, Erasmus immediately grasped it. However, the plans for Rome fell through. In 1495 the bishop permitted Erasmus to study in Paris. As a regular canon, Erasmus could immediately begin with theology. He first entered Montaigu College, led by Jean Standonck (1450–1504), but soon became ill because of the inhumanly harsh living conditions there. Recovering his health in his homeland, he lived thereafter privately. Since he received only a meager stipend from his bishop, he had to earn his income in large part by work of various sorts. He taught the sons of wealthy foreigners, among them the son of Lord Mountjoy. In addition, he was literarily active. We know little about his theological study. He obviously could not content himself with

scholastic (nominalist) schoolwork. Worse was his experience that the statutes of the university denied him, born out of wedlock, the baccalaureate degree. He therefore accepted the invitation of his student Mountjoy to accompany him on a trip to Italy. When Mountjoy was instead called back home, Erasmus went with him to England for a half year in 1499–1500. On Mountjoy's estate, Erasmus met the significant humanist Thomas More (1478–1535), later Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor, with whom he formed a friendship. It was evidently his subsequent stay in Oxford particularly, during which he met John Colet and heard his lectures on Paul, that was important for him. A deeper interest in methodical biblical study was probably first awakened in him at this time. Opinions are certainly divided over whether this was already a decisive breakthrough for his theology. In London, two experts in Greek, Thomas Linacre (1460–1524) and William Grocyn, awakened his love for Greek studies. After returning to Paris, he continued this in self-study with zeal.

The years following this first trip to England were unsettled. Erasmus was driven from Paris by an epidemic. He went to Orleans and thereafter other places, including St. Omer. There he met Jean Vitrier, guardian of the Franciscan monastery, who seemed to him a model of Christian life-conduct. He commissioned Erasmus to write his *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (*Manual of the Christian Soldier*), in which he (in response to a direct request) drafted a program of Christian ethics or piety. It appeared in 1503. Erasmus then returned to the Netherlands for a time. In the summer of 1504, while working in Leuven, he made the famous discovery of the Valla manuscripts (see above p. 15) in the Parc Monastery, which he immediately published in Paris in 1505. From now on his interest in the New Testament was awakened to the highest: to continue Valla's work was one of his most important plans for the future. It required above all else reconstructing a reliable text; the Vulgate, in many respects distorted, seemed to him inadequate for this purpose. He therefore worked on his own improved Latin text of the New Testament during his second visit in England in 1505/1506.

He now also fulfilled his long cherished desire to visit Italy. He was invited to accompany the sons of Henry VII's physician on their Italian trip. Since, as a priest's son, he could not be graduated by Paris, Cambridge, or even Bologna, he went first to Turin, receiving his doctorate there in 1506. From Turin he went to Bologna, then at the end of 1507 to Venice, where he met a circle of humanists around the publisher Aldus Manutius (1449–1515), and finally to Rome. Erasmus was able to make use of the numerous old manuscripts of the Bible available

in the libraries there in order to bring his planned edition to completion. Several cardinals gave him a very friendly welcome, and he even received an offer to remain in Rome permanently. But then Henry VIII (ruled 1509–1547), who was known as a friend of literature, ascended the throne in England. Golden times were expected from his rule. Lord Mountjoy invited Erasmus to come to England and share in it. Erasmus immediately accepted the invitation. *In Praise of Folly*, perhaps the best-known work of Erasmus, arose early on during his time in England. Yet his expectations of financial security were deceived. Hence, in 1511 he accepted Bishop John Fisher's offer of a teaching post at the University of Cambridge, where he remained until the beginning of 1514. He traveled from Cambridge to London as often as possible, pursuing all sorts of literary plans. He worked especially on the letters of Jerome and the New Testament. When he left England in June 1514, he evidently intended to have them printed by the Aldus Press in Venice, but on his trip journey through the Netherlands and Germany he got only as far as Basel, where news of Aldus's death reached him. The printer Johannes Froben (1460–1527) was willing to undertake the edition in place of Aldus. Thus the printing of the New Testament began in fall 1515 and was completed with the annotations in March of 1516—a work of over one thousand folio pages! Erasmus spent every day in the press, personally overseeing the corrections of the galley proofs. He was under intense pressure to do the work. It was known that at the University of Alcalá (the Roman Complutum) in Madrid a team of specialists under the direction of Francisco Ximenes (1426–1517), cardinal of Toledo and chancellor of Castile, was already far along in preparing a multilanguage edition of the Bible (the *Complutensian Polyglot*) for publication. Volume 5, containing the New Testament in Greek and Latin texts, had been issued earlier, in 1514. But the *Complutensian Polyglot* did not appear until 1522, because the Vatican delayed granting permission for its publication. Thus Erasmus's edition preceded it. But in Basel only more recent manuscripts were available to him as bases for his text. Erasmus issued the first edition under the title *Novum Instrumentum*; he again called the later, and heavily revised, editions (1519, 1522, 1527, 1535) *Novum Testamentum*. The edition of Jerome already followed in June of 1516. Erasmus later arranged for an even larger number of editions of other church fathers. In addition, he set to work composing paraphrases of the New Testament writings, first the Epistle to the Romans (1517) and later the other Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. The first complete edition of paraphrases appeared in 1524.

At the time of the publication of the New Testament, Erasmus was at the high point of his fame. Public recognition was not lacking. The later Emperor Charles V (ruled 1519–1556) appointed him to his Council in 1515. In 1517 Erasmus was released from his monastic vows. In the same year Erasmus again moved to Leuven, where he remained until 1521. One of his most important undertakings there was the founding of a college at the university (*Collegium Trilingue*) where the three ancient languages would be taught. In the years thereafter he had to enter into discussions about his works, especially with critics. He defended himself against the Leuven Professor Jacob Latomus (1475–1544), who had disputed the necessity of knowing the three ancient languages, against the young Englishman Eduard Lee, and against the Spaniard Jacobus Stunica (Zuñigas) of the Alcalá circle, who denied the legitimacy of a free translation of the Scriptures.

All this, however, was less weighty by far than the problems that arose for Erasmus by the emergence of Luther and the spread of the Reformation. At the outset he took a favorable view of Luther, although critical of Luther's radical line of action. In a letter of 1519 he admonished him to modest behavior. Later, after 1519, Erasmus was directly attacked by his opponents as the source of Luther's ideas. The papal Nuncio Alean-der brought the bull of excommunication against Luther to Leuven at the end of 1520. The university endorsed it. Suspected followers of Luther were persecuted. Attempts, through the princes, to reach a reconciliation between Luther and the church fell through. (Erasmus traveled to Aachen for a *Fuerstentag* for this in the fall of 1520.) Since his situation in Leuven had become untenable, he moved to Basel in 1521, where he remained until 1529. He was pressured ever more strongly by both sides to take a stand for or against the Luther party. Finally, in 1524, he published his work on free will (*De libero arbitrio*), which Luther answered with his counterwriting on the bondage of the will (*De servo arbitrio*) in 1525. Meanwhile, residence in Basel became ever more uncomfortable for Erasmus. After the introduction of the Reformation in the winter of 1528/1529, Erasmus moved with other Catholics to Freiburg im Breisgau. However, he never felt well there, and in 1535 he took the opportunity to return to Basel. When he was offered the task of preparing in Rome for the (later Tridentine) council and a cardinal's hat by the new pope Paul III (1534–1549), he declined. He had become tired and lonely. Erasmus died in July 1536.

Where does the significance of Erasmus for the history of biblical interpretation lie? In retrospect, his edition of the original Greek

texts of the New Testament is without doubt at the center. Predecessors such as Valla had consulted the Greek texts when necessary in order to revise the Vulgate. But the chief aim of Erasmus likewise was to make the Greek text the basis of his own Latin translation, which he printed in a parallel column, since the Latin text remained even for him, as always, authoritative. In any case, he produced a completely revised Greek edition as well. Thus this printed edition was in any case a pioneering act. Of course, it does not meet the demands that modern text-critical research might make on a biblical edition. Erasmus used the existing, relatively recent manuscripts available to him by chance in Basel as the printer's copy. Since the manuscript used for the Apocalypse of John was damaged at the end, Erasmus expanded the text from Rev 22:16–21 even by his own (inaccurate) backward-translation from the Latin. But he had used older and better manuscripts in the course of his preparations over many decades, especially in England. Nothing was known about the history of the New Testament text at the time; the groupings into which related manuscripts can be divided were not yet distinguished. Hence in the edition of Erasmus, the so-called koine (universal), the form of the text that had gained acceptance in the Byzantine church, showed its advantage. It was the authoritative edition of the text for several centuries. Since Luther also used it as the basis for his German translation, its peculiarities can even today still be recognized in many formulations of the Luther Bible. No other textual witnesses for reconstructing the most original text possible were introduced until modern times. But these developments were first made possible by the foundation Erasmus had worked on. One could again deal with the New Testament in his original language. Printing made it available to every researcher. The independent Latin translation of Erasmus was also of significance; in view of the authority of the Vulgate, it was still a risk that brought him a lot of criticism, but it also set in motion discussion about the wording of the Bible.

Whether Erasmus was pioneering in his understanding of the Bible is less certain. Here, instead, elements pointing backward can be recognized. Erasmus had expressed himself on the use of the Bible already in his *Enchiridion*. In addition, the prefaces to his *Novum Testament* are important for this. The first edition, the *Novum Instrumentum* of 1516, contains, in addition to a dedication to Pope Leo X, a preface to the reader and a foreword to the annotations' three introductions: *Paraklesis* (*Admonition*), *Methodik* (*Methodology*), and *Apologia* (*Apology*). While the first and third of these introductions remain virtually unchanged in the later edition, Erasmus replaced the *Methodology* with an lengthy work, *Ratio*

verae theologiae (*Theologische Methodenlehre*), which appeared as an independent book in 1518 and was repeatedly republished. The three tracts are put together even in modern anthologies (e.g., that of Welzig 3). Their relationship to the edition of the text, however, must not be ignored. For Erasmus, theology is closely bound up with understanding Scripture; he accused the scholastics of having lost sight of this connection.

Already in his *Enchiridion*, Erasmus recommended an allegorical understanding of Scripture to his addressee, naming after Paul (whom he himself understands to be an allegorical writer of Scripture) Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine as models (Welzig 1:88–89). He urges him not “to remain tied to the dry letter but to rush on to the concealed mysteries” (see Welzig 1:92–93). In the background is the antithesis between letter and spirit, for which Erasmus appeals to John (John 6:64) and Paul (Rom 7:14; 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Cor 3:6 [Welzig 1:90–91]). Based on this separation between letter and spirit, Erasmus can do relatively little with the literal sense, though he does not altogether ignore it. Indeed, he can call upon his reader “that you disdain the letter and pay attention above all to the mystery (the concealed sense)” (Welzig 1:188–89). For, as Erasmus says at another place, “just as the spirit in humans as the guide of the body is concealed under the coarse work of the body, so something more inward and refined is concealed under history” (*Par. ad. Gal.* LB 8:959). This understanding of Scripture is dependent on a dualist-Platonist image of humanity. Humans are, for Erasmus, “combined from two or three very different parts, from the soul, which is so to speak a divinity, and the body as a dumb animal.... According to the soul we are even capable of divinity so that we may even rise above the angels and become one with God” (Welzig 1:108–9). These two parts of a person also pursue different passions: the body strives for what is earthly, the soul for the heavenly-eternal. In so doing it is guided by reason as king. Erasmus can—by appeal to Origen (cf. Welzig 1:138–41)—also speak of a tripartite division of humans into spirit, soul, and body. He is not original in any of this. At any rate, there are also statements in which Erasmus ascribes a more positive role to the body; hence he once speaks of the transformation of the body that follows the spirit, because the body is the spirit’s dwelling (*En. in Ps. 1*, ASD 5.2:70). Also, the body will become renewed at the resurrection (*Par. ad Cor.* 1.15.44. LB 7:910 DE). Here it can be seen that the biblical image of humanity occasionally breaks through, apparently without Erasmus detecting any conflict. From this image of humanity come ethics and piety; they, too, are Neo-Platonist. The human task is to strive beyond from the visible, transitory to the heavenly-eternal, to approach

the “mystery” (*mysterium*). In the fifth canon of the *Enchiridion* (Welzig 1:180ff.) it becomes clear that all moral action is ordered by this goal and based on it. Erasmus can equate this way with the way to Christ, his imitation, and obedience to his commandments (“the law of Christ”) without further ado. He can even use the term “philosophy of Christ” for this. To the extent that ancient ethics agrees with Christian teachings, it can be useful to study. Erasmus shares this Christianized Platonism with the other Renaissance theologians we have already encountered.

Erasmus retained his philosophical-theological presuppositions of thought in his introductions to the New Testament as well. In the *Paraclesis* he rejects the view that the Bible should not fall into the hands of the laity. On the contrary, it should be read and learned by heart by the simplest people: “Indeed, if only the peasant with his hand at the plough would sing something of it for himself, the sailor would summarize something of it for himself with his little ship intact, and the traveler would shorten his way with narratives of this sort!” (Welzig 3:14–15; see also *En. in Ps. 1*; ASD 5.2:54). The foreword to his *Paraphrase of the Gospel of Matthew* (LB 7) is also a call for Bible reading by the laity, who have their own access to the Scriptures alongside the theologians. For the task of the theologian is nothing other than to convince the people that “we (already) here, free of all impurities, can live an angel-like life” (Welzig 3:181–82). The “philosophy of Christ” is a rule attested “not only in ceremonies and doctrines but from the heart outward and throughout the whole of life” (Welzig 3:20–21). Erasmus is convinced that humans can draw this philosophy of Christ from the Holy Scripture and that it is also for the most part in accord with nature. “But what is the philosophy of Christ ... except the renewal of God-created nature?” (Welzig 3:22–23). What he means can also be seen in his reflections on the “law” in the interpretation of Ps 1. To be *under* the law—that applies to Jews, who are, so to speak, enslaved to their laws—is different than to be *in* the law. “Christians move in the law, living voluntarily in accord with the law, not compelled by punishment but invited by love. Those under the law are slaves; those in the law, free” (ASD 5.2:51). In the background is a basically optimistic image of humanity—that Erasmus could not come to the Reformation understanding at all is to become visible later. Therefore he can also cite the Stoics, Socrates in Plato, Aristotle, and even Epicurus as witnesses to the morality required without further ado (Welzig 3:24–25). But the philosophy of Christ we have before us in the Gospels and even the letters of the apostles surpass all pagan teaching. “When he promised us that he will always remain with us until the end of time (Matt 28:20), so he guides

us especially in his writings in that he now too still lives for us, breathes, speaks, almost, I might say, even more effectively than when he dwelled among people" (Welzig 3:28–29). It becomes clear that Erasmus considered the whole New Testament as words directly from Christ—although he can also say it is the writings of the evangelists and apostles (*ibid.*).

In his *Methodus*, Erasmus stresses that such dealings with Scripture require reverence before the mystery and that its effect is not shown "when you dispute shrewdly, but when you feel that you are becoming another" (Welzig 3:42–43). The disappearance of vice and the increase of piety is the goal. He nevertheless considered scholarly methods for the study of Bible necessary, especially knowledge of the three ancient languages. But also important are knowledge of poetry and rhetoric, basic knowledge of Christ's teachings from the Gospels and the letters of the apostles, to which the other statements in Scripture can be related. Finally, Erasmus stresses that learning scholasticism is of no importance to a novice theologian—Duns Scotus specifically is again cited as a horrific example of nit-picking arguments. On the other hand, he considers the commentaries of the fathers to be of significant aid in understanding the Bible, putting special emphasis on Origen, "who is the foremost to such a degree that none other can be compared to him." But it is to be stressed that Erasmus is not bound to the church fathers slavishly. On occasion he can even say that as men they were subject to error.

In the *Ratio*, which replaced the *Methodus*, Erasmus repeated much of what has been said. It is striking that here Erasmus frequently appeals to Augustine, particularly his work on method, *De doctrina christiana* (see *History* 2:79–94). As for the rest, this work—often somewhat long-winded and therefore hard to read—is not only a methodology but a theology, too, though not in the manner of scholasticism, but one that follows the statements of the Bible. Thus for Erasmus Christ is at the center, his teaching and above all his life. Indeed, Christ can virtually be identified with what he teaches: "But do not regard Christ as an empty word but as nothing other than the love, the sincerity, the patience, the purity, in short, everything he taught" (*Enchiridion*; Welzig 1:168–69). After Erasmus has emphasized many of the words and parables of Jesus in the Gospels as teaching by example for his readers, he remarks: "Nevertheless, no teaching is more forceful than his life. What human being would not be ashamed if the one who is truly supreme tied a linen around himself and washed the feet of his disciples?" (see John 13:1–11; Welzig 3:274–75). Christ as exemplar of humility is also in many places set over against the arrogance prevailing among Christians and widespread self-contentment,

which is not done without a side-jab at the pope (cf. Welzig 3:272–73). Erasmus can also refer in this connection to Paul, who calls whatever virtue he finds in people “every sort of gift and grace of God and ascribes to the spirit of Christ and Christ” (Welzig 3:284–85). Nevertheless, he evidently comes to these statements only in the context of his warning against the vice of self-righteousness, which Paul also had opposed (Welzig 3:288–89). Afterward, other emotions, such as fear of man and fear of death, are spoken of. The conclusion is unambiguous: “But since the whole of Christ’s teaching centers on that we lead pious and holy lives, examples and models for all actions are to be drawn from Holy Scripture, but particularly from the Gospels, from which we can draw most of our duties” (Welzig 3:294–95).

In other places it becomes clear that, for Erasmus, the teaching and the life of Christ are largely in correspondence with natural law. Thus he can say that it had to do with nothing other than that it “reproduces nature in its purity” (*Par. in Matt.* 5.30; LB 7:32).

Christ’s teaching is concentrated for Erasmus in two catchwords: faith and love. One can think of 1 Cor 13, but even more to Augustine, in whom the word *caritas* first is central. Indeed, Erasmus can even say: “What, then, does Christ teach except what he exemplified by his entire life as the highest love? It is this one thing that he had come to teach us” (Welzig 3:300–301). On the other hand, “Leaf through the entire New Testament, you will nowhere find a regulation relating to ceremonies” (Welzig 3:302–3). Already in the ethical theology of Erasmus we find that indifference toward everything ceremonial that was to turn into hostility during the Enlightenment. He also expressed himself critically about all externalized forms in the church in still other passages (see, among other places, Welzig 3:330–31).

In the last part of his *Ratio*, Erasmus deals yet with figurative ways of speaking of the Bible: allegories, similes, and parables (Welzig 3:356ff.). He sees these as a means of bringing truths to the hearer in a pleasing way. But there are also many figures of speech that are related to this way of speaking. As a rhetorician schooled in Quintilian, Erasmus knows a host of examples from the New Testament to name that are to be explained by the peculiarity of Greek (or Latin). This also gives him a justification for adopting the theory of multiple meanings of Scripture. On the one side, Erasmus warns readers of overexaggerations in allegorizing, for which he faults even Origen, Ambrose, and Hilary; he sees a danger particularly in number-speculation (Welzig 3:416–19). By contrast, the significance of the literal sense is not to be neglected. There are even biblical passages that

cannot be interpreted allegorically (cf. for this also *En. in Ps. 33*, LB 381). This inevitably leads him to consider the philosophical-historical aspects of the New Testament. He criticizes the “ancients,” that is, the theologians of the ancient and medieval church, for exaggerated theological interpretations of many biblical passages (Welzig 3:440ff.). On the other hand, Erasmus recommends collecting the prooftexts pertaining to certain theological themes from both Testaments, along with references in the ancient commentaries and even pagan authors (Welzig 3:452–53). In so doing he anticipates the so-called *loci* method typical of later Protestant dogmatics. Even the old rule that obscure biblical passages are to be interpreted in light of other passages is repeated. Many insights of Erasmus are noteworthy to this day. Thus, the reference to a plurality of rhetorical figures in the New Testament according to the classifications of ancient rhetoric is important for a stylistic examination of the Bible, the significance of which is again strongly recognized in modern times.

What Erasmus exposit in his introductory essays he puts into practice in the annotations (*Annotationes*) of his edition. He had expanded these considerably in the various new editions compared to the first edition of 1516. Originally it had to do mainly with remarks on the text (to the extent these remarks aimed at alterations of the Vulgate text, he had to expressly justify them to his opponents already in the *Apologie*). In so doing, of importance to him was a clear understanding of the Greek text as well as a stylistically objection-free rendering into Latin, which included criticism of the Vulgate. He could even—for which he was reproached—describe Paul’s way of speaking as “popular” and attribute the lack of Greek elegance to his Cilician descent: “He would have expressed himself more fluently, I suppose, if he had stayed in Athens with Demosthenes, Plato, and Isocrates, and was able to express what he felt more purely” (note 3 to 1 Cor 4:3; LB 6:674). He later went over more and more to theological-didactic conclusions too. Thus in 1516 in note 44 on Matt 11:30 (LB 6:63–65) he had merely explained the meaning of the word *chreston* (good). In the final edition this developed into a long essay in which Erasmus not only cites Augustine, Ambrose, and finally Cyprian as witnesses of his interpretation (against the attacks of Zuñigas), but also draws practical and theological conclusions from the word of Jesus (“my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”). So also one finds a detailed comparison between the burdens imposed on the Jews by obedience to the law and the burdens of Christianity: Christians are oppressed at least as much by ceremonies, as well as by the tyranny of princes, bishops, cardinals, popes, clothing regulations, holidays, marriage regulations, and the like under threat of

excommunication. The gospel is hardly still proclaimed in the temples (churches). Here there is one aid alone: "That in accord with the teaching of Paul we seize the freedom granted by Christ, so that we do not offer the flesh this opportunity to serve vices in a more scandalous way on the pretext of freedom" (LB 6:65). A similar turn to a moral admonition appears in note 14 on Matt 19:16, expanded from 1519 on, which initially had to do only with the question whether to read "Why do you ask me about the good?" or "Why do you call me good?" An ethical-theological reflection is later added: "Moreover, whoever does the good is good. For if there is nothing really good in human actions, no one could be called good. For what is always good in us is God's gift" (LB 6:100).

In his late essay *Ecclesiastes sive concionator evangelicus* (*The Churchman or Evangelical Preacher*) of 1535, Erasmus sets forth his most extensive discussion of allegorical method (ASD 5.5:159–260). Here he is not always unambiguous in his terminology himself. For him (following the teaching of ancient rhetoricians), allegory is an extended metaphor, but the basic meaning is that one statement has a second, different meaning. He is aware that modern interpreters distinguish four senses of Scriptures, the ancients, on the other hand, only two: a literal and a spiritual sense (ASD 5.5:220). A type (e.g., Sarah and Hagar in Gal 4) is another matter, where "the designation of a higher sense stands in the background of the actions themselves" (ASD 5.5:219–20). Yet Erasmus is not always consistent in his use of this term. He realizes that modern interpretations also know of a so-called "anagogical," eschatological sense, but he himself does not use it. His emphasis falls on the so-called "tropological" sense, which has to do with the moral meaning of statements. He now even claims that the entire Scriptures can be interpreted tropologically (morally); "there is never not a place for tropology" (ASD 5.5:256).

One can well recognize that Erasmus's chief interest in biblical exegesis lies in his interpretation of the psalms. Erasmus discussed Pss 1–4; 14; 22; 28; 33; and 38. The form in which this occurs is less that of a scholarly commentary than that of a sermon. The consistent carrying out of the steps of interpretation can be traced well especially in some later places (the *Ennaratio* on Ps 22 appeared in 1530, that on Ps 14 Erasmus published a half year before his death in January 1530). Erasmus begins each time with a short section on the literal sense or historical sense, then adds discussions about the allegorical/mystical sense (the reference to Christ), and ends with an lengthy tropological-moral section, where he refers the statements of the psalms in question to the life of the Christians in the church.

While historical questions are of little interest to him and in the sections on Christology he largely follows tradition (frequently his recourse to patristic commentaries can also be shown), he is personally engaged above all ethically. Where it has to do with criticism of conditions prevailing in the church, in all external-ritual things, and moral appeals to the reader, of course, out of a pious, Christian-spiritual concern, he becomes wordy, but he is involved with his whole heart. His concern is totally pedagogical. Although the opinion that Erasmus is purely a moralist has been rightly rejected, his emphasis falls on ethics nonetheless.

THE BIBLE IN THE REFORMATION

2.1. BECOMING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH: MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther was born in Eisleben on 10 November 1483, the son of a leaseholder of a copper mine, Hans Luther. Since the family moved in the next year to Mansfeld, Martin spent his childhood to age fourteen there. His parents, of peasant descent, enjoyed modest prosperity. In keeping with the custom of the times, Martin was raised strictly by his parents. He attended school in Mansfeld, later in Magdeburg, and finally in Eisenach. He had bad memories of the instruction, in which Latin grammar above all was drummed in, but the confession of faith was also learned, along with the Our Father; church liturgical music was also pursued. In 1501 Luther matriculated in the University of Erfurt. During the first four years he studied the liberal arts, as was the custom, and gained the bachelor's degree (1502) and the master of arts (1505). The study of law that he then began lasted only a few weeks. An inward crisis (the causes of which are disputed) led him to doubt what good this study was. At Stotternheim, while returning from a visit to his parents in Mansfeld in June 1505, he was thrown to the ground by a nearby lightning strike. Shaken to the core, he spontaneously vowed, out of concern for his soul's salvation, to enter a monastery. He believed he could avoid the judgment of Christ by special asceticism as a monk. He entered the monastery of the Augustinian hermits at Erfurt. From 1503, the Vicar General of the Saxon reform congregation was Johann von Staupitz (ca. 1469–1524). He was the first dean of the theological faculty and held the Bible professoriate in the University of Wittenberg, newly founded in 1502. After a probationary year as novice, Luther took the vows. In 1506/1507 he received his priestly ordination as well. He took monastic life very seriously. He fulfilled the strict ascetic rules with zeal: hours of prayer, fasting, and regular confession by which he sought to gain God's favor. He fell into a crisis nonetheless:

despite all his pious achievements, he could not gain the assurance of salvation. The judging Christ always stood before his eyes; his pious works could not satisfy him. Bible reading played a decisive role for him; along with the rules of the order, the Bible was the only reading allowed to novitiates. Upon entering the monastery, Luther received a red bound Bible. He gained a stupendous biblical knowledge. In 1507, he began theological study. In 1508, he moved to Wittenberg, where he had to fill in as a lecturer in philosophy. Afterward—in accord with the program of study of the time, but in unusually quick sequence—he became in spring 1509 *baccalaureus biblicus* (Bachelor of the Bible), and in fall of the same year *baccalaureus sententiarus* (Bachelor of the Sentences). He returned to Erfurt, where in 1509/1510 he lectured on the sentences of Peter Lombard (d. 1160). In 1510, he traveled to Rome (in connection with discussions within the order) with another delegate to the Order's General Aegidius of Viterbo. However, he was disappointed by the deplorable state of affairs prevailing there, as well of the general confession that was of little avail. After returning to Erfurt, Luther was transferred to Wittenberg in the fall of 1511. There Electoral Prince Friedrich the Wise (ruled 1486–1525) was his sovereign. Luther lived here in the monastery of the Augustinian hermits. One day Staupitz revealed to Luther that he was to be promoted to a doctor of theology, then the prerequisite for assuming a theological professorship. Staupitz wanted to give up his office as biblical professor, and Luther was to be his successor. Luther resisted for various reasons, considered himself unworthy of the office, but agreed out of obedience. He was promoted in October of 1512. But he did not begin his teaching—for unknown reasons—until the winter semester of 1513/1514. The first lectures he gave were on Psalms—we will turn to them shortly. Lectures on Romans (1515/1516), Galatians (1516–1517), Hebrews (1517–1518), and once again the Psalms (1518/1519) followed. Luther continued his lecturing activity for his entire life—the last time with lectures on Genesis that extended over his last ten years of life.

In addition to his lecture activity, Luther also worked as a preacher, first in the Augustinian monastery, then in the city church. From 1512 on he was also subprior of the monastery; from 1535 on, district vicar in Meissen and Thuringia. In the early years of his work, his theology developed, and he turned against humanism and scholasticism along with the Aristotelianism behind them ever more strongly.

Luther entered the public arena in the fall of 1517, on the occasion of the dispute over indulgences. Indulgences, arising from medieval penitential practices—according to the theory of indulgences, for works of

penance, above all paying fees, the pope especially could declare release from temporal penalties of sin, even for souls in purgatory—had proved by the collection of indulgence fees to be a considerable financial enterprise for the curia (for the building of Peter's church) and the archbishop of Mainz (Albrecht of Brandenburg 1514–1545), who was in debt to the Fuggers. When Johann Tetzel, the commissar for the indulgence, conducted his campaign in the vicinity of Wittenberg and many of Luther's penitents went to him, Luther, after a long hesitation, turned in letters to the archbishop and other bishops with criticism of the practice of indulgences. He also composed the famous Ninety-Five Theses on indulgences, which he sent as a letter and nailed (as an invitation to an academic disputation) to the door of the castle and university church in Wittenberg. He sent the letters to the bishops on 31 October—this is therefore the official day of the Reformation—and the posting of the notice followed somewhat later. The theses were printed soon thereafter in various places and spread like wildfire throughout all Germany. In addition to a dispute with Tetzel, there was thereafter a debate with the disputatious Ingolstadt theologian Johann Eck (1486–1543), who composed a rebuttal. In a disputation in Heidelberg on the occasion of a meeting of the order's chapter in the fall of 1518, Luther composed the well-known Heidelberg Theses, which clearly expressed his Reformation understanding of justification through faith alone apart from works.

Meanwhile, the case against Luther was officially opened in Rome. It suspended until the bull of excommunication was issued on 3 January 1521. A hearing before the Cardinal Legate Cajetan (Thomas de Vio from Gaeta, 1469–1534) in October 1518 in Augsburg brought no resolution; Friedrich the Wise refused a subsequent order to turn Luther over. A mediation attempted by Karl von Miltitz, the papal chamberlain, was also of no avail. No action was taken against Luther in 1519 because of the upcoming election of the emperor, in which Friedrich the Wise was influential. In the period thereafter, Luther busied himself reforming the University of Wittenberg and revising his lectures on Galatians into a printed commentary. In addition, in 1519–1520 he published his most important Reformation writings. In a disputation with Eck in Leipzig, Luther discussed the authority of the papacy in particular. The trial against him in Rome resumed in 1520. A bull threatening excommunication condemned forty-one of his propositions. Luther wrote an open letter to Pope Leo X, defended all his propositions, and burned the bull along with the canon law in December 1520. In so doing, he repudiated the entire church legal system. At the Imperial Diet at Worms, Luther

was ordered to recant before Emperor Charles V, but on 18 April 1520 he refused to do so, appealing to his conscience bound by Scripture. He and his followers were thereafter outlawed in the view of the empire by the Edict of Worms and his books forbidden.

On his return from Worms, Luther was “seized” by knights of Friedrich the Wise and taken to the Wartburg in security. There he lived as “Junker Jörg” until March 1522. Among the things he worked on during this time was the translation of the New Testament, which appeared in September 1522. Meanwhile, unrest developed in Wittenberg, since one group of his followers, under the lead of Luther’s colleague Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt (ca. 1480–1541), discontented with the initial steps for Reformation (priestly marriage, first withdrawal of monks and nuns from the monasteries, revision of the Mass), pressed for more radical initiatives. An attack on images in January 1522 led the Electoral Prince to prohibit further reforms. The situation finally forced Luther’s return. Thanks to his authority, his appeal for moderation in the *Innocentius* Sermons was successful against the zealots. Between the years 1523 and 1525 came the debate with Thomas Müntzer (1490?–1525) and the Peasants’ Revolt. Luther denied that the peasants had the right to rebel against the authorities. The dispute with Erasmus over free or bound will in 1524/1525 led to Luther’s ultimate separation from humanism.

In 1522, Luther married the former nun Katharina von Bora (1499–1552). She led a large household. After the New Testament, he translated the Old, and the first complete German Bible appeared in 1534. Evangelical church orders were gradually established, first in Saxony. Luther’s German Mass (1525) established a new order of worship. Conflict between Luther and Zwingli over the Lord’s Supper (after 1525) led finally to the unsuccessful Marburg Colloquy in 1529; because no agreement was reached on the understanding the Lord’s Supper, the Reformation movement remained divided.

As an outlaw, Luther was unable to participate in the Augsburg Reichstag of 1530 and remained at the Coburg fortress. The Augsburg Confession of the evangelical states was written with the influential collaboration of Philipp Melanchthon (see below, §2.2) but was approved by Luther. Because of the danger after the Reichstag, which renewed the Edict of Worms, the evangelical states formed the Schmalkaldic League in 1531. However, the Nuremberg Interim of 1532 brought an initial, temporary, religious peace. The Reformation could advance; the theological faculty and Wittenberg University could be newly reordered. Luther’s approval of the Wittenberg Concord (1536), a declaration on the doctrine

of the Lord's Supper by the Reformers of Upper Germany, brought a rapprochement with the Upper Germans, but not union. Hopes for a general church council were not at first fulfilled. The 1540/1541 colloquy of evangelical and Catholic theologians at the behest of the emperor led to no agreement. Luther fought anew fiercely against the papacy thereafter.

Luther, who was sick for a long time, died on a visit to his home county of Mansfeld, where he sought to mediate disputes in the count's household, on 18 February 1546.

We come now to Luther's interpretation of Scripture. In preparation for his first lectures on Psalms, delivered between 1513 and 1515, Luther had published in the summer of 1513 an edition of the text of the Psalms (in the Vulgate, as usual; Luther personally consulted the original Hebrew text, too) that professors and students used as a handbook. His procedure in these lectures was as follows. First, the text was briefly elucidated (glossed) by dictating the explanations to the students (*Dictata super Psalterium*). Explanations of words were written between the lines of the Bible, somewhat more extensively in the margins. This is a continuation of the medieval *Glossa ordinaria* (see *History* 2:138–40). The new possibility of book printing now made distribution more simple. Fortunately, Luther's own exemplar with his interlinear and marginal glosses is preserved in Wolfenbüttel; they were published in the great Weimar Luther edition (ultimately, WA 55.1). A summary explanation of the individual psalms followed, called *scholia*. The manuscript itself was destroyed in the Second World War in Dresden; fortunately, a photocopy survived, the basis of a planned new edition.

The interpretation of his lectures on the Psalms is no easy task. Luther reported in later years that he found an answer to his own inward doubt about how to gain justification before God while reading Rom 1:16–17 one day in a study room in the tower of the monastery: justification before God through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Whether Luther had this “tower experience” before, during, or only considerably after his first psalm lectures—many researchers do not date it until in the winter of 1517–1518—has long been contested. The theological statements in these lecture are therefore of particular interest.

For an adequate judgment on the matter, one must keep in mind that Luther would not have begun at point zero but could refer back to the rich medieval tradition of interpretation, as we learned of it in volume 2 of our exposition. Of special importance for Luther was Augustine, whose heritage was consciously nurtured within his order and whose commentary on the psalms (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*) he frequently cited. In addition,

his library included a number of medieval commentaries on the Psalms, among them the Postill of Nicholas of Lyra (see *History* 2:247–59). His method is also clearly dependent on the medieval model of interpretation. Hence a significant group of modern Luther researchers wish to consider Luther's first lectures on psalms as pre-Reformation, especially because he makes use of the—later abandoned—theory of the fourfold sense of Scripture. Yet this rule, first formulated in John Cassian (see *History* 2:69–76), remained in currency throughout the entire Middle Ages. On the other hand was his intimate knowledge of the letters of Paul, whose formulations he always heard in his mind.

A further consideration is more of a matter of content: Should the search for traces of Reformation awareness be fixed to particular formulations? This applies, for example, to the expression *extra nos* (we are justified from outside, without our doing), which first surfaced in Luther's somewhat later lectures on the Epistle to the Romans (at Rom 1:1). The topic itself can already be encountered in Luther even earlier.

When Luther gave his first lectures on the Psalms, he was still living in the monastery and shaped by the monastic context, so one cannot expect any finished results in it. Luther himself said in the introduction to his lectures that he did not yet understand many psalms (WA 55.1.1:2,1ff.; 55.2.1:25,11–12)—and that was meant seriously! But certainly traces of Luther's struggle for truth can be recognized here, as well as his first steps along a new way that was to lead him on and on to new shores.

One of Luther's guidelines from the medieval tradition was the christological interpretation of the Psalms. The Psalter was understood as a prophecy of Christ from the mouth of David; many psalms were considered to be prayers of Christ. Precisely this makes it understandable why Luther first turned to the Psalms. The preface to the *scholia* in his Psalms lectures bears the heading *Praefatio Jesu Christi* and begins with the I-saying of Jesus in John 10:9 (WA 3:12,11). Already in the preface Luther rejects as “fleshly understanding” the historical interpretation of Jewish exegesis, which related many psalms to figures from the history of Israel, and some interpreters who followed the rabbis (in all likelihood Nicholas of Lyra particularly is meant; WA 3:11,14–15), while Christ has bestowed the Spirit for understanding the Scriptures to those who are his own (WA 3:13,9–13; 55.1:8,3–7). With Nicholas of Lyra and Lefèvre, whose *Quintuplex Psalterium* he commented on in the context with his lecture (WA 4:463–526), Luther distinguished a double literal sense: one historical and one prophetic. The prophetic literal sense always refers to Christ. “Every prophecy and every prophet must be understood from the

Lord Christ, except when it becomes clear plain by clear words that he is speaking of someone else,” Luther says already in the Prooemium to his lectures (WA 3:13,6–7; 55.1:6,25/8,1). This signifies already an important revision to the system of the fourfold sense of Scripture, because by it the literal sense, discounted by most, gains a new dignity, though at another level. In interpreting some of the later psalms, which Luther did not treat until the second year of his lectures, there is clearly an emerging awareness that their origin belongs to a historical period before Christ. Thus he heads Ps 101 (102): “Prayer of poor people before the coming of Christ” (WA 4:141,4; cf. 18–21). The gloss to the heading of Ps 142 (143) reads: “This psalm is in the Spirit and prophetic sense the voice of the people of the faithful synagogue” (WA 4:443,18–19). In addition, already in Old Testament Israel there is a “remnant” of believers in the preanticipation of Christ, although no special significance is attached to it.

Luther still stood completely within the medieval theological tradition, which held that theology was by its own understanding of its center an interpretation of Scripture (*lectio divina* or *sacra pagina*); moreover, in the biblical interpretation of the monastic theologians, biblical understanding was closely tied with their own conduct of life. Thus tropological interpretation—dealing with action—played a significant role in the hermeneutics assumed in Luther. Moreover, the clarification of theological terms especially corresponded to the Western tradition.

Luther’s inward situation led him to occupy himself intensively with the biblical statements about themes such as the judgment of God, justification, trust, humility, pride, grace, and gospel, about which he could find a great deal in the Psalms. In so doing it had to do centrally for him with anthropology: the position of the human before God. From this point of departure he already comes to a decisive shift of position in his first lectures. From the outset he no longer understands the tropological sense of the psalms, as the humanistic theologians still did, along the lines of an instruction for action but christologically, as existence-related. We read this already even in the Prooemium: “At the same time, the same (the wording of the Psalms) must be understood tropologically by a spiritual and inner man, against the flesh and the external man” (WA 3:13,27–28; 55.1:8,10–11), for “tropology is against the tyranny, the temptation, and the attempt of the fleshly and external man who irritates the Spirit and beleaguers the dwelling of Christ” (WA 3:13,27–28; 55.1:10,8–10). Two elements of this statement are worth noting. The first is the altered image of humans: we are no longer dealing with the dualistic-Greek image of the person that distinguishes body and soul and in so doing devalues everything bodily and

sees worth in the spiritual alone. Instead of this, the fleshly (with Paul!) is for Luther a person's God-opposed stance, one moment determining one's entire existence, while the Spirit as the dwelling of Christ overcomes this God-opposed factor in humans. The person is a whole, but one's life (as a unity) is constantly influenced by the one power or the other: either by the flesh, the stance of unbelievers far from God, imprisoned to the world; or by the Spirit through whom Christ takes up dwelling in believers (an allusion to Eph 2:22), is incarnated in them. By this means, the believer becomes a new creature (2 Cor 5:17). Luther can also appeal to Paul for this transposition of the well-known Pauline idea that the believer is "in Christ" (see Gal 2:20; WA 3:127,11). By this means the tropological interpretation in its entirety takes on a new sense: the moralism of the monastic-medieval levels of interpretation is overcome; the demand coming from outside for an ethical action becomes a statement about a way of existence that is won in Christ. This thought is developed further in the scholion to Ps 109 (110). Where the text reads in the address of the king "sit at my right," Luther stresses, the word "sit" means in the figurative sense (*mystice*) that the spirit who was heretofore a slave of sin is now enthroned in the peace of conscience like a king ruling over the sinful members. "For he sits with Christ at the right"; that is, he participates (according to Eph 2:6) in the spiritual goods (WA 4:227,18–23).

Luther understands humans in accord with the biblical witness from the outset in terms of their life before God. On the expression "before God," Luther remarks (in the scholion to Ps 37 [38]:4; WA 3:214,16–23) that the Latin *coram* ("before") is a Hebrew expression that actually signifies "in front of the face." This is not to be understood spatially, for spatially we are always before the face of God, but "according to knowledge and the affections" (scholion to Ps 72 [73]; WA 3:479,3). "That is to say, we are before God when we know and love that which God has chosen" (WA 3:479,9–10). Luther makes it clear that biblical thinking is fundamentally different than philosophical Greek: philosophical thinking asks abstractly about the being of man, statically understood, while for biblical thinking the respective personal references are decisive. Thus on Ps 32 (33):3: "No one can sing 'a new song' except a new man; that is to say, a man is a new man by grace, a spiritual and inner man before God." For Luther this is only possible within the church (WA 3:239,20–21). On the other hand, the old man is "the sinful man, the fleshly and external man before the world" (WA 3:182,24–26).

While in the Christ event—this, of course, is a modern term Luther did not yet know of—man's existence is already ultimately decided, he still

stands within historical perspective in the time of decision: he must recognize his situation and decide to step toward the side of God. Luther develops this thought, drawing on his monastic starting point but at the same time transcending it, in his theology of repentance. As sinner, and only as sinner, can we experience the grace of God. But we must first accept this: "For we become sinners when we acknowledge that we are such, since we are such before God" (WA 3:288,6–7; scholion to Ps 50 [51]). When the sinner learns the truth of being a sinner and in so doing comes to himself, the gracious acting of God who aids one to such knowledge (WA 4:446,31–34 and elsewhere) has already occurred. From the sinner becomes a righteous person. "The righteous man is in principle his own self-accuser" (WA 55.2:33,1, on Ps 1:5). Meanwhile, unbelief and disobedience—the "law of the flesh"—rebel against faith and obedience; the behavior of such a person equals idolatry (WA 4:383, 25–35; on Ps 118 [119]:163), beneath which pride finally conceals itself (WA 4:360,35–361,2; on Ps 118 [119]:113). Humility, by contrast, is "all truth and all righteousness, briefly put, the cross of Christ itself, the death of the old man with his deeds and feelings" (WA 4:383,34–35; at Ps 118 [119]:163). Praise of God is tied at the same time with confession of sins; they are two confessional acts belonging together (WA 4:239,1–3). Indeed, confession of sin is nothing other than praise of God (WA 3:185,7).

The view that this theology of humility, which Luther had not yet truly moved beyond in his early lectures, is in reality nothing other than a refined form of the law is certainly not tenable. The understanding of humility won in Luther—against the old understanding of monastic virtues, in which humility was closely tied with obedience to superiors of the order—is likewise a dimension of faith. Luther at one time formulates: "For the justified man is not the one who considers himself humble but the one who considers himself worthy of condemnation and damnation in own sight [and his sins damned, making themselves his own, etc.]. It is he who is justified" (WA 3:465,5–8). Humility is humiliation (by God, death of the old man) (*ibid.*, 5)!

This is confirmed by a look at Luther's understanding of covenant. The term is by no means—as it is later in Bullinger and especially Reformed federal theology—at the center of his reflections, but it can cast further light on his views. The old and new covenants are for Luther—again, in contrast to later Reformed theology—to be clearly distinguished. The old covenant, as a covenant of works, is a two-sided relationship that can be dissolved by breaking the covenantal obligations; the new covenant is based solely on God's grace and is indissoluble (WA 4:41,15–29). Here

Luther picks up on the medieval distinction between objective and subjective conceptions of covenant. The new covenant is objective in that it is based on God's appointment.

Along with it, the medieval tradition knows of a subjective side of covenant: by doing whatever he possibly can (*facere quod in se est*), the sinner can cooperate in his salvation by preparing for the receipt of grace, and the Christian in the state of grace can also contribute to the increase of grace. This can be sublimated to the extent that knowledge of one's own sinfulness and corresponding humility can already be considered adequate cooperation. Luther modifies these ideas in a decisive way: he emphasizes in connection with Mark 16:16 that "whoever believes ... will be saved"; the grace of Christ is promised to all who believe in this (WA 4:193,10–21). But the term *fides Christi* is ambiguous: "That is to say, faithfulness (*fides*) is his grace and his mercy itself, which was once promised so that we may be justified and saved by it" (WA 4:127,18–19). The first half of this formulation looks back to the previous covenantal act, while the concluding explanation includes the statement that faith in Christ is decisive for the subjective appropriation of this covenantal grace. Here Luther corrects the idea of what is possible to do. It is reduced to the "expectation" (WA 4:262,8, 17) and the "petition" (WA 4:262,2–3) for grace, which is the only proper stance of the sinner to whom plainly nothing is available.

The new theology becomes clear above all in Luther's view of the significance of God's judgment (*iudicium*) and justice (*iustitia*). His discussion of Ps 71 (72):2 especially has received a great deal of attention in this regard. The old WA printed the text in an incorrect sequence. The leaf inserted in the second position (Bl. 104 = WA 3:464,1–467,4) represents the actual interpretation of Ps 71 (72) and originally preceded it, while the prior leaf in the WA (Bl. 103 = WA 3:461,20–463,37) deals with a thematic question. In content, however, the two discussions are nearly the same.

In the interpretation of Ps 71 (72):2 itself, Luther distinguishes three sorts of meaning of *iudicium*. (1) Anagogically (eschatologically), it is the final judgment. Luther remarks that this is seldom called *iudicium* in Scripture (addition: "Of the Old Testament. But also in the New") (WA 3:464,10–13). (2) Allegorically, *iudicium dei* is the hidden division between good and evil by Christ in the church. (3) Tropologically—and this is a very frequent meaning of the word in Scripture—*iudicium dei* is the killing of the old man, which is at the same time accepted in faith and in doing so efficacious ("God condemns and makes condemnable what we have from ourselves" WA 3:465,2–3). In one schema—Luther loves such

graphic sketches—*iudicium* is unfolded as (1) “God’s Word,” (2) “self-judgment,” (3) “corresponding fulfillment in action” (WA 3:466,9–11).

Luther then points out that *iudicium* and *iustitia* appear in parallelism in many psalms (WA 3:465,16–30). This leads him to point likewise to the threefold meaning of *iustitia* (WA 3:466,26–467,4). While allegorically *iustitia* is the church, anagogically it is “God himself in the triumphing of the church” (its perfection), and here again the tropological usage of the word is most important to him. Meanwhile, Luther now first remarks that *iudicium* concerns more the evils, *iustitia*, the goods. He notes in a *corollarium* (addition) that the frequent appeals in the Psalms, “Judge me, God” and similar ones (see Ps 43:1; 82:8; 95:13; 98:9), are to be understood as “give me true humility and mortification of my flesh that I am saved by you in the spirit” (WA 3:466,36–37). Here the already described view, which is easily misunderstood, appears once again. For the early Luther, the acknowledgement of one’s own sinfulness is linked with becoming justified, not as its presupposition—that thought would still be pre-Reformation—but as an inseparable accompanying appearance.

Especially worth noting, however, is that a reference to Rom 1:16 surfaces in this context. Tropologically—and this Luther states in the first place—*iustitia dei* equals *fides Christi*. The quotation from Rom 1:17 follows, with the formulation “from faith in faith” (WA 3:466,26–27). The Latin expression *fides Christi* should be read as “faith in Christ.” What *fides* means, Luther made clear in other passages of his lectures, such as his scholion on Ps 73 (74) in which faith (in line with Heb 11:1) is directed to what is not seen (WA 3:498,27–499,8) and a sign of future things, not yet the thing itself (see WA 3:57,23–27; 3:341,32–33; 4:193,32; 4:402,20–21). Formulations that speak of justification by faith occur in various passages. Thus on Ps 5 (6):5, “my salvation is in faith and grace, and not in the law or the inheritance of the flesh” (WA 5.2:92,17–18); on Ps 111 (112):4: Christ is “righteous, who justifies us only through faith” (WA 4:248,2–3; see also WA 3:179,2–3; 331,3–4 [by appeal to Rom 4 and 1:17]; 4:325,8–11). A detailed discussion of the term “faith” is also found in the scholion on Ps 84 (85):14 (WA 4:18,17–20,5). Among the things Luther stresses here is that, just as hereditary sin (the Latin designation *peccatum originale*, “original sin,” is more precise) is present before each of our evil works, so also original righteousness—as the righteousness of God—is before each of our good works. Instead of original sin, “the righteousness of Christ is now given us in place of each meritorious work” (WA 4:19,30).

This is then also confirmed by a detailed explanation of Ps 71 (72) added in the original loose leaf 113 of the Dresden handwritten manuscript (WA 3:461,20–463,37). Here Luther deals once again in detail with the terms *iudicium* and *iustitia*. The starting point here is Ps 71 (72):4 (similarly already in verse 2), which speaks of a positive judgment by the prophetically preannounced Christ, when it is said that he will judge the people who are poor. This leads Luther to reflect on which various images of the gospel (or “law of Christ, of freedom, of grace”) are used in the Bible. It is astonishing that it can also be called *iudicium* or *iustitia*. This is “without doubt because he [God] judges and justifies the person who believes him” (WA 3:462,24–25). This then can be meant (as in the first chain of argumentation, on leaf 114) in a twofold way: first tropologically, then allegorically. The anagogical explanation is merely suggested.

The tropological interpretation corresponds to what came before: “the scourging and crucifixion of the flesh and condemnation of all things that are in the world, judgments of God, who deals with his own through judgment, that is, through the gospel and his grace (WA 3:462,34–36). When Scripture is treated as a work of God, then this work (in the literary-spiritual sense) is nothing other than Christ (WA 3:463,27; see also 458,10–11). Since, however, we are connected to this work that took place only once in history by faith alone, which applies this righteousness of God to us, Luther can state: “Hence, tropologically, *iustitia* is faith in Christ” (WA 3:463,1). Luther then says even more clearly in the interpretation of Ps 71 (72): 6 that righteousness is not achieved by one’s own action: “That is to say, just as Christ is received by the Holy Spirit, so each believer is justified and reborn not through any human work but through the grace of God alone [here we already have the Reformation *sola gratia*!] and the activity of the Holy Spirit” (WA 3:468,17–19).

At the conclusion of his discussion (WA 3:463,21–36), Luther further points out that the proposition that the gospel is *iudicium* and *iustitia* is to be understood as the full and fulfilled gospel. This occurs where Christ rules the church with judgment and righteousness. But it occurs not only through the word (the proclamation) of the gospel (this would be only to show didactically what is to be condemned, what is to be chosen), but when it is lived in action (*opus*). Those who fulfill the gospel in such a way are no longer under the law. Here it is clear, on the one hand, that Luther still understands the concept of the word *opus* in pre-Reformation doctrinal terms, yet, on the other hand, the word *opus* is to be seen from the whole context in a holistic sense that has to do not merely with an external action but with a lived fulfillment. Still to be added is the marginal note

to Lefèvre's *Quincuplex Psalterium* on Ps 1:5, in which righteousness is the life of the Spirit, [and] judgment, the death of the flesh (WA 4:469,23). It once again becomes clear that the entire new existence of the Christian is in view here.

In sum, it is to be noted that a twofold thing is stated in the idea of judgment in relation to the righteousness of God. God judges the old, fleshly man in that God effects that this man judges himself, acknowledges being a sinner. In so doing God makes him at the same time righteous in the Spirit, that is, in faith in Jesus Christ, and thereby a new persone. To Ps 142:1, "hear my supplication, God, in your righteousness," Luther adds the gloss: "Not in my righteousness, but that which you give me and will give me through faith" (WA 43:443,9–11).

Luther discusses the relationship of righteousness and God's mercy in detail only in the scholion on Ps 84 (85):11–14. This portion of the psalm begins with the figurative statement: "Mercy and truth meet; righteousness and peace kiss one another." In the interlinear gloss elucidating these words, Luther interprets "mercy" as "God's grace," "truth" with "fulfillment of the promise," "meets" with "coming together in one person," "righteousness and peace" with "Christ, through whom we are just and who is our peace," "kiss" with "are joined with one another in the one Christ." In observing the chiasmic parallelisms of the terms, "righteousness" equates with "truth" and "peace" with "mercy." Striking, in addition, is the christological specification of the terms. The scholion on verses 11–14 places the section clearly within the overall structure of the psalm. According to Luther, it has three parts: the first (vv. 1–3) thanks for the future grace of the incarnation; the second (vv. 4–9) requests that it come; and the third (vv. 10–14) predicts that it will come (WA 4:12,7–10). For Luther, then, this prophetic part begins already with verse 10. At the term "truth" in verse 11, he gives at the outset an overview of the possible meanings. Here the correct meaning is confidence, trust in the fulfillment of what is promised. "Christ is thus the truth, because he has fulfilled the promise the Father made about him" (WA 4:13,7–8). By appeal to the expression of Lyra, "For because of the mercy of God the Word assumed flesh in order to fulfill the truth of the promise, which was made to the faiths of the Old Testament," Luther says, "he [Christ] is, in that he comes, mercy" (WA 4:13,14–15). "He is himself truth, that is, the action of the truth of God who has expressed the promise" (lines 16–17). Here the "nevertheless" of grace is expressed with absolute clarity: "That is, if it had not been given other than by merit, then righteousness and truth would stand over against each other, and there would be neither mercy nor grace,

but debts owed" (lines 22–24). Luther then gives an entire list of terms combined with each other: first a double column of two terms, each three times (mercy—truth; mercy—righteousness; mercy—peace; righteousness—peace; truth—peace; truth—righteousness). Or, however, in other combination, a further double column of the same structure: truth—mercy; righteousness—mercy; righteousness—truth; peace—mercy; peace—righteousness; peace—truth (WA 4:14,8–15). These are not intellectual games but an illustration of the close interrelatedness of all these terms for the tropological action of God. Luther presumably wrote these words on the chalkboard, as we know from medieval schooling elsewhere. In sum, the outcome is again the proposition that God tropologically "promised the salvation of the spirit and threatened the judgment and condemnation of the flesh" (WA 14:15,9–10). Along with this tropological aspect, Luther also mentions here again the anagogical, related to the final judgment, in which God will condemn those who are evil in the final judgment and save those who are good. But this should not be taken in isolation. What is decisive is that God's mercy consists in sending us our righteousness in Christ, and with this righteousness, true peace. Therefore the two terms can be brought together more closely. At this point truth comes into consideration, because God keeps his promises. As regards the phrasing of verse 11b, "righteousness and peace kiss one another," Luther remarks that Christ is both, and since neither the righteousness of the law nor the peace of the world can be this, it is possible only in Christ (WA 4:16,30–31). But we find already indicated here also the theology of the Word typical of Luther, for at the formulation in verse 8, "show us, Lord, your mercy," he can comment that here there is a distinction between the first and the ultimate coming of Christ: "That is to say, now shown to us through faith, but then through sight. Here, therefore, through hearing, then through clear sight. For faith comes from hearing." Luther again has his Paul (Rom 10:17) in mind! But he also knows the distinction between the first appearance of Christ in the flesh and the second in the Spirit: "Indeed, the coming in the flesh is ordained and takes place for the sake of that spiritual one; otherwise it would be of no use" (WA 4:19,33; for the threefold coming of Christ in the flesh, in the soul, and eschatologically, see also the gloss on the title of Ps 101 [102]; WA 4:141,18–28). Also related to this are the words "mercy and truth": the spiritual coming is intended chiefly in the tropological meaning. To be added as well is the reflection on God's goodness in Ps 115 (116):12: we cannot repay God anything, for he gives nonetheless and repays good for evil (WA 4:269,21–30; see also on Ps 117 [118]:1, WA 4:278,3–79,6).

Viewed as a whole, Luther is already moving in his first lectures on Psalms in clear steps toward his later clear Reformation statements. Of course, one has to do a double take in order to be able to identify Luther's decisive turn over against his predecessors (even over against Augustine's statements in his Psalms commentary). Luther still moves within the formal orbit of the hermeneutics passed down to him, such as the schema of the fourfold sense of Scripture and, by the stimulus from Lefèvre, the double literal sense. Moreover, the traditional method of an interpretation, following the text closely and interpreting each of the terms and phrases individually, occasions him to state his explanations in formulations supported by the wording in each case, often even with the aid of allegorizing. In this, one unambiguous guideline of content guides him: the conviction of the sinfulness of all humanity, the impossibility of attaining righteousness before God by works, and the faith that this elicits by the representative suffering of Christ. His consistency on this basic conviction distinguishes him from all his predecessors, even Augustine, in whose tradition he stands most strongly.

After concluding his first Psalms lectures, Luther turned to Paul himself, first to the Epistle to the Romans. The handwritten manuscript of this lecture (1515–1516) in his own notes was not rediscovered until 1907—along with the printing of the Vulgate edition of the Epistle to the Romans prepared for this purpose—in the Prussian National library in Berlin, after it had laid unnoticed for decades in a showcase in connection with an exhibition in 1848. Its immediate publication gave Luther research a powerful new stimulus. Here, where Luther dealt with the most mature expression of Pauline theology, one could expect to find the clearest Reformation statements.

Luther's way of proceeding in the Epistle to the Romans is outwardly similar to how he worked in the Psalms lectures. Again, a printing of the text prepared for the lecture was presented that offered room for interlinear and marginal glosses. In addition, Luther elucidated phrases and terms of importance to him in scholia; here are found a good many later additions (*corollarien*). Luther produced this autograph for his own preparations! Alongside it were some student lecture notes from which the course of the actual delivery of the lectures can be well reconstructed (WA 57:5–232). A comparison shows that Luther tightened up many things in his lecture as over against his manuscript; not a few sections were completely omitted. Thus here his theological basic ideas come through in many cases all the more clearly. On the other hand, why some critical passages especially are missing in the version he delivered can only be surmised.

Since the way of interpreting by following along the individual formulations does not yet take into account the overarching context, structure, and context of the letter as a whole—this was reserved for a later phase of interpretation—for an introduction to the content of Luther's interpretation, it is most useful to order it according to the themes treated.

Justification by faith, which Paul speaks of in the first chapters, impresses itself on Luther as the central theme of the Epistle to the Romans. His view, already sharpened in the Psalms lectures, of the distinction between the biblical (Hebraic) concept of "righteousness" and the Stoic-juridical one going back to Cicero and Justinian of a retributive-punishment *iustitia*, for which the formula "to each his own" (*sum cuique*) is characteristic, now comes to greater clarity. He now knew that his constant thinking of punishment and judgment—the reason for his excessive inner need—whenever he had heard of "God's righteousness" went back to the jurists and philosophers (see WA 56:287,16–24, at Rom 4:7). But the understanding of a punishing or rewarding righteousness of God was pervasive in late scholastic theology, too. The theory that God gave grace to those who did the best they possibly could (*facere quod in se est*) offered an only ostensible relaxation of the rule. Luther, by contrast, took seriously—Augustine's writings against Pelagius in particular helped him in this regard—that no one can attain righteousness before God by his or her own doing alone. The statement in Ps 50 (51):7 that humans were already born in sin was for him confirmed by the statement that Paul in Rom 3:10 took up from Pss 14:3; 53:2, 4 that there is no one who does the good (WA 56:284,1). Luther is concerned not with current individual sins but with "original sin," which he can also call "radical sin" (WA 56:277,12; cf. 56:283,6, 15; 56:285,16) or "radical evil" (WA 56:277,23). By appeal to Reuchlin's explanations (in his edition of the penitential psalms), Luther deals on various occasions with the meaning of the Hebrew words for "sin" (WA 56:277,5ff.; 284,9ff.; 290,2ff.). Current sins are simply the consequence of this fundamental human sinfulness in which human beings are involved from birth and can therefore be also called "sin of origin," natural sin" (WA 56:284,25), "first sin" (WA 56:315,1). Luther can also describe this condition as a "turning inward upon itself" (*incurvatio*), that is to say, that of a person who "is so turned in on himself that he bends back toward himself not only bodily but even spiritual goods and cares for himself in everything. This turned-inwardness is now natural, a natural vice and a natural evil" (WA 56:356–57). In this context Luther identifies as the *summarium* (summary) of the Epistle to the Romans as a whole that "all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh destroy, root out, and annihi-

late ... and implant, nurture, and make sin great" (WA 56:157,2, 6). What is meant is: to bring people to the knowledge and confession of their sins. This picks up on a central idea found already in the Psalms lectures: "That is to say, the man who has righteousness is not he who alone has this quality—for he is altogether a sinner and unrighteousness—but the one God mercifully counts as righteous and wants to have with him because of his confession of his unrighteousness and his appeal to the righteousness of God" (WA 56:287,19–22).

Before this can become reality, all self-satisfaction must be destroyed. This righteousness of God (Luther rephrases it "who and how someone is and becomes righteous before God") is revealed "only through faith, through which the word of God is believed" (WA 56:172,1). Here in the scholion to Rom 1:17 is already found the well-known Reformation core statement. "God's righteousness" is defined: not "by which he is righteous in himself, but by which we became justified from him, which takes place through faith in the gospel" (WA 56:172,4–5). According to the scholion on Rom 5:15, "God's grace" and "gift" are the same, "that is, righteousness itself, which is freely sent through Christ" (WA 56:318,28–29). Luther can also call it a "passive righteousness" of God. Our active justification by God includes that he is justified by us (WA 56:226,23–25). "But then God is justified in his words, when we consider and accept his word as just and truthful, which occurs through faith in his speaking" (WA 56:212,26–28). Vice versa, the justification of God means by our justification, his condemnation, the self-condemnation of unbelievers to their damnation (WA 56:226,23–30).

The well-known Pauline formulation that faith comes from hearing the Word (*fides ex auditu*, Rom 10:17) echoes not only in the sentence quoted above but is unfolded by Luther in his commentary on Rom 10:16–17. At Rom 12:7 ("or ministry, in ministering"), he complains about the inability of many pastors in his church to preach, for the bishops appointed unsuitable people. Touched on here is one of the greatest evils of the church of that time, but today as well!

Later on in this context Luther uses the terminology of the antithesis between "inner" and "outer": the righteousness sent by God is "from outside" (*extranea*) and not "from within" (*domestica*). "Not one that comes and arises with us but one that comes to us from somewhere else" (WA 56:11–12; scholion to Rom 1:1; "which is from Christ within us"; WA 56:159,2). It is an "external" and "alien" righteousness (WA 56:158,13). From this comes the famous formula "outside of us" (*extra nos*), which appears for the first time in this very scholion ("outside us and in Christ,"

ibid., line 9). Everything depends on moving away from self-righteousness and self-contentment toward the grace of Christ. One must act like someone who previously has nothing and “awaits the mere grace of God that counts him as righteous and wise” (WA 56:159,13–14). It then even holds true “that we are sinners does no harm so long as we try to be justified with all our might” (WA 56:266,17–18). The proximity to formulations of mysticism (as in Tauler) has been suggested, but the contacts are indeed merely formal.

Similar reflections lead to a well-known characterization of the believer as “at the same time justified and sinner” (*simul iustus ac peccator*). In the context of interpretation of Rom 4:6–7, Luther sets up theses formulated antithetically in the scholastic way: “The saints are inwardly always sinners; therefore they are always justified from outside. But the hypocrites are inwardly always righteous, because they are always sinners from outside” (WA 56:268,27–30). “Inwardly” means according to one’s own judgment; “outwardly” means by the judgment of God (WA 56:268,31–269,1). In God’s estimation, we are justified but, on the other hand, sinners, “according to the nature of relationships” (WA 56:269,7–8). Thus, as Luther then formulates it in his second series of theses (WA 56:269,21–24), the saints are “justified and sinners at the same time” (the hypocrites, “sinners and justified”). These two terms are not static but relational, as the logical paradox expresses. Luther also knows still other related formulations: since we serve the law of sin with the flesh, but the law of God with the spirit (Rom 7:25, quoted from memory), we are “partly justified, not fully” (WA 56:260,23), or, “sinner in fact [*in re*], but justified in hope [*in spe*]” (WA 56:269,30). Original sin persists, is present even within the justified as a “remnant” (WA 56:258,8–13; cf. 56:271,25–27). Against the scholastics who claim original sin could be removed like actual sins, Luther appeals to Augustine and Ambrose (WA 56:273,3–274,2). The image of humanity behind this is formulated at length in the scholion to Rom 12:2: “Man is always in not-being, in becoming, in being, always in lack, in possibility, in doing, always in sin, in justification, in righteousness, that is, always sinner, always penitent, always justified” (WA 56:442,15–17). So this “justified and sinner at the same time” is always a movement: the believer is on the way; there is a spiritual progress. The new being, however, is not to be attained by one’s own efforts; it can only be hoped for and accepted as a gift. On the other hand, God leaves the hypocrites justified in their own self-estimation, while they are sinners in God’s eyes, because they think they can gain righteousness by their own achievement.

The antithesis of law and gospel is decisive for this event. In the scholion to Rom 10:15, Luther explains: "For the law shows nothing but sin and makes [people] guilty and thus terrifies the conscience. But in this way the gospel proclaims the wished-for help to those in terror" (WA 56:424,8–10). "The law weighs on the conscience by sins, but the gospel liberates it and grants it peace through faith in Christ" (ibid., 14–15). The reference to Christ is intensified by setting between these sentences the reference to the "lamb of God" from John 1:29.

One catchword for characterizing Luther's theological approach is likewise taken from the formulations of Paul (see 1 Cor 1:18): "theology of the cross." This theology speaks of the reversal of all values; according to Luther—as he already had stressed in the above-quoted summary at the beginning of the scholia to Rom 1:1—a major point of the letter is to destroy, eradicate, and annihilate all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh and to implant, grow, and make great sin—a statement that a little later Luther supports by the Old Testament with a quotation from Jer 1:10 and reference to the stone that smashed the statue to pieces (Dan 2:34; WA 56:158,7, 9–10). This action of God that radically contradicts all human expectations and human thinking (WA 56:376,32–377,1) can also be placed under the term of "alien" work. In the scholion to Rom 8:26, "we do not know what we should pray" (WA 56:375–377), Luther explains that we can first then let the works of God toward us occur, "when we cease our planning and let our deeds rest and we are completely passive with respect to God" (WA 56:375,23–24), for (with Isa 55:8, "my thoughts are not your thoughts") we cannot understand God's plans with us. What God then does for us against all our expectations (again proved by a quotation from the book of Isaiah, Isa 28:21) is his "alien work" (*opus alienum*). This alien work—in which God destroys our own righteousness—serves only "his proper work" (*opus proprium*), "that the first and exemplary of all his works is, namely, in Christ" (WA 56:377,4–5).

Luther refers to the concealment of salvation: "That is to say, our good is concealed and so deep that it is concealed under its opposite [*sub contrario*]. Thus is our life (concealed) under death, our self-love under self-hate, fame under shame, salvation under annihilation, rule under exile, heaven under hell, wisdom under stupidity, righteousness under sin, virtue under weakness" (WA 56:392,27–32). Yet this is christologically grounded: Luther refers in the same context to the fact that "Christ more than all the saints (on the cross) is condemned and left abandoned. And he has not, as some suppose, suffered lightly. For God has real and truly given him in eternal damnation for us" (WA 56:392,7–9). The God-

given shattering of all human self-assertion is incorporated into the event of the cross, of which it can be said: "His [Christ's] human nature relates itself nothing other than a man who is eternally condemned to hell" (WA 56:392,9–10). Everything depends on the reality of the event of the cross, which is tied to the events following it and by this means leads to salvation: "Because of his love for God, God awakened him immediately from death and hell and so destroyed hell" (WA 56:392,11–12). In commenting on the statement of Rom 5:2, "Through whom we have access in faith (to grace)," Luther rejects all theories that anyone is able to reach to God without Christ through faith: "Through all works of faith this occurs that we are made worthy of refuge and protection by Christ and his righteousness" (WA 56:299,23–25).

Although the Christian always stands again and again at the beginning with regard to justification and cannot detect progress in any case ("therefore none of the saints considers themselves or confesses themselves righteous, but always petitioning and expecting of being justified," WA 56:259,18–19), the justified person is nonetheless "free," "because if the will is not healed through the grace of God (which God promises and sends to the believer in Christ), so that we are free and joyfully for works of the law, asking for nothing other than pleasing God and doing his will, not out of fear of punishment of acting out of self-love, and we are always under sin" (WA 56:235,21–25, on Rom 3:9). There is also such a freedom and cheerfulness in the actions of the believer! Insofar as he or she is justified, the Christian is capable of and determined for doing works of righteousness. In a comparison Luther makes clear that when a layman performs priestly tasks but is not ordained, he does not thereby become a priest but deceives himself and those who are his. Thus although a person justified by the law can do works that are even more lovely than those of someone justified by faith, he is not justified by this and is even hindered from achieving works of grace (WA 56:248,18–33). God "does not accept a person because of the works, but the works because of the person." (WA 56:268,4–5). Works are of no use for justification by faith, this Luther stresses again and again (so at Rom 4:6; *ibid.*, 1–14). But, countering the opinion that no action is any long necessary, "It is necessary that both occur, through faith, through Christ, that in faith in Christ we do everything we can to endure and indeed confess ourselves to be useless servants in all these things" (WA 56:299,20–22). In this context Luther distinguishes between two sorts of works. Works of the law do not lead to justification but are the actions of the unsaved. In the context of explicating Rom 3:20 ("no flesh is justified by works of the law"), Luther

also finds in the *glossa ordinaria* (see *History* 2:138–41) the apparently opposed statements of Jas 2:26 (“faith without works is dead”) and Gal 5:6 about “faith that works through love.” Luther’s answer (found here in the question and answer format of the disputation) reads: “The apostle distinguishes between law and faith, or between letter and grace, and so also between these works. Works of the law he calls those that occur outside of faith and grace and out of the law that compels by fear, ... but works of faith he calls those that occur from the spirit of freedom alone from love for God” (WA 56:248,10–14). The latter are also called “works of grace” (*ibid.*, 33). “Therefore justification does not require works of the law but the way of faith which works its works” (WA 56:249,10–11).

The motivation for this action is—Luther follows Augustine here—love. In this, however, he has difficulties with the command “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18; cf. Matt 19:19), because for the sinful person self-love is already turned into selfishness. Instead of this, “true love for oneself is hatred toward oneself (as sinner)” (WA 56:517,10–11). For this, Luther appeals to the word of Jesus in Mark 8:35 and its parallels, to Phil 2:4, and to 1 Cor 13:5: “Love seeks not its own” (WA 56:517,10–15). According to Luther, then, the formulation “as yourself” can mean nothing other than a warning against loving yourself egoistically and instead of this a summons “that you completely cease loving yourself and in that you forget yourself, love your neighbor alone” (WA 56:518,7–8). “Therefore you love yourself in a false way. You will not be free of this evil unless you love your neighbor in the same way, that is, cease loving yourself” (WA 56:518,16–18). Here Christ, in keeping with Phil 2:7, is the model who loves us in that he “hated himself and emptied himself, surrendering totally for us” (WA 56:519,25–26). Luther has a much more radical understanding of sin than his predecessors do, and he also meditates far more deeply on the legitimate motives of Christian acts of love.

In living as righteous and sinner at the same time, Christians are like sick people in the treatment of a doctor; “they are in fact sick, but in the beginning and in the hope of being healthy, that is, becoming healthy” (WA 56:347,13–14). With this, Luther takes up a theme already met in Augustine. This condition, of course, lasts throughout the whole of earthly life: “Therefore, when we petition that righteousness may be completed and sins taken from us, we ask at the same time that this life is ended, for this inclination to evil will not be completely healed in this life” (WA 56:260,24–26; see also 235,31–37). Taking up Paul’s admonitions to the members of the community in Rom 12:12, Luther admonishes his hearers (to “rejoice in hope!”) to take joy not in things that are present, visible, for

“this is futile, because transient,” but in things invisible, only believed, in hope (WA 56:365,1–6). “Hope is not reality” (in Latin, a play on words: *Spes non est res*; WA 56:520,6). Everything, then, depends on renouncing all those things in which one can take joy in this world, because only then can one find one’s joy in hope. In the interpretation of Rom 4:18 (“whoever believes in hope against hope”), Luther distinguishes between human, “natural” hope and the “supernatural” hope of Christians (WA 56:295,14–15). According to Paul, one example of this is Abraham, whose hope of becoming a father of many people was not in his dead body but in the promise of God, “who is capable of doing what he promised” (Rom 4:19, 21; to this, 295,29–34). The meaning is that Christians are beset by many evils so that they take no joy over the present. Patience amid temptations is therefore necessary (for “patience amid afflictions,” WA 56:465,15–24). Hope constantly has an eschatological horizon.

In reviewing Luther’s lectures on the Epistle to the Romans, we discover that the main themes of his Reformation theology are already completely present there. His commentary is basically nothing other than a restatement of themes of Pauline theology, which Luther makes his own by sharpening and contemporizing them. The term *ennaratio*, which Luther uses as the heading of his second lecture on the Psalms (*Ennaratio in Psalmos*) but is applicable to all his commentaries, captures this characteristic best. We have already pointed out that in terms of method this is still a medieval model of interpretation. In keeping with the model of *sacra pagina*, it still makes no separation between exegesis and systematic theology. In this regard Luther follows the monastic mode of interpretation; methodologically, he stands apart from the scholastics, too, whom he always opposed in terms of content (even though there are occasionally echoes of the form of scholastic sentences, familiar to Luther from his years as a *sententiarus*). In content, though, Luther advances a powerful step: the theological ideas he first delivered in the Latin language to an academic audience in his lectures on the Epistle to the Romans were to have an undreamed-of effect in his expressions of the years 1518–1520, more strongly directed to the public. But the reading the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans already conveys a deep impression of the consistency of his thought.

Luther gave up allegorical scriptural interpretation more and more (although never completely). He later on occasion explicitly opposes it, as in a Table Talk of 1540 that states: “When I was young, I was learned and especially before I came to theology, I went along with allegories, tropes, analogies, and made nothing but artistry.... I know it is pure trash that I

have now let pass.... The literal sense, that does it; there is life, comfort, power, doctrine, and art in it. The other is the work of fools, even if it has high shine" (WA.TR 5:45,10–17).

Luther basically made his views known on the relationship between the Old and New Testament in his prefaces to the German Bible. In his preface to the Old Testament (in the edition of the last hand, 1545 = WA.DB 8), he says about the Old Testament: "So know then that this book is a book of law that teaches what one should be doing and offers in addition examples and stories of how such laws have been kept and violated. Just as the New Testament is a gospel or book of grace and teaches where one should draw from so that the law may be fulfilled." But this applies only generally, for Luther knows very well that, just as the New Testament contains laws governing earthly life alongside teachings of grace, "so also in the Old Testament alongside the laws there are many promises and sayings of grace there" (WA.DB 8:12,9–22). But for Luther it remains decisive that Christ is the center of Scripture, the "mathematical point" (WA.TR 2:439,25–26) from which all understanding is to be drawn.

Luther continued his lecture activity lifelong. In the end he occupied himself—with interruptions, in the years 1535–1545—with the first book of Moses. Despite some new themes, this lecture is similar in character to the earlier ones. All in all, the commentary, which in the modern Weimar edition encompasses three vast volumes, is a treasure trove for Luther's theology. Upon their completion, on 17 November 1545, a few months before his death, he was worn out. He is said to have told his listeners, "May Our Lord God grant that others after me do better. I can do no more. I am weak; pray God for me that he grant me a good blessed hour" (WA 44:825,11–12).

2.2. ORGANIZING THEOLOGY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE: PHILIPP MELANCHTHON

Philipp Schwartzertdt was born in 1497 in Bretten, the son of a weapons-maker and electoral armorer: Georg Schwartzertdt from Heidelberg. His father died as early as 1508. Thereafter Philipp attended the Latin school in Pforzheim, where he lived with a distant relative of Reuchlin. Reuchlin, who benevolently watched over his progress in learning, gave him the Greek form of name Melanchthon in keeping with humanist usage in 1509 (unusually early). From the winter semester of 1509 on, he went to Heidelberg University and was graduated as bachelor of arts in "the old way" (realism) of scholastic philosophy in the summer 1511. He

then continued studies in Tübingen, gaining the master's degree in "the new way" in 1514. Nominalism remains from then on the philosophical orientation of his thought. With his friend Oecolampadius he pursued humanistic studies, read Aristotle in the original texts, and also learned Hebrew thoroughly. In the "obscure-men conflict" he joined the Reuchlin party. An edition of Terence and a Greek grammar were the first fruits of these studies. The decisive turn in his life occurred by the subsequent call, at Reuchlin's recommendation, to Wittenberg University to the newly created chair for Greek (together with six other humanistically oriented chairs). He arrived there, after a stay in Nurnberg and Leipzig, on 25 August 1518 and delivered his inaugural, *De corrigendis adulescentiae studiis* (*On the Reform of Studies of Youth*). In this, Melanchthon developed a program for humanistic instruction that went alongside the scholastic and later in Wittenberg replaced it completely in the philosophical faculty of Wittenberg.

Melanchthon called for studies in history, mathematics, and languages, including Greek and, for theologians, Hebrew. He began his teaching career with lectures on Greek classics (Homer, Plutarch, and Pindar), but also on the Epistle of Titus, on which he (with great technical difficulties) had printed a Greek text edition. Until finally receiving the professoriate in Hebrew in 1521, he also lectured on the Hebrew Psalms and taught Hebrew grammar. Only theologians, however, were permitted to offer exegetical biblical lectures. Melanchthon earned the lowest degree required for this, Bachelor of the Bible, in September 1519. He never pursued higher theological degrees; by his background and his own conviction, he remained a theological layman. Nevertheless he, like Luther, was granted a special status in the salary reform of 1525 and was allowed to lecture in both faculties. He got a successor for the Greek professoriate. Other linguistic, philosophical, and historical works take up a wide place, however, in his numerous publications.

In 1520, he married a Wittenberg citizen's daughter, Katharina Krapp. In the place of a small, old house, she apparently brought into the marriage as her dowry, the Elector had a magnificent Renaissance building built for him in 1536. Two daughters and a son reached the age of maturity. Melanchthon lived to see several grandchildren as well. Johann Koch, first a student and then a factotum of Melanchthon (1553), belonged to the household into which Melanchthon accepted students as co-dwellers and pupils.

Melanchthon exercised great influence in the overall administration of the university, as in the reform of the program of studies (1523) and

the drafting of statutes for the theological faculty (1533) and later (1545) for the philosophy faculty and the whole university. He was rector of its faculty in 1523–1524 and 1538 and dean in 1536–1537 and 1546–1548.

He was also involved in responsible posts in numerous church political and general political debates of his time (the two areas are not to be separated). During Luther's absence at the Wartburg, Melanchthon was his representative but was not prepared for the problems that arose (see p. 68 above), so that Luther returned hastily, against the will of the elector. He was better equipped for this task later (as at the Diet of Augsburg). By numerous visitations (for which he composed the *Unterricht der Vistatoren* in 1528), he collaborated in the reform of the territorial church. As for missions to other locales, he was present at the Diet of Speier in 1529, the Marburg Colloquy with Zwingli (where he assisted Luther), and the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. The Augsburg Confession was his work. Attempts at an agreement with theologians of the old church in long committee negotiations finally failed, primarily because of church-political differences. After the appearance of the *Confutatio (Refutation)* by the Catholic party, Melanchthon wrote the *Apology* of the Augsburg Confession, which was published together with the Augsburg Confession itself in 1531. In the service of the Schmalkaldic League, founded in 1530 by the evangelical princes against the Emperor, he composed (in addition to other confessional works) an altered edition (*variata*) of the Augsburg Confession (appeared 1540). In addition, he participated in numerous religious colloquies that made attempts, ultimately futile, to come to a settlement with the Catholic side. In addition, he drafted a confession, the "Wittenberg Reformation," for the Diet of Worms of 1545.

Upon Luther's death, Melanchthon, as his successor, became the head of the Wittenberg faculty. After the defeat of the League in the Schmalkaldic War of 1546–1547 (during which Melanchthon had to flee Wittenberg for a time) and the assumption of rule over Wittenberg by the new Elector Moritz of Saxony (1521–1553), who had gone over to the victorious imperial side, the university and with it Melanchthon resumed work in the fall of 1547. Among the ancillary tasks expected of him were formal opinions on the Augsburg Interim (an attempt at the regulation of the religious question advanced by Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg, 1547–1548) and on the Saxon church order introduced by Elector Moritz (the so-called Leipzig Interim). Theologically, the matter of concern was the conflict with the strict (Gnesio-)Lutherans under Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575) about so-called *adiaphora*, the question whether external orders (e.g., the retention of choir robes [*stola*] and other

rites) were insignificant for faith or not. Here Melanchthon advocated flexibility when it was necessary for the maintenance of pure teaching. Disputes over doctrinal questions arose later, too. Melanchthon and his supporters (Philippists) also maintained their mediating position in the fluctuating inner-Protestant discussions. Over against Catholicism, he worked polemically with the conclusions of the Council of Trent (1545–1563); he was unable to follow through on the order to attend there in 1552 because of the outbreak of war. He would also have to experience the start of the Counter-Reformation in Bohemia and Bavaria. Tired of the disputes of theologians, he died from an infection in 1560 and was buried beside Luther in the Wittenberg castle church.

Melanchthon wrote a large number of biblical commentaries, especially in the form of lectures, and after 1527, after the first notes had been published without his approval, he brought out a printed edition himself. Of most of them one can say that they deserve no special place in the history of interpretation; his prominent position, which earned him the honorary title of “Germany’s teacher” (*praeceptor Germaniae*), lies in other areas. But we come to a central point of his theological work and a milestone of Reformation development with his chief systematic work, the *Loci communes* (*Loci communes rerum theologicarum seu hypotyposes theologicae*), which he reworked his entire life after its first publication in 1521. It has long been recognized that this work is not to be understood apart from its prehistory in the interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans with which he had worked extensively in 1519 and 1520.

Before he was authorized to give public lectures by his theological degree as a *baccalaureus*, Melanchthon was able to work on exegetical questions in private biblical exercises he carried on with student lodgers in his household. A small work arose from this as early as 1519, *Theologische Anweisung über den Römerbrief* (*Theologica Institutio*) (CR 21:49–60). Melanchthon later, in 1520, distributed this work as a study aid to those attending his lectures on the Epistle to the Romans. The original in his own hand that Melanchthon later gave his friend Johannes Hess (1490–1547), the Reformer of Breslau, is preserved. Here for the first time appears the reference to basic terms (*loci communes*) that are constitutive for the Epistle to the Romans. Melanchthon names them in the introduction (perhaps of independent origin): sin, law, and grace (CR 21:49). In the main part (with a new heading) the terms *justification* (chs. 1–8), *predetermination* (predestination; chs. 9–11), and *moral formation* (chs. 12–16) are presented as the letter’s overall points of division. In wider perspective, then, the meaning of the first-named terms is developed in the

context of the Epistle to the Romans. At the conclusion (CR 21:56–60) is a summary (*summa*) of the letter's contents in which for each chapter again the leading basic terms (such as, for Rom 5, sin, death, grace, law; for Rom 6:1–7, 13 the same terms appear in another sequence) serve as characterizations. What is innovative is that this time the loci are drawn not from a preestablished stock of terms but from the biblical text. Practice assists in gaining familiarity with the statements of Scripture, and their evidence is based not on human foundations in general but on the authority of the biblical word.

Yet another work related to the interpretation of the Romans epistle is the *Capita* (*Major Points*) or *Lucubrationcula* (*Nacharbeiten* = *Night-works*; CR 21:113–46), originating in 1520. Here the point of departure is in fact a debate with Lombard's sentences (hence with scholasticism), and the procedure also is in line with scholastic dialectics but then shifts to the method of rhetoric.

The division of materials in terms of basic concepts (*loci*) already had an old tradition. It is already found as a rhetorical schema in, among others, Cicero, John of Damascus, Peter Lombard, Rudolf Agricola, and Erasmus. The latter in his *Ratio* had recommended them as useful rubrics into which theological themes could be organized in terms of relationship and antitheses, (Welzig 3:452), but above all he had praised them (by explicit appeal to Origen) as a method of exegesis that facilitated the interpretation of obscure biblical statements by the collection of comparable text passages (3:454). In so doing he held fast to traditional usage in that for him also the basic concepts characterize what concerned universal, super-temporal, moral existence of humans. Basically no distinction is made between the ancient-philosophical and the biblical images of humanity. Melanchthon himself still used it in his *Rhetoric* of 1519 in the sense of basic elements of human existence and conduct, especially with regard to ethics, founded in natural law. The *loci communes* are general topics that in antiquity are understood to assist as orientation for political activity in the service of universal needs. In the humanist attitude toward life, they served as the basis of a literary self-education with the goal of advancing from an inability for decision making to an acceptance of the responsibilities of citizenship. In the framework of rhetoric, the *loci* function in forming a didactic structure that can provide the anthropological foundation for the science. Human existence that can be conceived in terms of categories and human conduct are in this way closely connected. The good is teachable!

With their adoption into an exegetical-theological context, the *loci* assume a basically changed quality in Melanchthon. By formulating the

basic concepts that he drew from Romans, he gained for the theological themes he treated, on the one hand, a conceptual apparatus that is no longer taken from outside but emerges directly from the Bible. Melanchthon understands his *Loci* simply as an introduction into Holy Scripture. Corresponding to the Reformation "Scripture alone" (*sola scriptura*), he develops a biblical and nevertheless systematically arranged theology in the literal sense. In it, corresponding to the definition of *loci*, emerges the insight into a basic structure of righteousness gained through justification in which human existence finds its completion. On the other hand, such an arrangement is of assistance to exegesis because it aids in understanding the Pauline letter itself. Exegesis and dogmatics are brought near one another. Thereby the basic content of what such *loci* signify is also basically changed.

In the *Capita* the discussion of free will is first disputed in terms of the scholastic dialectical schema, although also under occasional reference to the "comforting *loci* on predestination" (CR 21:15). For the next section on original sin (CR 21:17–23), Melanchthon then explicitly adopts the rhetorical schema of *loci*; the absolute bondage of humanity by original sin makes free will illusory. For this are now cited an entire series of scriptural passages from both Testaments that group around the Pauline teaching of flesh and spirit in Rom 8. "The whole of life and evangelical doctrine is contained in Paul's letter to Rome" (CR 21:23). Finally, a section about the "law" follows. Unlike Erasmus, who by this understands ceremonial law exclusively, Melanchthon means the law in the twofold, Pauline-Lutheran sense of "law and gospel." The structure of the Epistle to the Romans stands in the background.

This reworking is clearly parallel to the lectures on the Epistle to the Romans that Melanchthon also gave in 1520. It also belongs to the preparatory work for the great systematic work, the *Loci communes*. When we consider the structure of this work in its two bilingual editions, we must first identify the first chapter about free will (Pöhlmann, 24/25–46/47) as a later addition (in the context of the confrontation against Erasmus and Catholic theology). In addition, chapters 8–11 have a special position. They arose from debate with Lombard's sentences, which, as the authoritative textbook of scholastic theology, Melanchthon once again had to work on during the semester he prepared for his theological baccalaureate. Here, therefore, are found sections on the sacraments ("signs"), love (*caritas*), the political authorities (new), and, finally, a chapter on the trouble caused by human opinions. The central part, however, follows the arrangement that is already evident in the preparatory work and, as we

saw, follows the chief themes Melanchthon had drawn from his interpretation of Romans. In the sequence sin, law, gospel, grace, justification (chs. 2–6), they name the catchwords that Luther had already highlighted as the most decisive of Pauline theology. They are dialectically related to one another and hence in the situation are to be understood as an occurrence, justification, as the history of God's saving acts toward humans. The significance of this finding cannot be overestimated. Here for the first time systematic theology is decisively ripped from the outline that philosophy had given it in scholasticism—thus, missing are the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Christology that are elsewhere presented at the beginning. Instead, the outline and detailed exposition are completely determined by the salvation-oriented perspective, that is, to humanity in relationship to God. Pauline, Reformation-interpreted theology provides the guidance for this. Melanchthon stresses this right away in his introductory dedicatory letter. He then gathered together the material “by which it is chiefly to be sought in Scripture, and how dreadfully those who offer us Aristotelian subtleties instead of Christ's teaching talked drivel everywhere in theology” (Pöhlmann, 12/13). In what follows, he several more times offers assurances that instead of calling students away from Scripture, he would seek to introduce them to its study; he does not think very highly of commentaries. He explicitly comments: “Anyone who tries to gain for himself the essential form of Christianity from somewhere other than the canonical Scripture deceives himself” (14/15).

Paul's exposition in the Epistle to the Romans is pointed to again and again as the basis for statements, even in details. One example is the law of nature, about which Melanchthon remarks that it had not yet been founded by anyone on a conclusion of a natural proof of reason, and he considers it also questionable whether anyone could do so at all. He finds an adequate justification, however, in Paul in Rom 2 (14–15) (Pöhlmann, 100/101). On the distinction between the Old and New Testaments (ch. 7), Melanchthon remarks: “I call the Old Testament the promise of bodily goods, tied with the demand of the law” (288/289). “The New Testament, on the other hand, is nothing other than the promise of every good without the law and without concern for our own righteousness” (290/291). It thereby holds that the law in its entirety, and not merely the ceremonial and judicial laws, is antiquated. This is confirmed by Jer 31:31–34 and its repetition in Heb 8:8–13, as well as by statements about Christian freedom from Romans and Galatians. Romans 6:15 provides the point of departure for discussing the well-known problem of whether freedom from the law means we can now sin without restraint and the Reforma-

tion answer, "Those renewed by the Spirit of Christ will strive out of an inner impulse, even without the law that is past, to do what the law commanded," is backed up by reference to 1 Tim 1:9.

All in all, we again find Reformation theology in its main points in accord with Luther's understanding and largely based on biblical statements, with the letters of Paul especially, Romans first of all, at the center. The closeness of systematic and biblical theology can hardly be reached ever again in this form, even if such a similar attempt might be made. If the first edition of 1521 is today largely considered the most significant, it is because there its exegetical foundation in the theology of Romans is carried through most clearly. In later editions Melancthon returns ever more strongly to viewpoints that arose in the scholastic tradition.

2.3. FORMING THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE: HULDRYCH ZWINGLI

Huldrych (Ulrich) Zwingli, the son of a bailiff (district administrative director) of the same name, a well-to-do large farmer who perhaps engaged some in trade as well, was born on 1 January 1484 in Wildhaus in the Toggenburg Valley in northeast Switzerland. He had at least nine siblings, four of whom apparently entered the clerical estate; the others became farmers. He was later proud of his peasant descent. He would have come by his patriotism, characteristic of the Swiss, as well as his church connection from his family. The sparse testimonies make it difficult to learn details about his childhood and youth. We learn that at five years of age he went to his uncle Bartholomäus Zwingli, the pastor of Weesen at Lake Walen, in order to attend the school there. We do not know more about this time. In 1494, he was sent to Basel, where he was to learn Latin. Around three years later he went to continue his study of Latin with the well-known humanist Heinrich Wölfflin (d. 1534) in Bern. There, however, the Dominicans had their eye on him because of his beautiful voice and had already enticed him into their monastery when his father and uncle intervened and fetched him home for a time. He enrolled for the winter semester of 1498 in Vienna. Again the content of his study there is completely unclear; possibly he first completed Latin instruction here and attended only the Stephan school attached to the university, not the university itself. He would then have first taken up actual university studies in Basel (1502–1506), where he passed through the usual course of study in the arts faculty, becoming a *baccalaureus* in 1504 and a master of arts in the spring of 1506. Zwingli formally studied theology only in the summer

semester of 1506. Yet the program of the arts faculty in the philosophical fields already had so many points of contact with the all-dominant theological themes that scholastic thought at least was fully familiar to him. One of his teachers was Thomas Wyttenbach (1472–1526), at the time a *sententarius* at the university, an adherent of “the old way” or “realism” (see above, p. 87), from whom he received his basic philosophical orientation. He still studied the writings of John Duns Scotus during his years in Glarus. Whether he also attended Wyttenbach’s New Testament lectures in the theological faculty is uncertain. In Basel he also met as a fellow student his later assistant Leo Jud (actually Keller, 1482–1542). Jud later joined the group gathering at the time in Basel, which became known as “Swiss humanists.” Among those belonging to it were Beatus Rhenanus (actually Beat Bild, 1485–1547), Caspar Hedio (1494–1552), and Conrad Pellican (1478–1556). Beginning in 1514 Zwingli’s protégé from Glarus, the Köln student Heinrich Loriti (Glarean, 1488–1563), joined, who later arranged contacts with Erasmus for him.

Already in late summer of 1506 Zwingli received an inquiry from Glarus whether he wanted to assume the role of senior pastor (Kilchherrn) there, and he immediately jumped at the offer. He remained there until 1516; from 1516 to 1518 he held the office of a “people’s priest” at the pilgrimage site of Einsiedeln. These are years of special significance for his intellectual development.

First, he was embroiled in the political events in Switzerland. Glarus, like Zurich and Bern, belonged to the thirteen old cantons and there to the cities marked by guilds and patricians, while the original canons of Uri, Schwyz, and Upper and Lower Walden were rural-democratic in character. The larger cities, Bern and Zurich in particular, had in part extensive subject areas. In addition were the so-called “affiliates” such as the city and abbey of St. Gall, as well as several (“common”) dominions jointly administered by all the cantons. Because of the lack of work due to a population explosion from the second half of the fifteenth century on, many young men hired themselves out to foreign powers as soldiers (mercenaries). Supremacy over Upper Italy was the primary issue among France, the emperor, and the papacy at the end of the fifteenth and the start of sixteenth centuries. These powers sought to gain allies and spheres of influence in Switzerland. The pension system also served this purpose: persons of importance were bribed to exert their influence on behalf of a foreign alliance. Zwingli himself, as an adherent of the curial party, received a papal honorarium of 50 gulden from 1515 on! Several times he went into the war in Italy with the Glarern as a field chaplain, in so doing

was also in the battle of Marignano (1515), which with the victory of the French and the death of around ten thousand Swiss represented the final catastrophe of Swiss big-power politics. Already in 1510, however, he had criticized the prevailing system and called for peace in a political “Fabelgedicht vom Ochsen” (Poetic Fable of the Ox), his first published writing (SW 1:1–22). In it he warned the confederacy of the flutterings of the lion (Habsburg), the leopard (France), and the shepherd (pope). He similarly spoke out against mercenary service and pensions in a later poetic fable, “The Labyrinth” (1516; SW 1:39–60), and numerous sermons. Nevertheless, he was ready at every moment for the defense of the homeland and later the evangelical faith with weapon in hand.

It is also important to learn something about his religious development. At first, after he celebrated his first Mass in Wildhaus in 1506, he was still a completely Catholic priest. He took interest in Glarner relics, received an indulgence as early as 1512 in Rome, and still in 1517 led the pilgrimage from Einsiedeln to Aachen, planned since 1510. He continued his studies in private, as we know from his partly preserved library remaining in Zurich with many marginal notes in his own hand. The library includes, on the one hand, scholastic works, and therefore a continuation of theological study in the classical sense, oriented toward realism (Duns Scotus among others). In addition, he engaged in humanist studies, as emerges from his correspondence with Glarean and Joachim Vadian (Joachim von Watt, ca. 1483–1551), whom he knew from Vienna, at first still apart from any religious connection. The two informed one another of new books appearing on the market at the time. Latin and Greek classics were read. Zwingli acquired and later read, however, editions of the church fathers (which were published in quick sequence particularly by Erasmus), the works of modern humanists (such as Valla, the two Picos, Reuchlin, and above all Erasmus), and, as soon as they appeared, the first writings of Luther. From about 1513 Zwingli began a private study of Greek, with the express intention of reading the Holy Scripture in the original text (letter to Vadian, 23 February 1513; SW 7:22). He also learned Hebrew by self-study, using Reuchlin’s *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (see above, pp. 34–35).

Especially influential on Zwingli were the works of Erasmus, which he studied from 1515 on. The high point was a personal meeting with the master in the spring of 1516 during his second stay in Basel, to whom he then wrote an enthusiastic letter (SW 7:35–36). The appearance of the *Novum instrumentum* in 1516 and the introductory writings on the New Testament, which Zwingli worked with thoroughly, brought about a turn.

On the advice of Erasmus, he copied from this text edition the letters of Paul (at the time the letter of Hebrews was still considered Pauline) in a notebook (still surviving today) and by this means learned them by heart. This coincides in time with the move to Einsiedeln. From then on he also began to furnish this exemplar with philological marginal glosses, drawing from, among others, Lefèvre's Paul commentary. A great deal later (1523), Zwingli in retrospect designated the year 1516 a decisive new start: from that time on he began his public preaching on the Gospels from the Holy Scripture alone (although not free of the influence of the church fathers, especially Jerome), and indeed, in that he interpreted the text read at each morning Mass in the afternoon (SW 2:145,1–21). In the same context (2:217,8–14), he mentions a poem of Erasmus that he read at the time (*Expostulatio Jesu cum homine suapte culpa pereunte*, LB 5:319–20 = *Klage Jesu über den Menschen, der durch seine eigene Schuld zugrunde geht*). It is man's fault that he does not let himself be served by this Lord in whom all goods are available. That he puts Christ at the center, Zwingli learned from Erasmus! In a still later testimony (1527), in which he fends off the suspicion that he was influenced by Luther, he mentioned "many and prominent men" from whom he learned (apart from John, Augustine, Paul) the practice of the gospel, long before Luther's name had been known (SW 5:712,25–713,2). Since he mentions among them Thomas Wyttenbach (718,7) and, without naming the name, evidently Erasmus (721,7), the Basel humanist circle is to be thought of. The Einsiedeln sermons (none of them survives) would have been formulated in this spirit; they were so impressive that notice was taken of them in Zurich. When the position of "people's priest" at the Grossmünster came open in the fall of 1518, Zwingli was called. Assuming office on 1 January 1519, he served there until his death. During his first year in Zurich he fell ill of the plague but survived the illness. The "Pestlied" (Plague Song) composed thereafter (SW 1:62–69), however, still shows no Reformation ideas.

Very little is known about the beginnings of Zwingli's activity in Zurich. None of his sermons before 1522 is preserved. Nevertheless, we are familiar with some of his themes, known by their effect and their sources. Among the works Zwingli used were, for Matthew's Gospel, the homilies of Chrysostom (ca. 350–407) and the Matthew commentary of Hilary of Poitiers (fourth century). It is known that Zwingli, breaking with the medieval order of pericopes, began with his inaugural to interpret the Gospel of Matthew continuously (*lectio continua*). In so doing, he evidently dealt with the presentation of the life of Jesus and his teaching. This was followed by Acts, with the history of early Christianity, and

then the Epistle of Timothy (see SW 2:707–8). The goal was pedagogical: Zwingli wanted the Zurich community to keep before itself as its model the original community, which he idealized for its proclamatory zeal and moral purity. In all this he was of typical Erasmian stamp. The model for his sermon series on Matthew was evidently the church father John with his—likewise catechetically oriented—Matthew homilies (sermons).

It is still debated today whether Zwingli experienced his Reformation conversion under Luther's influence. He himself later constantly denied it, pointing instead to 1516 as the year he for the first time made the message of the Bible the starting point of his proclamation. The scale is tipped toward considering this not merely a defensive claim. Luther's chief Reformation writings of 1520 (*On the Freedom of a Christian Man, To the Christian Nobles of the German Nation*), were evidently not yet of influence on Zwingli, at least at the outset. Instead, he at first understood the works of Luther available in his library to be supportive of his efforts for reforms of practice, which were aimed at eliminating church abuses in the humanist sense, only now by concrete actions. The denial of the authority of the papacy was among them. Thus, Luther's courageous stand against the papacy at the Heidelberg Disputation (1519) influenced him (where Luther stepped forward like David against Goliath; SW 5:77,1–5, like Hercules who killed the Roman boar, 723,1–2). That in so doing the Scripture represented the point of departure and Christ was understood as its center are Erasmian principles! It is also striking that Zwingli supplied the works of Erasmus found in his library with marginal notes in abundance, while they are absent in Luther's works. But Luther was not without influence on Zwingli. We can recognize in the years 1520/1521 an internal upheaval, which can be seen (recognizable by different handwritings) in the later marginal glosses in Zwingli's own handwritten copy of Paul's letters, in his breviary, and in his copy of Lefèvre's *Psalterium quincuplex*, where for the first time the idea of justification—as a gift of righteousness already taking place by the reconciling act of Christ and currently applied to humans—surfaces in numerous notes. Zwingli becomes a Reformation theologian through Luther. Even Zwingli's intensive readings of Augustine (from 1520 on), especially his tractate on John's Gospel (as is likewise known by marginal notes in his personal copy) originally goes back to Luther's stimuli, but they led to a hermeneutic differing from Luther's, because Augustine (like Lefèvre) had distinguished word and spirit (in his work *De spiritu et littera*). Zwingli followed him. But Zwingli's claim that he was not dependent on Luther contains an element of truth as well, because the Paulinism in Zwingli's theology was certainly based on his own read-

ing of Paul's epistles and then found in Luther's interpretation one, albeit decisive, support.

Zwingli's early years in the Grossmünster are, so far as ascertainable, characterized by his critical sermons, which he directed against the moral decline in the citizenry (with names named!), against the monks, the veneration of saints, purgatory, and the tithe. In 1521, Zwingli (after having renounced his papal pension in 1520 and in so doing making a break with the papacy) was named additionally to a canons regular post in the Grossmünster.

One concrete occasion for Reformation action was offered by the eating of sausages during the fasting time in the house of the printer Christoph Froschauer (9 March 1522), in which the participants (Zwingli was there but did not eat any sausage himself), in adopting one of Zwingli's previous sermons, "all food is the same to all Christians at all times," deliberately intended to break the fast regulations. Other of Zwingli's radical followers repeated the process on the same evening once again at the same place. From this came a sermon of Zwingli, "Von Erkiesen and Freiheit der Speisen" (SW 1:74–136: "On the Choice and Freedom of Foods"), soon appearing in print, in which Zwingli demonstrated from biblical passages that there can be no compulsory food regulations. The law of God contained in the gospel is to be obeyed, not human commandments. Here we immediately recognize a marked distinction between Luther and Zwingli in understanding the law! When the bishop with responsibility for Constance (Hugo von [Hohen]landenberg) sent a delegation to Zurich in order to deal with leading clergy and the city council over the break of the fast, the Large Council (which had the final decision) mandated the church authorities, the bishop's theologians, and the Zurichers, including Zwingli, to justify the prior practice according to "Christ's statements." The authorities in Zurich also claimed the right to determine church affairs. As soon as Zwingli succeeded in bringing the majority of the council to his side, it became possible for him to implement the reforms he considered necessary on the basis of Scripture.

Further steps undertaken in 1522 were the council's order to mendicant orders to preach in accord with Scripture alone and the petition to the bishop to permit priests to marry. (Appearing at the same time was Zwingli's *Freundliche Bitte und Ermahnung an die Eidgenossen* [Friendly Petition and Admonition to the Confederationists]), which demonstrated that celibacy is also unbiblical.) Zwingli himself married the well-to-do widow Anna Reinhart (1484–1538), at first in secret (the public marriage ceremony did not follow until 1524), and had four children by her. Zwingli

wrote a refutation of a letter of admonition by the bishop to the Zurich authorities to maintain the church order. Zwingli was released from part of his pastoral duties from November of 1522; preaching was now his sole task. He was also to preach in the Dominican nunnery of Oetenbach (supervised by the city). This preaching was the basis for the work *Von Klarheit und Gewissheit des Wortes Gottes* (SW 1:328–84: *On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*).

Since the conflict between the two church parties persisted within the priesthood and the members of orders as well, the council, at Zwingli's request, issued the clergy of the city and the territory of Zurich a call to an oral disputation on 23 January 1523, to which the bishop was also invited. On the basis of its outcome, the council intended finally to decide on the rightness or wrongness of Zwingli's preaching. In the Sixty-Seven Articles (SW 1:458–65) he presented for this occasion, Zwingli gave an account of his preaching. Article 2 is itself revealing: "The sum of the gospel is that our Lord Christ Jesus ... has made known to us the will of his heavenly Father and by his innocence has saved us from death and reconciled God." It is clear already here that Zwingli's primary intention has to do with changes of practice. Reconciliation through Christ (see also article 18) is spoken of, it is true, but proclaiming the will of God is of utmost importance. Next to the "by Christ alone" (see article 3: "Hence Christ is the only way to salvation..."), that which is "based on what is written" (opening section) is the sole standard for all the concrete problems still under discussion, for which Zwingli demands reform.

The result of the discussion in which over six hundred persons participated—among them a delegation of the bishop under the direction of the Vicar General Johannes Fabri (1478–1541), one of the able, humanistically minded theologians—was a victory for Zwingli, who was able to clear himself of the charge of heresy in the view of the council. The council ordered all the preachers to preach on the basis of Holy Scripture alone. He represented the civil authorities; according to the Zurich model, the church community was virtually identical to the city community (only the settlement in Bern was more consistent).

Zwingli followed the Sixty-Seven Articles with a detailed rationale, *Usslegen und gründ der schlussreden oder articklen* (SW 2:14–457: *Interpretation and Justification of the Conclusions or Articles*). It is Zwingli's most comprehensive dogmatic work. In it is a theological position that clearly agrees neither with Erasmus nor Luther. Zwingli stresses the spiritual nature of God, God's strict separation from creation, and speaks of the reconciliation by Christ, who by his death on the cross fulfills the

demands of God's justice (cf. Anselm of Canterbury's theory of satisfaction) and by this means saved humanity from servitude to sin. Because of God's providence, there is no free will. As a moral claim on humans, divine righteousness (also "law of God" or "law of nature"), summarized in the double command of love (Matt 22:37–40), cannot be fulfilled and shows them to be sinners. Human righteousness, on the other hand, is external order in the community, which is placed under the oversight of the authorities and applies to everyone.

The initial attack on images (at a public call by Leo Jud in September 1523 but then taken up by Zwingli's radical followers particularly)—in some cases images of saints, but crosses and painted windows as well were cast out of the churches in riotous fashion as contrary to Decalogue's prohibition of images—led to the second Zurich Disputation (October 1523) over the scriptural bases of Masses and images. The practical outcome was moderate: images were allowed temporarily, but no new ones added; the Mass, too, was continued for the time being. Zwingli was a moderate Reformer who took into consideration the feasibility of swift revolutionary innovations. This aroused protests by his radical followers, from whom the Anabaptist movement developed. They maintained that temporizing over something contrary to God's commandments is indefensible; the matter had to be dealt with immediately. At the start of 1524, then, a beginning was made with the removal of images, but carefully. To be mentioned among the further measures, gradually implemented, are the abolition of serfdom, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the establishment of a marriage court that could grant divorces too (all in 1525). In 1525 also came Zwingli's major systematic work, *Commentarius de vera et falsa Religione* (*Commentary on True and False Religion*), dedicated to the French king Francis I. The "false" religion is the religion oriented toward external practices, the sacrifice of the Mass, veneration of the saints, and works righteousness, which the true religion confronts "in eternal battle" (SW 3:909,27). The way of salvation leads beyond self-knowledge: that the pitiable man despairs of himself (SW 3:723,1–2; in this connection Zwingli likes to quote Ps 116 [115]:11: "Every man is a liar"; also in connection with the adoption of the quotation in Rom 3:4; see, e.g., SW 1:151,10–11, 375,27–31; 2:23,25–32, 74,20–76,4) and therefore casts his whole trust in Christ so that he may die to sin (cf. Rom 6:5–11; quoted SW 3:704,18–26) and is thereby morally changed as well. Zwingli can state "that the Christian religion is expressed as nothing other than the firm hope in God through Jesus Christ and blameless living, in accord with the example of Christ that he himself gives" (SW 3:705,8–10).

Again, Zwingli's theological position as intermediary between Erasmus and Luther is clear.

The other events can be mentioned in only summary. A confessional division arose within the confederacy between the cantons remaining Catholic: Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Underwalden, and Zug (as well as Freiburg and Solothurn) on the one side, and the cantons joining the Reformation on the other. It was intensified by a disputation in Baden in 1536 in which Zwingli's teaching was condemned in his absence (Oecomlampadius represented the Reformation side). Zwingli found himself in a better situation in a disputation at Bern (6–26 January 1528), in which besides 350 Bern pastors a strong Zurich delegation under Zwingli and Protestant clergy from Swiss and Upper German municipalities took part. Zwingli was largely responsible for the result confirming that Reformation teaching and practice were scriptural and led to the immediate implementation of the Reformation in Bern (as the council there with its evangelical majority had wished).

Tensions between the covenanted cantons remaining Catholic and the Reformation cantons, likewise unified in a covenant, already led to an initial military clash in 1529. Zwingli had sought as the goal of the war the unhindered "preaching of the gospel" throughout the entire confederacy, the prohibition of pensions, and war reparations for Zurich and Bern. Despite a victory by the far superior forces of Bern and Zurich at Kappel, his demands were not considered in the compromise peace concluded soon thereafter. But the Reformation was able to proceed unhindered in the north and east of Switzerland (in the common dominions and affiliated cantons).

From 1529 the famous debate between Luther and Zwingli in Marburg (1–3 October 1529) is still to be mentioned. While agreement in fifteen articles could be reached on fourteen themes, the question of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper (on which Luther and Zwingli were divided since 1524) remained irresolvable. Luther stressed the "is" in the words of institution. Zwingli spoke of "signifies," because for him the sign character of the sacrament was certain in accord with John 6. Both disputants appealed to the Bible for their view. Today the differences in the understanding of the Lord's Supper between the evangelical confessions are overcome by modern exegetical knowledge.

From 1529 to 1531, Zurich and Zwingli sought, largely without success because of Zwingli's insistence on his view of the Lord's Supper, allies outside of Switzerland against a possible threat coming from the Habsburg and the Catholic cantons within Switzerland. Zwingli per-

sisted in efforts to force the five cantons to permit evangelical preaching. Finally, he openly advocated offensive warfare. After Bern carried out a blockade of provisions instead and broke it off when it had no success, Zurich tried to continue the controversy alone. Then the five cantons themselves declared war against the city. Due to inadequate preparation, the Zurichers, poorly organized and far inferior to the inner-Swiss, entered into a second battle at Kappel on 11 October 1531. They were decisively defeated. Zwingli himself and five hundred Zurichers, including twenty-five clergy, met their deaths in the battle. The hatred of their opponents went so far that Zwingli's corpse was disinterred and burned and his ashes mixed with dung in order to prevent any martyr's veneration at his grave.

It has already become clear that the Bible occupied a central place in Zwingli's theology, but his biblical interpretation has long remained very much in the background in research.

Zwingli made a series of basic statements on the significance of Scripture. The earliest thematic expression (shortly after the *Archeteles* appeared in 1522) is the previously mentioned work *Von Klarheit und Gewissheit des Wortes Gottes*. It was designed to clarify uncertainties on the part of the conventual nuns in the Oetenbach monastery about dealing with Scripture. Striking here is the starting point of the image of God in humanity (according to Gen 1:27), which consists in "that we are formed by heart or by soul for the way of God" (SW 1:344,6–7). Therefore, "deference toward him and his words" is decisive (SW 1:345,14; see also 25–26). But because according to Gen 2:7 God has breathed his Spirit into man, man is (as many other scriptural quotations, especially by Paul, make clear) spiritual (347,30ff.). The word of God, however, is full of power and clarity—for both, Zwingli adduces numerous scriptural passages from both Testaments—and one can grasp it because one has received the Spirit (quotation from 1 Cor 2:12–13; 369,12–16). If one wishes to understand Scripture, God's Spirit must always first be requested, for one must be taught by God (377,7–20), not humans.

We clearly see in the antithesis of God and Spirit the influence of Augustine's hermeneutics, which he developed in *De spiritu et littera*. Lefèvre also seems to have influenced Zwingli with his distinction between the simple and the spiritual literal sense. This determines Zwingli's understanding of the sacraments as well. The material—in the case of the Lord's Supper, the elements of the bread and wine—can for him have only a sign character; he therefore rejects the "is" of Luther. On the other hand, it would be incorrect to speak of spiritualism in Zwingli's case,

because he always takes the path through Scripture; he knows nothing of a free-floating illumination by the Spirit.

Zwingli's emphasis on the role of Scripture also conditions his polemic against the papal church: "Indeed, I realize that since popes and councils have often erred" (375,22–23), they can err again. Not even the church fathers (whom Zwingli on other occasions draws upon for his own benefit) are authorities: "In the lead are Anastasius [Pope Anastasius II, 496–498, long considered a heretic], Liberius [pope 352–366] in the error of Arius [because of his changing position in the Arian dispute]" (375,23–24). Thus the preachers likewise cannot teach (379,12–16); in order to determine if priests who preach are proclaiming the truth unmixed with their own views, it is necessary to be well read in Scripture (383,3–6). On the other hand, anyone who believes in Christ and hence possesses the Spirit, even an uneducated peasant, can understand the Scripture (*Arche-teles*; SW 1:321,35–322,3). One must leave one's own reason behind, listening to God's Spirit alone. Zwingli's emphasis on the Spirit distinguishes him from Luther, who always refers to the proclamation of the Word. Zwingli nonetheless holds firm to the reference to Scripture. For this, he knows to recall his own experiences with Bible reading, which led him "seven or eight years ago" (at the end of 1516) to set aside commentaries and interpreters and devote himself to reading Scripture alone (379,25–28). The request for God's illumination then led him to understand it. In *Auslegen und Gründe der Schlussreden* Zwingli states that he would like to let Scripture guide him and to be condemned, if Scripture condemned him (SW 2:75,10–11). The emphasis on Scripture as a starting point sets him apart from the radical spiritualists who were also among his followers. He maintained this stance later when, against his opponents who brought onto the field the authority of the church as represented by the pope and councils, he time and again made reference to Scripture as decisive for its interpretation. On the other hand, however, Scripture, in Zwingli's opinion, is "rightly understood only by faith" (SW 5:773, 23); he is no biblicist. Yet it must be said that Zwingli never came to a fully satisfactory answer to the questioning of the spiritualists with regard to the relationship between the Spirit and the Scripture.

Also found in Zwingli along with the interaction of Scripture and the Spirit of God is the antithesis between the letter and the spirit from 2 Cor 3:6, which he relates to the distinction between the letter and the sense in the way of Erasmus. Hence his usage is not unambiguous.

Of central importance for Zwingli's stance to Scripture, however, is that throughout his life he saw his chief task as preaching and, contrary

to customary practice, made the Bible its foundation. In his continuous preaching over the course of the less than twelve years he had available for it in Zurich, he had in effect preached his way through the whole Bible. In addition to his regular sermons in the Grossmünster, he preached Friday evenings at least, sometimes, it seems, more often, in the Fraumünster as well. His biblical commentaries grow out of these sermons and his preparation for them (as was later to be the case for Calvin). Zwingli's humanistic schooling was evidently the reason that he dealt intensively with the text and content of the pertinent biblical books in his sermon preparation, which was then made available to other Zurich preachers. Unfortunately, only a few sources are available for the early period. Apparently Zwingli and others already held exegetical exercises in small circles from 1520 on. In these, Zwingli dealt with the psalms (letter of 24 July 1520; SW 7:345,14–16). In June of 1525, a public Bible school was able to be established in the fourth, highest class of the Latin school led by Oswald Myconius (1488–1552; in Zurich 1516–1520 and 1523–1532, thereafter leading pastor in Basel). In accord with 1 Cor 14:26–31; it got the name “Prophezey” (Swiss-German = interpretation). It was to serve the reeducation of the ministry; participation was a duty of the clergy in the early years. Daily except for Fridays and Sundays, the clergy gathered in the morning with the Latin students and out-of-town scholars in the summer in the choir, in winter in the room of the canons regular in the Grossmünster, where the Old Testament was interpreted by various teachers, Zwingli among them. After an introductory prayer (SW 4:365,1–6), the Hebrew teacher (initially Ceperin; after his early death in December 1525, Pellican) first elucidated the Hebrew text of the pertinent section, and Zwingli then interpreted it in Latin. At the end came a German rendering and brief interpretation by one of the preachers, most often Leo Jud. For this part of the program, the community streamed into the church. The start was made with the Pentateuch. It was completed in November 1525. At the request of many of Zwingli's supporters, the result of the interpretations of Genesis and Exodus was subsequently published in commentary form (*Farrago Annotationum* [*Mixed Annotations*] for Genesis to Exodus; SW 13:1–290, 291–427). Leo Jud and Kasper Megander (Grossmann; 1495–1545) collated the transcribed record from the notes that they and other auditors made. In addition, in the case of Genesis, many things written down by auditors of the sermons Zwingli gave on these biblical books in 1526–1527 were added, so that the current text also includes homiletical sections. On occasion passages the editors excerpted from other of Zwingli's publications are also encountered. Since

the transcribed notes were not originally made with any intention of later publication, skepticism has been frequently voiced whether the commentaries should be considered authentic works of Zwingli, especially since the result reproduces the yield of total work of the *Prophezey*, in which (as Zwingli explicitly notes in his foreword) Zwingli's students participated. However, since Zwingli reviewed the manuscript of the Genesis commentary at least in part (on chs. 1–5) before its publication and composed a foreword for it, one can conclude that he acknowledged the work in full as his own.

The available commentaries still reflect the process of interpretation in the *Prophezey*. In their afterword to the Genesis commentary, Megander and Jud report that after Pellican elucidated the Hebrew words, Zwingli each time compared the Septuagint translation with the Hebrew and Latin text. Then he discussed other examples from history that related to morality and piety (SW 13:287,24–29). The first run-through, then, concerned itself with text criticism and philological examination of the text. Zwingli shows himself here to be a trained humanist who was in command of not only the ancient languages of Latin and Greek but Hebrew as well (in dependence on Reuchlin)—although the explanation of the Hebrew words was first entrusted to a specialist. In addition to explanations of words and observations about various formulations in the three languages (Zwingli, for example, takes special note each time Hebraisms appear in the Greek and Latin text), we encounter numerous stylistic comments in which Zwingli shows his expertise in the rules of ancient rhetoric. Since modern readers are hardly familiar with the grammatical-rhetorical technical terms that appear in abundance (fifty-eight in total), the critical edition has included a comprehensive list of Latin and Greek specialized terms (SW 13:839–54). Herein, too, the educated humanist shows himself. So Zwingli remarks on Gen 1:1, “in the beginning God created heaven and earth”: Moses chose “heaven and earth here as a synecdoche for heavenly and earthly things, that is to say, by “heaven,” all things that are in heaven, like spiritual and invisible substances...; by earth, everything that is earthly, corporeal and visible” (SW 13:7,14–18). In this instance he is, of course, mistaken about the original sense of the statement. The rhetorical term *synecdoche* means the use of one word for another, an assumption Zwingli was fond of, letting him find in a text meanings that are not immediately to be drawn from the wording (and, in this case, can be false!). Related is metonymy, while metaphor is a figurative way of speaking. When, for example, according to Gen 2:7 God formed man from the dust of the ground, a way of speaking about pot-

tery-making is carried over to the creation of man (SW 13:17,30–33). First off a new translation emerged from all these observations.

With respect to content, Zwingli distinguishes various levels of sense, continuing the medieval schema of the four senses of Scripture. Even the literal sense, which everything depends on in the first place, is already a spiritual sense inasmuch as it derives from the Spirit as the true author of Scripture (SW 3:205,28–206,3). This is reminiscent of Lefèvre (see above). The moral sense (although Zwingli does not use this term) means for him the pedagogical-ethical application of the natural sense to the current situation of the hearer. His students Jud and Megander formulate completely in Zwingli's sense: "You, good reader, continue to understand the Holy Scriptures simply and in a natural way, and you walk in what you have rightly understood" (SW 13:294,26–295,1). In addition, he knows the sense traditionally called "mystical," for which allegorical interpretation above all is used. But Zwingli does not distinguish between the diverse variations such as allegorical and anagogical, *typos*, figure, and so on. On the statement in Exod 2:10, which derives the name "Moses" from the fact that he was drawn (Hebrew *mašah*) from the water (by the Egyptian princess), Zwingli comments: "Divine providence always illustrates something beforehand in external things. He is lifted from the water because he liberates the sons of Israel from the water of oppression. In addition, Moses represents the type of Christ ... for he was of priestly descent: Christ is the true priest and high priest who gives himself for us in order to free us from the tyranny of the devil" (SW 13:299,31–36). Types of Christ are, in Genesis, Noah (because his name, according to Gen 5:29, means that he will comfort people in their toil, SW 13:41,3–6 and elsewhere), Melchizedek (Gen 14:18–20; Zwingli gives the traditional christological interpretation according to Heb 7:11–17; SW 13:84,3–13), Isaac especially often, but Jacob and Joseph as well. Allegorical interpretations, though, are also "that jar in which the manna is preserved [Exod 16:33] is the humanity of Christ in which divinity, which is the bread of life, is preserved" (SW 13:24–25). It also should be noted that in this work Zwingli can speak out against allegory very negatively. So for the allegorical interpretation of the concluding word on the chapter Gen 1: "Until now we have treated the literal sense in the most simple way, since we consider it useless, indeed harmful, to obscure history with inappropriate allegories" (13:14,23–24). Likewise in the narrative of the crossing of the sea (Exod 14) the historical sense is altogether sufficient: "That is, we see in this history how hard God seeks his own, again, in what way he frees those who trusted in him so that it is unnecessary to seek for abstruse

allegories or so-called spiritual interpretations" (361,27–30). Zwingli puts value on the fact that what is narrated in the biblical reports actually took place in history (thus, typology occupies the foreground for him; the foreshadowing of the Christ-event by Old Testament events), but at the same time he always sees its symbolic meaning. Allegorical interpretations are also useful for ornamentation: everyone can toy with allegories, but in doing so the analogy of faith (*analogia fidei*) must be maintained (310,32–33). Much like Luther, Zwingli judges those who read the words of Old Testament prophets literally to be interpreting it "carnally" (SW 6.2:305,28–308,14). At the core of this approach is Zwingli's conviction that Scripture deals with Christ even in the Old Testament. Often, however, his interpretations of the Old Testament are also moralizing. Thus, when Zwingli interprets the wars of the Jews, they signify the battle we should wage against vice and unbelief (SW 1:177,21–178,2).

Zwingli later wrote commentaries on the books of the Prophets that also in a similar way emerged from the activity in the Prophezey. These followed the investigation into the historical books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings), which came to its conclusion in the fall of 1527. The book of Isaiah was worked in the Prophezey under Zwingli's authoritative guidance until February 1528. Zwingli then chose it as the subject of his Grossmünster sermons. He himself then prepared the printing, which was completed by July 1529. The community of biblical scholars at Oberrhein, from Strassburg (Bucer and Capito) to Basel (Oecolampadius) and then to Zurich, had ardently looked forward to its appearance. The new commentary, which Zwingli dedicated to the cities of the "Burgrecht" (formed for defense against the Catholic coalition in 1528), of Zurich, Bern, Constance, Basel, St. Gall, Mühlhausen, and Biel, and which according to the Letter to the Reader (SW 14:5–14) at the beginning was also to instruct them to make Isaiah's message the guiding principle for their politics, carried the careful title *Erstes Erzeugnis einer Einebnung [glatten Übersetzung] des Propheten Jesaja, mit einer Apologie, warum alles so übersetzt worden ist* (*Complanationis Isaiae prophetae foetura prima ... = First Product of a Level Translation of the Prophet Isaiah, with an Apology, Why All Has Been Translated in This Way*). It is already clear from this title that the main goal was the production of a new Latin translation, which was urgently required for use as the basis of preaching by the theologians. It was to be "more understandable and popular" than those available (SW 14:88,29–30). In the first printing Zwingli had set the usual Vulgate text over against his own translation in parallel columns for comparison (evidently for reasons of caution) in the first part

of the work (SW 14:15–84). The commentary, which is to provide the foundation for the translation offered and is introduced by an extensive foreword by Zwingli (SW 14:85–103), therefore puts emphasis on linguistic explanations and continually debates with Jerome as the author of the Vulgate and its wording. But for this, too, discussions of matters of content are necessary again and again. In Zwingli's foreword two topics in particular are noteworthy. First, the appeal for attention to figures of speech and tropes in the biblical text is necessary in order to arrive at an adequate translation (if biblical language is figurative, one would have to be able to decipher it; 89,5–92,21). Zwingli admires the Hebrew style on one occasion after another. Thus at Isa 1:4, for example, he exclaims in admiration: "Which Demosthenes or Cicero (the classical orators) ever completed and attained everything and succeeded in so few (words) in arriving at the core of the matter in such a fitting way and with such brilliant style!" (112,14–16). Hence he dealt with the forms of Hebrew style with love. On the other hand, in discussing the value of the Septuagint Zwingli is critical of the legendary traditions about its origin in the Letter to Aristee, and after his experiences in the commission work in the Prophezei he considers it unlikely that the translation came about in a miraculous way ("if we claimed something occurred in a miraculous way, the lying would have no end," 96,7–8), that each of the participating translators translated the whole Bible, or that the project had been completed in seventy-two days (96,9–37). It is therefore likely that each participant translated a certain section, and then the entire corpus was written together from this (96,37–97,6). This already emerges from the fact "that the same words, ways of speaking, figures, and expressions were translated differently not only in different books but at times in the same book" (97,7–9). Isaiah found one unworthy translator (97,14). Even so, the Septuagint is to be given priority as a translation because of its age (Zwingli places it around 200 B.C.E.; 100,18–19). It may be, though, especially in the book of Jeremiah, that a different order of the text can be identified (97,26–27). At any rate, the Septuagint would have read at many places differently and better than the rabbis later. Zwingli is as a rule very mistrustful of their work, but in principle the original Hebrew text should be preferred.

While Zwingli is dependent on early, medieval, and contemporary church interpreters of many sorts for his interpretations of content, he evidently has no precedents for his observations on the Septuagint. They reveal an exegetical instinct that leads him to such independent and, for the precritical period, substantial knowledge.

Zwingli then offers further instructions for Hebrew study. Since the Hebrew text is not to be read without vowel signs, one would have to go back to it *nolens volens* despite its unreliability. As for the rest, Zwingli holds that both faith, which even the uneducated in the church would have, and prayer are basic presuppositions indispensable for understanding the Bible ("Faith understands the Spirit, when he speaks, always"; SW 14:101,11). "To glow with mercy is desired of all, to be rich in education, of few" (101,15–16). Otherwise, however, one should work on Hebrew by drawing upon Reuchlin's *De rudimentis hebraicis*, so that one is finally able to swim without a float, that is, to read the Bible in Greek and Hebrew and to compare their variant readings. One can therefore avoid commentaries that do not mention the original text, giving only allegories instead. But by no means would he intend to cast aspersions on the excellent commentaries of Oecolampadius!

Although it is not his chief aim, Zwingli still comes to speak on appropriate occasions to questions of theological content. But here he is less original. The christological understanding of the prophecies encountered throughout, for example, was Christian common property. Here also appear polemics, typical of the Reformers, against the Jewish understanding, as regards, for instance, the four songs of God's servant in Isa 52:13–53, which Zwingli says provide the clearest testimony to Christ conceivable (SW 14:370,10–13). By no means could it mean Ezra or the high priest Joshua (Latin, "Jesus"), as the stubbornness of the Jews sought to demonstrate, because they would not have borne such suffering. "This alone we grant the opponents: the leadership of Ezra and Joshua was a shadow and type of the salvation Christ brought, albeit a far more modest one" (370,17–19).

The New Testament was interpreted on afternoons under the direction of Oswald Myconius in the choir of the Fraumünster, the second great cathedral, for the same well-informed audience. These exegetical lectures also served as preparation for preaching. Zwingli appeared there as an exegete at least once each week.

The origin of these "notes" (*annotationes*) on the New Testament writings is in principle to be understood by analogy to that of the Old Testament commentaries. Zwingli interpreted the Greek text continuously in Latin. In distinction to work in the Prophezey, where usually an entire book was first exegeted before Zwingli began his continuous series of sermons on it, he evidently then immediately preached on the text previously interpreted in evening worship (vespers) in the Fraumünster. Here agains it was Leo Jud in particular who made handwritten notes during

Zwingli's lecture, which he later edited together with some excerpts from Kaspar Megander and Werner Steiner's transcriptions and published. But the complete translation of some of the remaining transcriptions is still to come. Jud's edition is peculiar in that he added to the scholarly interpretation portions of the sermon manuscripts in Latin translation, which now likewise function as "digressions" (*digressiones*), giving the final product a mixed character.

As the textual basis for the New Testament commentaries, Zwingli used throughout not only the Vulgate but the *Novum Instrumentum* (after the new edition of 1519, *Novum Testamentum*) of Erasmus and also took over many from the annotations and paraphrases with only slight changes of wording. He drew upon other works of Erasmus, too, along with numerous ancient authors (e.g., Cicero, Seneca), church fathers (particularly Augustine and Jerome), and contemporary interpreters. His wide reading emerges here as well. The New Testament commentaries differ from the Old Testament commentaries in that they have somewhat fewer philological observations, though they are used even more often in arguments about content and hence statements of content dominate the field all the more. Erasmus had in large measure already done the philological work. On occasion, however, philological problems are touched on here. In addition, Zwingli shows the same interest in questions of (ancient) rhetoric as he had before in the Old Testament commentaries.

Zwingli began his New Testament interpretations with the epistolary literature (perhaps not by accident deriving from Augustine, with the epistle 1 John in 1526, then the epistles of Paul). A cycle of three Gospels followed—Mark, John, and Matthew—without the passion and resurrection narrative, which was discussed separately in the form of a Gospel harmony, *Kurze Erinnerung [Commemoratio] des Todes Christi aus den vier Evangelisten (Brief Remembrance [Commemoration] of Christ's Death from the Four Evangelists)*. In the last year of Zwingli's life, the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Luke came in their turn. Their interpretation broke off with chapter 16, incomplete, due to Zwingli's sudden death on 8 October 1531.

Behind the structure of the commentary, though this also arose by Jud's redaction, the old division into glosses and scholia still shines through. This technique, however, is given up. What is retained is the system of occasionally commenting on individual words and phrases, interrupted occasionally by longer discussions. Often, too, only an initial word (*incipit*) is given (on occasion expressly with "etc.") and the following sentence discussed. Zwingli proceeds selectively in this regard. Only

what seems important to him is addressed. Evidently behind the longer sections (digressions) is a certain penchant for thematic preaching—in apparent opposition to his program of preaching a series on biblical texts—in which Zwingli loves to develop a theological question in popular instructional form. Thus one can find there much about his theological views that is contained in his systematically constructed writings as well. Ethical admonitions also often play a role.

So we find at Matt 12:15 (Jesus escaped from his persecutors) a lengthy summons to the hearers not to avoid their social responsibility in the prevailing situation characterized by many grievous conditions—Christ is here not an example (S 6.1:285–86). On Matt 12:36 (“concerning every careless word”), Jud notes, “here he [Zwingli] said in an aside how one should guard against idle and harmful speaking,” and an appropriate discussion then follows (S 6.1:293). An example of the treatment of a theological theme is the digression (S 6.1:241–44) on the law of nature and the law of God on the occasion of Matt 7:12 (the golden rule). Here, starting from Rom 2:14–15 but drawing on quotations from Cicero and Seneca along with Paul’s statements, Zwingli treats the theme in a fashion typical of him: the law was written on the human heart as the image of God already in creation by the creative Spirit of God—as statements of ancient authors also confirm—but it has been obscured by Adam’s fall (which here is also considered a historical fact). Nevertheless, this lamp was not completely extinguished (!), as Augustine’s statements in *De spiritu et littera* 27, confirm. It is impressed upon us in creation by the image of God; it may perhaps be damaged but not completely destroyed. Whoever does evil is acting against human nature. By the spirit of grace, Christ has renewed the inner man in us, the image of God, the “law of God” created the heart anew. “For just as this light was first lighted in man through the Spirit of God, it is then restored by the Spirit of Christ and later confirmed.”

If here one will find a certain difference to Luther’s view of the total corruption of human nature and its complete new creation by faith in Christ, in other passages Zwingli unambiguously shows himself to be a Reformation thinker. This emerges immediately, for example, in the introduction to the Matthew commentary (S 6.1:203–4). There in the introductory sentence Zwingli defines the gospel as the good message by which we humans, “after Adam’s eating [of the apple], all have become sons of wrath, that is, born of sins from the sinner.... but God took pity on us and sent his Son so that he, surrounded by frail flesh, freed us through his death and restored the grace of God ... in that he atoned our sins....

The blessing of God here is called gospel.” A more lengthy discussion in a similar vein is the so-called “Christian sermon” on Luke 2:11, “to you the Savior is born today” (S 6.1:553–54). The view of humans as sinners is constitutive for Zwingli’s image of humanity; his judgment of Christ’s work of salvation is dependent on it, too. In it he clearly gives priority to biblical over humanist anthropology. In this, he follows Paul, when Paul understands fallen humanity as a whole as “flesh” and also as sinner. Justification of this one follows according to Luther and Zwingli only through faith. The counterimage to the sinner is the believer who trusts in God and whose faith is active by love of neighbor before God. Found alongside it is also the classic anthropology largely taken over by Christianity, which divided the person into the components of spirit, soul, and body. Finally, the distinction between divine and human righteousness is of significance; it corresponds with Luther’s doctrine of the two kingdoms, formulated at the same time. Further agreements are the distribution of the Lord’s Supper into both kinds, the denial of the five sacraments in addition to baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and the desirability of priestly marriage.

Of special interest in this connection is Zwingli’s handling of the Sermon on the Mount. In the introduction to Matt 5 (S 6.1:218–19), Zwingli immediately speaks of those to whom the Sermon on the Mount is addressed: it is directed not to the outer man but the inner. “The outer man is he who falls within sight of the eyes and the outward sense and can be rebuked. But the inner [man] is he who is enclosed within, who is concealed, who cannot be rebuked by another.” The outer man often does not recognize himself, yet when the inner man opens himself to the all-powerful God, “then he discovers ‘a Lerna of evil’ [the sea where Hercules killed the many-headed snake, according to Virgil and Cicero]. Here he will find pride, lust, envy, selfishness. Even someone who performs all works should know himself as a useless slave and as a sinner” (S 6.1:260). Outward conversion brings only righteousness that applies before humans. God sends to the inner man through his Son and the Holy Spirit inner righteousness that is valid before God. Christ teaches about forming this inner man in the Sermon on the Mount: “But here he teaches, penetrating more deeply in the breast of man, that we become pure and holy in the eyes of God, at least that we do what is in our powers to the extent, that is, it is possible in this mortal flesh.” This interpretation recalls the scholastic saying (*parole*) “*facere quod in se est*” (“one should do whatever one possibly can as a precondition for grace”), yet in Zwingli it has another value. It must be taken together with other such statements as Matt 19:16–17, where Zwingli remarks, “an evil tree can yield no good fruits. Therefore

our works are good to the extent they are gifts of God and done out of the Spirit of God." Zwingli considers the word of Jesus to the rich disciple, "If you want to enter into life, obey the commandments," as an accommodation to the inquirer's way of thinking: the Lord therefore commands those who serve the law to keep the law. "But the papists will not prove from words of this sort that eternal life comes from observing the commandments. Good works ... are, that is to say, not the basis or the reward of eternal salvation but rather signs of faith and of election" (S 6.1:349).

A clear slant shows itself in the interpretation of the individual commandments of the Sermon on the Mount. An especially striking example is the discussion of Matt 5:34, in which Jesus intensifies the Old Testament prohibition of perjury (Lev 19:12) into an absolute prohibition against oaths. Zwingli seeks to refute the view of the Baptists (Zwingli contemptuously calls them not "Anabaptists" but "katabaptists," "drowners") that this command would have to be followed unconditionally with a philological explanation. The German word "to swear" does not mean the same as the corresponding formulation in the text. It has, that is, a twofold meaning: (1) that of a formal commissioning (as for, say, military service), oath-taking; and (2) that of a private vow, which can be correct or false. After investigating the word usage in Latin (where three terms are given) and in Greek as well as the Old Testament proofs (in the Decalogue, Exod 20, and Num 19), Zwingli comes to the conclusion that the "ancients" were only forbidden perjury in the name of God. From this, the Jews came to the mistaken conclusion that no oaths should be made. Jesus is not speaking of official oath-taking at all but is concerned only with private irresponsible swearing and in other cases reinstated the old, falsified rule that only prohibited misuse of the divine name.

On Matt 5:21–22 (the extension of the prohibition of murder to anger), Zwingli gives a longer discussion (S 6.1:224–226) according to which Christ indeed wills that we might be holy and perfect (cf. Matt 5:48), but since in practice this is impossible due to our weakness ("as if he said, 'I know your weakness; I know you could not be perfect without suffering'"), it is important not to raise the hand, not to let anger come out in action.

On the question of divorce (Matt 19:3–9), Zwingli tackles the problem that evidently according to the words of Jesus there is not to be any possibility of divorce except for adultery. "But let us not fix on the letter so superstitiously in Jewish fashion that we overlook other laws that are issued at the dictation of the same Spirit. That is to say, here the Lord condemns the irresponsible repudiation of wives by the Jews, not every

repudiation.” Rather Jesus proceeds here in keeping with Hebrew morality: when he gives one reason, he is in so doing not excluding others. He identifies adultery as only a minimum limit below which no one should go. Who does not see that impotence is another reason, since indeed God (according to 1 Cor 7:9) instituted marriage as a makeshift aid against fleshly desires. Moreover, Paul cites differences of faith as a possible ground of divorce (1 Cor 7:15). Here one sees at work the practitioner on the one side, the biblical harmonizer on the other.

The principle that the commands of the Sermon on the Mount are directed to the inner man, together with his rhetorical schooling, allows Zwingli to understand some demands of the Sermon on the Mount as figurative. Thus the instruction in Matt 5:39 that after being struck on the cheek one should offer the attacker the other. Here Zwingli’s basic presupposition extends to the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount: it is directed to the inner man; after one blow of fortune, everyone should be prepared to bear the next patiently. Rhetorically considered, the word of Jesus is an exaggeration (*hyperdoche*).

The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1–16) provides Zwingli an occasion to develop his view of salvation history (S 6.1:351–53). A periodization of salvation is derived from the sequence of those called to work in the vineyard. The first, the phase of calling, extends from Adam to Noah, the next from Noah to Abraham, the next from Abraham to Moses, the next from Moses to Christ. For the period under Moses it holds: the law is spiritual, man is fleshly [Rom 7:14], therefore it condemns. “Under Moses, then, there was no salvation.” The full wages that the late workers receive in the evening is the grace of Christ. This perspective on the Old Testament age is more radical than that developed by Luther or, later, Calvin.

One achievement of the Zurich Reformation remains to be mentioned: the translation of the whole Bible into German, the so-called Froschauer Bible (printed by Froschauer) that appeared in 1531. This was in fact the first complete German translation, even before the completion of the Luther Bible (1534). It may be due to Zwingli’s early death that the extent of the Zurich model’s expansion was limited. The influence of John Calvin and his Genevan order, by contrast, was worldwide

2.4. SEEKING INSTRUCTION IN THE SCRIPTURE: JOHN CALVIN

Johannes Calvinus (the name is Latinized from Jehan Cauvin) was born on 10 July 1509, the son of the procurator of cathedral chapter in Noyon

in Picardy. Little reliable is known of his youth. When he was sent relatively young from there to Paris in order to begin his academic education with liberal arts study, in keeping with the custom of the time, is contested (it may have been at twelve; it may have been fourteen). It is uncertain which college of the university he first attended (at the time the University of Paris was, like that in Oxford and Cambridge, divided into colleges). It is certain that he spent his basic studies chiefly at Montague College, which had lost none of its harshness since the short time Erasmus had spent there. Calvin lived there on a benefice somewhat better than had Erasmus, who, desperately poor, had to earn his living by kitchen service. Calvin evidently never studied theology formally but gained his knowledge in this field largely privately. Montague College was a stronghold of conservative theology opposed to the Reformation; the philosophy taught there was a strict nominalism. However, Calvin's first publication (1532), a commentary on the work *De clementia* by the ancient Stoic Seneca (4 B.C.E.–69 C.E.), shows he had learned the viewpoints and methods of contemporary humanism by private studies—he mentions Erasmus and Guillaume Budé (1468–1540) in particular. But it is possible that this did not take place until he began his law studies.

If Calvin planned for theological study, nothing would have come of it since his father, presumably in 1528, arranged for him to study legal science (civil and canon law). Since only ecclesiastical law was taught in Paris, Calvin went first to Orleans, later to Bourges. The legal sciences and humanistic inclinations were at the time closely associated, as in the person of Budé. In 1531 Calvin concluded his law study with the academic degree of licentiate of legal sciences and, after his father's death, went back to Paris, where he dedicated himself completely to humanistic studies at the Collège Royal (founded by Francis I). There he published his Seneca commentary, which showed in addition to stylistic-rhetorical talent the use of exegetical methods that he later used in his biblical interpretations. In 1532–1533 he was again in Orleans; he lived in Paris again from the end of 1533 on.

The situation in France, and especially Paris, under the rule of Francis I (ruled 1515–1547) was tense. The theological faculty and the parliament resisted the inroads of Luther's thought after 1520. The first persecutions occurred as early as 1523. Yet the king in particular protected the humanists. A crisis arose in 1533/1534. Nicholas Cop, as docent at the College Royal one of the leading humanists, was chosen rector of the university in the fall of 1533 and as such gave the traditional inaugural address on 1 November, in which he unexpectedly called for reforms in the church

(more in the sense of Lefèvre but with the inclusion of Lutheran theology as well). The address provoked such public uproar that Cop had to take flight. Calvin also fled to an unknown location, then returned to Paris, but soon submerged again. It remains unclear whether he had participated in the drafting of the address. After temporary stays in Angoulême, Noyon, and elsewhere, the famous placard-affair of 18 October 1534 (the posting of anonymous placards directed toward the masses at numerous places, which led the king to take action) finally made it necessary for him to leave France. He probably left for Basel before the onset of the bloody persecution of the evangelicals at the start of 1535. In the meantime, he must have had his “conversion” to evangelical faith, which at the same time was tied to a consciousness of a special commission from God; still, Calvin’s later report of these events (in the foreword to his Psalms commentary of 1557; cf. CO 31:21–24) is again ambiguous and contested.

In Basel Calvin wrote his *Institutio religionis christianae* (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*), which he revised several times until its final edition of 1559. After its completion, he traveled across Ferrara, France, and Basel in the direction of Strassburg, where he intended to settle. Meanwhile, war between Francis I and Charles V had broken out; faced with troop movements that blocked his way, Calvin had to veer toward the south. He intended to stay overnight unrecognized in Geneva (where meanwhile the Reformation had been introduced at the initiative of William Farel [1489–1565]), but Farel had learned of the presence of the young traveler, already known by the *Institutio*, and forced him, despite his initial resistance, to remain by a threat of curse (see CO 21:30). Farel evidently hoped that Calvin would provide the fledgling church a firm order that was previously lacking. After he first had begun as lector in the Peterskirche to interpret the Epistles of Paul, he was appointed near the end of the year preacher and pastor as well. He became especially well-known by his participation in the disputation held in Lausanne in October 1536, in preparation of the Reformation, in which he contributed to the breakthrough to Reformation by the victory of his arguments against the Catholic clergy of the city. He also presented to the Geneva Council, in January 1537, a church order (*Ecclesiastical Ordinances*) setting forth his Reformation principles and introducing strict discipline, especially in (moral) eucharistic discipline. Many citizens disagreed with these. Small differences were added. Conflict between followers and opponents of Farel on the city council led to the exile of Farel and Calvin from Geneva in Easter of 1538. Calvin went to Basel for a short time but was then invited by the Strassburg Reformer Martin Bucer (1491–1551) to assume the pastorate of the French refugee

church there. In addition, he taught New Testament at the gymnasium led by the humanist Johannes Sturm (1507–1589). There, in 1540, he married Idelette de Bure, the widow of one of the numerous Baptists he converted to his church. She gave him a son who died early; she herself then died in 1549, leaving him with the care of her own two children. Calvin did not marry again. In his own church he oversaw eucharistic discipline and a liturgical order partly taken over from the Strassburg order. In Strassburg, Calvin wrote the second edition of the *Institutes*, which (now a real dogmatics) appeared in 1539, as well as the first of his numerous commentaries, on Paul's Epistle to the Romans (1540). He gained ecumenical experience by participating in several colloquies (Frankfurt 1539, Worms 1540/1541, Regensburg 1541), although all of the initiatives (proposed by Bucer) toward the Catholics and Lutherans (from whose doctrine of the Lord's Supper Calvin separated) failed.

Meanwhile, the followers of Farel and Calvin in the Genevan council again won the upper hand. The two were both called back in the fall of 1540. While Farel remained in Neuchâtel, Calvin accepted the call in September 1541 and at once presented the council the draft of a church order (formed in accord with Bucer's model) for acceptance. It is characterized by the establishment of four church offices: pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons. A strict church discipline was introduced, which the consistory, formed in 1542, oversaw as the highest church authority. A catechism was published in 1541. In light of the harsh measures, however, resistance by Calvin's opponents also increased, who also turned against the presence of numerous French foreigners in the city. This resistance was not overcome until the election of 1554–1555, backed by the grant of citizenship to a large number of wealthy immigrants, gave Calvin's followers the majority in the council. Calvin now carried out his plans undisturbed. In all, however, the council (the so-called Small Council to which Genevan-born citizens alone could belong was decisive) maintained its right to decide religious affairs. Calvin, who first accepted the citizenship offered to him in 1559, won influence solely through his personal authority. His involvement in the condemnation and execution of Michael Servetus, who challenged the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity in 1553, remains especially contested. The action against Servetus was taken by a council hostile to Calvin, but he submitted an expert opinion on it. Calvin was often condemned later as a merciless heresy hunter precisely because of the burning of Servetus.

Throughout his years in Geneva, Calvin engaged in extensive lecturing. He began as early as 1536 in the Peterskirche with the Epistle

to the Romans, continued the lectures in Strassburg at the gymnasium with John's Gospel, 1 Corinthians, and once again Romans, and, back in Geneva, interpreted most of the other New Testament writings in sequence. He later turned to the Old Testament. Because of the mixed audience, he gave his lectures in Latin. In addition, he often preached several times each week and in so doing interpreted in a cursory way entire biblical books (Deuteronomy, Genesis, 1 and 2 Samuel). Because of his workload, especially during his Genevan years, he delivered his lectures mostly by heart after merely brief preparation, and three secretaries were kept constantly busy making stenographic copies. By comparison of their manuscripts, they produced a clean copy that at the end Calvin usually reviewed personally and when necessary expanded (see CO 42:189–90). Due to the pressure of time, in his later years Calvin frequently stopped working his commentaries out in handwriting but based them on these lecture manuscripts.

By anti-Catholic polemical writings, by his vast correspondence, by his *Institutio* and biblical commentaries, Calvin also gained considerable international influence. Also important was the foundation of the Academy (1559), directed by Theodore Beza (1519–1605), later his successor, in which Calvin and Beza alternately gave theological lectures.

Having suffered from various illnesses for a long time, Calvin's health worsened in the spring of 1564. He participated in the consistory meetings ever less frequently. On 28 April he gave his farewell from the Genevan pastors; on 27 May he died and was at his own wish buried in an anonymous grave. He rejected a personal cult.

Despite the variety of his writings, the Bible was at the center of Calvin's theology. This holds true even if one with good reason really considers the *Institutio* his main work. For, as Calvin himself remarks in his preface to the 1539 edition (CO 1:257), the intent of this book is "to prepare candidates of sacred theology for reading the word of God and instructing them so they can have easy access to it and make progress in it step by step without difficulty." The reference to Scripture is continued in all his dogmatic statements: The intention is also "to ascertain ... what is mostly to be sought in Scripture, and the topic [*scopus*] to which its contents are to be referred." One principle that Calvin took over from tradition and mentions in his foreword is that the Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture, in which the analogy of faith in accord with Rom 12:6 comes into play. By this, he points to the term "rule of faith," which was already a governing principle of scriptural interpretation (see *History* 2:89) ever since Augustine. Thus armed, the novice theologian is then

able to undertake actual exegesis, for which Calvin as example refers to his commentary on Romans. This approach is confirmed by the organization of the *Institutes* itself. After Calvin has dealt with knowledge of the Creator in the first book, stressing there that a general knowledge of God is given in the human spirit (CO 2: *Inst.* 1.3) and can be gained from the structure and order of the world (1.5), he adds that nevertheless everyone, even the wisest of philosophers, fell into errors and had not known the wisdom of God. It therefore holds: "Whoever wants to attain to God, the Creator, must have the Scripture for leader and teacher" (motto to 1.6). "To remedy this weakness, God has opened his own mouth and gave the word in order to give those whom he wanted to draw into his closer and more intimate communion" not only knowledge of the Creator but a Savior as well (1.6.1). This occurred by the oracles given to the patriarchs and prophets (see 1.6.2; 13.7; see also 7.1), which they faithfully preserved. "But if it is to work out so that the true religion illumines us, the beginning must be made with the heavenly teaching, and likewise no one gains even the slightest taste of correct and sound teaching without beforehand being a student of Scripture" (1.6.2). Calvin therefore presents himself as a theologian bound to Scripture. For him, Scripture is the word of God and as such a "heavenly teaching." "The highest accreditation of Scripture is drawn from the person of God as the speaker" (1.7.4). It is the word of God also in written form; this written record in the Bible was necessary in order to counter human forgetfulness and errors (1.6.3). This statement is especially important because in it the foundation for biblical exegesis as a theological task is laid. In the Bible we have constantly to do with the Word of God! Further, it is important that we are directed to illumination by God's grace for understanding the Bible (2.2.21); for this, the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit is necessary (1.7.4). It is significant that in 1.7 (against Roman teaching that the truth of Scripture depends on the authority of the church) Calvin based the authority of Scripture itself on the witness of the Holy Spirit. Scripture and the Spirit are closely joined in this way—also against the spiritualists who believe in a direct influence of the Spirit *apart from* Scripture (1.9). On the other hand, the Scripture, although directed by God, is still human witness; biblical authors like Isaiah and Moses are witnesses and servants of the Word (1.7.5). Therefore, there can also be a misunderstanding or a merely external acceptance of Scripture unless the hearer is led by the Spirit of God. It is always living only in the concrete address to the hearer and reader. Therefore, the correct stance for approaching Scripture is humility and modesty. Rational reasons, by contrast, are secondary, which Calvin in addition adduces

for the credibility of Scripture (1.6.8). The content of the Bible is indeed from the Creator, but always from the Savior as well, for God is not only the Creator “but also the Savior in the person of the Mediator” (1.6.1). Thus the christological element is emphasized from the outset. God also accommodates himself to humanity’s capacity for knowledge, as, for example, when bodily parts of God (e.g., hand, mouth, foot) are spoken of in Scripture. God speaks with us in a childlike way, like a wet nurse with her children (1.13.1). Likewise, Moses accommodates himself to the way of thinking of his uneducated people: when he says in Gen 1:5, “There was evening and there was morning, the first day,” he began the day with the evening, “in keeping with the customary practice of his people” (Genesis commentary; CO 23:17). That God did not create the world in a single moment but in six days lies in the fact that God himself took six days “in order to accommodate his work to the human ability to understanding” (CO 23:18). Furthermore, God does not speak directly down from heaven but does so by making use of human mediators, “because he preferred to address us by mediators in a human way in order to entice us rather than scare us off by thundering” (4.1.5).

Some other formulations are characteristic of Calvin, too. Among them is the statement that “all correct knowledge of God arises from obedience” (1.6.2). Another element of his understanding of Scripture is that Scripture contains instruction that is to be obeyed. Thus it is the source of an order to be followed in daily church practice as well.

Calvin’s view of the theological significance of the Old Testament is also important for our theme. In this regard it is first to be said that he (with Rom 3:10–18; 2.3.2) considers humanity after the fall to be totally corrupt and incapable of any truly good actions. In this section (2.1–5) he decisively rejects the assumption of a free will even in fallen humanity and in so doing separates himself from the humanistic view. On the other hand, he acknowledges that humanity definitely retains the rational skills learned in the liberal arts even after the fall in order to shape the world (2.2.13–16) “for the period fixed for this life” (2.2.13). As such, these skills are gifts of God. He himself used the skills learned in his studies as tools of his biblical interpretation. However, they are not sufficient for knowledge of God and with it salvation. Because due to the fall God alone could no longer be recognized as the Creator, faith in God the Savior had to be added under the figure of his Son (2.6.1). God, according to Calvin, already placed this figure before the eyes to the people of the old covenant, for Christ was from the beginning the object of the hope of salvation. “Thus God never shows himself from time immemorial well-

disposed toward the people and never gave them hope of grace apart from the Mediator" (2.6.2). "The blessed and fortunate condition of the church has already been based on the person of Christ" (2.6.2). The message of the prophets was also in his service: "God wished the Jews to become so absorbed in these prophecies that they would become accustomed to direct their eyes to Jesus Christ" (2.6.4). Calvin, like Luther, thinks of the entire Bible christologically. The Mediator was always present and stood before the eyes in the image of the king particularly: "There is therefore no doubt that in David and his posterity the heavenly Father wanted to illustrate the living image of Christ." With this element of messianism come two others. Much like Luther, but less restrictedly (for Luther's starting point was always the small number of believers in Christ, the "little church" [*ecclesiola*] in ancient Israel), Calvin sees a continuity between the people of the Old Testament, whom he freely speaks of as "church," and the church of the present. Where there is faith, there is the church, and this means, since Abraham. In his sermon on 1 Samuel, Calvin offers a brief survey of the total Old Testament history of Israel and remarks that we could gather from the Old Testament reports that "God has directed and ruled in the individual ages his church," "in a special way toward his church, which is the house of God" (CO 29:241). To this comes the idea of covenant: God founded a covenant with Abraham first in Gen 12:1–3 (Genesis commentary; CO 23:177). This saving covenant is established in Christ alone (178). Moses was sent as a renewer of this covenant (*Inst.* 2.7.1). This covenant is the same as that in the New Testament; the parts of the Bible are bound together in a unity by it.

But Calvin did not himself introduce the idea of covenant into the discussion; this was already done by Zwingli and especially his successor in Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575). Also, the covenant by no means stands in the center in his thought, as in later Calvinists; he does not devote a chapter of its own to it in the *Institutes*.

Calvin approaches the Old Testament law from these premises. By the term *law* Calvin means not only the Ten Commandments but "the entire form of reverence for God as it was passed on by the hand of Moses from God" (2.7.1). According to Calvin, God gave the law to the ancient people of God as a gift of grace in order to point by its signs and promises to the coming Savior. Signs of this sort are blood sacrifices and ceremonies, which would be absurd in and of themselves if they had not had this forward-pointing function. A reconciliation stronger than that by the blood of sacrifices was necessary. The prophets are interpreters of the law who sought to point to its true intent. Calvin distinguishes three elements of

the law: the moral-ethical, the ceremonial, and the legal. The two latter are time-bound and superseded by the coming of Christ. Here Calvin again distinguishes three functions. The first function (2.7.6–9) is that the law, because we have not fulfilled it (and as fallen humans could not fulfill it), convicts us of our guilt (dogmatically—*usus elencticus* or *theologicus legis*). The second function (2.7.10–11) is that by its threats of punishment it is at least a deterrence from the performance of even worse deeds and by this means maintains the external peace of the community (*usus politicus* or *civilis legis*). For Calvin, the third function (2.7.12–15) is the most important. In this function the law is necessary for believers: it serves to instruct them as to what God's will is and to admonish them, because even believers who are already spiritual are still subject to the lethargy of the flesh and require scourging that drives them to work "like a lazy and slow-witted donkey" (2.7.12). Here Calvin fights against the view of those who maintain that Christians are no longer subject to the law, since indeed Paul has written that "those who rely on works of the law are under curse" (Gal 3:10). Calvin, by contrast, maintains that although we are freed from the curse that threatens every violation of the law with death, nothing is taken from the authority of the law, which is to be accepted with the same obedience (2.7.15). In addition to the elements already mentioned, the law has an educational task: "not for a merely external respectability, but an inward spiritual righteousness" (2.8.6). For this Christ is the best interpreter, for which Calvin appeals to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:21–44; *Inst.* 2.8.7). He then offers an interpretation of the Decalogue (2.8.13–59). This stands under the premises of the preamble that God is the Lord "who has the right to command that obedience be paid," but connected with it is the friendly enticement that he is the God of his church (2.8.14). Here it once again becomes clear that Calvin knows only one church, which is the same throughout both Testaments. The exodus from Egypt also relates to us directly, because it is a model of liberation from spiritual captivity to the devil (2.8.15). Calvin can, when required, also argue typologically and allegorically—although in principle he rejects allegory as a method.

One will have to maintain—even against criticism by the Lutheran side in particular that Calvin confused law and gospel—that Luther's view of the commandments (one thinks of his catechisms) is not fundamentally abandoned. Still, the placement of the law in the overall structure of Calvin's theological thinking definitely shows that a certain shift of emphasis has occurred. Calvin also sees the relationship between law (in the wider sense of Old Testament revelation) and gospel such (2.9) that

the law held the Jews in the expectation of the bringer of salvation yet to come, while the gospel is defined as “the clear disclosure of the mysteries of Christ” (2.9.2). On the other hand, believers during the new covenant era remain in a situation similar to that of believers of the old, since their earthly existence is a living in hope and not vision (2.9.3). The latter Servetus particularly had claimed in his book *Christianismi restitutio* (1553; *Restoration of Christianity*).

In this context Calvin also states his position on the general relationship between the Old and New Testaments (2.10–11). Against Servetus and some of the Anabaptists particularly, Calvin wants to make clear the similarity and difference of the two Testaments. Already in the heading of book 2 we read that it is concerned with the knowledge of God, “who has shown himself to be the Savior in Jesus Christ, which was first made known to the fathers by the law, then revealed to us by the gospel.” In addition, he stresses that “the covenant with all the fathers differs so little from ours in its substance and reality itself that it is one and the same. Its presentation, however, is various” (2.10.2). First, already in the Old Testament the hope was directed toward immortality; second, the justification of faith also is already revealed to the Jews; third—for this Calvin appeals to 1 Cor 10:1–5—the patriarchs already participated in the sign of baptism, that is, in crossing the Sea of Reeds (2.10.5). Against his challengers who claim that all striving in the Old Testament is oriented to earthly existence, it is to be stressed: “The Old Testament or covenant that the Lord made with the Israelite people was not limited to earthly things but contained the promise of spiritual and eternal life” (2.10.23). But there are also five differences between the two Testaments (2.10.23). (1). The invisible things were represented figuratively by earthly goods such as the land of Canaan; in the New Testament, they were directly shown. (2). The Old Testament gave only indirect images; the New “represents the present truth and the firm bodies themselves” (2.11.4) or, as Calvin can also say, the “clear revelation of the mystery of Christ” (2.9.2). (3). The Testaments are distinguished as letter and spirit (law and gospel). (4). In the Old Testament, the servitude of fear rules; in the New, freedom. (5). In the Old Testament, only one single people was chosen; the New speaks of the liberation of the pagans. But all these differences belong to the administration of salvation, not its substance (2.11.1).

We cannot restate the entire contents of the *Institutes* in our context but limit ourselves to those discussions directly connected to Calvin’s view of the Bible. However, one important example of the direct application of biblical statements to church practice must still be mentioned: his doctrine

of offices. Calvin continuously developed them further in the various editions of his *Institutes*. In the final edition of 1559 he deals with them in 4.3 with the introductory sentence that what is to be discussed is “the order by which the Lord wanted his church to be ruled” (4.3.1). For the selection of offices, Calvin appeals (without mention of the place, he assumes it is known) to Eph 4:11—then considered as stemming from Paul—where apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds (*pastores*), and teachers (*doctores*) are mentioned (4.3.4). While the first three offices were established by Christ only temporarily, the latter two were offices of a permanent order. From various biblical passages (e.g., 1 Cor 4:1; Tit 1:9), Calvin concludes that proclaiming the gospel and administering the sacraments (*mysterien Christi*) are among the most important of the pastor’s tasks (4.3.6). Incidentally, the fact that he spoke of bishops, presbyters, pastors, and servants (*ministres*) was because Scripture uses these terms side by side (4.3.8). We find ourselves still in a precritical epoch in which diverse sources are not yet distinguished. In addition, Calvin concludes from Rom 12:7 and 1 Cor 12:28 (which list the gifts of the Spirit in the community) that still other functions took place in the church, two of which were established for the long term: governance (*gubernatio*) and care for the poor. “The ‘governors’ were, in my opinion, the eldest selected from the people, who were, together with the bishops, to be in charge of oversight for morality and the exercise of discipline” (4.3.8). Moral discipline, one of the chief tasks in the church, was at the time a common possession, supported by the passage Matt 18:15–18. Disunity prevailed only about who represented the “church,” as responsible authority according to Matt 18:17. There is, in addition, a distinction made between presbyters as clergy (bishops) and as lay elders, who are responsible for the oversight of morals; a proof for this is supposedly found in 1 Tim 5:17. Deacons (in accord with an interpretation of Rom 12:8 [4.3.9]) were responsible for the care of the poor, one group of them responsible for the administration of alms, the other for the care of the poor. A description of the tasks of both is drawn from 1 Tim 5:10, 17 and Acts 6:1–6. Parallel discussions on this theme are also found in 4.11.1. All in all, then, the result is that Calvin takes the order of offices established in the Genevan church order directly from the Bible, by combining a group of biblical passages.

Calvin’s commentaries have been frequently overlooked in research because of the mistaken opinion that they are less important than the *Institutes*. It is true that they do not contain any theological statements beyond those in the systematically arranged work, but it must be considered that engagement with the Bible was of a great significance in Calvin’s

own eyes. Even in his testament he writes, "I also maintain that I sought in the degree the grace given me to teach his word purely both in preaching as through scripture and to interpret the Holy Scripture true" (CO 20:299–300). That Calvin mentions his preaching in first place shows how eminently community-related his interpretation is. In fact, sections from Calvin's sermons were plainly incorporated in the editions of the commentaries his co-workers edited. The commentaries are also important because they afford insights into Calvin's method of interpretation, permitting him to appear in his distinctiveness as exegete. It is especially important to consider the dedicatory letter to the humanist Simon Grynaeus in Basel (from 1529 on, professor of Greek there [died 1541]), with whom Calvin had learned Hebrew), with which he introduced the first edition of his 1540 commentary on Romans (CO 10:402–6; Parker, 1–4). He writes there, as he does elsewhere, that both of them were agreed in private conversation that brevity was to be seen as an interpreter's finest virtue—this above all else because the interpreter's sole task is "to open up the opinion of the author he has undertaken to explain" (CO 10:403). In this, he thinks of the students who should not be wearied by long-winded commentaries. The principle itself clearly corresponds to humanistic hermeneutics. Calvin speaks appreciatively of the achievement of some contemporary commentators; Melancthon, Bullinger, and Bucer are mentioned specifically. He carefully distinguishes himself from Melancthon. By the fact that Melancthon also remained true to his principle of treating only theologically important themes in his biblical commentaries, Calvin remarks, important sections are often passed over completely. He has great respect for Bucer's knowledge and wealth of thought but criticizes him for being long-winded and difficult to understand. In contrast to him, Calvin wants to be of benefit to his readers by brevity and simplicity, especially by avoiding distraction from God's word by anything superfluous. His chief interest is church proclamation. The absence of references to humanist interpreters such as Valla, Ficino, Colet, and Erasmus is striking. Calvin takes over the humanist methods of interpretation, but he radically dissociates himself from the humanist image of humanity. On the other hand, he obviously used Luther's commentaries often, along with those of other Reformation interpreters such as Zwingli and Oecolampadius, without citing them by name. Actually, he stands in a rich tradition of interpretation extending back to the patristic interpreters. It is not always easy to identify what is his own.

In order to learn about Calvin's specific way of interpretation, it is advisable to begin with his Old Testament commentaries, although

chronologically seen it is not correct, since he first wrote his commentaries on the New Testament epistles between 1540 and 1551 and began to read and write about the Old Testament only around 1550. But this fact already points to the circumstance that he was accustomed to understand the Bible from the New Testament, especially from Paul.

Calvin has rightly been characterized as a typical precritical interpreter. In particular, he does not distinguish between the wording of the text and historical events. This can be seen, among other places, in his interpretation of Genesis. Calvin gave a lecture series on this book during the years 1550–1554, but the printed edition of the commentary by his secretary N. des Gallars, who was responsible for the publication, could have incorporated materials from Calvin's lectures and sermons before 1549 as well. Calvin thinks that what is narrated in Genesis actually happened in just that way. In this regard he considers the wording precisely. This he can connect with rational reflections in the style of the time. So, when he comments on the birth of Cain and Abel (Gen 4:1–2): "Although Moses does not state that Cain and Abel were twins, it seems to me quite probable." That is to say, two births one after another are narrated there, but only one act of intercourse (CO 23:82). Luther had already considered this probable (WA 42:180,36–37). To the statement in Gen 5:3–4 that Adam lived for another eight hundred years after the birth of Seth, Calvin remarks it is to be considered in particular how many of the holy patriarchs would have been alive at the same time: "For throughout six ages following one another, when the family of Seth had grown already to a great people, the voice of Adam could still daily resound in order to keep in memory the creation, the fall, and punishment, to witness to the hope of salvation that remained after the chastisement, and to cite the judgments of God by which all would be raised" (CO 23:106). But it is a marvel that due to obedience and fear of God there is such unusual longevity that not even the more sound part of the human race could retain." Calvin is ready, however, to accept the miracle without further ado. Time specifications received great attention at the time. Calvin does this with respect to the dates of life cited for Abraham. Thus he remarks on Gen 17:1 (Abraham's age, ninety-nine years): "Moses passes over thirteen years of Abraham's life [according to Gen 16:18] in silence not because nothing worth mention occurred but because the Spirit of God left to his judgment which events were most necessary to know of" (CO 23:233). Yet he can also fall into difficulty: Thus at Genesis 25, where in the current sequence of the chapter it is reported that after Sarah's death (told in Gen 23) Abraham took another wife, Keturah, and had numerous children

by her. "It seems to be very absurd that Abraham, who is described as a dead body thirty-eight years before Sarah's death [Calvin thinks here of Rom 4:19], brought home a new wife after Sarah finally died. It was certainly ill-befitting his dignity." "Thus it was a laughable act of Abraham when after his widowership as more than a frail geriatric he took a wife. In addition, it is at odds with Paul's words that Abraham, cold and incapable of reproducing at a hundred years of age, produced numerous children forty years later" (CO 23:342). Thus Calvin comes to the conclusion that Abraham took Keturah while Sarah was still alive, which he combined with the psychological reflection that he felt his honor injured after the divorce from Hagar. Then, of course, the narrative is set in an incorrect place. Calvin explains that this is a stylistic device on the part of Moses, who often deferred stating what precedes in time until later. Surprisingly, however, Calvin is then also willing to agree with Augustine's opinion that, after the period of weakness at the time of Isaac's birth, Abraham's reproductive powers were restored to him for the rest of his life by God. "I accept this view gladly because it increases the miracle's luster as well as for other reasons" (CO 23:343).

Calvin is therefore far away from literary-critical considerations. On the other hand, he employs (in the wake of Erasmus) the methods of ancient rhetoric, reanimated by humanism, for making wide-ranging exegetical observations on biblical texts. Thus he emphasizes the power of expression Moses reached precisely by the simplicity of his language (on Gen 22:9–10; CO 23:317). He takes note of the emphasis that can be found specifically in a cry like that with which David begins Psalm 8 (on Ps 8:2; CO 31:88). Actually, he often stresses the emphasis and intensity of biblical speech, as in the lament of Christ over Jerusalem in Matt 23:37 (CO 45:641). For hyperbole (an exaggerated way of speaking), which is frequent in biblical language, he remarks that nonetheless a clear, understandable, simple sense is expressed in it—as, for instance, at Matt 5:29 ("if your right eye offends you, tear it out and throw it away"): "Christ, however, does not mean the body must be mutilated so that we obey God ... but Christ teaches in a hyperbolic way that we must put aside everything that hinders us from obedience to God" (CO 45:179–80). He recognizes pictorial ways of speaking in many passages, as, for example, the personification (*prosopopoeia*) in Matt 2:18 (citing Jer 31:15), where the long-deceased Rachel stands for the downfall of the tribe of Benjamin: "That he (Jeremiah) ascribes grief to the dead Rachel is a *prosopopoeia*, which is very effective in rousing the feelings. Indeed, Jeremiah employs rhetorical coloring not merely to ornament his speech but because he

could not overcome the hardness and obduracy of the living other than as it were by waking the dead from their graves" (CO 45:100). Among the rhetorical devices already encountered in Erasmus is the assumption of an antithesis secretly concealed beneath a formulation like, for example, Ps 5:4 ("in the morning I will plead"): "Most add 'his prayer,' as if it were an elliptical way of speaking. But David wishes, instead, to testify that, though he is turned and drawn this way and that, he established this order so that he might find refuge in God. It is, that is to say, a tacit antithesis to the wandering and erring ways of those who turned their eyes to the remedies of the world" (CO 31:67). In addition, Calvin loves psychological explanations that on occasion (as at Gen 22) go far beyond the text. But he is also greatly interested in the moral integrity of the patriarchs. So at Gen 16, where he once emphasizes that Abraham was led to take Hagar as his wife by Sarah, "so that we know that the holy man was not driven to do this by (sexual) desires." He also rejects the assumption that Sarah placed her maid in her place out of the wish for a descendant: "It is not credible to me that the pious matron would not have been aware of that promise that had been so often recalled to her husband" (CO 23:222). Somehow an edifying purpose always stands in the background of the commentary.

Calvin often takes delight in the miraculous. This can also be tied to an interest in knowledge of real things. Thus on the question of the building of Noah's ark in Gen 6–7, in discussing the opinions of earlier interpreters, he deals in detail with the materials of the ark, its size, its construction. With respect to its size, the difficulty arises how the ark could actually hold so many animals. To this, Calvin says he does not know how large the solid measure was at the time: "I am content that the things for which there was room were not concealed from God (whom I now acknowledge without contradiction as the first architect of the ark), which he described to his servant. If you leave the extraordinary power of God out of this story, you will say that mere fables are being narrated. ... I tell you, this entire narrative of Moses would be cold and empty and laughable if it were not for the miracles it reports" (CO 23:123). In this respect Calvin is still definitely precritically oriented.

On the other hand, he can—like Luther before—reject an unrestricted christological interpretation of Old Testament statements. Thus, as regards the Bible's first word "in the beginning" (Gen 1:1): "To interpret the word 'beginning' by Christ is all too absurd. Moses simply wanted (to express) this: the world was not from the beginning arranged as we now see, but an unorganized chaos of heaven and earth was created. So the statement is to be resolved: when in the beginning God created heaven and earth, the

earth was formless and void" (CO 23:14). Here can be seen an exegetical soberness that is capable of making differentiations. The last sentence, by the way, is a translation that is still in use today as the important alternative understanding to the customary one.

But in his Genesis interpretation Calvin is interested above all in doctrine (*doctrina*) in the sense of instruction. This can be seen, for example, in his treatment of Gen 22. Calvin stresses right at the beginning that this passage has to do with an especially remarkable narrative, since of all the proofs of faith and obedience that Abraham gave during his lifetime, "nevertheless nothing more outstanding can be thought than the sacrifice of the son" (CO 23:310). It is exceptional above all in that God, as it were, battles against him with his word (CO 23:312). Abraham's answer, "here I am," before he heard God's command, is exemplary: "This is finally true submission, when we are ready to act before God's will is known to us" (CO 23:312). Calvin attaches to this a lengthy reflection on Abraham's internal conflict over the command to sacrifice and the promise, which is the basis for the coming of Christ as Isaac's future descendant of Isaac, with respect to the denial of fatherly and marital feelings demanded of him. With reference to Heb 11:19 (according to which Abraham believed that God was able to raise the dead), he emphasizes that Abraham held fast to the promise nevertheless. This leads to the conclusion: "it is left for each of us to conform to this example" (CO 23:314). In his sermons on the sacrifice of Isaac (CO 23:740–83), Calvin then presented this conclusion in a congregationally appropriate application. In addition, his interpretation has place for his own faith experiences as well. This applies especially to the Psalms. In the preface to his Psalms commentary (CO 31:15), Calvin comments: "I am accustomed to call this book not without reason an anatomy of all the parts of the soul, for indeed no one will find in himself even a single affection whose image is not reflected in this mirror. Truly, here the Holy Spirit has all pains, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, anxieties ... vividly represented." However, it is true that "the rest of Scripture contains what God entrusts to his servants as instructions to be conveyed to us." The Psalms commentary is also, by Calvin's own statements, written for the use of the church (CO 31:35); its intention is to make available this treasure for all the pious (CO 31:33). The use of the Psalms is that it directs readers in the practice of prayer. Of greatest importance here is to direct the praise to God (CO 31:19), but also to submit to his will, even when it entails suffering. To this extent the Psalms also contain instruction. That Calvin inserted the sole retrospective on his life in the preface to the Psalms commentary shows how very

much he identified himself with these experiences. By the way, however, it is the figure of David (traditionally considered the author of the psalms) in which such experiences of faith crystallize. This is evident in Calvin's interpretation of individual psalms themselves. Here Calvin usually follows a three-part schema. In a short section, a general description of the content of a psalm and its situation (usually from the life of David) is offered. A translation of the text from the Hebrew, section by section, then follows, and finally an interpretation of the individual sections. It becomes clear that what matters here is not the historical David at all; David is rather the mouthpiece for universally valid theological statements. In this Calvin again and again shifts to the first-person plural and arrives at a *summa*, as, for instance, at Ps 32:1, which in this case reads "there would be no other remedy for our evil than that we, humbled by God's hand, rest our entire salvation on his mercy alone" (CO 31:323). The interpretation of the Psalms does not have a critical but a pastoral character.

On the other hand, Calvin is a modern interpreter inasmuch as he vigorously opposes allegorical interpretation. His position on Gal 4:21–26, one of the few passages where Paul himself presents an allegorical interpretation of the two sons of Abraham (Ishmael and Isaac) is well known. Against interpreters who derive from this text full permission for allegorical interpretation, Calvin objects that the authority of Scripture is thereby undermined. "Scripture, I grant, is a rich and inexhaustible source of all wisdom, but I deny that its fruitfulness consists in multiple senses that everyone can invent at will. We know therefore that the true sense of Scripture is the original and simple. We want to grasp it and hold it by our teeth" (CO 50:237). He expresses himself similarly in the interpretation of Gen 2:8 about the location of the garden of Eden. This is by no means "as some [because they nowhere find it] dream" outside the world situation, "but the allegories of Origin and similar [interpreters] are emphatically rejected. Satan sought to introduce them into the church with evil guile so that the teaching of Scripture would be ambiguous and lack anything sure and firm" (CO 23:37). For Calvin, the historical-literal sense alone is the unambiguous basis for interpretation. He is ready to admit, nevertheless, that in the case of Moses much is meant figuratively and as a type; this is, however, not distant from a true literal sense. Where true allegories appear in the Old Testament, as in the book of Ezekiel, he acknowledges them also as such.

Connected with this is the fact that Calvin is also concerned for the original text whenever it seems to him necessary. Thus he can engage in reflections on the sense of the Hebrew expressions as when, by way of

example, he debates with Jerome's view that the name Moriah in Gen 22:2 is derived from the root *ra'ah* ("to see"). "But all experts in Hebrew language reject this meaning." Other suggestions are the derivation of *yarah* ("teach") or *yare* ("fear"). Calvin follows the last of these, "because it is the most probable"; that is to say, the place of God's worship is meant (CO 23:315). As regards the term *rakia'* in Gen 1:6, Calvin remarks that the term means "not only the realm of the air as a whole but what extends over us," the heaven. He does not know why the Greeks (the Septuagint) use *stereoma* for what the Latins render by *firmamentum* (CO 23:18). Linguistically, Calvin was at the forefront of his age. We learn from the foreword of the printer of his Daniel commentary: "Calvin is accustomed (in lecture) to read each verse first in Hebrew and then translate it into Latin" (CO 40:523–24). When New Testament authors quote Old Testament texts in a wording different from the Hebrew, he notices it. But he states as a matter of principle (on the quotation of Mic 5:1 in Matt 2:6) that the Evangelists make every effort to reproduce the sense of the statement correctly even when they are not translating it word for word. But when Matthew, in marked contrast to Micah, who describes Bethlehem Ephrathah as small, says it is by no means small, he wants to emphasize the greatness of the grace of God, who chose this insignificant place as the birthplace of Christ (CO 45:84–85). Calvin has basically little interest in pressing ahead with grammar and lexicography; his sole concern is with working out an unambiguous text.

Calvin interpreted many of the New Testament writings before those of the Old Testament (from 1540 on). It is typical of his starting point as a Reformer that he began with the Letters of Paul and was interested first of all in the Epistle to the Romans, initially in lectures, then in a printed commentary. Already in the *argumentum* (the overview of the contents) of his commentary he justified his selection on the basis that this is, so to speak, the key to the entire Scripture: "Because, if anyone attained true understanding of it, he has opened doors for reaching the most concealed treasures of Scripture, too" (CO 49:1). Calvin wrote the dedication already in fall of 1539; he issued it at the start of 1540. Then followed the other Pauline, later the non-Pauline, letters. As was typical, he then turned to Acts (appeared in two parts, 1552–1554) before he finally commented on the Gospels, beginning with the Gospel of John (1553). The Synoptic Gospels were published at the end of 1555, indeed in the form of a commentary harmony (in *Harmoniam ex Matthaeo, Marco et Luca compositam commentarii*, CO 45). The prevailing principle that Scripture should contain no errors and no contradictions led Calvin to

such a procedure, for which he already had a series of predecessors. To be mentioned after the (lost in the original) *Diatessaron* of Tatian (second century) are especially the medieval *Monotessaron* of Johannes Gerson, that constructed from the Gospels as continuous a text as possible, and the 1537 *Gospel Harmony* (*Harmonia evangelica*) of the reformer Andreas Osiander (1496–1552); its title became a common term. The attempt to deny contradictions between the Gospels was already undertaken by Augustine (*De consensu evangelistarum*) in a casual way. Calvin, like Bucer for the first time in his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels (1527) beforehand, set John's Gospel to the side and made Matthew's text the basis in the main part of his harmony. The prehistory is compiled from that in Matthew and Luke, while in case of the history of the passion and Easter he offers a synopsis of the various editions. To each part is added a commentary in the usual way.

Calvin begins here too with the *argumentum*, the first part of which emphasizes the theological significance of the gospel. He first presents a definition of the term "gospel." It is "a celebratory proclamation about the Son of God who appeared in the flesh in order to restore the lost world and bring people back from death into life" (CO 45:2) and that therefore with right is called a good and joyful message. In this it concerns the restoration of the kingdom of God. Actually, then, the designation "gospel" should also be ascribed to the whole New Testament. Now, since the four narratives in birth, death, and resurrection of Christ "contain the whole sum of our salvation in themselves," their authors could rightly be called Evangelists. At this point it is important to Calvin to stress once again that with their reports about the in-breaking of the kingdom of God and the fulfillment of the prophetic promise of the Old Testament they would by no means have had the intention of setting these aside "as some fanatics dream," for "the reading of the gospel becomes truly useful and fruitful when we learn to connect it with the ancient promises" (CO 45:3).

Some critical observations that seem important to us appear to Calvin irrelevant, when he comes only to the wished result that the statements of the Gospels are absolutely historically correct and dependable for faith. Thus he turns to speak against Jerome's assumption that the Gospel of Mark is a shortening of the Gospel of Matthew. This is incorrect because the sequence in Mark frequently deviates from Matthew, and there are many differences in details as well. Similar things apply with regard to the distinctive features in Luke: all three Evangelists would have written down in good faith what they had learned as certain. "But this did not happen by accident but under the direction of divine providence; the Holy Spirit

inspired them in differing ways of writing a miraculous agreement" (CO 73:3). It is therefore irrelevant whether Mark was, as claimed, a trusted student of Peter and Peter dictated the Gospel to him. "Therefore we must not become anxious, because it is of little significance to us so long as we firmly hold that he is a legitimate witness appointed by God" (CO 73:3). The makings of historical criticism are definitely already at hand, but its time is not yet come, because all the emphasis was put on theological relevance.

The interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel commentary stands under the premises that had characterized Calvin's treatment of the law in the *Institutes*. Here it comes down decisively to reference to Christ already in the Old Testament law. Calvin had already made it clear in his interpretation of Jer 31: "We see that God from the beginning so spoke that he would alter not one syllable later so far as it concerns the *sum* of doctrine. That is to say, he encompasses in the law the rule for perfect living; by this means, then, he shows what the way to life is and leads the people to Christ by figures" (CO 38:688). Calvin can then say the same at Rom 10:4: Christ is the *end* of the law in the sense "that the law points to Christ in all its parts" (CO 49:196). This in the sense that Christ kept the law; he can rush to aid us, who groan under its burden (*Inst.* 2.7.2), so that he leads us "to an alien righteousness" (on Rom 10:4; CO 49:196). From this viewpoint, the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount are interpreted in a sense that accepts their radicalism. Here Calvin takes a position in opposition to the Anabaptists. By way of example, Matt 5:34, the prohibition against swearing oaths that the Anabaptists take strictly literally, Calvin interprets in such a way that the absolute prohibition of oaths is avoided. Calvin refers to the context in which it is said that no one should swear either by heaven or earth. This refers to the custom of the Jews of swearing in an indirect way by heaven, earth, or the altar and thus considering the oath as virtually nothing. This is what Christ wanted to oppose, "from which we conclude that the term 'at all' does not refer to the substance but to the form.... But where a just reason compels it, the law not only allows swearing an oath but expressly commands it" (CO 45:182). By this means the Decalogue's prohibition of false testimony quoted in verse 33 is confirmed. In addition to his basic view of the law and the relationship of the Testaments, Calvin's concern for church practice also comes into play. The radicalization appearing in the Sermon on the Mount seemed to him irreconcilable with a practicable church order.

The treatment of the Gospel story proceeds in a way similar to that in Genesis. The narrative of the Evangelists (which has been harmonized

beforehand by the firm faith that there can be no contradictions) is considered absolutely reliable, even over against extrabiblical witnesses such as Josephus, as when the contradiction between the information in Luke 2:1 about the birthday of Jesus and that from Josephus (*Ant.* 18.1) results in a reconstructed dating of the census under Quirinus (CO 45:71–72)—today it is known that both authors are following inexact recollections. For Calvin, it is clear from the outset that Josephus must be wrong, because Christ's age as generally known cannot be doubted. By the way, the external course of the earthly life of Jesus is not even very significant, because "Christ's birth, death, and resurrection contain the complete sum of our salvation in themselves" (CO 45:2). It is important to Calvin that the life of Christ is incorporated into the covenant history of God—and here the judgment about contemporary Israel is the same as ever: Israel remains the people of God among whom the earthly Jesus was active; he extends his mission to all peoples only after the resurrection. But at the same time the Israelites at the time of Jesus are also those who have fallen from God's covenant. This is true of the Pharisees and scribes in particular, whom Calvin accuses of hypocrisy. Nevertheless, he turns from this judgment back to his readers: When Jesus, moved by pity, calls the apostles to come to aid those "who were relatives and covenant partners of God, therefore legitimate heirs of eternal life, but who nevertheless were called lost until they regained salvation in Christ—what then remains for us who are far less in honor?" (on Matt 10:6; CO 45:275).

Rational doubts about the miracles of Jesus are foreign to Calvin. In connection with Matt 13:54/Mark 6:1–5, where Jesus speaks of the mighty deeds that were impossible because of the unbelief of his fellow citizens in Nazareth, Calvin comments that we should judge the matter differently: "Where human means are lacking, the power of God becomes clearly revealed to us, so that he receives firm praise" (CO 45:426). The miracles of Jesus are not at the center; as regards the resurrection of the young man of Nain (at Luke 7:11), Calvin expressly remarks: "Since the analogy is to be held to in all the miracles of Christ, ... we should know that this young man whom Christ awakened from death is a picture of the spiritual life that he once again gave to us" (CO 45:239). Finally, the miracles are of secondary significance, particularly since they no longer occur in the present. It is clear "what the miracles have to be related to if they are not left free to draw us into ruinous temptation. That is, they are in service to the gospel." They are mere "appendages" to the word of God (CO 45:830).

Calvin treats the parables in a basically more text-focused way than most of his predecessors. At the exemplary narrative of the good Samari-

tan (Luke 10:30–37), he refers to the nearly universally widespread allegorical tradition of interpretation that describes humanity (Adam) after the fall by the figure of the traveler to the heavenly Jerusalem who fell among robbers and was injured. Yet this traveler is not robbed of every capacity for good action, since he was only “half dead.” The Samaritan is then the image of Christ, who, in that he poured oil and wine into the wounds, heals us by repentance and the promise of grace—but not immediately, since he first entrusts us to the innkeeper, the church, for healing little by little. On this, Calvin: “The allegory that defenders of free will develop here is too baseless to require refutation. Scripture is to be accorded greater respect than to allow its original sense to be manipulated in such a loose way” (CO 45:614).

Otherwise, led by the desire to draw applications of practical use from the biblical narratives, he can definitely delve into specific details of parables as well. He handles the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–24) as follows. He first gives an overall interpretation. “In the first part is shown how inclined and eager God is to grant forgiveness of our sins, but in other parts, how pernicious and perverse those act who resist his mercy” (CO 45:506–7). Christ compares all sinners to the prodigal son, who, weary of their sins, turn to God’s grace. By the gracious father, God is meant. In the following individual interpretation, Calvin soon comes across the concern whether one should make use of individual features taken from the context as a general statement. So at the narrative detail in verse 12 in which the son demands the premature distribution of his inheritance from his father: “An interpretation from this would not be inappropriate.... But since I fear that such an allusion would be overly subtle, I will be satisfied with the literal sense” (CO 45:507). With regard to other features, however, it is stressed that the young man’s action shows how man can govern himself by his own spirit and in this way fall under God’s punishment. The fact that he is led to conversion by hunger teaches us “that we do not believe that God deals cruelly with us when he imposes hard burdens on us, since he ... teaches us obedience by this means” (CO 45:508). The high point of the parable, however, lies in verse 20: the welcoming love of the earthly father who approaches his repentant son in forgiveness reflects the much greater love of God. Here too, however, Calvin must again repudiate the opinion of supporters of free will as “stinking sophistry,” who conclude from this “that God’s grace is not granted to sinners until they come to it by their own repentance” (CO 45:509).

These examples show Calvin’s care in interpreting individual details as well as his constant striving to secure evangelical teaching by biblical

exegesis and above all to defend against humanist, enthusiast, and Roman Catholic views. Doctrine is the goal everywhere, but in an altogether practical sense. In this case all of those who act—the younger son, the father, as well the older brother—serve as positive and negative models and by this means can define the conduct of Christians. But there are also parables that comfort the church and awaken hope, such as the parable of the tares among the wheat (Matt 13:24–31). In this instance, Calvin remarks—at the same time in opposition to Baptists who call for the use of the sword against unbelievers in the church—“that Christ is not dealing here with the office of pastors or secular authorities but is taking exception to those by whom the weak are confused when they see that the church is not composed of the elect alone but of impure dough, too” (CO 45:369).

Calvin finds examples in the most diverse individual features of the narratives. Thus in the report of Peter’s denial (Mark 14:66–72 and parallels): “The case of Peter that is narrated here is a famous mirror of our weakness. His repentance likewise sets before us a memorable example of the goodness and mercy of God. There a story telling of a single man contains a common teaching for the whole church and an especially useful one as well, one that both directs the upright to attentive fear and encourages the fallen by trust in pardon” (CO 45:741). But also the fact that Christ called Judas to be among the company of his disciples, although he foresaw his betrayal, thus finds its explanation. Here (at Mark 3:13), Calvin answers several questions that evidently had been put to him with the suggestion “that the Lord deliberately wanted to forestall future offenses, so that we would not be confused about the measures, as unfaithful teachers so often hold a place in the church or turn from confessors of the gospel to unfaithfulness, at the same time also to set before us an example of a man’s terrible downfall so that people in high places of dignity do not become over-content with themselves” (CO 45:158).

Throughout, then, it is pastoral concern above all that moves Calvin in his exegesis. He is an interpreter altogether oriented toward practice, with the result that his commentaries still find readers even today.

2.5. EXTENDING GOD’S KINGDOM BY THE SWORD: THOMAS MÜNTZER

There are only hypotheses about Müntzer’s youth. The first date verified by documentary evidence is the entrance of his name in the matriculation of Leipzig University on 16 October 1506 as Thomas Müntzer of Quedlinburg, at the time obviously the residence of his parents, of whom we otherwise know nothing. From the usual matriculation time at the age of

sixteen to seventeen years, one can conclude that he must have been born around 1490, but proof is lacking. In his letters and writings Müntzer described himself as "Thomas Müntzer from Stolberg." His birthplace, then, was the small city of Stolberg in the Harz. Since after the death of the mother the father and son engaged in dispute over the inheritance, this cannot have been inconsiderable. The family is said to have moved early to Quedlinburg, and young Thomas attended the schools there. But information about this time is lacking. We learn just as little about the period of his study in Leipzig. Since Thomas Müntzer is later addressed as "master," it is to be assumed that he studied in the customary way the seven liberal arts in the faculty of arts and concluded this study with the master's degree. Situated in the area of sovereignty under conservative Duke Georg of Saxony (ruled 1500–1539), Leipzig was a traditional university in which scholastic philosophy still ruled uncontested (while the newly founded Wittenberg had granted humanism entry.) How long Müntzer remained there is unknown. The next documentary mention is that of his matriculation at the recently founded Brandenburg University in Frankfurt an der Oder in 1512, a daughter university of Leipzig in the sense that many times members of its faculty came from there. It was, like Leipzig, a stronghold of Thomism. In Frankfurt, Müntzer surely studied theology and apparently received the baccalaureate degree, although no certificate of study confirms it. At any rate, he was finally treated as an educated theologian. Although he, evidently meanwhile priest, received a benefice in Braunschweig in 1514, he apparently did not move there, but could first have been active in Aschersleben and Halle as a pastoral assistant (collaborator). In 1516/1517 he was provost of the nunnery in Frose near Aschersleben. Why he had to leave there, we do not know. Apparently he had spent some time in Wittenberg afterwards (or first 1518/1519?), but probably did not study at the university. For a while he worked as a teacher in the Martin School in Brunswick. At the start of 1519 he received the offer to take over as interim replacement of the Lutheran pastor Franz Günther in Jüterbog, who was suspended because of conflict with the Franciscans there. Since he continued to criticize the pope and church along with scholastic theologians even more sharply than Günther, the Franciscans also denounced him to the bishop in charge. After Günther's return in May, Müntzer went first perhaps to Orlamünde, where Karlstadt was pastor. Then he returned as father confessor of the sisters in the Beuditz nunnery in Weissenfels. There he had time for intensive study of the Vulgate, historians, church fathers such as Jerome and Augustine, and the writings of mystics such as Johann Tauler

(ca. 1300–1361) and Henry Seuse (ca. 1295–1366). Possibly at Luther's recommendation he was finally called to Zwickau in May 1520, as the interim replacement for the pastor there, the Erasmian Egranus (Johann Wildenauer [Sylvius], d. 1535). The church of St. Mary's, where he substituted for Egranus until his return in October, was made up mostly of the well-to-do citizens, and some, gaining riches from their participation in the silver works, who supported the humanistic reform ideas of Erasmus. Müntzer again came into direct opposition with the monks and criticized his parishioners' wealth and superficiality. He polemicized against Egranus from the pulpit (see also the theses supposedly collected by Müntzer, MSB 513–15), so that the latter complained to him by letter and later to Luther about him. Belonging to St. Catharine's church, on the other hand, which he took over thereafter, were in part poor clothmakers, handworkers, apprentices, and in part wage-dependent miners. There a spiritual Christianity was practiced in conventicles and brotherhood groups. One group led by the clothmakers Nicholas Storch and Thomas Drechsel, called "Zwickau prophets" by Luther, advocated a radical teaching stressing the revelation of the Spirit against the authorities (who should be removed or killed), marriage, and infant baptism (which should be abolished). Influences on the part of Taborites (a radical apocalyptic-oriented group directed by Hussites) are possible. It is unclear how far Müntzer, who advocated an increasingly spiritual-apocalyptic theology, had already worked in this. The Zwickau prophets later went to Wittenberg and caused considerable unrest there (during Luther's stay at the Wartburg). Because of the tensions he aroused, Müntzer was dismissed in April 1521. He went to Prague, where he was at first welcomed in friendship at the university as a "Wittenberger," but soon again caused offense because of his sermons. He wrote his "Confession," the so-called "Prague Manifesto" (November 1521) there. It is preserved in a shorter German version in Müntzer's handwriting, in an expanded German copy, and in Latin and Czech versions. Müntzer soon departed from Prague disappointed; he had not found there the hoped-for support for a thoroughgoing reformation. He made his way again toward Wittenberg, still considering himself a follower of Luther. After various travels he found temporary employment as a priest in the Glaucha monastery at Halle. When he was driven from there, he became in April of 1523 a pastor in Allstedt, an enclave of Electoral Saxony in the middle of a Catholic area. This time, until his flight from the city in August of 1524, was his most happy, theologically fruitful period. He was able to win the Electoral Saxon bailiff (district magistrate) Hans Zeiss and his pastoral college

Haferitz to his side. He married the former nun Ottilie von Gersen and had a son. His chief concern was a thoroughgoing reform of worship. To this end, he wrote a *Deutsches Kirchenamt* (German Church Service Book; MSB 25–155), a *Deutsch-evangelische Messe* (German-Evangelical Mass; MSB 157–206), and a justification for them, *Ordnung und Berechnung des Deutschen Amtes zu Allstedt* (Order and Explanation of the German Office at Allstedt; MSB 207–15). These orders of worship remained in use anonymously after his departure. Also appearing in 1523–1524 were two of Müntzer's theological writings, *Protestation oder Erbietung* (Protestation or Proposition; MSB 225–40) and *Vom dem gedichteten Glauben* (On Counterfeit Faith; MSB 217–24).

Soon, however, a crisis also arose in Allstedt. When the new form of worship (forbidden by the Edict of Worms and the Imperial Mandate) gained popularity among inhabitants of the surrounding areas in Masses, Count Ernst of Mansfeld forbade his Catholic subjects attendance at worship. In an open letter, Müntzer denied that the count had authority to do this: authorities should not forbid the holy gospel. He defended himself also against his own electoral prince. Tensions increased when the Allsteders withheld their tithes to the nearby Naundorf monastery and burned down the (vacant) Mallerbach chapel owned by the monastery. Meanwhile, Müntzer had founded a *Bund* of armed people in Allstedt for the defense of his supporters in and around Allstedt against the Catholic authorities and called upon the electoral prince to defend them. Thereupon the elector's brother Duke John, along with his son John Friedrich, the Chancellor Brück, and a court councilor, came to Allstedt in person in July 1524 in order to examine the situation. Before them, Müntzer delivered in the castle chapel the famous "Sermon to the Princes" on Dan 2 (MSB 241–63). Thereafter he completed the *Ausgedrückte Entblössung des falschen Glaubens* (Manifest Exposé of False Faith; MSB 265–319), based on Luke 1, which was published in Nuremberg in the fall. After a hearing at the ducal court in Weimar, the Allstedters were ordered to punish those responsible for Mallerbach, to dissolve the *Bund*, and to close the printing shop working for Müntzer. When those in authority complied and raised the alarm against him, Müntzer fled the city in secret.

He went via Nordhausen to Mühlhausen, a populous free imperial city, where he received a friendly welcome because there had been anticlerical preaching there for a long time and even disputes with the churches and monasteries (because of tithes). Müntzer received a license to preach in two churches and, together with the preacher Heinrich Pfeiffer, began to carry out his reform of worship here as well. In addition,

political tensions arose. In the “Recess of Mühlhausen,” supporters of Pfeiffer initially proceeded, contrary to the council, with changes of the city constitution, the property rents, and the rights of the free selection of pastors. A little later the “Eleven Articles” called for a new council oriented to the Word of God. Yet Pfeiffer and Müntzer were defeated; the old council seized power again and expelled the two from the city in September. Müntzer went first to Nuremberg, where he secretly had his work against Luther published, the *Hochverursachte Schutzrede ... wider das geistlose und sanftlebende Fleisch zu Wittenberg* (*Highly Provoked Vindication ... against the Spiritless and Soft-Living Flesh at Wittenberg*; MSB 321–43). Then he returned to southwest Germany, entering the Hegau and Klettgau region as well. There he encountered the peasants already in rebellion, whom he, however, had not incited. Whether he met with the Zurich Baptists also remains unclear. In any case, he was in Mühlhausen again in February of 1525—Pfeiffer also had returned there and had meanwhile brought about the dissolution of the monasteries and the confiscation of the church’s income. An “eternal council” was newly elected.

Events now followed one another very quickly. The Peasants’ Revolt had spread to surrounding areas, and in Thuringia three great masses of peasants collected to battle against nobles and princes. A force from Mühlhausen gathered under the flag that Müntzer had sketched: a rainbow against a white background. Müntzer, who himself did not participate, had intended for an immediate move against his chief opponent, Count Ernst of Mansfeld. The majority, however, decided first to relieve the hard-pressed peasants in the Eichsfeld. Then, at the start of May 1525, Müntzer was able to rush with a small company to the aid of the hard-pressed Frankenhäuser army. It was only from this time on that he seems to have assumed a position in the rebellion. Soon, however, the princes under the lead of Philipp, Landgrave of Hesse, decisively defeated the forces of Frankenhäuser entrenched before the gates of their city and ordered a bloodbath among them. Müntzer was taken prisoner in the city, interrogated under torture, and executed on 27 May 1525, along with Heinrich Pfeiffer in Mühlhausen, which had had meanwhile surrendered to the princes without a fight.

Thomas Müntzer wrote no biblical commentaries, but his writings are filled with biblical references. His “Sermon to the Princes” and the *Ausgedrückten Entblössung* each take a chapter of the Bible as their point of departure. He shared an excellent knowledge of the Bible with not few of his contemporaries. Evidently the Vulgate was the edition in which he studied the Bible. For his German quotations from the New Testament, he

used mostly Luther's translation with a few deviations, while he provided his own translations of the Old Testament. He obviously did not refer back to the original text; it is disputed whether he had any knowledge of Hebrew at all.

During his middle period of activity Müntzer considers himself belonging to the Reformation camp. He apparently had recommendations of Luther to thank for some of his early posts. As late as 1522, Müntzer wrote to Melanchthon at Wittenberg (MSB 379–82), "I accept your theology with my whole heart" (MSB 380,3). At the same time, he already criticized Luther because his reform measures were, in his judgment, half-hearted: "Our dearest Martin deals unknowingly because he does not want to upset the little ones" (MSB 381,20–21). This seems to refer to Luther's *Invocavit* sermons (9–16 March 1522; WA 10.3:1–64, 436–39), in which Luther had warned against over-hasty changes, particularly in worship. A radical anticlericalism runs through all of Müntzer's writings. In this he echoes a widespread sentiment of the time. In addition, however, beyond his ever-mounting opposition to Luther—reaching its peak in 1524 in the *Hochverursachten Schutzrede*, in which Müntzer attacked Luther in well-known phrases as "spiritless, soft-living flesh at Wittenberg" (MSB 322,1–2)—was a basic distinction in their relationship to the Bible. Müntzer faulted Luther for having "completely defiled the piteous Christianity in a perverse way through the theft of the Holy Scripture" (MSB 322,2–4).

Müntzer already raised this accusation of the theft of Scripture in the "Prague Manifesto" against the "confounded priests." He accused them (by reference to Jer 23:30) of stealing the "mere Scripture from the Bible" (MSB 491,15–492,1). The accusation states that they had stolen away the word of God, "which they themselves never heard even once from the mouth of God" (MSB 492,3–4). Behind this is the antithesis of letter and spirit, which Müntzer based on 2 Cor 3 (probably vv. 3 and 6 especially). Müntzer's leading question about the essence of faith, which he has posed by his own statements more passionately than others, is in the background (see MSB 491,3–7, 505,6–8). Although the targets in view at the time are the Catholic priests—from whom Müntzer in his youth in a search for assurance in faith was unable to gain any satisfactory information—Luther is included here as well. For Luther, faith comes from the hearing of the word of Scripture through proclamation. For Müntzer, who in this regard seems to follow the impulses of mysticism, faith arises through the immediate inspiration of the Spirit within the interior of the heart. In this context, Müntzer points to "reason," which is first given by the Spirit and

enables the elect to understand Scripture. This is, of course, not yet the concept of reason as it was first developed by the Enlightenment, but a deliberate paraphrasing of a capability of understanding in a spiritual way. "For anyone who does not feel the Spirit within, indeed, anyone who is not certain of having it, is not a member of Christ but of the devil." Again, a biblical passage, Rom 8:9, serves as proof. Müntzer also distinguishes between the "letter" and the "word of God." The living word is not "written in the books" (MSB 493,23). In his letter to Melanchthon, Müntzer quotes a biblical word as the basis for this: "'Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God' (Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4; Luke 4:4). Note: It proceeds from the mouth of God and not from books. Actually, the testimony to the true word is found in books" (MSB 380,11–13). For this, Müntzer appeals also to the prophets, because their formulation "thus says the Lord" is in the form of the present, not in the past. Indeed, he considers himself a prophet when he believes himself capable of destroying his opponents "in the spirit of Elijah" (MSB 504,29). He can also set "the dumb God" (in the Bible) over against the living and speaking ("in the heart by the Spirit"; MSB 511,3–4).

Another chain of argumentation is added in the expanded German version of the *Manifesto*: "For some, the gospel and the whole of Scripture is closed." Combined as scriptural proof for this are Isa 22:22 (in the allegorical interpretation of Rev 3:7—Müntzer incorrectly: ch. 5), which speaks of the "key of David," and Luke 11:52, the passage in which Jesus rebukes the teachers of the law for taking away the key of knowledge. This key is God's living self-expression in the depths of the soul. For Müntzer, the teachers of the law—elsewhere (see below) frequently referred to as the "scribes"—personified the theologians who lock up the Scripture by saying that "God cannot speak with humans in his own person" (MSB 498,18–23). Instead of this, they appeal to the "mere Scripture," which they have cunningly stolen from the Bible (MSB 496,17–18). Another complaint against the "students, ministers and monks" states that they would have "no experiences with Scripture that they have felt" in order to apply to their explanations (MSB 499,15–16). For Müntzer, an adequate understanding of Scripture is impossible without spiritual experiences. He judges otherwise about the laity: "But I do not doubt the people." Here a pastoral concern moves him: "Oh, you truly poor, pitiable little group, how thirsty you are for the Word of God!" (MSB 500,3–4). The fact that they suffer lack of it goes along with their ignorance: "They would like to do the very best and are unable to know the same (lines 6–7). The complaint against the clergy states that they have not broken the bread of the

Bible for the people; “that is, they have not opened their minds, so that they might recognize the Holy Spirit within themselves” (lines 17–18). This is in keeping with Müntzer’s understanding of “Spirit” and Spirit-given “reason” but at the same time shows that he thinks the presence of the Spirit is not separated from the Bible and considers instruction from the Scripture necessary for its acquisition. He views this as the task of a minister, which in his view the Catholic clergy neglect. A social perspective, on the other hand, is not detectable in his expression.

If we attend to how Müntzer deals with Scripture, we note that passages brought together from the whole Bible have for him the function of confirming an idea that has been gained in another way. This follows along the line of the medieval use of Scripture. In this case it is the teaching of the immediate word of God in the soul of the elect. On the other hand, it is not lacking a scriptural proof, the function of which is above all to convince those who think otherwise of the view presented.

Another teaching typical of Müntzer, which is likewise already found in the expanded edition of the Prague Manifesto and like that mentioned above of medieval ancestry, is his theology of suffering. He stresses that the believer must “be conformed with his passion of Christ” (MSB 499,25–26), “for God speaks only in the suffering of creatures” (MSB 499,19–20). A theology that disregards the way of suffering is for him mere theory and therefore worthless; it is disqualified as “honey-sweet ideas” (line 26). Müntzer seizes for this also on the parable of the four soils (Mark 4:3–8//Matt 13:3–8), comparing the heart of the theologian with the stone on which the seed of the word falls and brings forth no fruit, or even with the flint that can chip off the master’s chisel by itself (MSB 499,2–4). In today’s language, one would say for him faith is existential in character and does not actualize itself except in the imitation of Christ along his way of suffering.

All in all, the Prague Manifesto (in its various editions) is a vehement attack on the Catholic clergy. Every other element is subordinated to this interest. Still, we learn from it a vast amount about Müntzer’s understanding of the Bible; he was to retain it in basics thereafter.

In his Allstedt writings of 1524, Müntzer developed his ideas further, each in succinct theses. His work *Wider the gedichteten [eingebildeten] Glauben der Christenheit* (*Against the Counterfeit Faith of Christendom*)—probably an answer to an inquiry by Georg Spalatin (1484–1545; at the time adviser of Friedrich the Wise) formulated in writing in eleven points (MSB 569) apparently during his journey through Allstedt—criticizes the alleged faith of “lust-filled scribes” (MSB 218,27), which is only imagi-

nary and not authentic, when one “is not previously receptive by his cross to await God’s work and word” (MBS 218,10–11). This work is first experienced as a destructive one. Müntzer seemingly understands Scripture as Luther does, as a witness to Christ (“points to Christ,” 218,17), yet in a completely different sense: a person on the way to faith sees “the whole of Holy Scripture like a two-edged sword [Heb 4:12], for everything in it is there so that we rather might be strangled than be made alive” (218,20–21; see also “to death,” MSB 220,24). Müntzer reads Scripture as a vast history of enticements, telling of how “God has tempted his elect the utmost from the very beginning and did not spare his own Son so that he might be the true goal of blessedness and point to the one narrow way (see Matt 7:13–14; Luke 13:24) that the lust-filled scribes are eternally unable to find” (MSB 218,23–27). The figures of the Old Testament, such as Abraham (art. 3; MSB 219,4–17), Moses (art. 4; MSB 219,19–28), and indeed “the patriarchs, prophets, and especially the apostles” (MSB 220,3–4), are all examples of this experienced enticement, and the case is that all “come to faith with great difficulty. None of them wanted to burst in like our mad, lust-filled pigs” (220,4–6). The apostles who did not once believe that Christ was resurrected are themselves an example of inevitable shortcomings (art. 6; 220,15–19). Scripture as a whole is also a book of spiritual experience. This understanding is quite plainly directed against the Lutheran when the adherents of the “imagined faith” are accused of basing an imagined promise of God on “natural promise” (here Luther’s famous catchword “promise” appears) and wanting “to storm heaven with it” (220,21–22). The Scripture kills and does not make alive, “like the living word that an empty soul hears” (220,24–25). A formulation typical of mysticism again surfaces in this passage: the talk of an emptiness of the soul that must first be reached before the divine word can be received into it. Thus Müntzer also considers the preacher’s most noble duty to be that of driving out of people their imaginary faith (art. 7), like John the Baptist (art. 9). Christians should be like sheep that, like the slain lamb Christ, bear their suffering and are fed with the salt of his wisdom instead of with the poison of the “sweet Christ” (art. 10; MSB 222,7–8). Whoever does not have the “bitter Christ will gorge to death on the sweet” (222,22–23). This idea that Christians must become like Christ the lamb in suffering runs throughout the further discussion. Müntzer appeals particularly to Matt 15:24 for his theology of suffering (art. 14, where he mentions the chapter in its entirety): “There you will find that no one can believe in Christ before he becomes like him” (MSB 224,2–3). This is the only way Scripture can be understood, and

only from this is his seemingly antiintellectual expression to be understood: "Even though all Scripture is presented to the learned in a human way, he still does not rule it even if he should also burst asunder." Then Müntzer continues: "He must wait for it to be opened to him with the key of David at the winepress where he is contrite in all his supposed way" (MSB 224,24–27). The combination here of the image of "David's key," already mentioned above, and the apocalyptic image of the winepress of the wrath of God from Rev 14:19–20 already points toward something of the later development of Müntzer's thought.

Similar statements about the Bible appear in his pamphlet *Protestation oder Erbietung*, written around the same time. The statement that the Bible is there to kill and not to make alive (MSB 231,14–15) is repeated. Another argument develops the complaint that the church accepts the Bible "from outside." Müntzer compares the usual superficial Christian stance that lacks correct seriousness with the position of the pagans, Turks (Muslims), and Jews and finds that they have much in common. The mere possession of the Bible changes nothing: "If you had already eaten the Bible, it does not help you; you must bear the sharp plow (cf. Ps 129:3)" (MSB 234,2–4). What is of concern again is suffering in the sense of "becoming empty," which is described pictorially in what follows as taking off clothes as an unavoidable transition stage to faith; according to Müntzer, it cannot be attained without testing. Believers likewise must endure suffering; they bear it by participating in the body of Christ, whose head they follow (MSB 234,15–16; see above).

An important hermeneutical principle of Müntzer is also expressed in this work. He remarks that one should not merely present biblical sayings scattered here and there "without a full comparison of the whole spirit of Scripture" (MSB 234,10–12). Somewhat before he explains, "The artistry of God must be confirmed from the Holy Bible in a full comparison of all the words that are clearly written in the two Testaments" (MSB 228,20–23), and in so doing he refers to 1 Cor 2 (2:13 is meant). According to the linguistic use of the time, "to compare" means, roughly, "to smooth out, equalize" (while modern usage puts the stress more on identifying the distinctions between the points of comparison). In the Vulgate edition, Paul states in this passage that in his proclamation he compares (*comparantes*) the spiritual with the spiritual. In the context of Spirit-worked biblical interpretation, each biblical verse is to be read in its context, and at the end a unified sense is to be established for the entire Bible. The Reformers are accused of a "piecemeal" use of the Bible (e.g., 228,16, in the context of the basis of baptism). The call for a "contextual" or "canoni-

cal” exegesis has again today become modern, but it should be considered that the principle of innerbiblical comparison and reconciliation is an age-old principle of interpretation; we come across it already in early rabbinic exegesis (see *History* 1:105–18), and it was retained throughout the Middle Ages (on Bonaventura, see, e.g., *History* 2:213–14). One can also think of its use in the case of Erasmus in the framework of his humanistic *loci* [topical] method. But Müntzer is different in that he does not have in view each and every individual scriptural proof but always Scripture as a whole. Here also Müntzer shows himself to be an interpreter stamped by tradition. Over against this, the humanist Egranus had demanded: “Each biblical (passage) is to be interpreted apart from every other biblical passage, because the spiritual cannot be compared with the spiritual. Rather, one must consider the clarity [of each individual passage] so that the authorities are retained without the interpretation of other passages and thus each individual (statement) expresses what is its own” (thesis 11, MSB 514,14–16). Here the path to a historical-critical view is pointed to. See also thesis 16, in which the “last chapter in the Gospel of Mark” (Mark 16:9–20) is already recognized as “apocryphal” (514,30–31).

All in all, it must be said that Müntzer lagged far behind Luther with these explanations. Despite sympathy with the Reformer at times, Müntzer has almost nothing in common with him but comes to repudiate him sharply because Luther is so deeply rooted in medieval mysticism and imitation-of-Christ theology. Although his ideas are saturated with biblical reminiscences, Scripture occupies a merely secondary place in them.

The situation rose to special intensity when Müntzer gave his sermon on Dan 2 before the Saxon princes, which was soon printed under the title *Auslegung des anderen Unterschieds Daniels*. This sermon’s point of departure is similarly that Müntzer complains about the “scribes” (the clerics, but perhaps the Reformation theologians too; cf. “our clergy,” MSB 257,12) who have rejected the “cornerstone” (according to Isa 28:16) Jesus Christ in the church (Ps 118:22; Luke 20:12; MSB 245,2; cf. 244,31). This “stone” is at the same time identified with the mountains that according to Ps 46:2 are carried into the middle in the sea and the stone of Dan 2:45. This playful-like dealing with the world of Old Testament images is typical of allegory. Attacks against the “scribes,” “hair-splitters” (MSB 248,30), and “scholars” (248,32), mixed with terms of derision—drawn from the Bible—such as “pigs” (Matt 7:6; 2 Pet 2:22) or “animals of the belly” (according to Phil 3:19; MSB 245,22–23) run throughout the whole sermon. The accusation that they would have turned “the crucified Christ

into nothing but an imaginary idol" (245,9–10) is again indicative of the opposition between Müntzer's theology of the cross and that of Reformation theology. The intensified situation brings Müntzer, however, this time to choose the apocalyptic text Dan 2 as the basis of the sermon and to speak first of false ("monk's dreams," MSB 249,12; cf. line 18) and true dreams God sent to his elect. According to Müntzer, the pious of the Old Testament experienced such visions mostly in times of great trial and affliction; he cites as examples Abraham (Gen 15; 17), Jacob on the flight from Esau (Gen 28; 32), and Joseph in fear of his brothers (Gen 37) and in prison in Egypt (Gen 39–41; MSB 253,20–254,2). The presupposition here, too, is "that an elect person who wants to know which vision or dream is of God, nature, or the devil must . . . set aside all the temporal consolation of the flesh" (MSB 252,13–14). His mystical theology plays a part in his speaking "of hearing the internal word in the abyss of the soul by the revelation of God" (MSB 251,15–16). In context, this leads to the claim that "God revealed it to us through his Spirit," based on the scriptural quotation "for the Spirit searches all things, indeed, even the depths of divinity [God]" (1 Cor 2:10; MSB 250,9). "But when one has perceived the clear word of God in the soul, then one must have visions" (MSB 254,13–14). They are recognized as alternative means of revelation. Examples are Acts 10:10–20; 16:9–10; and 18:9–10. But another tone now enters in: the call for "vengeance against the enemies of God" (MSB 246,10–11) requires powerful action. Müntzer sees in Dan 2—the text is for him "clear as the bright sun" (MSB 255,29)—the announcement "of the change of the world" (255,16). "He [God] wants to prepare for it in the last days" (255,17). Here an imminent apocalyptic expectation appears, which is based in the critical situation of the church. The outpouring of the Spirit over all flesh (in accord with Joel 3:1–5) is immediately at hand. An "invincible future reformation" is necessary for this (255,24–25). The five-kingdom schema of Dan 2 forms the scriptural background for current interpretation, according to which the fifth kingdom is the present day, in which false clergy and secular lords copulate like eels and snakes (MSB 256,12–14). In this context, Müntzer considers himself a "new Daniel" who interprets the revelation and like the priest of Deut 20:2 goes before the army in battle (MSB 257,19–21). The Old Testament model is Israel's conquest of the land: "They won the land not by the sword but by the power of God, but the sword was the means" (MSB 261,12–14). Müntzer sees the campaign against all of God's enemies in this moment entrusted to the princes as leaders. He himself must "reconcile the wrath of the princes and the enraged people" (MSB 257,21–22): Müntzer hopes

for an alliance of the people and the princes that will achieve victory. If the previously gone-astray rulers would recognize the deceits of the false clergy, they would be incensed about them and punish them. The order of the king from the parable of the pounds to slaughter all his enemies (Luke 19:27) is (with Matt 18:6) treated as a saying of Jesus, without noticing Jesus' inclusion within the narrative, and used as a scriptural proof for a similar procedure with the clergy (MSB 258,13–15). On the same level, Deut 13:6 is valued as a directly valid summons to execute the evildoers (MSB 259,13–15). According to Deut 2:27–30, they should first offer their enemies peace. If the enemies do not want it, drive them out (1 Cor 5:13). As types of the pious rulers in this sense, the Old Testament kings Jehu, Hezekiah, Josiah, as well as Cyrus and Elijah (1 Kgs 18), are named (MSB 257,14, 261,25–26). This typology of kings is a widespread model frequently found elsewhere. Müntzer explicitly rejects Luther's view that the sword is entrusted to the authorities in secular matters (257,29–31).

Many of the views characteristic of Müntzer are again found in the *Ausgedrückten Entblössung* written shortly thereafter, which attempts an interpretation of Luke 1. The chapter Luke 1 offers the basis for the tractate, but the tractate does not actually amount to a commentary, because the text merely supplies here and there a starting point for the continuously repeated statements, elsewhere far afield in their polemics. Its basic tenor is likewise anticlerical, directed against the evangelical preachers and directed also against Luther personally (he is derided as "brother soft-living and father pussyfoot," i.e., as not radical enough [MSB 282,8–9] or designated as "poisonous black common raven" [310,15]; see also in the *Hochverursachten Schutzrede* [327,18]). Müntzer attempts to expose the "false faith" (cf. the title, MSB 265 and 267,2) and sees himself as a tool for its destruction. In the self-description "Thomas Müntzer with the hammer" (267,15) there is, it is said, an allusion to Jer 23:29: He sees himself as a tool of God's Word against the "big shots" (267,10), one of his many labels for the clergy he criticizes. This is confirmed by the attached quotations of Jer 1:9–10, 18–19, according to which Müntzer sees himself in the role of a prophet. But he also looks forward to a new John (in this case the Evangelist, who is also considered the author of Revelation; MSB 296,32ff.; cf. 306,28–31, 307,7–10) or a "servant of God rich in grace ... in the spirit of Elijah" (MSB 300,16–18). Evidently the three figures Enoch, Elijah, and the Evangelist John are together figures of medieval legend in which John, in addition to Enoch (see Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2:11) is believed (according to John 21:21) to have been taken up into eternal life. In a letter (MSB 419,12–15),

Müntzer brings all three together as proclaimers of a time of hope. The clergy are accused of being "faithless men" who try "to preach Christian faith at the people." The Lutheran doctrine of justification seems to be the object of their preaching throughout: "Indeed, I will simply believe that God will make it right" (MSB 272,5–6). A similar attack also appears when Müntzer mocks: "The scribes are said to read beautiful books, and the peasant is supposed to listen to them, because faith comes through hearing" (MSB 275,36–276,1). The true faith, as Müntzer sees it, is delineated at greater length than before with formulations of a mysticism of suffering: "It is discovered by putting on (Christ) or by the passage in the abyss of the soul" (MSB 274,10–12). This requires a lengthy preparation phase: "If anyone is to be filled with the eternal divine goods of God, he [must] be made empty after a long discipline through his suffering and cross" (MSB 298,8–12) or also through "the impossible work of God in our suffering" (MSB 318,14–15); he must have his false faith and selfishness demolished "through great sorrow of heart and painful misery and through inevitable wounds" (318,30–31). In a letter Müntzer writes, "No one can come to a true Christian orientation without first suffering, for the heart must be ripped from its attachment (to) this world through misery and pains, until one is completely hostile to this life" (MSB 419,9–12). Only then can one first receive God's revelation in one's heart. At other places (MSB 251,6–11) he describes the whole event of personal revelation: "They [the scholars] block the passage of the Word that which springs from the depth of the soul; as Moses says, Deut 30[:14]: 'The word is not far from you. Look, it is in your heart. Now you perhaps ask, How, then, does it come into the heart? Answer: it comes down from God above in a great consternation [terror]'" (251,6–11). Müntzer sees this movement of faith reflected in the angel's announcement to Mary of the coming of the Spirit and the overshadowing by the power of the Highest (Luke 1:35; MSB 309,18–20), by "the overshadowing of the holy old covenant" (318,16–17), or by "the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit" (318,31–32). Also, the fact that Zechariah had a vision in the temple (Luke 1:11–20) is, for Müntzer, a type of the mystical experience of faith. This section of the chapter, the sum of which Müntzer defines as "the strengthening of the Spirit in faith" (318,24–25), is therefore called forth not only by the similarity of content but by word associations with the catchwords of mystical theology as well.

The contrast to Luther's scriptural-bound theology emerges clearly. Müntzer states: "Now even if someone neither heard nor saw the Bible his entire life, he may very well have for himself an authentic Christian

faith through the correct teaching of the Spirit, like all those have who wrote Holy Scripture without all books" (MSB 277,25–33). Though this latter claim is mistaken, as we could see from the Old Testament itself (see *History* 1:9–18), the Reformation age was still unaware of a historical perspective. Müntzer is thinking here of someone "who is raised from youth among unbelievers, who experiences the just work and teaching of God without any books at all" (MSB 278,32–36). He unambiguously advocates a spiritualist viewpoint. Related to it is the view that Müntzer entrusted to a marginal note in his own hand in the edition of Tertullian he owned (the first edition of 1521, p. 47), according to which Christian truth is inherent in the order of nature: "Indeed, Christian truth endures, even without the Scripture." Scripture is granted a function only in the second passage: "Scripture is to be used in order to instruct about such splendid work and such people and witness with friendly judgment to everyone, whether Jew or Turk [Muslim]" (MSB 278,37–279,5). Further, in direct connection with the statement from the *Ausgedrückten Entblössung* quoted above, if a Christian "were to say he had learned the Christian faith from God himself, he would not be believed ... unless the account he gave was in accord with Scripture" (MSB 277,12–18). Müntzer emphasizes this function of control and proof of the Bible again and again. Thus in a letter to Count Ernst of Mansfeld: "I intend to show that my new services and sermons and the least of the things I proclaim, and sing as well, are in accord with the Holy Bible" (MSB 394,21–23). From his opponents also he demands: "Prove this to me by clear Scripture and the fruit of faith; then I will grant you the point" (MSB 526,26–27). Like Luther, Müntzer is convinced of the clarity of Scripture.

Shortly after the "Sermon to the Princes," Müntzer seems to have given up his hope for the princes. He now interprets Paul's statements about the authorities in Rom 13:1–7 in such a way that the princes are not established for the sake of good works but only out of fear of evil works. "They are therefore nothing other than executioners and lackeys; this is their entire handwork" (MSB 285,13–15). Indeed, he now takes up Hos 13:11: "God has given the world the lords and princes in his wrath, and he will take it away from them again in his embitterment" (MSB 284,38–285,3). In a letter of July 1524 he comes to a judgment diametrically opposed to his earlier opinion: "A prince and territorial ruler is placed to rule over temporal goods, and his power also extends no further. This is the opinion of the saints Peter and Paul, where they write of the power of men" (MSB 412,23–24). A gradual intensification of the situation is unmistakable.

There are not many new elements in the *Hochverursachten Schutzrede*, written after Müntzer's flight from Allstedt against Luther's warning against Müntzer ("Ein Brief an die Fürsten zu Sachsen von dem aufrührerischen Geist" = "A Letter to the Princes in Saxony about the Rebellious Spirit," WA 15:199ff.). But here Müntzer clarifies one viewpoint hinted at in other writings without being explained at length: against Luther, he considers the fulfillment of the law (or the commandments) an indispensable step along the way to faith (MSB 327,1–17). He came to this realization from the five books of Moses, Ps 19 (18):[9–10], Isa 11:[5?], and John 16[:8]. He did not want to allow Luther his perverse way "of treating the new covenant of God without dealing with the divine commandments and the source [coming] of faith, which is first experienced only after chastisement by the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit first punishes the unbeliever in accord with the knowledge of the law" (MSB 327,4–8). But the law, too, together with the gospel, belongs to the life of faith itself: "I declare Christ with all his members as the fulfiller of the law" (327,11–12)—by appeal to Ps 19 (18), Rom 2 (?) and 7 (7ff.). God's will must be done, according to Ps 1 and Rom 12:2, otherwise no one could distinguish belief from unbelief" (327,14–15). "Therefore he [Christ] has not done away with the law" (MSB 331,18). Whoever judges otherwise, "he scorns the law of the Father ... and destroys the Father along with the severity of His law by the patience of the Son" (331,8–10). Therefore John 7 (verse 24: "judged rightly") precedes John 8 (the pardon of the sinful woman). The law and the gospel belong together. There must be for the righteous "the proper time and place ... to learn God's will" (MSB 330,18–19). Luther would meet him with hostility after he "preached the severity of the law" (MSB 328,10). At another place (in a letter interpreting Ps 19 [18]), Müntzer appeals explicitly to Paul against all who deny the Old Testament. "God's law is clear, illumines the eyes of the elect, makes the godless blind, is a blameless doctrine, when the Spirit of the proper pure fear of God is explain by the fact that ... Paul commanded such works of the law; they are also necessary" (MSB 403,28–32). Obviously, Müntzer never had doubts, as Luther did, that God's commandments could be fulfilled. He remains a pre-Reformation theologian.

Müntzer has become known in our time particularly for his role in the Peasants' War and his statements with an apocalyptic ring in this situation of crisis. It is disputed whether his prophetic awareness of mission and his view of an immediate revelation of God in the hearts of the elect is to be designated as "apocalyptic." He is distinguished from the mystical tradition in that for him it is not a matter of an isolated experience of the Spirit by

the individual; he sees instead the coming of a new age in which Christianity as a whole will be changed in a way through and beyond the elect (a renewed core community). Yet it is striking that the Apocalypse of John and some extrabiblical apocalyptic writings are quoted relatively seldom and that no special stress is put on them. Müntzer, as we saw, nevertheless treats the Bible as a unity. It is worth noting that expressly apocalyptic statements do not play any essential role in his printed writings and make their appearance relatively late. His contemporary opponents, of course, considered his theology apocalyptic and reminiscent of the “age of the spirit” in Joachim of Fiore (see *History* 2:170–85). Müntzer decisively denied this (MS 398,13–18), and one should believe him. An early witness for his apocalyptic ideas is a letter from the year 1521 in which he regards the age of the antichrist as already come and in so doing refers to Matt 24:15 and the kingdom of the four animals according to Dan 7:23 (MSB 373,4–10). In the Prague Manifesto is found a brief concluding passage (MSB 504,28–505,4) in which Müntzer announces that he will destroy God’s enemies “in the spirit of Elijah.” To be thought of here, however, is the sermon: “that the people in the church should ask me on the pulpit.” Whoever scorns this admonition will already be personally given over to the hands of the Muslim, then the antichrist. On the other hand, Christ will give the world to his elect. Müntzer quotes Rev 16:4 (MSB 381,4–6) in a letter to Melancthon of 1522, yet this remains isolated. In the middle of 1523, while still a pastor in Allstedt, Müntzer wrote a letter to the brother in Stolberg with the request (so already in the title) “to avoid unnecessary turmoil” (MSB 21–24). At the beginning of his letter he does, it is true, express the expectation of a coming final judgment, but he does not yet consider it imminent. “The proper rule of Christ will have to occur after all the display of honors of the world; then the Lord comes and rules and casts the tyrants down” (MSB 21). When the situation then critically intensified and he had already come into contact with the rebellious peasants in the Hegau and Klettgau (possibly with supportive Swiss Baptists, too), his tone changed. Already in a letter in the middle of 1524 he appealed to Josh 11 (v. 20, the extermination of the Canaanites by Israel: God will rip the tyrants out by the roots; MSB 409,1–3). Around the same time he can write of unbelievers: “For I tell you, truly, the time has come that a shedding of blood will be sent over the unrepentant world because of its unbelief” (MSB 414,7–9). The threat against the rulers is still limited, however. To the demand to grant them the respect they are due, Müntzer answers: “this would probably be fair, when rulers did not act against Christian faith, but as they act now against not only the faith but natural law as well, they

have to be strangled like dogs" (MSB 417,10–13). Not social revolution but carrying out of faith is his goal! But neither does he any longer shrink from the use of force. His prophetic self-consciousness now increases: by God's summons he is to spring into the breach for Christianity (according to Ezek 13:5; MSB 430,9). He now sees the devil driving the scholars (the Lutheran clergy), like the monks and priests before, to their downfall (430,12–13). Anticlericalism is a driving motive here as well. He even threatens Friedrich the Wise with Josh 11 (MSB 431,36).

At the highpoint of the debate, Müntzer then lets himself get carried away, urging the Allstedter (at the end of April 1525) into battle with shouts: "Now attack, attack, attack; it is time to hunt the villains down like dogs.... Do not let yourselves show any mercy, as God ordered through Moses in Deut 7 [7:1–5]... Attack, attack while the fire is hot. Don't let your sword grow cold, don't let it drop!" (MSB 454,20–21, 26–27, 455,14–15). Müntzer now appeals to Matt 24, Ezek 34, Dan 7, Ezra 10, and Rev 8 as prooftexts. Against evidently uttered objections that their opponents would have to be forgiven if they made concessions, he expressly says, "Don't let yourself show mercy, even if Esau also [see Gen 33:4] spoke good words" (MSB 454,33–34; see also 458,6–7: "Don't let good words bring you any lousy mercy"). According to Deut 7:1–5, the extermination of the godless is a divine command (454,26–27). Added to Müntzer's usual signature, "Thomas Müntzer, a servant of God," is now found "against the godless" (MSB 456,6). The apocalyptic tone increased still at the beginning of May (letter to the people of Eisenach; MSB 463–64). Müntzer now appeals to Dan 7:27, "that force should be given to the common people," which for him (by appeal to Rev 11:15) is equivalent to the lordship of Christ over the world (MSB 463,12–13). The signature now reads "Thomas Müntzer with Gideon's sword" (MS 464,17; likewise 470,14; cf. Ruth 8:21). Now the openly stated goal is to overthrow the tyrants, for which Hos 13 (vv. 10–11) and 8 (v. 4?), but also the phrase from the Magnificat of Mary, "you cast down the powerful from their throne and lift up the lowly" (Luke 1:52), serve as scriptural proof (MSB 469,12–16; from the letter to Count Albrecht of Mansfeld). Müntzer finds the anticipated final battle foretold in Ezek 37 and 39 (MSB 469,17–469,4). Interesting is the variant by which God, corresponding to Dan 7 (see above), has given authority to the *community* (MSB 460,8). This is obviously equated with the "common people" (a variant of the "universal priesthood of believers" in Luther). During this phase Müntzer also distinguishes between the political goals of the peasants and his expectations of faith. As various of his statements show, he indeed sees those of greatest concern and in need

of his intervention to be chiefly the masses of the people oppressed by the spiritual tyranny of the Catholic “priests” and Lutheran “scribes” and the princes supporting them, but he also maintains friendly relations with individual nobles supporting him, such as Count Günther von Schwarzburg (who, however, had renounced his title of nobility after his overthrow by the peasants). In the letter of the same time to the people of Erfurt (MSB 471–72), Ezek 34 and John 18 and 19 are also named as biblical passages, in addition to Ezek 39(:4, 18–19) and Dan 7(:27). But here also Müntzer names as the goal the hoped-for overthrow of tyrants: “Nearly all the judgments (statements) in the Scripture attest that creatures must be free if the pure Word of God is to flourish” (MSB 471,23–24). The sought-for overthrow of power relationships is not an end in itself but has a religious intention. In his interpretation of Old and New Testament statements as prophetic of a turning-point that is expected to be immediately imminent, Müntzer is an apocalypticist. But he does not come to this until late and despite everything remains reserved in its application. In a farewell letter to the people of Mühlhausen before his execution (MSB 473–74), he acknowledges his error in participating in the bloodshed and calls upon them to entreat the princes for grace.

The statements of Müntzer quoted clearly show that he is misjudged when he is considered a social revolutionary. The real target of his opposition is the clergy of both confessions, who in his view oppose the true faith. He battles against them with the word and Scripture; not until the end does he use the same instruments to assist the uprising of the peasants, through whom he hopes to approach his goals. He disputes with the princes only inasmuch as they put themselves in the way of his activity. Previously he seeks to draw them to his side, as his “Sermon to the Princes” and his letters show. The Bible, from which he draws countless scriptural quotations as proof, is not a source of faith for him but a “witness” for his views. His view that the word of God speaks directly in the heart of the believer—along with the possibility of receiving visions—was not apocalyptic but of mystical origin.

2.6. TAKING THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS WITH RADICAL SERIOUSNESS: THE ZURICH BAPTISTS

At the far edge of the wide Reformation movement there were more radical currents that are grouped together—in a not altogether fitting but established term—as “the left wing” of the Reformation. To it belong Baptists (Anabaptists), spiritualists, mystics, rationalists, some of them

mavericks, others—the Baptists in particular—representatives of communities that would have expanded in range if possible like the Reformation great churches with which they competed, if it were not for the immediate onslaught of persecutions that mercilessly exterminated their adherents, forced them into the underground, necessitated a restless flight from place to place, and reduced their groups to small, separate churches that were able to survive to the present only in areas of religious tolerance—as, for example, in the Netherlands and finally above all the United States. Their convictions of faith are in each case closely connected to their differing understanding(s) of the Bible.

Recent research locates various areas of lineage for the Baptists. One group had its origin in Zurich, deriving from Zwingli. Its most important representatives are Conrad Grebel (1498–1526) and Michael Sattler (1490–1527). The apocalyptic spiritualists Thomas Müntzer (see above) and Hans Hut (ca. 1490–1527) stemmed from central Germany. In a later phrase, their earlier students came to an altered position in which a mystical form of piety predominated. A third center of the Baptists was Strassburg. There Melchior Hoffman (ca. 1500–1543) converted to the Baptists and undertook missions on behalf of his new conviction in Friesland, from which the Baptists expanded to Münster and into the Netherlands. Earlier attempts to reconstruct an inner connection between the various groups and to depict, say, the Zurich Brethren as the originators of the entire movement have failed. Although there were personal or epistolary contacts among them on occasion, the Baptist start-ups took their rise at various places independently of one another. There is also no unitary “Baptist model” and no common position toward the Bible. Moreover, sometimes individuals worked who were not oriented toward community formation.

The oldest of the Baptist groups known to us are the Zurich brethren. The moment and occasion when Zwingli’s radical followers turned away from him are long contested. It was evidently a process that built up gradually out of increasing alienation until a public break came. Already in the first spectacular action, the breaking of the fast in the spring of 1522, some of the later Baptists were participants. Zwingli, it seems, was surprised by the proceedings; although he was present, he did not take part in eating the sausage himself. Zwingli did not, it is true, completely disapprove of the way of provocation in order to compel changes of traditional church customs, but he was basically very restrained and quickly agreed in negotiations with the Large Council to a temporary cessation of the break of the fast.

In addition, the widely dominant anticlericalism played a great role, as it was recognized from the widespread popular broadsheets against priests and monks. Anyone describing the clerics as a voracious mob out only to make a good life for themselves at the expense of the poor could count on general approval. Here the criticism of the church by the humanists continued at a lower level. The clergy were also accused of neglecting their true tasks, which are to be sought above all in preaching in accord with the Bible. From 1522 on there also arose sensational interruptions of preaching, first by Leo Jud, who had disrupted an Augustinian father's conventional preaching about the veneration of the saints by interjections that he should preach on the Bible, then by Grebel and others to be counted to the later Baptists to increasing radicalism in preaching by members of the religious orders who discussed monasticism and the cloistered life. When they were summoned and rebuked by the Smaller Council, they showed themselves to be uninstructed, and in leaving the council chamber they slammed the door behind themselves with a thud. The result that soon thereafter the council instructed members of the religious orders to preach in accord with Scripture and that Zurich's country clergy also committed themselves to preaching in this way seemed to bear out the radical critics. Even Zwingli himself once interrupted the sermon of a Franciscan; it was a not uncommon way of advancing the Reformation. Zwingli's other sermons with his mounting criticism of church relationships aroused an increasing pressure among his radical adherents to demand an immediate implementation of reforms that he also favored in principle, though the Reformer himself was not ready to rush into anything in view of the current political situation—which included a persistent latent threat to Zurich and its Reformation from other Swiss cantons—and was concerned as well not to endanger the success of the measures by excessive demands on church members accustomed to the old.

One important topic in this dispute was the battle against the tithe. It spread from the villages in the environs of Zurich, whose churches sought independence from the Grossmünster chapter and other owners of benefices, such as the Wettingen Abbey. Simon Stumpf, pastor in Hoengg, called for refusing to pay the tithe in his sermons as early as in 1522. Wilhelm Reublin, appointed by the Witikon church as its pastor in place of the official incumbent at the end of the year, was solidly behind the appeal of six country churches in the summer of 1523 to the council to stop the payment of the tithe to the Grossmünster as not in accord with Scripture. This was not granted. Zwingli made clear in his sermon "Von

göttlichen und menschlichen Gerechtigkeiten" (On Divine and Human Righteousness) that, although the tithe was indeed not in accord with divine righteousness, secular righteousness had to apply in the world, and hence it was a Christian's civic duty to continue to pay the tithe so long as the council required it. Then in the fall the council and Grossmünster chapter together carried out a thoroughgoing reform of the chapter. It included new regulations of the tithe, stipulating that it should be used for the support of the church's pastors and its surplus for hospitals and care of the poor. By this action, the dissolution of all the orders and chapters that followed in 1524/1525 had already been prepared for. From 1526 on, all those with benefices had to deposit their revenues in a central fund from which all the ministers were paid.

It is important to realize that in this period there was still no intention of a separation into a free church. The concern of the radicals was, instead, a thoroughgoing reform of the existing church. Grebel, Mantz, and Stumpf came to Zwingli at this time with the demand that he break with the traditional church institutions immediately and establish a new church. By winning over a majority of the citizens, it would soon be possible to elect a new, God-fearing council, too. Stumpf had even expressed to Zwingli his opinion that the undertaking would succeed only by slaying the existing clergy. Against this, Zwingli held firm in his view, self-evident to him, that in a Christian commonwealth such as Zurich secular authority alone had the right to decide about the external order of the church and that the current council cared for the matter in an adequate way.

In the meantime, a Bible school was formed among the Zurich artisans. They met in private homes, where the bookdealer Andreas Castelberger interpreted the Epistle to the Romans from Luther's German New Testament. He connected this with fierce criticism of clerical arrogance, benefices, but also war and mercenary soldiering, and sharply distinguished human and divine statutes.

Another topic during the year 1523 was the question of images. Leo Jud claimed in a sermon that it could be proved by Scripture "that idols should be thrown out of the churches." Zwingli had also preached in a similar vein. But both had in mind a gradual preparation of the church for changes, not the direct action that soon followed. Panels were removed from altars in several Zurich churches, with members of the Bible school taking part. The council for its part issued only mild penalties. Ludwig Hätzer (ca. 1500–1529), then in Zurich, produced a work at Froschauer's, "A Judgment of God" (against images). In Hoengg, Simon Stumpf preached that the congregation should remove all images from the church.

The church was then broken into at night and a heap of rubble left behind. Nicholas Hottinger, a member of Castelberger's circle, removed a crucifix in Stadelhofen belonging to the miller there. Thereupon the council arranged for the disputation of October 1523 on images and the sacrifice of the Mass at which differences of Zwingli and his adherents, on the one hand, and the radicals in Zurich and outside Zurich, on the other side, were aired in public. Although both parties agreed that the veneration of images and the sacrifice of the Mass were not in accord with Scripture, Zwingli insisted on the council's competency for appropriate reforms—which then came about only slowly—and the efficacy of appropriate preaching as preparation, while his opponents demanded their immediate removal. The council later took punitive measures against Stumpf (who was deposed and left the land) and Hottinger. A merely interim solution came about on the question of the Mass.

The year 1524 brought an open attack of the radicals against infant baptism. Reublin had discouraged members of his congregation in Witikon from bringing their children to baptism. Zollikon (under Johannes Brötli) joined in this. A small group opposed to infant baptism formed in Zurich, among them Grebel, Mantz, and Castelberger. Toward the end of the year they and the Zurich pastors discussed the issue, and in January 1525 an official disputation was held in which infant baptism was declared in accord with Scripture and a cessation of baptism was forbidden. Grebel and Mantz received a restraining order against speaking. Non-Zurichers among the advocates of adult baptism were expelled from the land. The first adult baptisms occurred shortly thereafter. At a meeting on the evening of 21 January, Grebel baptized Blaurock, who then baptized the others who were present. Mantz baptized Hans Bruggbach and Jacob Hottinger in a private gathering in Zollikon on 25 January. Other baptisms followed. On the same occasion, the Lord's Supper was celebrated in both kinds, with the passing of the bread and wine among the participants, according to the biblical model.

With this, the definitive break with the established church was complete. It must still be stressed, however, that the original intent of the Baptists was not this separation and formation of a free church. They had sought at first to convert the entire church to their committed position and in this way return to the original design of the church as they saw it in the time of Christian origins. Wherever—as for a time in some villages surrounding Zurich, in St. Gall, and Balthasar Hubmeier in the city of Waldshut—they had the majority and the authorities on their side, there were even mass baptisms. It was persecution that forced them to separate

and create a pure church, as they understood it, within a small circle. One sign of this was that discussion of the introduction of excommunication took place from 1525 on; thereafter, a rigorous church discipline became a distinctive characteristic of the Swiss Brethren, producing a legal moralism in the “purified” churches. Even the question of violence now came to be viewed differently. While at first they allowed resistance by force of arms in the country against, say, the imprisonment of accused leaders and in many areas there was cooperation with the rebellious peasants at the time of the Peasants’ War (1525), after the revolt’s defeat they turned to pacifism and the principle of absolute nonviolence. In the city of Zurich, where the Baptist-minded always remained a minority, they early on stressed their nonviolent stance.

How did the Swiss Brethren deal with the Bible? An early witness is the letter Grebel and his circle wrote to Thomas Müntzer in September 1524 (Müntzer, correspondence 69, MSB 437–45). From it emerges that they did not know Müntzer personally (437,18), but obviously (by the mediation of Hans Huiuff from Halle an der Saale, whom Müntzer had recently visited) had already received and read several of his writings (438,37, 439,9–10), which had made on them a deep impression directed against infant baptism. But Müntzer himself never practiced adult baptism; the theme played only a subordinate role in his work.

The biblicism of the Baptists clearly emerges from this letter to Müntzer. Grebel and his associates accused the evangelical preachers, whose hearers they had been at the start, of having intermingled the divine word with human words (438,33–34) and—as also the ancestors before—lapsing from divine usages and church love into unchristian ceremonies. “But after we took Scripture into our hands and had investigated articles (of faith) of all sorts, we became better informed and have found out the great, harmful errors of the shepherds and our (own), too, that we do not earnestly pray to God daily that we might be led out from the destruction of all divine life and human horrors into true faith and uses pleasing to God” (428,26–31). They believe they have found a like-minded compatriot in Müntzer and at the same time admonish him “to preach only the divine word without flinching, to uphold divine usages alone ... to value only what is good and right, which can be proved by plain, clear Scripture” (439,9–12). In so doing they adopted one part of Zwingli’s approach, without, of course, sharing his Reformation presuppositions. Their radical belief in the Bible becomes clear in the subsequent paragraph of the letter. On the basis of Müntzer’s liturgical writings, with which they are likewise familiar, they rebuke him for translating the formulary of the

Mass into German and introducing new “German hymns.” “It cannot be good, for we find no teaching of singing, no example, in the New Testament” (439,15–16). The sung Mass, the Latin hymn, which grew without apostolic example, does not become better by German translation. To this comes the (blatantly absurd) exegesis claiming that Paul himself forbade singing in Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16. Here it is stated as a principle that “what we are not taught by clear (biblical) precepts and examples is forbidden no less than as if by written orders: Do not do it, do not sing!”

The Lord’s Supper is discussed in the following section. Only the words from Matt 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and 1 Cor 11 (alternatively), neither more nor less, should be said on this occasion. Ordinary bread and ordinary drinking implements should be used. Clothing of office and the Mass are forbidden. There should be no consecration, and no one should eat alone. Here again an imitation of the biblical model as close as possible is sought. There is not lacking here either a reference to the “rule of Christ,” Matt 18:15–18, a passage extremely beloved among the Baptists, on which they base their church discipline. With admission to the Lord’s Supper, exclusion should also be a possibility. Nevertheless, whoever takes part without brotherly love eats to his own condemnation (in accord with 1 Cor 11:29). Müntzer, too, the Brethren admonish, should build up his community with the rule of Christ (442,15–17).

The writers of this letter are convinced at the time (still prior to the establishment of a separate community) that “there is more of certainty and counsel in Scripture of how one should teach, rule, and make all estates, all people, pious” (442,20–21). A Christian society based on the New Testament (this is meant) seems to be possible. But as for anyone who does not want to be instructed, after preaching Christ and his word, his rule, has been preached to him, after he is also admonished (in keeping with Matt 18) in the presence of three witnesses and thereafter the community, “he should not be killed but considered a pagan and publican and be left” (442,25–26). Thus conceived, excommunication differs from the otherwise usual process against heretics, but the power was indeed not in their hands! Excommunication was rather the means for producing a pure church of the saints who are without sin.

A similar dealing with the Bible appears in the document that can be considered the foundational document of the now as free-church organized Swiss Baptists (and beyond), the Schleithem Confession of 1527. Its authors, who had met in an assembly in Schleithem, northwest of Schaffhausen, are largely unknown; it cannot even be proved that Michael Sattler led them. This anonymity was evidently intended for reasons of security.

The intent of the Schleithem Articles was to establish the basics of faith in a community that was embattled, internally confused, persecuted by outsiders, and dispersed and to separate it off from false brethren (heretical opinions). Therefore, the brothers are addressed in their dispersal generally by several terms: lovers of God, children of light, brothers and sisters.

It is striking that the Schleithem Confession speaks only of action. This goes together not only with the fact that the Baptists, who were mostly of simple descent, were little interested in dogmatic questions or in theological principles such as the propositions in confessions of faith but also had no dissent with the great churches. Although the leaders of the first generation (e.g., Sattler) were educated theologians, the whole interest of those gathered at Schleithem lies on correct action.

There has been a lively discussion of the question regarding the formative influences on the Swiss Baptists' position. The paradoxical answer must be that their most sharply contested positions were those of members of religious orders! Not, of course, by contemporary monks whose worldly way of life they rightly criticized, but rather the monastic tradition, which had formed an ascetic piety oriented toward a strict withdrawal from the world and the fulfillment of Christ's commandments. The ascetic legacy of the Middle Ages is obviously significant in this. That the Bible also played an important role was not foreign to medieval monasticism, as we saw. It was present in the concern of Francis and his disciples with the exclusive imitation of Christ for which the commands of the Sermon on the Mount are central. Both return among the Baptists as well. Yet their attitude toward the New Testament is of a legalist stamp, as their practice of excommunication shows.

Producing a pure community separated from the world became the most important goal in Schleithem. Already in the introductory paragraphs those in the Schleithem gathering characterized themselves as "God's obedient children and sons and daughters who have been separated and are to be separated from the world in all their activities" (Jenny 9,27–29). Meant here by the "false brothers" from whom they separate are evidently Zwingli and his followers, who are now reproached for giving themselves over to "the lust and self-indulgence of the flesh" (10,40–41), in which the Pauline terminology—"flesh" in antithesis to "Spirit"—is adopted.

On the whole, those at the assembly agreed on seven articles. The first article has to do with baptism. It should be given to all "who have learned repentance and amendment of life and truly believe their sins are taken away by Christ, and all those who wish to walk in the resurrection of Jesus

Christ and wish to be buried with him in death so that they may be resurrected with him" (10,60–65). Without explicit reference, the phrasing is an adoption of Rom 6:3–4. For adult baptism, the Baptists appeal also to Matt 28(19); 16(15), Acts 2(38, 41); 8(36–38); 16(15); and 19(5). The second article deals with excommunication. Here appeal to Matt 18:15–17 reappears, as does the procedure: two private admonitions of those caught in sin and the third time excommunication before the gathered community is in keeping with the biblical formulation. Excommunication is to be declared before the celebration of the Lord's Supper so that (according to the third article) only a purified community as the body of Christ participates. The New Testament tension between the community as the "body of Christ," which is sanctified by the community with the resurrected one, and the morally embattled empirical church is resolved in that the community of the Lord's Supper is equated with the ethically pure community of the saints. This means, with the application of 1 Cor 10:21, the exclusion of all those who have "fellowship with the dead works of darkness," because "we cannot at the same time partake of the table of the Lord and the table of the devil" (11,96–97, 94–95). Separation is then, in article 4, stressed as a basic obligation. The rationale is dualistic. There is only light and darkness, good and evil, faith and unfaith, the "world and those who are of the world, the temple of God and the idols, Christ and Belial, and none can have part with the other" (12,117–18). For the separation also, appeal is made to a "command of the Lord" (2 Cor 6:17–18), as well as (by way of exception) the Old Testament summons to leave Babylon and Egypt (Isa 48:20 and elsewhere; but see also Rev 18:4).

Article 5 speaks of the shepherds. It is striking that this separate office (and the term itself) reappears among the Baptists. For the suitable personality the Schleithem declaration appeals to the "order of Paul" (1 Tim 3:7; 13,146). The first duty (office) of the shepherd is the reading of Scripture. The community does not want to hear a sermon *about* Scripture but the text itself. The Bible class on the Epistle to the Romans at Castelberger's, the Zurich bookdealer, was the starting point for this development. In addition, the shepherd should "admonish, teach, warn, discipline, and excommunicate," that is, exercise pastoral care and church discipline. Finally, he leads worship, particularly by leading in prayer (in which the community evidently joins), and he begins the breaking of the bread in the Lord's Supper (which is held as a memorial meal in accord with the Zwinglian sort). It is also stipulated that the shepherd should be provided for by the community, because (in accord with 1 Cor 9:14) "those who serve the gospel should gain their livelihood from it as well" (13,156–57).

Article 6 is concerned with the Christian's relation to the state. This is first defined, as with the Reformers, as a God-willed arrangement for punishing the evil and defending the good. But the Baptists then distinguish between the state power of punishment (the "sword"), which is an "arrangement of God outside the perfection of Christ" (14,169), and the "perfection of Christ," in which excommunication alone, without any corporal punishment, is used. Church and state are not distinguished as in Luther's two-kingdoms doctrine but completely separated from one another. As for the possibility of a churchly penal power, the account appeals to various New Testament passages, first to Matt 11:29, where Christ says we should learn from him, for he is gentle and humble of heart. Reference is further made to the adulteress of John 8, whom Jesus let go unpunished, saying "go and sin no more!" (8:11). It is striking that the commandment in the Decalogue, "you shall not kill" (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17), which is usually adduced as the basis for nonviolence, does not surface here. The question whether a Christian is permitted to hold a state office ("to be an authority" 15,197), that is, to exercise the sword, is denied by the imitation of Christ (Matt 16:24; also 1 Pet 2:21), first because Christ refused to be a judge (see Luke 12:13), second because he did not want to have himself made a king (see John 6:15). Finally, the passage about the dispute over rank among the disciples (Matt 20:25–26) is introduced: "The rulers rule ... but not so with you." (According to modern viewpoints, none of these scriptural proofs pertain to the subject matter, because the intentions of the text in the respective contexts lie at another point.) On the other hand, here also the dualistic outlook steps into the foreground: "The regiment of authority is according to the flesh, that of the Christian according to the Spirit. Their houses and dwellings remain in this world, those of Christians are in heaven. The weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against flesh alone, but the weapons of the Christian are spiritual, against the fortress of the devil" (15,213–19). The Baptists even refuse the payment of taxes to the state (which is supposed to defend them nonetheless).

In the seventh article those assembled in Schleithem also speak out against oath-taking. In so doing Baptists of every sort appeal to the words of Jesus, who in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:34–37) forbids all oaths. For the Baptists, this statement becomes absolute law. What is distinctive is the rationale, which attaches to Matt 5:36, where Jesus says that no one can make a single hair white or black: one is not permitted to swear because one cannot guarantee what one promises in the oath. By this, Jesus forbids only swearing by one's own head; the Baptists relate

this to promises connected with an oath. The oath as a strengthening of a witness before state proceedings is another matter, which the Baptists do not discuss. Here difficulties arise when it has to do with findings of justice and an oath could prevent the condemnation of an innocent person. Whereas Jesus urges unconditional truthfulness in Matt 5 (verse 37), the Baptists make a law out of refusing oath-taking. In so doing, they also shirk Christian social responsibility.

2.7. FINDING THE MEANING IN THE INNER WORD, NOT “THE LETTER”: SEBASTIAN FRANCK

Sebastian Franck was born in 1499, probably the son of a weaver, in the imperial free city of Wörth on the Danube (today Donauwörth). He was therefore a child of quite poor people. Apart from an incidental notice indicating that his father must have still been alive in 1534 and an uncle was an innkeeper, we hear nothing further of the family, as Sebastian Franck did not consider events of his youth worth mentioning at all. He evidently attended a Latin school, which was a prerequisite for university study, but we know no other details. From 1515 on he studied with the faculty of arts in Ingolstadt, which at the time was still ruled in philosophy by the scholastics of both schools (the old and new ways). He completed the basic study at the end of 1517 with the baccalaureate degree but without gaining his master's degree. He then studied theology at the Dominican college in Heidelberg but did not enroll in the theological faculty. This college, like the university as a whole, was still very old-fashioned and untouched by humanism, already long in full bloom elsewhere. All told, the yields of the study would have been ordinary at best.

Most probably—though it, too, is not directly documented—Franck witnessed Luther's brilliant Heidelberg Disputation on the theme of “paradox” (paradoxical statements of faith), which impressed him by its theological profundity and quick-wittedness. From then on he was a convinced adherent of Luther, to whom he long remained true. When he later separated from him, he took up the theme of paradox once again.

When Franck completed his theological studies is unknown, as is where he spent the next five years. Evidently he worked as a simple country clergyman, probably in the diocese of Augsburg. There he seems to have read a great deal, among the theologians Luther's writings in particular. When the Reformation was introduced in Nuremberg and the Margravate of Ansbach-Bayreuth in 1524, he registered in the imperial city and applied for a position as an evangelical pastor. He was sent to

the village of Büchenach near Roth in the Amt Schwabach in Ansbach, where there was no pastoral post for him. The peasants paid him weekly wages. Despite his precarious financial situation, he remained there until at least 1527. When the Peasants' War broke out, he distanced himself from the rebellion. He even got this certified officially (at his request?) in 1527. Soon thereafter he became the second pastor in Gustenfelden near Schwabach. In 1528 he married Ottilie Behaim, who was evidently close to Baptist circles. His activity was still certified as faultless by a visitation in 1528. How a complete upheaval in his attitude came about from 1528 to 1529 remains unclear. The job Andreas Althamer (d. 1538) gave him of translating his work *Diallage*, a work defending Scripture as free of contradiction against Hans Denck (d. 1527), may possibly have played a role. Now the view of the early Luther of the Spirit-inspired clarity of the Scripture and that of the spiritualist Denck, that the contradictions in Scripture could be only resolved by the Spirit, were hardly all that far apart. So for Franck, when he soon thereafter went over to the spiritualists, the step was not a long stretch. Franck surely knew Denck personally, because Denck lived in Nuremberg from 1523 to 1525 as rector of the Latin school at St. Sebaldus. In addition, already in the preface Franck wrote for his translation (*Sämtliche Werke* 1:5–20) is found a clear moralism obviously directed against Lutheranism. Franck repeatedly stresses there that justification by Christ is not sufficient unless corresponding works of the Christian follow (in accord with Jas 2 and elsewhere). For according to Matt 5:18–19, not a “tittle” of the law will be removed (*Sämtliche Werke* 1:8,21–25). What is peculiar is the distinction between “man” and Christ.” Sin remains attached to man lifelong (but is “overlooked” by God and not punished) and is not removed before death, but the same man, as a Christian, is justified and does good works. If not, he is punished. Luther's thesis “justified and at the same time sinner” still seems to shine through here, but it is transformed in character.

The first of Franck's own works, *Vom Laster der Trunkenheit* (*On the Vice of Drunkenness*), appeared in Nuremberg in 1528. Already here is found the radical criticism of the established church with which Franck rebuked its lack of ethical perfection. It is reminiscent of Baptist rigorism. The initial stimulus for his separation was presumably like that of other radicals the impression that the Reformation had effected nothing ethically. Possibly Franck had contact on occasion with Baptist circles in Nuremberg, from which he later withdrew. A pseudonymous work of 1528 also (*Nicodemus Martyr*), *Von dem wahrhaftigen Kreuz Christi...*, with its pastoral admonition that everyone should bear his cross patiently,

is recently ascribed to Franck. He still produced translations of some humanist works as well. However, he gave up his pastorate in 1528 and for the next two years lived as a man of letters in Nuremberg. In 1530, still in Nuremberg, he published the *Chronica Abconterfayung und entwerffung der Turkei* (*Chronicle of Turkey*), the revision and translation of a Latin work appearing in 1480. Soon thereafter he went to Strassburg, a city of relative tolerance. There his *Chronica: Zeitbuch und Geschichtsbibel* (*Chronicle: Book of Time and Bible of History*) appeared in 1531. It led him into difficulties. At the instigation of Erasmus in particular, whom he had listed among the heretics, he was thrown into prison at the end of 1531 and exiled soon thereafter. He remained for a while in Kehl; when he was unsuccessful in getting the exile decision lifted, he went to Esslingen, where he earned his living as a soap maker. Franck went to Ulm in the fall of 1533. After a year, he was able to gain citizenship there. *Die Vier Kronbüchlein* (*The Four Crown Booklets*) and the *Paradoxa* (*Paradoxes*) appeared in Ulm in 1534. An order of expulsion issued by the council (at Bucer's instigation) in January 1535 and supported by the Lutheran pastor Martin Frecht (1494–1556) was thwarted by the patrician Bernhard Besserer and finally revoked. Thus Franck, who meanwhile ran a printing shop, was able to work undisturbed until the start of 1539 and published a series of works, the most important of which are *Die guildin Arch* (*The Golden Ark*) in 1538 and *Das verbüthschiert mit siben Sigeln Verschlossen Buch* (*The Book Sealed with Seven Seals*) in 1539. In January 1539, after a renewed investigation, the order of expulsion was finally issued. Franck, to whom a sixth child had been born, moved to Basel in July of that year. At about this time his wife died. In Basel things evidently went well for him financially. His printing shop did a good business. In 1541 he entered into a second marriage with the stepdaughter of the Strassburg book publisher Balthasar Beck. He published his collection of *Sprichwörter* (*Proverbs*, 1541) and composed a series of his own writings, though they were published only after his death. He was able to purchase citizenship in Basel as early as 1541. He died of the plague, at the height of his business success and before persecution began, in October 1542.

If one seeks to evaluate Franck's relationship to the Bible adequately, one must set it within the wider horizon of his theological and philosophical thought and writing. Particularly striking is the large amount of material taken over in toto. By far the larger part of his vast writing consists of translations, collections, compilations. Such compilation—the collection of traditional stores of knowledge—corresponded to a contemporary widespread practice. It has recently been pointed out, however, that

in Franck's case it reflects a special technique. By appealing to acknowledged authorities he successfully evaded the strict Lutheran censorship and brought his own views to the public. Franck followed this example already in his *Chronica: Zeitbuch und Geschichtbibel*. He writes in his first chronicle (*Chronica* 1.1–140) a history from Adam to Christ, beginning with the Old Testament (uncritically accepted as a historical source) and with the adoption of most varied ancient sources. To it he attaches (each with a new preface) a chronicle of emperors and world history (the “Foreword of the Eagle,” paraphrase statements about the princely heraldic animal from the *Adages* of Erasmus) up to Charles V, a chronicle of the popes and spiritual affairs from Peter to Clement VII (in each case, then, carried up to the present), and, following this, the chronicles of Roman councils and heretics (Luther among them; *Chronica* 2.118 recto; 126 verses) and of orders and sects. At the end comes a (rather reserved) eschatological section. This integration of church history and even secular history into biblical history shows that Franck values all history as somehow a unity such that God's work appears in everything. A critical assessment of sources—even if only by means of textual criticism (as in common use among humanists)—or the selective comparison of texts is missing, the latter altogether deliberately. Franck stresses already in his preface that he sought to be an impartial reporter and leave the judgment to the reader who may be deterred by the juxtaposition of various sorts of statements to make a choice of a definite preference at the outset. Without omitting any sects or individuals, he will also not declare anyone a heretic from the outset. Everywhere, even among pagans, there is good alongside the false, and he sought to discover it like gold nuggets from the dirt, and for the rest to live together in peace with everyone (*Chronica* 1, preface, fol. a III verso).

Behind all this collecting and compiling is an aim that Franck clearly highlights. The histories (which are considered more in their multiplicity than as a unity; the idea of development was not yet discovered) have a pedagogical value. He directs his readers to the works of God and summons them to learn from it: “To the godly, everything is an open book; a godly person therefore learns more from the creatures and works of God than any of the godless from all the Bible and words of God. For whoever does not understand God's work does not hear his word either and is even unable to understand it, and vice versa.... Therefore these chronicles offer ... the Bible immediately to the ready hand” (*Chronica* 1, fol. av recto). The term “Bible of history” (*Geschichtbibel*) is therefore chosen altogether deliberately. The word of God is not identical with the

Bible, not even to be found in it, but in other places: "Whoever no longer learns more from God's works (which are the living word and the gospel) than from the dead letter of Scripture will not understand God's Word nor know what it is" (ibid.). In the *Paradoxa*, which despite its unsystematic form one can designate as Franck's major philosophical work, these ideas are further developed. Thus, paradox 173 states: "The New Testament that is the Holy Spirit is no written book but written with the finger of God on the tablets of the heart" (Wollgast, 285). The works of God and the Spirit written in the heart (for which at this place the term "New Testament" is used as a metaphor) clearly appear in one line, as vice versa in paradox 174: "A godless person can preach the law and the letter of Scripture as a servant of the Old Testament, but never the Holy Spirit or the Gospels as a servant of the Spirit" (ibid.). "Old Testament" is a metaphor for spiritlessness. The Spirit is found not in the Bible but in the human heart.

Nor does the external world contain the truth. God has "concealed the invisible, the essential, in what is visible, figurative" (Wollgast, 16). The title "paradox" itself shows that Franck pursues an epistemological program. To the spiritualist, the world shows itself to be self-contradictory, indeed absurd. The critical observer is thus first directed toward man, toward himself: "Whoever seeks not to go astray must not remain in outside appearances but must dig deep in the soil and travel far from the world into himself, so that he will find the buried treasure" (Wollgast, 16). Here, too, the term "word of God" is used as a metaphor: what is critical is the inner word, which is in contrast to the external word, the Bible. Mystical terminology is adopted in this, although in Franck's case there are considerable differences from mysticism.

The chief goal of mysticism, unification with God, absorption into divinity, is absent. Precisely the reverse, Franck seeks to justify humanity's place in the world. In this, the heritage of humanism shows itself in him. In fact, in his case the influence of Erasmus (whose *Praise of Folly* he paraphrases) plays a large role. The Bible is relativized in its significance. The preface to the *Paradoxa* begins: "Scripture is a closed book with seven seals" (Wollgast, 3). Its sense is deeply concealed behind allegories and miracle sayings; God spoke to his students in parables and allegories. He desired that "his mystery, covered beneath the cloak of the letter, should remain in the school, hidden from the godless, and [that] its children alone should perceive it." Its contradictoriness is emphasized: the letter of Scripture is "divided and at odds with itself" (Wollgast, 11). Anyone can prove anything by the Bible (paradoxes 200–203; Wollgast, 330–36).

The antithesis of letter and Spirit also comes into view. That the Bible is only of relative significance is also preprogrammed by the antithesis between inner and outside as one of Franck's central categories. Scripture is merely the "mouth, flesh, shadow, holder, sheath, image, instrument, and lantern" of the inner word (paradoxes 124–25; Wollgast, 206–7) and the external word "of the inner shadow and image." In the preface to the *Verbüthschiert Buch* (fol. III recto), Franck also takes up the image of Scripture as the manger in which the Christ child lies (in addition to treasure in the ground, the monstrance, the golden pail with heavenly bread) but turns it into an antithesis. The manger is merely the external letter of Scripture, which is not identical to the inner spirit. From this arises a dangerous misunderstanding (here Franck has the Reformers in view): the antichrist, "who is now sick and tired of the pope, ... will assume another guise and set himself down in the middle of the letter of Scripture.... There are now many who make an idol out of Scripture, which they do not understand by the sense of Christ or the Spirit but by the dead letter alone" (*Chronica* 2, preface on the chronicle of the Roman heretics, fol. 84 recto). It is basically not the written word but experience: "For one must experience God's faithful, providential care, good, his protection and his attention. It does not help when one only already reads or hears of God's goodness, love, and so on. The man cannot believe it ... that he relies on himself and goes to death, until he experiences it himself as everything being true" (Wollgast, 352). "Faith and theology are more an experience than a science" (paradox 221; Wollgast, 348). "For because the work, example, experience ... at once unlocks all prophecy within itself, ... the work pours out and blows in the experience the mere letter like a spirit, soul, and living reason" (*Chronica* 1, preface, fol. A verso). Faith is directed only to the invisible God, and "his same eternal, spiritual word breaks out through love (Gal 5:[13]) and testifies to it with fruits and works" (Wollgast, 353). Likewise it is forbidden to interpret the living word by any human means. Although "there are still a great many miracle sayings in Scripture" (and some can be found in the books of the pagans also), Franck desires that "each one, taught by God, would read the book of his heart" (Wollgast, 457). In addition, Franck uses the metaphor of "writing": if one "unlearns" all human knowledge, "God will then write the content of his holy words in us" (Wollgast, 106).

Certainly, like all Christian thinkers of the age, Franck frequently quotes from the Bible, but not in a substantive role. "Scripture is a plaster for the human heart" (paradox 119; Wollgast, 199). It is used only for instructional purposes and for illustrations. The "miracle sayings" in it can be expanded "from the pagan books and judgment" (Wollgast, 457).

In *Die guildin Arch*, in which he tries to collect everything known about God and his works, Franck adduces supportive biblical passages for the “main points” of faith, but along with teachings of the church fathers and “enlightened pagans and philosophers” as well. Likewise, when Franck uses the traditional Trinitarian terms God, Christ, and Holy Spirit, he interprets them in a way all his own.

God is (according to Stoic-humanistic understanding) indefinable, without name—here Franck follows (Pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite—unchangeable, eternal, author and source of all being, Lord of the world, essence of all essence. Franck stresses this over and over again and in so doing refers to Christian theologians and pagan philosophers such as Seneca, Cicero, Aristotle, and Plato (Wollgast, 19). Corresponding to it is the relationship of God to humanity: there is no predetermination of human destiny by God, only a foreknowledge. In reality, we ourselves determine our God: “God first becomes willing in us; in itself without will, as we now draw himself into us, then God wills” (paradoxes 19–22, 54). “God is a free-following power ... with the evil he wills evil, with the good he wills the good, ... not in and of himself, but the blasphemer and idolater makes such a god” (Wollgast, 51–52). Thus everyone creates God in his or her own image. The true image of God, however, is first incarnate in Christ, but humanity, too, is the image of God from creation. “God has laid in the heart of man the way of his wisdom and the pattern of his essence, a spark, a trace, a light and image, in which God sees himself” (Wollgast, 175). The view that humans retained a spark of divine knowledge in the soul even after the fall (whereas in Luther’s opinion they are totally corrupted) is humanistic. Since this light is in Adam “faded and extinguished,” God made in Christ “another image and likeness of his essence and showed us” that God does not create from outside but brings forth from within (paradoxes 101–2; Wollgast, 176). When one follows this image and does God’s will, one can become a second Christ and a true son of God. A new person is born. Grace is offered to all without exception (Wollgast, 432; cf. 427): each can freely decide “to remain in Adam or accept Christ.” The whole world is set in this freedom.

Inasmuch as Franck—in the debate over the freedom of the will between Reformers such as Luther and humanists such as Erasmus—took the side of Erasmus, he is led to do so by relativizing the significance of the Bible to which the Reformers appealed. He therefore points out the ambiguity of the Scripture and adopts the originally mystical idea of a spark of light in the heart, which is said to lead through the coming of the Spirit to the true understanding of God and his will.

Since Christ, as eternal, is equated with the Father as an inner vastness behind the surface of the world in the human heart, the distinction between the Old and New Testaments is first relativized. Paradox 83 states that “the Old and New Testaments are one in the spirit” (Wollgast, 128). The apparent difference between the two, which could be drawn from biblical statements by which there is a time prior to and after the coming of Christ, is given up: “Before God, who is without time, there is no beginning, but like Christ and we in Christ are eternal before him, there too is the passion of Christ, grace, and forgiveness of sins ... eternally before God” (Wollgast, 134). Statements such as Heb 13:8 and Ps 110:4 support this view. Therefore “forgiveness of sins everywhere looks to Christ, even in the Old Testament” (Wollgast, 135). The distinction between the two Testaments is only available in the human optics (“in the case of humans, which all things by time, mass, space, and person judge”). “Therefore the immovable timeless God must be movable with the movables and a thing become something within time.” Christ, Holy Spirit, and forgiveness of sin were eternal, in which “we, however, did not know and understand him” (Wollgast, 135). It therefore holds: “By his death Christ has sealed both Testaments and made them certain (which are basically one in terms of sense and Spirit, as much as they are also in conflict in terms of the letter and the one contradicts the other)” (Wollgast, 133).

On the other hand, Franck strongly stresses the antithesis between the Testaments (paradox 86; Wollgast, 136ff.). By appeal to Ezek 20:(25), according to which God gave the Israelites commandments that were not good, he explains that these, considered fleshly, would only have served the purpose of separating Israel from other people, of being an example to them, and by this bringing in the pagans. Thus they would have had carried it through only with power and brought with it temporal reward and punishment but not salvation. Spiritually, they were thought of figuratively as referring to Christ. This applies especially to ceremonial worship, which therefore is now superseded. In the New Testament, everything becomes spiritual again: “a spiritual kingdom, priesthood, worship, baptism, bread of heaven” (Wollgast, 145). Expressed here is the anti-ceremonialism—along with anticlericalism in the same context—that was later to play a significant role in Puritanism. All compulsion now ends as well. “For this reason the New Testament lacks all that was commanded in the Old by the letter” (Wollgast, 140). However, in this the law is not taken away: Christ is “an end and a beginning of the law (see Rom 10:4) who contradicts it in letter and yet fulfills it in the Spirit and

sense" (Wollgast, 140). It therefore holds that, if one looks to the Spirit, "a free Christian does what satisfies Moses and keeps both Testaments" (Wollgast, 141).

In the famous letter to Campanus (Fast, 219–33), in which Frank explicitly develops his views of the superficial official church, committed to the antichrist, and of the true spiritual church dispersed among the pagans, he accuses the "doctors," whom he calls "apostles of antichrist," of mixing the New Testament with the Old and misusing this "empty quiver" to defend its interests, namely, to prove from it "war, oaths, rule, power of authorities, tithes, priesthood" (Fast, 223). Here he touches on Marpeck's negative position (see below, p. 192) toward the Old Testament.

God adapts with respect to human existence and powers of judgment tied to the standards of changeability (we already encountered the idea of accommodation in Colet and Zwingli; see above): the "unmoving, independent God allows himself to come down to us who are in motion, babbles with us, directs all his speaking and writing to our hearts ... as if God does this today, tomorrow that, wills, begins, speaks, yet in God and before God ... everything is from eternity" (Wollgast, 199–200). He himself remains, however, motionless. The antichrist, "who is now sick and tired of the pope, ... will clothe himself otherwise and sit down, so it seems, in the middle of the letter of Scripture.... Therefore many now make an idol of Scripture, which they still understand everywhere not by the sense of Christ or the Spirit but by the dead letter" (*Chronica* 2, preface on the chronicle of the Roman heretics, fol. 84, recto). This applies to Christ, too. In contrast to statements about his coming in time are others that stress his timelessness, such as that Abraham saw the day of the Lord (John 8:56) or that the patriarchs would have drunk of the rock of Christ (1 Cor 10:4) or that Christ had suffered in Abel. Forgiveness of sins, faith, and spirit are also, like Christ, eternal. Heaven always stood open (Wollgast, 203–4). In a plastic image: "It is as if I were shown twenty gulden that I already carried on myself without knowing it. Their discovery is as if I had new discovered them" (Wollgast, 204; cf. 131).

Franck is skeptical of the calculations current in his times of the end of the world based on numerical information in the Bible and Old Testament prophecies. He does not explicitly state his opinion on this as such, but only on presumed calculations about the birth of Christ from Old Testament prophesying. Bullinger had published a work *De hebdomadis quae apud Daniele sunt* (*On the Seventy-Years Weeks Found in Daniel*) in 1530. A Daniel commentary by Oecolampadius appeared the same year. By showing how the desired goal is reached in these and other computa-

tions by completely differing methods of calculation, namely, that Daniel foretold the birth of Christ (*Chronica* 1.107–10; similar to a calculation of Johannes Brenz, 162–63), Franck indirectly makes their incredibility evident.

He likewise expresses himself critically, and indeed about both the Reformational principle of the word as well as the Bible in the *Vier Kronbüchlein*—which Franck considers a unified work, and the continuous page numbering shows, too, despite the use (in German translation) of sources (book 1, the *Praise of Folly* [*Encomium Moriae*] of Erasmus; books 2–3, “Declamation on the Uncertainty and Vanity of the Sciences and the Arts...” [*Declamatio de Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum et Artium*] of H. C. Agrippa von Nettesheim [1486–1535]). The starting point is the image of the crown of eternal life from Jas 1:12 and Rev 2:10, which is promised in the apocalypse for martyrdom. Here also Franck criticizes Luther’s principle of “Scripture alone” (*sola scriptura*). Scripture is for him a “sealed book” that can be read only by the eyes of faith (*Kronbüchlein*, 174,7–8, 231,9–11). The world is folly (with Erasmus and Agrippa von Nettesheim); one must therefore leave it behind, lose oneself, in order to be crowned by God (220, marg. 1). For this crown, suffering, indeed martyrdom, is to be undergone (128,7–12). God’s word is the inner word (182,20–21) that is preached in the heart (229,4–5). In this way Luther’s teaching of the preached word, which brings forth only “twaddle,” is indirectly rejected (241,31). Because the inner word speaks without external means (228,1), it follows then for Scripture: “Therefore Scripture cannot be the word of God. For the word particularly is something far other than Scripture” (246,35–36). “Therefore many in our times are in error, knowing no difference between Scripture and the word of God” (231,27–28). The Lutherans are meant. But there are also witnesses to the present-day direct illumination of humans, and, by the way, not only humans but Christ also, who is viewed as a mere man.

It is important to recognize that in this regard Franck represents a pre-Reformation view, because the separation between letter and spirit already comes from antiquity and is at the basis of medieval allegorical exegesis. Franck similarly speaks of the “dead letter” that must be set over against the living Spirit.

In the *Verbüthschiert Buch* Franck made clear his final position toward the Bible in the form of a compilation, typical of him. The guiding principle here is the antithesis posed in terms of the thematic rubrics of “scripture” and “counterscripture,” in which the contradictions in Scripture, the “labyrinth of the letter” (Franck also speaks of the “divided letter,”

Wollgast, 11), clearly come to light in a *Schriftkrieg*, a “scripture-war” (preface, fol. III verso). The intent, according to Franck, is to lead readers of Scripture from “the dead letter” and direct them by the proof of its contradictions to dig after the treasure in the ground, to search for the sense of Scripture that is to be found not in the letter but in the living Spirit, in Christ or the Word of God (preface, fol. III recto). This is made clear in the picture (taken and altered from Rev 5–8) of the seven seals, which Franck already used in the preface to the *Paradoxa* for characterizing the Bible. Accordingly, it is those living in accord with the example of Christ who are to open the sealed book in that their natural abilities are applied by the seven powers of the Holy Spirit (preface, fol. IIII verso–b I verso). Therefore the way of a compendium in the sense of humanistic exegesis (as developed by Erasmus and continued by Melanchthon), which organizes the Scripture handled by exegesis by *loci*, is simply negated: “The world, which through dialectics now makes art and subtlety of Christ, the gospel, and the word of God and tries to illumine him with many thousand scholarly questions ... creates this world precisely with it that in this art falls completely into an ignorance” (Wollgast, 324). Franck deliberately takes another way. His intent is to preserve a spiritual freedom and to open up an understanding that looks beyond the superficiality of “the letter.” A dualistic worldview is in the background, but it is not gnostic, because matter is regarded as neutral rather than negative, and, moreover, it is not striving to flee from the world, which is considered worthwhile, but the living of a life born of the Spirit in the world and by this means to lead humans into the divinity penetrating all things. A certain proximity to gnostic views is nonetheless unmistakable. It is revealing that in the conclusion of the *Verbüthschierten Buch* (428 recto) Franck mentions the (gnostic) hermetic writings (second/third centuries), “whether he did not write of Christ more clearly than Moses.” According to a remark in *Die guildin Arch* (42 recto), Hermes is “the first theologian ... who wrote of God’s majesty and word.” He is closest to original revelation. A continuation of this starting point is still found in the background of Franck’s final work, his commentary on collected proverbs. Even in popular proverbs the word of God is concealed in the express sense. Scripture is thereby robbed of its leading position.

Behind it all is Franck’s vision of an invisible church of the Spirit. In it all external signs such as preaching, ceremonies, sacraments, and excommunication are set aside as unnecessary, and it is governed solely by the inner word of God (see *Chronica ... der Turkei*, K 3 verso). There the Bible is also expendable.

2.8. RULING ACCORDING TO OLD TESTAMENT MODEL: THE EXPERIMENT IN MÜNSTER

The rule of the Baptists in Münster (1534/1535) is one of the most spectacular events of the sixteenth century; due to the extreme situation prevailing in the city, especially during the final phase of its siege, it remained in people's memories long thereafter. Political-ideological, sociological, and cultural attempts at interpretation have dealt especially with the external events. Of these, however, it turns out that some are not effective because of their narrow starting points or misjudgments of the sources. Others, like the investigations of the social power structures in Münster, can explain at most the possibility of a development of such a sort but not the reasons for its actual occurrence. Most of the contemporary reports used in older research are written from the viewpoint of opponents, which often misrepresent the events in biased fashion; they contain numerous factual errors as well. Not even the records of the interrogations of the Baptists imprisoned after the fall of the city offer an objective picture, because the answers resulted in part from torture and in part from leading questions and in every instance reflect the questions of interest to the interrogators.

In our context, where the concern is the understanding of the Bible of the Baptists of Münster that lay behind the events—that this played a central role can be presumed already in advance with respect to the biblicism, already familiar to us, that determines their position and corresponding action—the task is not so much reconstructing the course of external events in and around Münster in all their (often uncertain) details than describing the internal development of Baptist theology. But attention then focuses on Bernhard (Bernd) Rothmann, the actual chief theologian of Münster. Since he is also considered the chief drafter of most of the communiqués issued in the name of the whole Baptist community (in the second phase of the siege he even received the official function of a “spokesman”), we have in his writings the most authentic expressions of Münster theology before us.

Bernhard Rothmann, a blacksmith's son, was born around 1495 in the small city of Stadtlohn at the western edge of the territory of Münster, near the Holland border. We know hardly anything of his early years. He evidently attended the cathedral school in Münster and perhaps the school of the Brethren of the Common Life in Deventer as well, where Erasmus had been raised (see above, p. 52) long before. At the end of his school years, Rothmann became a teacher in Warendorf but was then

able to study in Mainz, completing his studies around 1524 with a master of arts. Thereafter he entered church service and became the preacher, granted a benefice, at St. Mauritz-Stift outside the gates of Münster.

His patrons, however, were soon displeased by the Lutheran stamp of his sermons. They sent him (around 1529) with a stipend to the University of Köln, still dominated by scholasticism, in the hope that he would turn back to the old faith there. But he is not registered anywhere in Köln; where he stayed at this time remains uncertain. After his return to Münster in 1530, he again preached Lutheran doctrines in St. Mauritz. In the spring of 1531, the Lutheran merchants of Münster financed him for another educational trip, this time to the cities of the Reformation. He met Melanchthon and Bugenhagen in Wittenberg. We, unfortunately, know nothing of the content of a memorandum he gave to Melanchthon to pass on to Luther. Thereafter he visited Strassburg, where he lived with Capito and Caspar von Schwenckfeld. Bucer was absent. But the meeting with Schwenckfeld especially was, it seems, important for his later theological standpoint. Evidently this stay brought about a theological turn: Rothmann thereafter advocated a Zwinglian-defined view of the Lord's Supper, that it is celebrated as a memorial meal and that its elements have a sign character. Upon his return, he resumed his preaching, yet only a few of his sermons are preserved. In addition to justifying faith and the acts of love flowing from it, criticism of everything in the church that cannot be directly derived on Scripture was an evidently leading basic principle. With this anticlericalism he hit exactly on the voice of the people prevailing in Münster, as everywhere else. There also ruled tension between the clerics at the cathedral, who claimed quasi-extraterritorial rights, and the citizenry, within which, along with the patricians who ruled the council, the guilds exercised considerable influence. It was among the latter particularly that Rothmann found his supporters. He firmly rejected the traditional marches and processions in St. Mauritz and the memorial celebrations. The bishop finally prohibited him from preaching—though Rothmann did not obey. Thereupon, in January 1532, his safe conduct to Münster was revoked by imperial mandate. He now moved into the city, where he took lodging in the deanery of the chandler's guild and continued his preaching. He composed a confession of faith, still quite moderate (preserved only in the Low German translation by Councilor Johann Langermann; Stupperich, 63–68), shortly afterward. It is highly contested whether Rothmann's further rapid inner development came from within or due to the influences of others. To be thought of would be the Netherlander Henrick Rol, who entered Münster in August of 1532

and had authored a work about the (spiritually understood) Lord's Supper in 1531, and the so-called Wassenberg Preachers. (Belonging to this circle, along with Rol, were Dionysius Vinne, Johann Klopriß, and Heinrich Schlachtschap, who, driven from the Duchy of Jülich, had come to Münster. Gottfried Stralen and Hermann Staprade did not come from there.) At any rate, Rothmann polemicized against infant baptism as early as the start of 1533. The (lost) draft of a church order that was sent to Philipp, Landgrave of Hesse, at Marburg with the request for a formal opinion had already included a criticism of infant baptism. Meanwhile a pro-Baptist movement had already formed in Münster. The sermons of the preachers critical of baptism led the council to close the church in the summer of 1533 and to a prohibition of preaching that was waived for Rothmann alone at the small Servatii church. In the fall, the preachers presented the authorities the *Bekennntnis von beiden Sakramenten, Taufe und Abendmahl* (*Confession of Two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper*) that Rothmann composed, with the signatures of Rothmann, Klopriß, Staprade, Rol, Vynnen, and Stralen under the preface (Stupperich, 138–95). The goal is expressed in it that, by the proclamation the gospel, proper baptism, and the proper Lord's Supper, "a pure and upright Christian community would be able to exist and manifest itself outwardly" (Stupperich, 191). The visible community of the saints is the goal typical of the Baptists. These views still basically move within the customary framework of Baptist theology. So it was that for a time, despite the criticism of infant baptism, no cessation of baptism was practiced. Even the New Testament orientation was in harmony with customary Baptist theology.

Melchior Hoffman had transmitted his apocalyptic worldview to the Netherland Baptists. Already in 1526 he had calculated the beginning of the millennium in accord with Dan 12 to the year 1533. Yet at the start of 1533 he had this expectation narrowed to the end of the year. Meanwhile, apocalyptic expectation spreading among the Melchiorites in Holland reached Münster at the start of January 1534, when two emissaries from Holland, Bartholomew Boeckbinder and Willem de Kuiper, first presented the Baptist confession to the preachers there and instructed them to pass it along to others. Baptized within a week were 1,400 persons, who sought by this means to avoid the impending final judgment. In accord with the model of Ezek 9:4, a little later Jan Matthijs (Matthys) marked those being baptized on the forehead with a T (Hebrew *taw*); those who were not rebaptized were given over to the avenging angels (Ezek 9:5–6). (Hans Hut followed the same baptismal practice!) With this, the Baptist community in Münster was instituted externally, too. This initial turn was strength-

ened a week later by the arrival in Münster of two Hollanders: Gerrit Boeckbinder and Jan Beukels (Bokelson), called Jan van Leiden. The latter had already been baptized by Matthijs in Leiden at the end of 1533.

A mandate of the territorial ruler, Bishop Franz von Waldeck (ruled 1532–1553), threatening all supporters of Baptist preachers with punishment intensified the situation but also resulted in solidarity within the city. In the face of external threat, the citizenry decided in favor of religious toleration at the end of January 1534, and from then on the Baptists were officially tolerated. Jan of Leiden meanwhile preached repentance and prophesied the imminent punishment of the godless. The call to repentance was repeated by others, such as Bernd Knipperdollinck. The events of 10 February, in particular, when troops whom the bishop had sent into the city under the bailiff von Wolbeck could be motivated to withdraw and unusual cloud formations in the skies were interpreted as signs of God's imminent punishment, intensified expectations of the end times. Such heavenly signs were traditionally considered by popular belief as heralds of the final days. From then on the Baptists of Münster were convinced that the godless stood directly before the wrath of God, which only his saints would be spared. Hence the further Reformation in accord with Baptist ideals remained the most important task on the program. At the same time, the way was open for a takeover of power in the city by the radicals. The "new Jerusalem" was to arise. Jan of Leiden considered himself the prophet who proclaimed and organized the coming kingdom of God. About the same time, Jan Matthijs was added as another prophet who proclaimed the return of Christ to be as early as Easter. But already in April he lost his life in an attack against the siege troops who had gathered around Münster. As a man of God of the end time, he had thought himself inviolable by the enemy!

At the end of February 1534, too, the rule in the city was taken over by the Baptists through the election of the council and mayor. Additional steps, beginning with the abolition of private property, followed. From this point on the (now identical) church- and citizen-community understood itself as the "new Israel"; the dissolution of the council by a body of twelve elders was considered prophetically revealed (by Jan of Leiden). They issued an edict that set punishments for violating Old and New Testament commands. The newly formed kingdom was disseminated outside by leaflets and coins. The failure of an assault on the city by the besiegers in May raised the expectation of the imminent beginning of the final kingdom. In July—after thorough study of Scripture showed that it did not forbid multiple marriage!—men were allowed to marry several women

and all the women were obliged to marry. The main argument was that marriage is an ordinance of God, like baptism, to which all had to submit: "Be fruitful and multiply!" The commandment from Gen 1:26 stood in the foreground as the purpose of marriage, along with Gen 3:16, in which the husband is to be lord of the wife. Therefore old women also were to be subject to the rule of a male. These regulations were eased somewhat later and divorces permitted as well.

When, in August 1534, a second attempt at storming the city by the besiegers was repelled with large losses for the attackers, the old system was abolished and Jan van Leiden proclaimed king. It is contested whether this was done by a new prophet, Johann Dusentschuer, or whether, as he himself claimed in his initial interrogation, he received a "witness" in the "spirit" about the matter, when a similar biblical passage occurred to him. It may have had to do with Ezek 34:23 or 37:24, since the citation is not altogether clear. He held an ostentatious court from then on. The reason for introducing the monarchy was not clearly stated, but obviously the Old Testament model was now being carried out, with the expectation of the rule of a messianic king for the end-time kingdom of God. But the Münster monarchy did not yet consider itself the millennial kingdom, merely a precursor and preparation for it.

The end of Baptist rule in Münster by the capture of the city in June 1535 is well known, as is the gruesome execution of the three chief leaders in January 1536: Jan van Leiden, Bernd Knipperdollinck, and Bernd Krechtinck. Nothing certain is known of Rothmann's death. In all likelihood, he fell during the capture of the city. According to one tradition, however, he escaped and lived a long time in another place.

The development of Rothmann's theology is important for understanding the external events. It reflected, although he was hardly at the forefront of influence on the others, all of the stages of the ideology ruling in Münster.

The confession of 1532 can still be classified as Reformational. At the start, Rothmann explicitly confessed the scriptural principle (*Über die heiligen Schriften*, Stupperich, 70). The doctrine of law and gospel (*Über das Gesetz*, Stupperich, 71–72) corresponds to Luther and Calvin; the law confronts people with their sinfulness from which they cannot save themselves with their own power. Those who believe in the promise of the gospel by Christ experience forgiveness of sin. Faith arises through the word of God alone (67, no. 60). One receives the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel (67, no. 59). But Rothmann already stresses (in the Zwinglian sense) that faith without works is dead (66, no. 40). Also

Zwinglian in character is the demand that the magistrates punish false prophets, so that unbelief will not spread within the community (77). It is a model typical of the Reformation of the south German cities. Rothmann takes an intermediary position on the doctrine of sacraments. The Lord's Supper is a sign of the grace received from Christ, as Gideon's fleece (Judg 6:37) assured him of his victory (74).

The program of the Baptist kingdom, the *Restitution oder Wiederherstellung rechter und gesunder christlicher Lehre, Glaubens, und Lebens aus Gottes Gnaden durch die Gemeinde Christi zu Münster* (October 1534; *Restitution or Restoration of Correct and Sound Christian Doctrine, Faith, and Life from the Grace of God by the Community of Christ at Münster*, Stupperich, 210–84) is also, although formally a communal document, generally thought to have been written by Rothmann. It was distributed in larger numbers outside of Münster in Low German language as a propaganda writing for laity (the “simple folk”; preface, Stupperich, 211). As its title itself suggests and chapter 1 details, history from the start of creation onward (for this, references are made to the reading of Genesis, 213) was interpreted as a chain of apostasy from God's word and of restoration (restitution; sought in vain by the prophets). The title and the idea of an apostasy and final restitution of the church are already found in *Göttlicher und heiliger Schrift Restitution und Besserung* (1552; *Divine and Sacred Scriptures, Restitution and Renovation*) by Johannes Campanus (ca. 1500–1575). However, Rothmann sees a series of apostasies and restitutions, first throughout the Old Testament, through Noah, Abraham, Moses, the apostasy of Israel in Egypt and its restoration in Canaan, the Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the temple up to the sending of the Son of God. “Therefore the case of the fall is restored by Christ, as Christ himself testifies Matt 5[:17] (Stupperich, 215). Here again we come across the legalistic view characteristic of the Baptists: the word of God is equated with the law; the decisive criterion is its fulfillment. Church history after Christ is also seen as a history of apostasy: “Indeed, we heed and consider as certain that it is demonstrable that no nation under the sun ... scorns God therefore so horribly and shamelessly ... as the so-called Christians do” (215). The apostasy begins in the second century by the teachers of the church and the princes. The present day is the final apostasy (by the Babylonian whore, Rome), to which the eternal restitution will follow; Acts 3:21 is in the background. God already began the restitution with Erasmus, Luther, and Zwingli (!), but it is to be led to its completion by Melchior (Hoffman), Jan Matthijs, and “our brother” Jan of Leiden (219). What the scholars began, those without learning will complete. The list of

witnesses is striking: evidently Rothmann sees an unbroken succession of humanism, reformation, and Baptists—a view in keeping with his basic ethical position.

With regard to understanding Scripture, it is said (ch. 2) that there must be “not scriptural interpretation of humans, glosses or postills, ... but God alone and His Spirit are the master” (Stupperich, 221–22). The content of Scripture is, briefly put, “God the all-powerful and Christ his Son to recognize and fear ... then, just as Christ was obedient to the Father and did his will, so we are therefore obedient with trembling and quivering and do his will” (222). This is the typical ethics of discipleship. Understanding Scripture and ethics are intimately connected: “If you want to understand Scripture rightly, use it in doing the will of God with diligence” (222).

The Old Testament (ch. 3), it is detailed, is antiquated with regard to external customs but is not to be interpreted allegorically as a figural witness to Christ. Sacrifices are interpreted allegorically: “When they [the Christians] feel sick and sinful, they slake their own lust and desire” (Stupperich, 224). To this extent, the view is in keeping with what is generally customary. Beyond this (again by appeal to Matt 5[:28]), the Old Testament is not antiquated because it contains the will of God, which is to be understood and fulfilled. As regards the New Testament, the basic significance of the term “new covenant” is first worked out in terms of Jer 31(:31) and the words of the Lord’s Supper in Matt 26(:28). In the significance derived from this as the book witnessing to the new covenant, this is still “in itself nothing,” for their basis and truth is defined in Moses and the prophets (Stupperich, 225). This is supported by the numerous scriptural proofs of Christ, Paul, and the apostles from the Old Testament. The objection that is often heard, “Oh, I am a Christian. I have nothing to do with the Old Testament; I hold to the New,” simply shows disdain for the word of God. “As God is one, therefore the Scripture is also one” (225). It is striking how here, in contrast to the overall Baptist tendency to value the New Testament more highly, both Testaments are valued as a unity. As the Father and the Son are one God, so Old and New Testament are also one (225). So, the preference of Matthijs and Jan of Leiden for the Old Testament received a theological foundation from Rothmann.

In our context, chapter 17 is still important: “On the Kingdom of Christ and His Glory on Earth” (Stupperich, 270–76). The coming kingdom of Christ is attested by the entire Holy Scripture, especially the prophets (the marginal note on 270 refers to numerous passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, as well as from Matthew, Acts, and the

Apocalypse of John generally.) The witness of Scripture, however, has either been scorned or the kingdom of Christ has been delayed until the last day and the kingdom of heaven. But it is clear that it is to be expected on earth. But Christ is also, according to the witness of Pilate (by reference to 1 Tim 6:13–16; but see also John 18:37), a true king. His earthly kingdom is at hand in which justice rules, the mouth of the godless stopped (273), and creation should be freed. The delay to the time after the final day is a misunderstanding. Numerous text references (275–76) are cited as the bases. “Summa: all Scripture is full and full of it” (276). The announcement of “the thousand-year kingdom” of the saints and the extermination of the godless (Rev 20:1–6; the text refers to Revelation as a whole) are typical of the apocalyptic form of the Baptists and hence at this time supported by Rothmann, too. The medieval Great Church and Lutheranism had pushed these texts back in favor of the immediate coming of the end stated in the Gospels (Matt 24:7–36; Mark 12:24–26; Luke 21:9–31). (The expectation of the millennium, according to the Fifth Lateran Council, 1516, and the Augsburg Confession, article 17, is repudiated as “Jewish doctrine”!) Unexpressed in the background stands that the Münster Baptists regarded the in-breaking of this kingdom of Christ to have already occurred symbolically in their city.

At this time, however, apocalyptic does not yet play a dominant role in Rothmann’s thinking. The chapter is only one among others in the Resurrection. But this changes quite soon. In October new preachers had been sent out in order to promote the cause of the Münster Reformation in the surrounding cities. Though they had a short-term success in Warendorf, the undertaking failed. All the messengers were executed. News of this catastrophe so enraged Rothmann that he immediately wrote *Ein ganz troestlicher Bericht von der Rache, an alle wahren Israeliten und Bundgenossen* (A Quite Comforting Report concerning Revenge, to All Real Israelites and Confederates; Stupperich, 284–97), which was printed in December. This self-characterization of the Baptists (following John 1:47; cf. Rom 2:29; Acts 3:25) seems to have been already in general use. In this tract, cast in the form of an apostolic letter, Rothmann summons Baptists everywhere to join together—by expelling those of all other faiths in February 1534—with the “holy” city of Münster and (by force of arms) to “bring the kingdom of Christ into its glory through us and all true Israelites” (285ff.). That now the time has come for vengeance on the Babylonian tyranny (the rule of the false Christians), “we considered it so evident and well known by the whole [all] Scripture of the Old and New Testament that it is unnecessary to write of it” (287). In this connection Rothmann again

accepts the calculations of the immediately impending kingdom of Christ in circulation among Melchior Hoffman's supporters. He plays on Christ's announcement of the impending "abomination of desolation" (Matt 24:15 = Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) and Paul's statement that the apostasy first had to come before the end appears (2 Thess 2:3). He recalls God's action toward Israel from Moses to Christ, which is to be understood as the model, and then the message of the prophets, but also Acts 3:(23–26); 15:(13–21); 2 Pet 1:(19–21); and 1 Cor 15:(24–28). That the eschaton has not yet come is to be ascribed to God's long-suffering, but it is now to be expected shortly. Then God will also have Elijah again come to earth (see Mal 3:23). Just as Elijah strangled the prophets of Baal (see 1 Kgs 18), so now all the godless will be killed. A quotation from Jer 30:(18–24, 8–9) shows that the annihilation of the godless and the restoration of Jerusalem are immediately imminent. Also, the new David is already installed as king (Jan of Leiden), whose rule announces the eschaton (Jer 30[:8–9]): "Now, dear brother, the time of vengeance has come to us. God has awakened beloved David; arm for vengeance and punishment on Babylon and its people" (Stupperich, 297). Not David, but the king of peace Solomon, is the image of Christ! "David in the image prepared by battles and punishments a peaceful kingdom for Solomon, ... then the peaceful Solomon is come, ruled in peace and high-priestly glory the whole of Israel and built in marvelous wisdom God's temple" (295). In his continuation of the speculations of Hoffman and Matthijs, Rothmann also employed his own calculation of the coming of the kingdom. Its starting point is the three and a half years of punishment for the apostasy of Israel effected by Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:1). This time in Babylonian captivity was increased around twentyfold to seventy years (see Jer 25:11). Once again with twenty multiplied, the result is a span of 1,400 years for the Babylonian captivity of Christians, whose end with the thirty-three years for the life of Christ, one hundred years for the early church, and 1,400 years for the apostasy falls to the year 1534 (291–92). Another outcome of Jeremiah's prophecy (30:24–31:1) is that all the peoples of the earth should take part in the kingdom of peace. The apocalyptic statements of the Bible, especially those of the Old Testament, are immediately related to the present in a high-pitched expectation of the eschaton, whose distant reality should show itself soon enough.

Composed about the same time but published somewhat later (February 1535) was the tractate *Von Verborgenheit der Schrift des Reiches Christ und von dem Tage des Herrn durch die Gemeinde Christi zu Münster* (*On the Concealment of the Book of the Kingdom of Christ at Münster*; Stupperich, 299–372). Again, Rothmann is the real author. This mas-

sive work is a sort of biblical hermeneutics aimed at a wide readership. It begins with the image of the key (widespread among Reformers and Baptists particularly) with which Scripture must be opened up. Again typical for Baptist theology is the statement that “the key of Scripture is actually nothing other than faithfully fulfilling God’s commandment and will” (304). Tied to it is the insight into God’s plan of salvation: “That you are able to understand the concealment of his will and the hope to which you are called” (preface, 299; see Eph 1:18). This insight emerges from a look at the history of God’s activity with humanity from the creation over the apostasy to the end-time restoration and calling into glory (327). In the Old Testament, the sense of these things is concealed everywhere in images (“The Old Testament, especially Moses, concealed his meaning nearly everywhere in images, therefore that ... almost not a single word is stated explicitly in all of Moses,” 308); the five books of Moses have a special significance. A central theme for Rothmann is the Mosaic tabernacle, which “is actually nothing other than an image of the nature of Christ” (309). Important is the tabernacle’s threefold division into forecourt, holy, and holy of holies; it corresponds to a threefold division of creation in its salvation-history development. Corresponding to footwashing at the entry into the holy, the world has been purified by the flood. The incense at the entry into the holy shows that the world will be tested by fire. This our, the second, world will pass over into a third world, the kingdom of peace.

Yet another analogical image is drawn from Jesus’ word “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6; Stupperich, 311). Just as Christ took the correct way into the promised land, the faithful should follow him through the three parts of the tabernacle: The life in the forecourt (“way”), in which one enters by baptism, means purification and keeping the commandments of laws. Whoever proves himself and no longer sins stands in the holy (“truth”) and participates in the truth of Christ, until with him he attains to the holy of holies, the perfect. It has also to do with the threefold faith, love, and hope (see 1 Cor 13:13). According to Rothmann (who at this point separates himself from Luther), faith still belongs in the forecourt (323). The goal is rather (in the mystical tradition), “that we, born completely anew, come out of the forecourt into the holy, into the truth” (see 315). This is the main thing for Rothmann, and he puts value on the fact that salvation is meant not only spiritually (in heaven) but actually comes to full realization in the form of a holy kingdom on earth (340–41). An entire chapter (9, 341–46) is dedicated to the discussion (explicitly against Melancthon, Jerome, and Bede, 343) whether Scripture has to be

interpreted in accordance with the rules of rhetoric. This is emphatically denied. Rothmann here again states with emphatic reference that a purely spiritual interpretation of the promises misses the religious sense of the letter, which has in view the earthly realization of Scripture. If one does the commandments of God, one has no need of rhetorical tricks. There then follow once more lengthy explanations about the perfection of the world (ch. 10) and the imminent restitution (ch. 11).

Here one finds one other hermeneutical basic statement. In the rush, Rothmann says, he could not search for all the fitting places in Scripture. "To us, then, it is enough that we know that our message is based and expressed in Scripture. Whoever will may search the Scripture itself with an upright heart, and then he will therefore surely find" (Stupperich, 351). The conformity of his theology to Scripture is of central concern for the Baptists; only from their differing perspectives do they come to fundamentally differing results than the Reformers. The biblical character of their statements is also manifest in the largely biblical language of their tracts, which make allusions to one another. Modern critical editions should take this into far greater account.

It is to be said that the Old Testament receives increasing emphasis in Rothmann's later writings. Even so, he never draws from it exclusively but basically adheres to the one Bible and quotes New Testament passages likewise.

2.9. MOVING AWAY FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: PILGRAM MARPECK

Among the Baptists, Pilgram Marpeck represented a teaching of markedly distinctive character. Born in Rattenberg on the Inn in Tirol around 1495, Marpeck (probably the most correct spelling) was a member of an influential, well-to-do family of councilors and mayors of the city. His father Heinrich Marpeck was a council member, in 1511 the mayor, and later city representative in the assembly of Tirol. After attending a Latin school, Pilgram was educated to become an engineer. He found his livelihood in the silver mines of the Inn Valley. In 1520 he was enrolled with his wife Ann as member of the miners' brotherhood. A member of the city's Outer Council from 1523 on (he was elected to the Inner Council in 1525), he was sent as a member of a delegation of three to Cardinal Matthäus Lang in order to intervene on behalf of the Augustinian hermit Stephan Kastenbauer (1491–1547; later called Agricola), who was imprisoned on the charge of propagating Lutheran teachings. He visited Kastenbauer in jail shortly afterward. It is possible that he was already inwardly inclined

to Lutheranism at this time, but this cannot be proved. In any case, officially he must have still been Catholic in 1525, for in that year he was appointed the director of mines, one of the most influential posts in the Inn Valley. He was responsible for mining as well as woods and smelting. His assets in Rattenberg were not inconsiderable, including two houses. In his capacity as mining director, he also came in contact with the Baptist movement in the Inn Valley. It went back in a wider sense to the extensive missionary activity of Hans Hut (ca. 1490–1527). Marpeck evidently came into contact with Hut's students Leonhart Schiemer and Hans Schlaffer, who evangelized at the time in the Inn Valley, and their writings. Around the same time, an intense persecution of the Baptists began. An initial, still vague mandate was issued against the Baptists by the ruler of Tirol, Archduke Ferdinand I, as early as 20 November 1527. A later mandate of 1 April 1528 ordered the execution of all Baptists who did not recant. Schiemer was arrested in November. He evangelized from the jail by numerous letters and writings before his beheading in January of 1528. Hans Schlaffer and Leonhard Frick were also executed shortly after in Schwaz. Evidently Marpeck was greatly influenced by the steadfastness of Schiemer, Schlaffer, and other imprisoned Baptists and their willingness to suffer, and he apparently joined the Baptists at that time. When and where he was baptized is unknown, but he testified it was because of scriptural law. Because he refused to report the Baptists among the mountain people to his sovereign, he stepped down from his office at the beginning of 1528. He had to leave his homeland; his possessions were confiscated. In fall of that year he gained his citizenship rights in Strassburg. The city, well known for the relative tolerance prevailing there, was a place of refuge for many who were persecuted for their faith elsewhere. There Marpeck took on the task of a city engineer with responsibility for, among other things, the wood provisions, with oversight of the forests. Despite the services he performed for the city, however, he was increasingly troublesome to the ecclesiastical authorities. He had joined the Strassburg Anabaptists. Because of his persistent opposition to infant baptism, he was accused of heresy by Bucer and even thrown in jail for a while in 1531, from which Capito helped him out without requiring him to recant. In December, he demanded a public disputation with the city's clergy, but he was refused. He was permitted, however, to address the council and the "Committee of 21," to whom he presented his ideas in a *Rechenschaft meines Glaubens* (*An Account of My Faith*), a confession of faith consisting of twenty-eight articles. Bucer was his chief opponent. The most important of the articles was a plea for adult baptism and an

accusation that the clergy did not preach under the cross but under the protection of the authorities. Therefore there was no Christian order in the city. The council decided in favor of Bucer; unless Marpeck recanted, he would have to leave the city. Marpeck declared he was willing to leave if he was guaranteed time for the sale of his possessions and the payment of outstanding loans. At Marpeck's wish, another disputation with Bucer was held in January of 1532, its topic a paper Bucer had prepared at Marpeck's request presenting his reasons for infant baptism. At the conclusion of the disputation, Marpeck gave Bucer and the council members present a copy of his *Confession of Faith* with a pamphlet appended to it refuting Bucer's paper. He left the city shortly after.

There were considerable internal tensions in the Baptist community in Strassburg at the time of Marpeck's stay there. To be mentioned in particular is his opposition to the spiritualist Hans Bänderlin, against whom Marpeck wrote his first work, *Clare Verantwortung ettlicher Artickel* (*Clear Responsibility of Some Articles*, 1531).

Where Marpeck spent the following years is largely unknown. He evidently engaged in travels for decades. He stayed for a while, it seems, in the vicinity of St. Gall, where he built a waterwork and watermill. He seems also to have returned to Tirol from time to time. Some of his letters are addressed from southern Germany, others from Moravia and Switzerland. During his stay in one of the church communities in Moravia, he evidently joined in an anonymous confession, which he is presumed to have composed, that was presented to a governor of Moravia, Jan von Pernstain. Finally (1540–1542), he evidently lived in Graubünden. An anonymous little book about baptism and the Lord's Supper (*Vermahnung; Admonition*) was published, with no notice of the place of printing, circa 1542, the composer of which is supposed to be Marpeck. Since those confessing believer's baptism were threatened with death after the Diet of Speier of 1529, every such publication was a risk. The work is a new edition, revised and translated into High German, of the *Bekentniss von beiden Sakramenten* (*Confession of the Two Sacraments*; 1533) of the Baptists of Münster under the direction of Bernhard Rothmann. When Caspar Schwenckfeld (1489–1561) wrote a critical assessment of this work in his *Juditium* (*Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* 8:173–214), Marpeck answered him in a *Verantwortung* (unpublished until modern times), the second part of which was first completed many years later (but probably before Marpeck's year of death in 1556). He lived in Augsburg from 1544 on. There he was again employed as an engineer and received a regular salary. Despite several warnings from the city council, he held to the Bap-

tists but was more cautious in public expressions than in Strassburg. Thus at last he remained undisturbed. He died at the end of 1556.

Only individual writings of his works are in modern new editions. A more comprehensive anthology was published in English translation, in connection with the special interest of American Mennonite research in the Baptist tradition.

If one looks for the influences that had an effect upon Marpeck's characteristic theology, one must first think of preachers active in the Inn Valley. Kastenbauer, as a student of Augustine, already preached a theology of suffering: the willingness to die brings salvation by God; the way of the cross is the way of freedom. Both Schiemer and Schlaffer developed a similar theology of the cross. It is striking that they kept themselves so distant from the apocalyptic proclamation of their teacher Hut. Instead, it was strongly dependent on the mystical work of the fourteenth-century *Theologia Deutsch* (*The German Theology*), in which union with God is described in terms of suffering obedience. In this, Christ is the one who goes before: relationship to him is seen above all as that of discipleship. Luther had newly edited this text in 1515 and 1518 and was for a time fascinated by it. Schiemer and, perhaps in parallel, Schlaffer also adopted its ideas: Christ died for our sins and is resurrected. Therefore we no longer live for ourselves but Christ in us. Baptism is the sign of this. There is also an inner, mystical incarnation that means participation in the sufferings of Christ. The new life is therefore characterized by suffering and readiness to suffer: the Christian comes by willingness to suffer, the acceptance of the cross, to his true created being and perfection.

Marpeck was surely personally acquainted with these two Baptists, Schiemer and Schlaffer. At the very least, their writings were familiar to him. His theological thinking is in large measure stamped by them and their medieval-mystical tradition of the *Theologia Deutsch*. He developed his approach rather early and largely retained it. In his various writings, one can recognize no essential further development of his basic theological ideas; he later needed only to argue for them more thoroughly on the basis of questions by Schwenckfeld. We recognize also the integration of his theology in the group of followers Marpeck collected around himself, for which he was the leading thinker and who closely cooperated together. The discovery of a (previously unpublished) collection of letters in Bern (the so-called *Kunstabuch*) kept by the Baptist Maler in 1561, that is, soon after Marpeck's death, opened some decades ago a vivid insight into the inner connections within this group and the traditions customary there. It consciously connected to the martyrs of the beginning, Schiemer and

Schlaffer, some of whose writings were incorporated into the *Kunstbuch*. In addition, letters of Marpeck and other members of the circle are found there. Other of Marpeck's writings also bear the character of communal works, although he was certainly the chief author; in any case, he writes there in the name of his group.

With regard to the content of his works, it can first be noted that Marpeck did not develop a systematic theology. Like all Baptists, he follows the principle of "Scripture alone" consistently, although his conclusions are moderate by comparison with those of the Swiss Baptists. His biblicism is evident in all his works in the mode of argumentation by gathering numerous prooftexts, but also in explicit statements such as: "We proclaim from Scripture, or what accords with Scripture...; however, if anyone is better able to inform from and with Scripture, we do not want herewith to be prejudiced and to have rejected it" (Hege, 195,36–40). In the letter he sent to Caspar Schwenckfeld along with the first part of his *Verantwortung* (Loserth, 55–59; see Klassen and Klaassen, 369–75), he admonishes Schwenckfeld to learn the language of the simple, truly believing hearts to whom the Holy Spirit will disclose his wisdom in Scripture, not by the human arts, including the knowledge of ancient languages (!). On the other hand, he can definitely value these skills, like all human abilities, as gifts of God. But these gifts are only to be used in keeping with the humility of Christ.

Orientation to the life and cross of Christ is decisive for Marpeck's understanding of the Bible. In the *Klaren and nützlichen Unterricht* (Klassen and Klaassen, 70–106), the persistent main thought is that everything depends on the teaching of the Christ-who-became-man. In it he rejects, on the one hand, the opinion of opponents (derived from humanism) that human abilities are a sufficient qualification for understanding Scripture and, on the other hand, the view of the spiritualists that God could reveal himself by the Spirit even without revelation by Christ. But what is important is that those who acknowledge at first glance scandalous facts that a simple carpenter's son can forgive sins and that a church likewise consisting of common people has received the same authority. For this knowledge, the customary stress on Christ's divinity and glory is of no help at all. The mysteries of God lay hidden in the simple humanity of Christ; his discourses, words, deeds, and ceremonies are authoritative. Since in Christ God has become man, he has tied himself to external things in order to make himself known in the world. But Christ steps forth not as an exemplar but as servant; even his ceremonies are to serve us. It is important for Marpeck (against the spiritualists) that the outward services

of church life—he mentions baptism, the Lord's Supper, excommunication, and the laying on of hands—go back to the Christ-who-became-man and are therefore indispensable as a precursor for the Holy Spirit (Klassen and Klaassen, 453–54). Indeed, each of Christ's words and commandments is a part of his human being and thereby a ceremony. Yet the truly faithful are “lords over all outward ceremonies of Christ and use them for their service” (Col 2:16–23); the ceremonies are there to serve them and not they to serve the ceremonies (Klassen and Klaassen, 83). It is important that Marpeck integrates the mystical idea of union with Christ from the *Theologia Deutsch* into what is physical. By this means he avoids the rejection of all outward church forms, which we encounter among other Baptists. On the other hand, the spiritual Christ, the Risen One, who is living in the faith of the Christians, is not to be ignored. Hence the “Petrine and Iscariot” Christians who try to defend the external Christ with the sword are to be rejected.

On the other hand, the gift of the Spirit is indispensable for understanding Scripture. To Marpeck (in conscious opposition to the spiritualists), the Spirit is closely tied with Scripture. The same Spirit who inspired the word of God at the time of its composition directs its study: “The beatific Lord, the man Jesus Christ, is according to his two natures true God in and through and with the Word, but there is nevertheless a distinction between the qualities of the two natures. Such beatific Lord, living in heaven as the man Jesus Christ in and according to both natures a unified God, speaks the word by his Holy Spirit from heaven into the inner ear of the believing human heart as a living word of God, which word and spirit then is God and he is Christ himself (John 1:8; 2 Cor 3; Rev 19), by which word all things are made (John 1)” (Loserth, 516,22–30). Here we encounter the Logos Christology of the early church. But Marpeck (deviating from Luther) combines the oral sermon and the written biblical text into one: “It is the evangelical sermon as the word of God speaking of salvation orally, and reading from the books of Scripture is hearing and reading *one* thing, because the evangelical or apostolic Scripture is or contains nothing other than evangelical or apostolic preaching” (522,5–8). Marpeck also expositis this thought again in his *Verantwortung* against Schwenckfeld in a chapter of its own (517–30). Of concern here also is the unity of the inner word that is Christ in the heart of the believer and of the external word in the Scripture (518,19–24). Marpeck also combats the letter-faith of the Swiss Baptists by emphasizing the Spirit-worked character of the Scripture. In any case, the Spirit is the divine Spirit, not a quality of humanity. It is important that the Spirit is given to us in history

through external means. The corporeal words of Christ prepare the way for the coming of the Spirit (298,6–9). The disciples cannot bear the words of Christ before the coming of the Holy Spirit (301,47–302,13); without the Spirit, the words of Christ do not even satisfy for understanding the Old Testament (367).

Marpeck's (and his group's) position toward the established church Reformers, especially Zwingli and Calvin, shows itself in his much-studied view of the Old Testament. In this, he first takes up the confrontational stance of the early Baptists who rejected the basis of the baptism of children as an action analogous to Old Testament circumcision by Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger, Calvin, and others. Moreover, like the early Baptists, Marpeck rejects the idea that Old Testament ethics are valid for Christians as well. However, the Baptists lacked a worked-out biblical theology with a well-founded assessment of the meaning of the Old Testament. Marpeck sought to be of assistance. His view already emerges in the account of his faith presented to the Strasburg Council in 1531/1532 (ed. Wenger). It begins (art. 1) with a statement about original sin. Marpeck here stresses that all sins, even the fall of Adam, take place with the knowledge of good and evil, because "where one knows nothing, one has no sin." But because the man wanted to be his own Lord and God, he became a servant of sin (Wenger, 171). He fled from God, in the knowledge of good and evil. With this knowledge came the recognition of sin, self-reproach, repentance. Behind this view—not here, but later frequently expressed—is the claim that children cannot sin before the development of reasoning (Hege, 215,12–17, 242,15–17, 250,12–15) and therefore did not yet require baptism. Yet God also gave a consolation: in the promise to Eve (that her seed will crush the head of the snake, then universally interpreted to Christ and the devil [Gen 3:15]), he expressed the promise that sin will be forgiven first in the coming of Christ. With this Marpeck expositis article 2 of the confession that the fall of Adam is annulled by God's promise to Eve. This promise was the basis of the faith of the patriarchs (art. 3). But it is "first completed in the future by Christ." Therefore the pious in the Old Testament must "wait for the Son of God." Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David did not receive forgiveness of sins before Christ; they "had to live in the faith of the hope alone" (art. 4). God concluded a first covenant (Testament) of promise with the children of Abraham after the flesh alone, with evil and good, because he was God of all (art. 6); its seal was circumcision (even of the foreigners living among them as servants). Even the children of Abraham according to faith, "who believed the promise of God to Abraham of future salvation," have kept

God's laws only out of fear, not out of love, for the law was not written on their hearts (art. 8). The patriarchs have perhaps desired the circumcision of the heart, but it is first begun only by the revelation of Christ (art. 9). The Son first gave the power to become children of God (art. 10). Circumcision and law set forth only demands and the wish to fulfill them, but not the ability (art. 12). Water baptism tied with the Spirit from faith in Christ gives those who are willing the ability to act as well (art. 13), while circumcision of the law brings recognition of sin, death, and hell with the hope of being saved from this; "the patriarchs had received this servant-spirit from God" (art. 14). Later (Wenger, 176) Marpeck stresses again that neither Abraham nor other pious Jews were promised justice or justification. "The Spirit of Christ has not been given to humans before the death and passion of Christ, who first purchased, won, and gained this Spirit and the comfort of conscience." The following articles (15–18) and again articles 25–27 describe the gospel that brings salvation, forgiveness of sins, and life to those who believe and are baptized.

The central conclusion drawn from these presuppositions is that "the inward circumcision has no correspondence to outward and inward baptism" (art. 11). Article 19 repeats that therefore infant baptism is not derived from circumcision as a "figure." Baptism in youth (childhood) is arrogance and self-will (art. 20) and mere water without Spirit, since one does not give adequate heed to God's word. Circumcision is a sign, not a witness, of the covenant, because God was the witness (art. 23). The water of baptism, on the other hand, is a creaturely witness for all who believe and conclude the covenant again with God (art. 24). Although full authority for excommunication is also ascribed to believers (art. 27), the concluding article still excludes compulsion. "No external power may rule in the kingdom of Christ, nor be used to rule" (art. 29).

In his *Verantwortung* against Schwenckfeld, Marpeck worked out the question of original sin in a lengthy chapter (Loserth, 189–281), where he once again develops the same ideas at greater length. Here he stresses, among other things, that the creaturehood of humanity as such ("flesh and blood") can in no way be sin, "otherwise God must have created the man Adam in sins, yea, sin itself" (191). Indeed, the bodies of Mary and even Jesus himself, as well as all the prophets, apostles, and saints, would have to be sinful. "For how, then, might a man become blessed even today or eternally if flesh and blood themselves were sin?" (192). In this also, however, the still unknowing children are sinless. But they also participate in evil of a sort, which they acquire from Adam as original sin. But since they know nothing of it, it is, so to speak, not yet activated and there-

fore does them no harm. In addition, in his coming Christ removed the sin of Adam and Eve for all humanity. Indeed, the Spirit God breathed in humans at creation is innocent and the source of natural piety, as the piety of Adam, Noah, the centurion Cornelius, and others who had not known the law of Moses show. Sin, however, began with the plucking and eating of the forbidden fruit by Adam and Eve. The conscious, thinking person is not excused, for by the knowing of good and evil comes the desire of the evil; its effect is that one follows the devil. By the law, then, comes the recognition of sins (Rom 7). Not until by faith in Jesus Christ and baptism will those fallen into evil become children of God (as Marpeck stresses by appeal to Gal 3). He deals with this in the following section (Loserth, 281–94). Baptism is merely the sign of children of God, for before people are baptized they have to become children of God renewed by the Spirit. Both, however, belong closely together.

In the *Verantwortung*, Marpeck deals also with the idea of covenant (Loserth, 85–87). In distinction from Zwingli and Calvin, whose starting point was the *unity* of one covenant, Marpeck distinguishes two covenants. His starting point is Jer 31:31–34, which speaks of a new covenant, and the repetition of this section in Heb 1:8–12, where the Greek word *diathēkē* is found instead of the word “covenant,” and “testament” is the rendering of this in the Zurich German biblical translation Marpeck used (as also in Luther, 1534). Hence the two terms are for him equivalent (as they are for Schwenckfeld, too). The new covenant is thus the forgiveness of sins obtained by baptism, which at the same time wrote the law in the heart, is love (following 1 John 4), peace, and so forth—none of which applies to the old covenant.

In addition, the metaphor of the first birth also appears here (Wenger, 186–87). “The first birth brings with it the dead letter, in two tables of stone, which is the hard order of God.” Those concerned with this learn from it, however, only their inability to fulfill the commandments and are therefore driven to complain of their need to God. The figurative ceremonies pointing to the hope of the future salvation by Christ are offered to them as comfort. “Therefore all these [Old Testament] ceremonies are done and gone, in that Christ the Son of God has come as the true consolation and Savior.”

While Calvin knows of only *one* church embracing believers since Abraham, Marpeck explicitly distinguishes between an old and a new church: “Now whatever the old church is built on, it can still in no way and not at all be compared with the new church; it is not even ordained by God that it should remit sins and would have authority to forgive sins and

to endure, as baptism in the church of Christ is commanded and instituted ... to remit sins and to endure" (Hege, 10–16).

A review of Marpeck's formulations shows that they are largely drawn from biblical passages, the vast majority from the New Testament, many from Paul. The Old Testament is not, it is true, denied to be part of the Bible, but its significance is related only dialectically to Christian faith. For the history of faith, it is a witness of a pre-expectation of Christ, which is consummated with his coming. In addition, it is the book of the law. The law is limited to the viewpoint that it reveals, indeed increases, sin (Marpeck draws this from Rom 7, but Rom 5:20 also), so that grace likewise can increase. Dialectically, then, it can also be called the "first grace" (Wenger, 178). Those who have come to learn of their sin from the law and their incapacity to fulfill it receive comfort by faith in Christ. "For such men who are first struck down, torn apart, and broken into pieces by the law, Christ is the physician for such brokenness" (181). For those of the Old Testament living piously under the law, this can only be an expectation.

Finally, there is between the Testaments also the relationship of promise and fulfillment. Against Schwenckfeld, who advocated the opinion that the believing patriarchs already possessed the promised fulfillment of Christ in their hearts, Marpeck stressed "that there is a great difference between promise and fulfillment." If someone promises to loan another a hundred gulden within two or three years, then the one to whom it was promised can only hope that he will later receive it, but he does not yet have it in his possession (Loserth, 325,30–39). It is the case for the old fathers, patriarchs, and prophets that they believed the promises of God and persisted to their end in the hope of the incarnation and coming of Christ, and after their bodily death they are sent into hell (underworld) with such hope (317,29–32; regarding their salvation from there, see 199). The Old Testament never deals with fulfillment, but always only of hope and expectation, because, for Marpeck, the periods before and after the coming of Christ are to be sharply distinguished.

The discussions of the Old Testament are written at much greater length in Marpeck's *Vermanung* (Hege, 227–38) than in its probable model, Rothmann's *Bekenntnissen*, and basically changed in tenor. In Marpeck it is also stated here at the start that "the Old Testament is only a testament of promise and of God's promise of a new nature, for in Christ Jesus everything has become new, the mind, character, and heart of believers.... No one received the spirit of the consolation of conscience for the forgiveness of sins before Christ's coming.... The Holy Spirit was not

yet there, Christ was not yet transfigured" (227,28–38). John 7:(39) and 16:7 are adduced as scriptural proof. Marpeck defended his theology often at special length by the Gospel of John, whose christocentric approach he emphasizes. The Old Testament thereby recedes in significance. When the Lord tells Nicodemus, "If anyone is not born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3), it must be remarked: "Of such a birth there is never a word ... occurring nor said of the patriarchs" (288,6–8). "Therefore the patriarchs meant only the human and bodily and believed" (230,34–35). Thus baptism also has no relationship at all to circumcision. Indeed, even during his earthly walk, Jesus did not yet dispense the Spirit to his disciples. What Peter confesses ("You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," Matt 16:16) was according to Christ's statement revealed to him not by flesh and blood but by the Father in heaven. But this knowledge is not yet granted to him by the Spirit, because Christ himself said he would not send the disciples this Spirit until Pentecost, after the ascension (John 14:16, 26; 16:7). That Peter did not yet possess this Spirit is shown clearly enough in that he immediately thereafter wanted to deny the Lord his sufferings and the Lord had to rebuke him as Satan (Matt 16:22–23). Strictly taken, therefore, the period of the Old Testament embraces still the time of the earthly path of Jesus and his physical association with the disciples; the new age does not begin until the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. It is the age of the new church (Matt 16:18), which is strictly distinguished from the ancient church. The authority for forgiveness of sin (Matt 16:19) was also not yet conferred (231,6–27).

Marpeck here develops his understanding of baptism within the framework of the idea of covenant. The ceremonies in the old covenant and those in the new are related to one another as promise and fulfillment. While the Old Testament ceremonies are merely illustrations, signs, or figures, the New Testament ones are "reality" (Hege, 232–33). The sign points to the reality: the law leads to the recognition of sin but not to its forgiveness. In reliance on Rom 6:1–7 there results—now a new situation created by the Christ-event—the efficacy of baptism, which leads beyond the Zwinglian understanding as sign: "Those who are so minded and confess such things are those to be baptized, ... and then certainly forgiveness of sins is obtained in baptism" (209).

Marpeck explicated the relationship of the Testaments with his group in still greater detail in one of his own works, the *Testamentserleütterung*. Frequent references to it appear in the *Verantwortung*. The largest portion of it is a concordance of biblical passages that are compiled as antitheses,

so that the opposition of the Old and New Testament comes clearly into view. In the foreword (Loserth, 579–84; Klassen and Klaassen, 555–64), the author once again summarizes his position. The Old Testament was only fleshly, shadowy, temporal, not current (579,20–21/556). By “current,” according to Marpeck, is meant things that relate “to eternal life, which yesterday was not yet present, but were future” (582,19/560). “The age of the Old Testament before the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ is called ‘yesterday,’ and the time of the New Testament as after Christ’s incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension is called ‘today’” (581,27–30/559). In the *Verantwortung* also Marpeck explicitly states “that before Christ’s ascension the apostles did not have the promised Spirit either for Christianity through baptism and rebirth or for their apostolic office through their faith ... let alone the others and the old ones” (Loserth, 384,26–27, 35). Here is found the same division of the periods in which the “today” first begins after the ascension. The view of the established church Reformers that salvation was already present in the Old Testament is denied, and especially rejected is the conclusion (as exemplified by the Baptists in Münster) that, since the Old Testament church already used the sword, it is also legitimate for the New Testament to apply it. In particular, the thesis of a retroactive power of Christ’s suffering into the Old Testament (Schwenckfeld) is denied (579,7–8, 35–38/556). Distinctive here is the argument with one of the articles of the confession of faith. When it is confessed that Jesus “descended to hell,” it is to be asked “why would Christ ... have descended and what would he have done to preach the gospel of Scripture aloud to the dead and the spirits in prison if yesterday, that is, in the Old Testament, they were Christians, that it is to say, if their sins had been forgiven them for eternal life?” (579,27–32/556). But here, too, the background is a biblical statement, 1 Pet 3:19. The same reference already surfaces in Marpeck’s confession of faith (Wenger, 176, 180), and there 1 Pet 3 is explicitly mentioned in the margin. It likewise appears many times in the *Verantwortung*. But in addition there is also a “tomorrow,” namely, “the return of Christ from heaven,” from which it follows “that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament speak in a threefold way: first, yesterday by figures, ... second, by the reality that has come today, with salvation from sin, death, and the yoke of legal servitude in the freedom of Christ, and, third, of the reality that will come tomorrow when Christ returns from heaven” (foreword to the *Testamentenläuterung*, Loserth, 583; Klassen and Klaassen, 561).

It is striking that Marpeck also wrote a typological-allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs (ch. 2; in the letter “On Love” [“Von der

Liebe”]; *Kunstbuch* no. 4; see Klassen and Klaassen, 516–20). Reference in this little book to the relationship between Christ as the bridegroom and the church as the bride is widespread in Christian exegesis from Origen on (see *History* 1:187–91), and in this respect Marpeck takes his place within an old tradition. Only this piece stands strangely erratic between his other expressions about the Old Testament.

On closer consideration, numerous contradictions result from Marpeck's theology, but in an age in which a historical perspective was still foreign, his view concentrated on the New Testament represented a considerably independent position. The occasionally expressed criticism that Marpeck attended too little to God's acts in history before the coming of Christ presupposes modern viewpoints that one cannot demand of the sixteenth century. It is worth noting how seriously this Baptist theology takes the wording of the New Testament in particular: every statement has equal weight. In this regard Marpeck is considerably more consistent than Zwingli and Calvin. Of course, the biblicist approach has its limits: the great Reformers produced considerably more developed systematic thinking. Of course, for today's reader who has learned to pay attention to the historical references of the biblical texts, the overall image that emerges is hardly convincing. That thousands of Baptists went to their deaths for these ideas because they sought to remain obedient to the gospel as they saw it is not free of tragedy.

THE BIBLE AT THE TIME OF THE COUNTER- REFORMATION, LATE HUMANISM, AND ORTHODOXY

3.1. FIGHTING HERETICS WITH THE BIBLE: JOANNES MALDONATUS

The Reformation, by moving the Bible to the center as the basis of faith, had awakened an altogether new interest in Holy Scripture. It called into question the structures and doctrines of the medieval church in terms of basic biblical statements. This called forth on the part of Catholic theology a counteraction that promised to be successful only if it was likewise able to bring biblical arguments into the field. The stimulus for Catholic biblical exegesis came from the Protestants, as the Jesuit program of study explicitly noted: an exacting study of Scripture, necessary in every age, is especially important “in this storm, when heretics provoke the Catholics from scholasticism to the Scripture. That these are bested by heretics in such a holy and pious practice is disgraceful.” It would be disgraceful if Catholics noted that this branch of theology languished among Catholics while it bloomed among heretics and therefore resorted to heretical commentaries. They sought to collect gold from rubbish, but in doing they carried more rubbish than gold back home (*Ratio studiorum*, 1586 ed., no. 9, Pachtler, 2:67–68).

Already Cajetan, Luther’s conversation partner in Augsburg in 1518 (see above, p. 67) and one of the most significant defenders of the old faith, sought by intensive biblical study to counter the Reformers with proofs based on the Bible. Growing out of this study in the last decades of his life came numerous commentaries on both Testaments, which extracted the literal sense especially. The Council of Trent created the official framework for Catholic biblical understanding by its decree of 8 April 1546 on the scope of the Holy Scriptures, the Vulgate as the authoritative edition, and the dependence of biblical interpretation on church tradition. From this a lively interpretative activity developed; the sixteenth century

is considered the “golden age” of Catholic exegesis, and the names of over four hundred authors are known.

Here also we can again select only one of the best known exegetes as an exemplar. It is no accident if in so doing it deals with a Jesuit. Jesuits were assigned a key role in the Counter-Reformation activities. This came about as a matter of course from confrontations with Protestants in their areas of activity. This had not yet been discussed at the time of the Society’s founding. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) and his associates, who after a failed attempt at pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the spring of 1538 gathered at Rome in order to offer Pope Paul III their services, were at first interested in preaching and pastoral care especially, and this was the chief goal of the new order of the Society of Jesus, too. To this were added the people’s-missionary institutions and the famous exercises (spiritual exercises), along with works of compassion. Among these, the Jesuits also counted the educational system—one of their specialties—that they established after 1539. An international network of schools of different levels was established, in which along with general education of the people, education of their own Jesuit rising generation played an important role. The system extended from simple Latin schools to colleges at places with universities. These were originally thought of as housing for future Jesuits in order to enable them for studies at the selected universities. By 1544 there were already seven such colleges, in Paris, Leuven, Köln, Padua, Alcalá, Valencia, and Coimbra, but mostly small and in financially uncertain situations. These problems were resolved over time. The number of colleges grew (there were already thirty-three at the death of Ignatius in 1556), and they soon adopted a program of study at the center of which were the humanistic fields (grammar, rhetoric, ancient languages, and often Hebrew). Their own courses of study provided for the education of clergy in philosophy and theology, in which the Jesuits were sent as docents first at the universities, then later on Jesuit colleges based in university settings. In some cases the Jesuits themselves took over or founded entire universities.

Exposition of the Bible played a significant role in the Jesuit program of theological study. During the first generation, Jesuits produced a series of prominent exegetes whose commentaries were in some cases published posthumously. So, Alphonso Salmerón (1515–1585) of Toledo wrote a commentary on the entire New Testament in sixteen volumes (appearing 1597–1602). Other important interpreters are Francisco de Ribera (1536–1591), Francisco de Toledo (1532–1596), and Bento Pereira (Pererius, 1535–1610).

We select one exegete who worked in Paris, one of the centers of the academic world at the time, and who left behind an indelible impression on his contemporaries, Joannes Maldonatus. Specialists consider him the most significant Catholic biblical scholar of the sixteenth century.

Joannes Maldonatus (Juan Maldonado) was born in 1533 or 1534 in the small city Casas de la Reyna (Beturiae) in the province of Estremadura in Spain. From age fifteen on he studied classical and oriental languages, philosophy (with the later Cardinal Francisco de Toledo), and theology (with Domingo de Soto, 1494–1560) in Salamanca. He gained his doctorate at the age of twenty-two and began a career as a philosophy professor. A few years later, the first Jesuit itinerant preacher in Spain, Juan (Johannes) Ramirez (1521–1586), sparked an awakening among the youth. After the somewhat older Toledo had joined the Jesuit order in 1558, Maldonatus followed his example in 1562, leaving his family and position and going to Rome, where he joined the Jesuits. He was ordained priest in 1563. The pope named him a professor at the Collegium Romanum, but the order needed a capable representative in Paris, where the parliament, university, and clergy were hostilely inclined toward the Jesuits. Hence Maldonatus was sent to the new Clermont College in Paris as soon as it opened in 1564. He began with a course in philosophy—on Aristotle's text *On the Soul*—with great success. This became overwhelming when he continued with theology. Scholasticism was still taught in the old, dry style by the theological faculty of the Sorbonne. Yet the Reformed lay theologian and philosopher Peter Ramus (1515–1572), later one of the victims of Bartholomew's Night (the massacre of Protestants), found a wide echo in his battle against Aristotelianism. Since the Sorbonne offered nothing, the students left and flocked to Maldonatus. The large audience (estimates run up to six hundred), including members of the upper classes (those living far away even sent copyists to transcribe the lectures for them), overflowed the college's largest lecture hall, so that Maldonatus frequently had to speak in an open courtyard.

With interruptions by missions in Poitiers (where he disputed with Huguenots) and Lotharingia, he taught in Paris until 1576. Then he had to parry attacks from the side of the Sorbonne. One accusation was that he denied the immaculate conception of Mary, although he had only said the church had not officially decided it. When the archbishop secured his acquittal, he was charged with denying that purgatory lasted more than a decade in duration. Thereafter he moved (probably at the advice of his superiors) back to the college at Bourges from 1576 to 1578. There he wrote his biblical commentaries, which the Jesuits brought to publica-

tion after his death. He was named supervisor of the order's province of France in 1578, then sent to Rome 1581 as its representative in the selection of the new general of the order (Claudio Acquaviva, 1581–1615), where Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) retained him for collaborating on a planned new edition of the Septuagint and an improvement of the Vulgate. However, he died of a stroke early in 1583.

The most significant of the commentaries of Maldonatus, of which over twenty editions appeared (I cite the Raich 1874 edition), is that on the four Gospels: *Commentarii in Quatuor Evangelistas*. He wrote it during his residence in Bourges. Its method and content are typical of early Jesuit biblical interpretation.

Methodologically, his commentaries are first of all dependent on humanistic exegesis. The best Jesuit interpreters, including Maldonatus, were solid experts in Greek and frequently Hebrew as well, in addition to classical Latin. Although Maldonatus, following Trent's decrees, made the Vulgate the basis of his interpretation, his knowledge of classical and oriental languages enabled him to refer to the original texts of both Testaments for comparisons. Later, precisely such "boldnesses" were often deleted by publishers of his commentaries. Already in the preface to his commentary (Raich 1:1–3), one finds an entire chapter on the various meanings of the word "gospel," which Maldonatus traced back to the Hebrew vocable *bissar*, "to proclaim a joyous message," and tracked down in its various occurrences. Linguistic observations of all sorts run through the other commentaries as well. In Matt 1:1, for example, he deals with the formulation in the Vulgate *liber generationis*, in which *liber* might refer not only to "book" but, corresponding to the Hebrew *sēper*, "narrative" as well (Raich 1:11). For *generatio*, he selects, instead of the widespread reference to the genealogical list (genealogy) of Jesus attached to it, that of the view advocated by certain interpreters, not specifically named, that the whole course of the life of Jesus is meant in the sense of a Hebraism. For this he appeals to Gen 6:9, where the expression has a similar meaning, but above all the Hebrew corresponding *tôlēdôt* (Greek *genesis*). "This interpretation pleases me all the more therefore because it corresponds to a Hebraism and is more comprehensive" (Raich 1:11).

Humanistic language study, but with full inclusion of Hebrew study, is an essential foundation of this interpretation. That precisely the Gospel commentary of Maldonatus is considered his most significant work is connected above all with his qualities in this respect. Maldonatus is, in addition, an outstanding expert in patristic literature. He presents the various possibilities of interpretation for each important text passage. In so

doing he speaks of their representatives, sometimes generally (as “some” or “others”), but frequently by name. Many well-known names appear, thus frequently Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, Hilary, Cyril, and Theophylact, among others. The tradition of the church fathers plays a major role in this interpretation. This, too, is a humanistic legacy, but Maldonatus sets it in a special context.

In his inaugural address at the beginning of his theological teaching (Galdos, 49–65), Maldonatus sets forth the motives for undertaking his course. He explains that the moment has now come for theologians to take up arms in defense of the heavenly fatherland (see Heb 13:14; Acts 21:9–22:5), since the enemies (the heretics) have opened the battle. If each person were to invent something one day and peddle it the next as the authentic gospel and Word of God, would the Catholic theologians then not have to do everything possible so “that we keep and preserve our ancient religion, which was left behind for us as like a testament, first by the word of Christ and then by that the apostles and the writings of the most sacred fathers?” (Galdos, 51). The real motive for taking up the teaching of theology is the acute threat by the Calvinists who are spreading in France and have already won considerable influence—we find ourselves in the hot phase of conflict before the Protestant cause was decisively weakened by the mass murder of their leaders in the Bartholomew’s Night massacre of 1572, when it was not yet decided who would finally hold the upper hand. Maldonatus, however, does not fight with the means of state power but with the weapons of theology.

In this context he drafts a brief outline of the history of theology. After a prior phase of pre-Christian (natural, poetic, and civil) theology comes an early Christian phase up to Constantine in which numerous heretics already beset the church. In the third period as well, which he calculates up to 1180, there were other heretics against whom—so one must add— theology kept watch in defense. A period of time then followed in which the heretics seemed defeated, so that theology atrophied. This is, so to speak, theology’s old age, in which it was beset by all sorts of diseases. It was defenseless against the new heretics springing up: Wycliff, Hus, Luther, Karlstadt, Bucer, the Anabaptists, Schwenckfeld, Campanus, Servetus, Osiander, Brenz. By this, Maldonatus means the scholastics, who wasted their time and effort “in lectures and discussions of I know not what questions [see *History* 2:141–43] and themes far remote from the Holy Scriptures and current problems” (Galdos, 63). He calls this way of teaching “childish screaming,” which would “be of least use and do the most damage ... in the war against the heretics” (Galdos, 62). Such warriors do without the

very weapons that could be used decisively in the battle against the heretics: "the holy books as well as the writings of the holy fathers and the way of ancient theological argumentation" (Galdos, 62).

The polemic against scholasticism typical of humanism may be found here, and the influence of the humanist frontal position is unmistakable. Yet in the case of Maldonatus the motivation is essentially different. Of concern now is the battle with the Protestants, against whom the Sorbonne's program of study cannot get anywhere, indeed, who have already infiltrated the university. They can be successfully combated only by meeting them on their own field, the interpretation of the Bible, and by using the aid of the theology of the fathers, who had not yet "set out to play in Aristotelian philosophy as a more pleasant wood" (Galdos, 62).

It is characteristic of Maldonatus, however, that he is not content with this. "What, then," he has one listener ask, "do you want us to give up this discourse and fine-spun theology completely and instead interpret the Holy Scriptures alone (as our opponents do) like fables of poets according to our own wish and pleasure?" (Galdos, 63). By no means, he answers, "for to seek to explain the Holy Scriptures 'with unwashed hands' [unprepared], without theological discussion, is arrogance from the very start" (Galdos, 64). It is like men who approach a text knowing only the rules of grammar and without asking for its sense. Correct Bible instruction involves bringing scholastic theology into a correct relationship with the Holy Scriptures such "that, when we dispute about a question, it relates not to Plato and Aristotle ... but the prophets and apostles, the Evangelists, Christ, the church, antiquity, and suits the adverse situation of the present day" (Galdos, 64).

When we think back to the medieval development in which scholastic theology gradually separated from Holy Scripture (*sacra pagina*) and allied with philosophy (see *History*, vol. 2), here we see the inauguration of a new stage in which the two fields are led back together again. At the same time, Maldonatus makes clear why he does not want to appeal to any one theologian in particular, especially not to Peter Lombard (whose *Sentences* he had presented at the beginning), who wrote with more relevance to his own time than to the present. Thomas should preferably be read in private study (Galdos, 65).

This form, typical of Catholic controversial exegesis, can be seen as well as it was worked out in Maldonatus's commentary on the Gospels. One example is the discussion of Matt 12:31–32: What is "sin against the Holy Spirit"? Maldonatus discusses this problem, which Augustine called the greatest in Scripture, as a *quaestio* in scholastic fashion for several

pages (Raich 1:253–56). He begins with the claim that the question falls into two parts: What is sin against the Holy Spirit, and why can it not be forgiven? In the first part he refers first to various possible interpretations on the basis of differently accented statements of Augustine, Novatian, and “others.” He comes then to the statement: “The true sense cannot be gained from anywhere other than the passage itself” (Raich 1:254). What is decisive is the occasion: the Pharisees had claimed that Christ drove out the demons by Beelzebub and thus ascribed acts of the Holy Spirit to demons. This, then, is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

The second part of the question requires a casuistic-dogmatic answer. Although in principle all sins can be forgiven by God and in addition it is believable that some who judged so at the time later regretted doing so, for a sin could be partly excused due to ignorance or weakness, there is no such possibility of excuse in the case of the sin against the Holy Spirit because of its severity. This is the interpretation of Augustine, Pacian (of Barcelona; prior to 392), Anastasius, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome. To this is attached the detailed discussion of the imagined objection. Evidently all mortal sins are of the sort that they cannot be forgiven. Why otherwise would not mortal sins be called forgivable? The answer (according to the model of a scholastic *responsio*) states: the sin against the Holy Spirit is not the only unforgivable sin. To these belong, among others, also the sins of present-day heretics, who sin in that they “either do not believe the miracles that occur in the Catholic church ... or interpret them as magic” (Raich 1:255). The anti-Protestant front is not lost from view!

Maldonatus discusses at special length the pericope of the Lord’s Supper in Matt 26:26–29 (Raich 1:540–63), which he handles not only with all the means of philology (e.g., on the identity of the terms *eucharistein* and *eulogein*) but also discusses in controversial theological terms against the heretics (especially the Calvinists). In this he stresses that statements such as “this is my body” are to be understood in the literal sense, not figuratively. Long, literal quotations from the church fathers support his position.

The dogmatic character of his discussions also appears, by way of example, in that the brothers of Jesus mentioned in Matt 12:46 (see also Matt 13:55), stemming from Joseph and Mary, cannot be acknowledged as his siblings because Mary remained virginal. Maldonatus follows the opinion of Jerome according to which Jesus’ cousins are meant, sons of his mother’s sister mentioned in John 19:25.

These are merely a few examples to which others could be added. By the nature of the case, historical-critical questions do not yet arise in

Maldonatus. He sees only harmonies among the statements of the three Evangelists. The differences in the Gospel of John cause him no problems. That the author John was the son of Zebedee and at the same time the author of Revelation is to him certain by tradition (preface to John; Raich 2:371–74). He accounts for the uniqueness of the beginning of this Gospel—that John does not report on the human origins of Jesus but on his divinity—by stating that John is writing against the Ebionites and Cerinthus, who, like the later Arians, denied Christ's divinity (2:374). Long discussions are then devoted to the problem of why Christ is called the "Word," in which again philological (for instance, that the name Yahweh is rendered in Aramaic by *memra*) and interpretative-historical arguments (numerous authors are quoted with their opinions) are connected with each other.

All in all, what comes into view is the image of a humanistically educated polemical theologian who by the standards of his day possesses vast knowledge as a philologist and patristic scholar. He makes use of this knowledge in his setting in order to combat heretics, among whom he understands the Calvinists especially, who in his view acutely threaten the very existence of his church. Perhaps they could not have been contained except by means of state force. Maldonatus considers himself a warrior who seeks to gain victory only through Scripture and theological tradition. Like the Jesuits generally, he contributed to the fact that the Counter-Reformation was successful only in the field of controversial theology. In his valuation of Scripture, he obviously learned from his opponents, the Protestant scriptural theologians, although he condemned them a thousand times over. From the distance of time, while these separated churches have come to new forms of mutual understanding and cooperation, one should not value too slightly the mutual influence in the direction of a reform oriented to Scripture on both sides.

The freedom that Maldonatus still enjoyed in scriptural exegesis, the Jesuits later limited through a study program of their own (the *ratio studiorum*), based on the constitutions of the order drafted by Ignatius. Already the constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Pachtler 1:8–69) had prescribed three areas for theological study: scholastic, scriptural, and moral theology. In this it is shown that the Jesuits largely continued the medieval program of study. But they soon established the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas as the basic textbook in place of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. Scholasticism—this means Thomas Aquinas, who remains the authoritative theologian for the Jesuits. They also distinguished between positive (scripture and tradition) and speculative (dogmatic) theology.

The detailed program of study emerged from these principles after protracted efforts. After preliminary studies from 1565 on, which, however, did not come to conclusion especially for theology, the preparatory works were adopted in 1581 under the Order's General Claudio Acquaviva by a commission to which Maldonatus, among others, belonged. He had already, in 1573, prepared his own formal opinion (Lukács 4:185–196) in which the outlines of the later program are already visible. The commission of 1581 does not seem to have made much progress; in any case, Acquaviva in 1585 established a new, smaller commission that produced a completed draft (Pachtler 2:15–217), the final edition of which (225–481) went into effect in 1599 after a lengthy period of consultation and testing.

The distinction between positive and speculative (dogmatic) theology was retained. Practically, scholasticism stood again in first place. Nevertheless, the plan of study gave considerable room to lectures on the Holy Scripture. The order of study prescribed the provincial to choose as professors for this men “who are fully at home not only in linguistic knowledge (for it is most necessary) but in theology and other sciences, in history and scholarly knowledge extended also, and so far as it goes, in eloquence” (Pachtler 2:234–35). Where there are two professors, the exegetical lectures should be heard daily in the second and third years of study (2:234–35). In addition, Hebrew language instruction should be allotted an entire year, from which the theologians cannot be released lest “they would then expose themselves as completely incapable of it” (2:236–37).

There are also special rules for the professor of Holy Scripture (294–99). As point 1 he is mandated to explain “the divine books in accord with the authentic and literal sense, ... which confirms true faith in God and the teaching of sound morality.” For this, however, consideration of the “distinctive idioms and figures of the Holy Scriptures” is recommended (point 3). Point 2 stipulates: “Foremost of the purposes he should pursue is that he defend the translation approved by the church.” Here, in keeping with the decisions of Trent, the Vulgate is in view.

A whole series of limiting instructions is found in the points that follow, such as that the *canones* of the popes and councils are to be followed when these designate a certain sense as the literal (point 6), like the church fathers with respect to the literal or allegorical sense of a biblical passage (point 7). “Where they are not agreed, however, one should prefer among the differing explanations those that the church seems to have been inclined in greater agreement for many years.” Further, point 8 reads: “Indeed, when something is a teaching of faith that is maintained

by nearly all the fathers and theologians, if one can prove it from Scripture, he should not deny that it can be proven from there."

Points 9–11 have to do with dealing with rabbinic scriptural explanation: "When something is found in the Hebrew rabbis that can be cited in a useful way on behalf of the Vulgate or Catholic teaching, then one should introduce it in such a way that one grants it no authority on this account so that no one will be prejudiced in their favor" (point 9). This is evidently seen as a danger. Thus, too, the professor should not read about "certain Christian interpreters [Nicholas of Lyra?] who very much follow the rabbis" (point 10). It is interesting that in point 11 there is even a warning against trusting the Masoretic markings, which are an invention of the rabbis. Of special significance is point 16. Here the Bible professor is advised to act judiciously in dealing with controversial texts: "When one comes across a text that is either a matter of dispute between us and the heretics [the Protestants] or is usually discussed back and forth in theological disputations, one should explain it simply, yet emphatically and firmly, especially when it goes against the heretics."

As can be seen, as a result of Trent and its confrontational stance toward the Protestants, Catholic biblical interpretation, which rested more and more in Jesuit hands, was subject to considerable limitations. These would prove, all the more as time passed, to be stumbling blocks that on the Catholic side held exegesis in dogmatic fetters and prevented any progress. Not until the twentieth century did the Second Vatican Council bring about a turn. Maldonatus still worked in a transitional period in which the restrictions were not yet fully to have their effect. One must see, however, that he himself in his formal opinion largely shared these views. Thus in 1573 he identified the goal of scholastic theology to be "to defend religion, refute heresies, form good morals, to correct the bad." Correspondingly, "the docent will teach theology best when he attends most to things that are necessary for preserving faith while refuting heresies, and deals with them as carefully, scholarly comprehensively (Lukács 4:190). He still expects of the scriptural exegete a knowledge superior to that demanded of scholastics. Moreover, one should be familiar with geography and secular history as well as secular authors. As an exegete, one should have the skill for sensitive conjectures, "on which the understanding of many passages often depends," as well as "patience for comparing passage with passage, word with word, syllable with syllable, sign with sign." Of greatest importance, however, is that when the text is Greek or Hebrew, he comes to it "from the Latin stance" (*animo latinus*); that is, he is "no admirer of Greek and Hebrew (writings)" (192). The

confessionally bound interpreter takes the place of the humanist interpreter, indeed in antithesis to such an interpreter, and for him thinking is in Latin and the Vulgate is authoritative.

Already according to Maldonatus, as the official orders of study later, the Old and New Testament should be taught at the same time, either in parallel or in turn each year. From the Old Testament, Maldonatus recommends the books of Genesis, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and the Prophets—a typical selection (Lukács 4:192). The New Testament should be treated in its entirety. Augustine's instruction to interpret the Old Testament through the New and the New as much as possible through the Old is a basic rule (194). In dealing with various versions, "our version," the Vulgate, remains authoritative. The interpreter will gain the true sense of a biblical passage when he proceeds from Catholic faith, compares the Greek and Hebrew versions as well as similar scriptural passages, and reads the best commentaries. In this, Maldonatus never loses sight of the theological viewpoint: "He will see which church teachings can be confirmed by this passage.... He must know whether the heretics misuse this passage in order to demonstrate one of their errors and to refute their interpretation, reading, and translation as carefully as possible" (193).

3.2. ATTENDING TO THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SCRIPTURE: HUGO GROTIUS

Hugo Grotius was born in 1583, the child of distinguished parents in Delft in Holland. Delft was the city of residence of the stadtholder William I of Orange (1533–1584) until his assassination. Hugo's father, Johannes, was a member of the humanist circle, mayor of the city, and curator of the University of Leiden, founded in 1575, in which his uncle Cornelis de Groot was a law professor. Already as a child Hugo could move, in keeping with the custom of the time, as a grownup in the circles of the often politically influential or highly learned visitors to his father's house. The humanist tradition was in Holland, the homeland of Erasmus, still very lively at this time. The "literary republic," as one is accustomed to call the group of citizens interested in humanism, was international in character and extended into various European lands, in loose connection to the respective confessions. In France, some of these *erudits* were Protestant (as at the academy of Saumur); the Catholics, Gallicans inclined toward so-called *politiques*. In Holland they inclined to the Arminians. Hugo Grotius came in contact with these circles for a time. Because of

the giftedness he showed early on—he wrote pleasing Latin verses at age eight—Hugo was considered a prodigy and put on display everywhere. At age eleven, in 1594, he began study in Leiden, where the curator of the university, Janus Dousa, greeted him with a Latin poem. Among his professors were the philologist Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609), from whom he learned text criticism in particular, and the mediating Calvinist theologian Franciscus Junius the Elder (1545–1602), who became determinative for Grotius's irenic basic attitude. When the Lord Advocate of Holland, Jan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547–1619), dispatched a delegation to King Henry IV of France, the fifteen-year-old Hugo was taken along as a show-piece companion and after a scholarly conversation received from the king a gold medallion with his portrait. His proud father afterward had a portrait made in which he can be seen with the medal. Grotius, in fashion typical of him, gained a doctorate in law not in Leiden but in Orleans, in connection with a trip to France. After the liberation of the Netherlands from Spanish rule, Oldenbarnevelt wanted to form a republic according to the Swiss design, in which the individual states would possess relatively considerable independence. Moritz of Orange, Wilhelm's son and successor as stadtholder, was to be the principal coordinator and lead the army. In keeping with the tradition of his family, which originally came from France, Grotius attached himself to Oldenbarnevelt's French-oriented politics, while Moritz inclined more to England.

After returning from France in 1599, the newly produced doctor of law moved to Gravenhage (the Hague), where he was admitted as a lawyer at the provincial court of Holland and the supreme court of the provinces of Holland and Zeeland. He composed a juristic work on the law of spoils of war and freedom of the sea (*De Indis*, mostly known as *De jure praedae*, 1604). In addition, he wrote Latin poems and pursued philological and historical interests: he edited the *Satyricon* of Martianus Capella, the encyclopedist of late-antiquity (fifth century), and published an account of the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain (*Historiae et annales*) as well as a national history, *De antiquitate republicae Batavae*, in 1610. In 1607 he was appointed Advocate Fiscal (public prosecutor's office; state prosecutor) at the court of Holland and Zeeland. In 1608 he married Maria van Reigersberch, the city mayor's daughter, who from then on faithfully remained at his side in all the crises of his life. Three sons (who later gave him a great deal of trouble) and two daughters came from this marriage.

The twelve-year armistice between the Netherlands and Spain (1609–1621) was overshadowed by a bitter religious conflict. From 1604 on the Leiden theology professors Jacob Arminius (1560–1609) and Franciscus

Gomarus (1563–1641) fought over divine predestination. While the strict Calvinist Gomarus advocated the thesis that God elected from eternity some people to faith and eternal life, others to eternal damnation, blessedness, according to Arminius, is tied to the faith that indeed is gained only by God's grace but that is not irresistible, so that preparation for it and apostasy from it are possible. The followers of Arminius defended their view in a remonstrance (presented to the states of Holland in 1610); the Gomarists answered with a counter-remonstrance (1611). The dispute took on political significance when the estates of Holland under Oldenbarnevelt's leadership tried to force the two parties into a peaceful life together within one state church. The Remonstrants, so-called after their confession, to which Oldenbarnevelt and Grotius, among others, belonged, had a majority in some areas, such as Holland and Rotterdam, while other areas, especially Zeeland and the city of Amsterdam—and, after 1617, the stadtholder Moritz as well—inclined toward the strict Calvinism of Gomarus. Grotius soon openly put himself behind the politics of Oldenbarnevelt, who sought to deprive the counter-Remonstrant coalition of its power. From this a lively interest in theological questions arose. He was ruled from now on by the cause of church unity, which he saw especially realized in the first three centuries among the church fathers. *Meletius*, a 1611 work composed in this vein, was first rediscovered in 1984 and published in 1988. In these efforts he was in harmony with tendencies toward church unity and toleration such as those that appeared in the French Edict of Nantes (issued 1598). He remained in lively correspondence with his Christian-humanist friends throughout his life. In addition, he advocated—with the Heidelberg theologian Thomas Erastus (1523–1583)—the right of state governance over the church, even in dogmatic questions. He distributed his view publicly in tractates, especially in *Pietas ordinum Hollandiae et Westfrisiae* (1613, *The Piety of the Estates of Holland and Westfriesland*). The sharp polemic in it against the Gomarist preachers and insistence on the right of the state assemblies over the church brought him fierce attacks. He had now closely tied his destiny to Oldenbarnevelt's. At his counsel he accepted in 1613 the position of a pensioner (*syndikus*) of the city of Rotterdam; as such, he also belonged to the delegation at the states of Holland. In 1613 he was sent to England on an embassy, among other things with the secret commission of persuading King James I (1603–1625) of the concerns of Holland church politics. He was, of course, unsuccessful in this regard; James later supported the Gomarists at the synod held in Dort (Dordrecht) in 1618–1619. Grotius's efforts to secure an official ecclesiastical peace, including an edict

of toleration by the estates of Holland (1614), failed because of the zeal of enemies. Finally it came to a revolution from above. Moritz removed the magistrates in many Remonstrant cities. Oldenbarnevelt and his leading supporters, including Grotius, were arrested and brought to trial. The international synod in Dort (Dordrecht) ended with the condemnation of Remonstrant theology and the dismissal and exile of Remonstrant preachers. Oldenbarnevelt was condemned to death and executed, while Grotius was condemned to life imprisonment, which he was to spend at the castle Loevestein. His possessions were confiscated; he received merely a small sum paid out for a modest living.

Grotius used the two years of his stay in prison (1619–1621) for theological writing. The prison let his wife, together with his daughter, stay with him; shopping outside the fortress and maintaining outside contacts were permitted. He was even allowed to receive and send books in a large chest from time to time. At Loevestein he wrote his best-known work for the defense of Christianity, *On the Truth of the Christian Religion* (which he later translated into Latin, *De veritate religionis Christianae*); it later had numerous editions in the Latin edition. There he also began to write his *Annotationes*, notes on the Old and New Testament, which he did not complete until the final years of his life.

In March of 1621, his wife succeeded in having him carried from the fortress in a book chest by sentries and rowed to shore in a boat. He went to Paris to King Louis XIII, Henry IV's successor after his assassination in 1610. Things at first went well for Grotius in Paris, because France disapproved of the Netherland rebellion against Oldenbarnevelt, and Louis XIII admired the famous scholar. He was promised a royal pension. In practice, everything worked out otherwise. The pension was paid only slowly; he was constantly pressured to convert to the Catholic faith. He persistently rebuffed these attempts. He defended himself against attacks on his honor from his homeland in a *Verantwortung* (1622) with legal arguments, in which he demanded redress of the injured traditional privileges of the cities of Holland; its issuance made his return home quite impossible. The seizure of power (1624) by Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642), who did not like him, made his situation more difficult. Nevertheless, he published in 1625 the work on international law basic to this day *De iure belli ac paci* (*On the Law of War and of Peace*). But its true thrust was mistaken when, as unfortunately often happened, it was published without its numerous biblical quotations. To Grotius, law and theology were not separate fields; he was far distant from modern secularization. Grotius now hoped for a quick return to Holland, even with the help of Friedrich Heinrich, the

brother and presumed successor of Prince Moritz of Orange. In face of the fanaticism of the victorious counter-Remonstrants, Friedrich Heinrich could dare nothing less upon his entrance to office in 1625 than to call back the most important Remonstrant politician. When every effort to gain his rehabilitation failed, Grotius returned to Rotterdam spectacularly in October 1631, on his own initiative, and called for a church law regulation granting a place for the Remonstrants. He ostentatiously visited the Erasmus monument in the city, thereby honoring his intellectual ancestor. Yet resistance to his return was too great. Already at the start of April 1632 the estates of the province issued a decree expelling him. He went to Hamburg, later to Frankfurt. There he met the Swedish chancellor Oxenstierna (1583–1654), who appointed him Swedish ambassador to Paris. Triumphant, he returned to the city in 1635. Yet soon numerous difficulties were made for him by the French side; he was *persona non grata*. After the defeat of Sweden at Nördlingen in 1634, France no longer put great weight on the alliance and wanted gradually to withdraw from the Thirty Years War. In addition, there were court intrigues. The salary from Sweden often did not arrive; Swedish emissaries disputed his right to it. Hence he felt unhappy in his position but zealously tried to maintain proper etiquette. On the other hand, the unfortunate diplomat's bitterness against his countrymen was so intense that his brother-in-law's attempts to negotiate a compromise over his return failed.

Disappointed by diplomacy, Grotius after 1640 threw himself anew into composing works on behalf of a reunification of the separated churches. Instead of gaining supporters for this idea, he attained the opposite. A tract *On the Antichrist* (*Commentatio ... de Antichristo*, 1640, in *Opera* 3:457–504), in which he rejected the equation of the pope with the antichrist (1 John 2:18; cf. 2 Thess 2:3–4), customary even in medieval sectaries and among all the Protestants, even the Remonstrants, as unfounded on the basis of an exegesis of the New Testament prooftexts, elicited fierce polemics. His work *Annotata ad consultationem Cassandri* (1641, *Annotations on Cassander's Consultation*, in regard to Georg Cassander [1512–1566]), in which he maintained that Protestants and Catholics basically agreed in dogmatics, appealed to ancient church unity for a confessional reconciliation and brought him into a fierce conflict with the orthodox Reformed professor André Rivet (1572–1651) at Leiden; it continued in various works by both sides—Rivet, *Animadversiones* against Grotius (1642); Grotius also wrote *Via ad pacem ecclesiasticam* (1642) and *Votum pro pace ecclesiastica*—until Grotius's death. There were polemics from many other parties as well. Grotius was even suspected of

being a papist. The idea of union had no chance in the age of confessional polemics. In addition, Grotius made himself unpopular with his Swedish employers.

Besides, Grotius resumed his biblical studies, interrupted since 1621. In 1641 he published his *Annotationes ad quatuor evangelia* (*Annotations on the Four Gospels*). In 1644 his *Annotationes in Vetus Testamentum* (*Annotations on the Old Testament*) appeared. Other books on the New Testament appeared posthumously, in 1646 and 1650.

In 1645 Grotius decided to travel to Sweden and offer his resignation. Requested by Queen Christina (1626–1689; ruled 1644–1654) to remain at her court as a scholar, he declined and took his leave. On the return trip over the Baltic Sea he was shipwrecked; he had to disembark in Danzig and travel overland, while ill, as far as Rostock, where he died on 28 August 1645. The Lutheran theologian Johannes Quistorp (1584–1646) offered him spiritual assistance, and from Quistorp we receive a report of his final hours.

With his biblical commentaries, Grotius stands both at the end of an old period and at the beginning of a new one. As we have seen, he was an admirer of Erasmus and one of the last representatives of the humanist tradition. As a humanist he united in his person a basically classical education, knowledge of ancient and modern languages—including biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew and Syriac—and interest in classical philology and ancient sources (he edited various Greek and Latin authors) and history. The progress in natural science of his time (Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, and others) left him undisturbed, as did the upcoming empiricist philosophy. For all this, he was an expert in church tradition. In his exegetical works we encounter numerous quotations from church tradition: Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, and others are drawn upon for explaining the text. In addition, he was familiar with the Jewish exegetical tradition of the “rabbis” Philo and Josephus up to Maimonides, Kimchi, and Ibn Ezra, which he consulted on philological details in countless cases. “For understanding the sense of the books belonging to the old covenant, the Hebrew authors contribute a great deal, especially those who best know the words and customs of their fathers” (*De iure belli*, Molhuysen, 12). In addition, he quoted classical authors extensively, both for explaining certain phrases and for historical observations. Humanist exegesis was, as we saw, first and foremost a philological program. Grotius also pursued the system of annotations (*annotationes*), a word-for-word interpretation in customary chapters, with occasional excursions on special problems, skipping over others. The wealth of information to be found

here, however, extended far beyond his contemporaries. Also distinctive to Grotius was the goal of interpreting the whole Bible in this manner. In it a program was announced at the same time, for by this means Grotius distanced himself from the type of contemporary theological commentary in which the Bible was consulted merely as a collection of prooftexts (*dicta probantia*) for dogmatic statements over which the various confessions and theological parties disputed. In this, no attention was given to the historical descent of the text; the Bible was applied as directly valid for the present. Grotius, by contrast, is always led by an interest in determining the sense of the New Testament writings at the time of their origin. In this regard, he was in conscious opposition to the contemporizing method that the interpreters of confessional stamp followed. Behind his biblical exegesis was his concern for unity, for he hoped to discover in the Bible the form of Christian faith that all the confessions could acknowledge as a common foundation.

In his philological explanations of words in the Vulgate text, he usually referred back to the original Hebrew term, expanded by the various Greek versions. Since the Greek was less familiar, in the final edition he added a Latin translation in each case. In Gen 3:15, for instance, in the Vulgate the snake is told "she [*ipsa*] will crush your head." On this Grotius comments:

As if treated by the woman in an unmanly sense. But the Hebrew text we now have prefers the masculine, for both the pronouns and verb, so that it seems to refer ... to the seed, which in Hebrew is the masculine gender. And hence Irenaeus explains 3.38 the passage.... The Septuagint writes "he" from the Hebrew even though among the Greeks *sperma* (*semen*) is neuter. Thus they made the construction as if the antecedent were not *sperma* but *sporos* (*satus*), which means the same. Irenaeus 4.78 follows them, and Cyprian.... Thus there are many constructions in accord with this sense everywhere.

Another case appears when versions of the text differ from one another. So, according to the Vulgate, Gen 3:16 reads: "You will be under the power of the man." To this, Grotius says:

Here the translator expresses the Hebrew "your desire for your husband" as well as possible literally. So also Ibn Ezra. This way of speaking, namely, describes the reduction of the freedom that man naturally strives for, as by the right of the firstborn.... The

sense is that husbands do not always deal with their wives with kindness.... Often they command something that displeases their wives. Nevertheless, they are to be obeyed from the universal law of humankind.

This explanation obviously tries to harmonize the Vulgate text (which still is accepted as authoritative) with the original Hebrew text. In addition, Grotius appeals to natural law in order to legitimate the existing order of society. Textual variations between various versions seem to give Grotius little problem. Thus he discovers at Exod 31:4 merely that the Greek text has several words more than the Hebrew and the Latin, some manuscripts still more. On the contrary, he once expressly maintains that the basic agreement of the Greek translations with the original text in all the historically important passages is one of the proofs of the reliability of the text's transmission (*De veritate religionis Christianae*, *Opera* 3:61b).

But factual-historical questions are also of concern. At Gen 11:1, "but the earth had one language at that time," Grotius states, "the Hebrews say it was their language, the Syrians that it was theirs." He derives the linguistic designation "Hebrew" from the Hebrew *ʿōbērīm*: of those who came over from Chaldea (Josh 24:2–3). The derivation from the name Heber is incorrect. This language was added to Canaanite when Abraham and his people settled in Canaan. It is similar to Punic, like a dialect, "as very learned men have shown." "For this reason it is more true to say that there was no one original language existing in its purity anywhere, but its remnants are found in all languages." Further references to a multiplicity of ancient authors then follow. Here Grotius shows himself to be at the height of the Orientalism of his day. On the other hand, he can also be bound to an old-fashioned canonical exegesis. So, when it concerns Cain's sacrifice, which according to Gen 4:3 was made from the firstlings of his herd and their fat. But since only what was in human use was sacrificed and the eating of flesh was not permitted before the flood (see Gen 9:3), the "firstlings," according to Grotius, could not have meant animals of the herd but only their wool and by "fat," fat milk.

His historical interest, on the other hand, extends to persons and events of the Old Testament historical books. Grotius develops a biblical history from the conservative standpoint—the Bible is error-free with respect to history, too. In addition to the Bible itself, he quotes Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities*); for topography, Jerome; and for the description of the Holy Land, *Locorum terrae sanctae descriptio* (published Venice, 1519; German edition in Frankfurt am Main, 1584) by the German Dominican

Burchard von Barby (Brocardus de monte Sion), at the time widespread in many manuscripts, allegedly written in 1283; for Assyrian names, Herodotus; for Babylonian, Berossos (ca. 345–ca. 265 B.C.E.), whose fragments passed on by Eusebius and others were nearly the sole source for Babylonian history before the emergence of ancient oriental archaeology. The appearance in profane sources of pagan princes mentioned in the Bible is cited in *De veritate* as a proof of the historical reliability of the Holy Scriptures. More is to be learned about the Persian kings from Greek authors (*De veritate* 3.16, *Opera* 3:56b–60a). On the other hand, Grotius at times laments the dearth of sources: “We could interpret this prophet and others more clearly and exactly if the *Assyriaca* of Abydenos and the *Babyloniaca* of Berossus were available” (*Annotationes* on Isa 13).

Grotius puts great value on explaining the historical background of biblical names and events. In so doing he also considers the knowledge of medieval Jewish interpreters. One example is the interpretation of the puzzling names of the children whose birth Isaiah announces in Isa 7:14. The point of departure for Christian interpretation was the quotation of the passage in Matt 1:22–23. In his annotations on the four Gospels, Grotius offers a long excursus at this place (*Opera* 2.1:11a–14a) in which he deals above all with chronological problems. “The child ... does not seem to be Hezekiah, as many Hebrews think, because he, if the dates were rightly fixed, had already attained a certain age before the rule of Ahaz, as Rabbi Salomo correctly remarks, although what is said at the start of chapter 9 is correctly referred to him. Rather, this child is the son of Isaiah himself” (13a,59–13b,5). Grotius explains other details of the text in a similar fashion. He considers the number sixty-five in Isa 7:8 a textual error: instead of $60 + 5$ it must mean $6 + 5 = 11$, for there were eleven years from this point in time to the deportation of the ten tribes by Salmanassar (*Annotations to the Old Testament*, *Opera* 1:z. St.).

On the other hand, the historical viewpoint often leaves him in dealing with prophetic texts. There has been special interest in how he judges the second part of the book of Isaiah, chapters 40–66. But it was J. C. Döderlein, around a century and a half later (*Esaias*, 1775), who first recognized that this chapter could not have originated before the time of the Babylonian exile. Grotius is blocked from this insight by his trust in a prophet’s Spirit-worked ability even to foresee events of a distant future. This foresight occasionally astonishes him. So, when in Isa 44:28 the Persian king Cyrus (559–529 B.C.E.) is mentioned by name, “It is truly astonishing that so long before, 210 years before, as Josephus states, the name of the king is made known in this passage and several that follow....

But God, who foretold this, put this name in the minds of those who had the right to disclose it.” He sees a pastoral reason for this: “God, you see, did not want to keep secret anything honorable that would happen to the people, so that the pious who were exiled for the guilt of others might experience more comfort” (Prooemium to Isa 40, *Opera* 1:308a,33–35). In other cases Grotius gives his identifications: he sees in the servant of God of the first three songs of God’s servant the prophet himself (this is still discussed today); the latter is Jeremiah. But he sees even such late events as the Maccabees (second century B.C.E.) preannounced in Isa 63–66.

Grotius proceeds in the interpretation of the New Testament with a similar method. Here he offers information drawn from extrabiblical ancient authors for explanations in even greater measure. Thus at the saying in Luke 4:23, “physican, heal yourself,” he quotes the authors Aeschylus, Euripides, Ennius, and Virgil and investigates what the word means in context: “Perform your miracle first in the city of your birth.” It is important that Grotius was the first to discover the relationship of the world of thought and language between the Epistle to the Hebrews and Philo of Alexandria.

Grotius also engages in text criticism in his New Testament work. He realizes that the text situation is basically different in the New Testament than in the Old: “The variants in the writings are countless; this anyone who compares the manuscripts knows.... to distinguish what is correct in it is an immense work, and not always successful” (*Votum pro pace*, *Opera* 3:673a,57–62). As his basis, Grotius used published editions of the koine, the “received text,” which he compared with other printed translations, such as the Syriac and Arabic. He also utilized for the first time the Codex Alexandrinus of the Greek text (from the fifth century), of which he had received a copy of the original located in London from 1628 on. The other early uncials (handwritten manuscripts in capital letters) were at the time still unknown. Grotius often suggests using the versions in these handwritten manuscripts or ancient translations. In contrast to the poor-quality handwritten manuscripts Erasmus had used for his edition of the Greek New Testament (see above, p. 54) and the Textus Receptus generally, this was a considerable advance.

The apologetic work *De veritate religionis Christianae* defends the truth of the Christian religion among other ways by the trustworthiness of the Scriptures. It is striking that this first appears in book 3, after Grotius has demonstrated in book 1 that there is only one God and in book 2 that Christianity is the true religion. Already the title to chapter 2 stresses a thought important for the trustworthiness of the Bible: “That the

books that bear a name stem from those whose name they bear" (*Opera* 3:50a,27–28). "That is to say, those whose names they bear were either prophets or exceptionally trustworthy men; such a one was Ezra, too, who is said to have collected them into one volume" (*De veritate* 3.16, *Opera* 3:56b,11–14). Not only what Moses passed down "but the history thereafter also has many pagan witnesses" (*Opera* 3:56b,18–19). In the case of writings whose authors are unknown, such as Hebrews, or doubtful, such as the Johannine Epistles and Revelation, their authority emerges from their quality. "Since those who wrote the books over which we now dealt attest to have lived in the original age and to have been distinguished by apostolic gifts, this must suffice us" (*De veritate* 3.4, *Opera* 3:50b,37–40). It is worth noting that Grotius fully acknowledges the uncertainty of the authorship of several New Testament writings (so even 2 Peter, in whose first verse he considers the words "Peter and apostle" as additions, and Jude, which he ascribes to Hadrian's day), and to this extent represents therefore a historical-critical viewpoint.

He is also sometimes skeptical in the case of the Old Testament, as in the case of the Book of the Preacher (Qoheleth), which because of the later terminology could not have been by Solomon (preface to Ecclesiastes, *Opera* 1:258b), and Job, which he places in the Babylonian exile for similar reasons (203a). But this insight cannot shake the trustworthiness of these writings for him. The authority of the Gospels is founded first on the fact that Christ's teaching has divine authority, because he himself was God's Son (letter 640, to P. Dupuy, Molhuysen 2:73). His divinity was confirmed by his miracles and his resurrection. The New Testament authors wrote what they knew of; they had no reason to lie. "It follows that what they wrote is true, because everything false ordinarily emerges from ignorance or from evil intent" (*De veritate* 3.5, *Opera* 3:51a,10–13). Their trustworthiness, however, is also based on their person: Matthew, John, Peter, and Jude belong to the twelve apostles Jesus chose, James was either an apostle or a relative of Jesus whom the apostles established as bishop in Jerusalem, Mark a companion of Peter; Luke was born in Palestine and was able to still speak with eyewitnesses of Jesus. The writer of the Apocalypse could no more err with respect to what was revealed to him than the author of the Hebrews in that which was shared with him by the Spirit or the apostles (*Opera* 3:51a–b). Also, the miracles worked by the apostles and evangelists and occurring near their graves confirm their authority (51b–52a). It is by linking the truth of what is testified to the person of the witness that Grotius differs from the strict belief in verbal inspiration of his orthodox opponents. In a discussion with Rivet he says of himself:

"That the prophets spoke by the spirit of God what they spoke, have written what they were ordered to write, Grotius acknowledges with his own heart. He judges the same over the Apocalypse and the predictions of the apostles. To doubt that all the words of Christ are words of God would be a crime. Over the historical writings and the moral sayings of the Hebrews he judges otherwise. It is enough that they are written with pious intent with the best faith and over the highest things.... Neither Ezra nor Luke was a prophet, but they were serious and wise men who did not wish to deceive nor be deceived" (*Rivetiani apologetici discussio, Opera* 3:722b,58–723a,7). Historical sources are to be treated differently than prophetic writings. In view of the first words of the Gospel of Luke, he asks the question: "Did Luke say: 'The word of God came to Luke,' and the Lord said to him, 'write,' as the prophets are accustomed to? Not at all the same." Instead, he wrote, "from the witnesses themselves, not revelation," "not dictated, but with reason, in sequence" (723a,19–20). Grotius clearly distinguishes between prophecy, which he acknowledges to be inspired by its own self-testimony, and historical authorship, which he ascribes to Luke as well as certain Old Testament authors, again in keeping with their own words. This is a considerable advance in knowledge for the time.

One remarkable new insight in Grotius is that none of the Evangelists adhered to the correct chronological sequence in Jesus' activity. They were free to arrange their material in accord with the intent of their narrative. "Nothing is more certain than that the authors of the Gospels arranged a great deal not in temporal order but in terms of the congruence of the materials" (on Matt 26:6; cf. on John 6:15). Most narratives in a historical presentation, it is true, can be set in their correct place, but in some cases the original place of the words of Jesus can no longer be identified. This is the case when Luke freely combined, as in Luke 6:39, in the dialogues of Luke 9:57–58, 59–60, 61–62. Not days but years, according to Grotius, are meant in Luke 13:32–33; Jesus would have then spoken these words already three years before his death. The Evangelists could also on occasion err, as in the information about the reason for the death of the Baptist in Mark 6:17–19; Matt 14:3–4, which deviates from Josephus (*Ant.* 17.5.2, 118). He is more trustworthy as a historian. Overall, however, Grotius sees a reliable historical source in the Gospels. He harmonizes contradictions between them. Nevertheless the Evangelists appear as independent authors; the idea of verbal inspiration is given up for them. Grotius also recognizes that they did not intend to be historical writers and used only material that served the proclamation of Christ (see letter 640). Yet the fundamentalist trait of trying to find, for apologetical reasons, objective

historical truths in the accounts of miracles and the resurrection accounts made him vulnerable to later rationalistic criticism. His faith also in the possibility of obtaining a historical trustworthy reconstruction of the activity of Jesus (an attempt that would later be repeated often) did not withstand such criticism.

It is less striking that Grotius considered the Bible of both Testaments as a direct source of law (e.g., in his book *De iure naturae et gentium* [*On the Law of Nature and the Peoples*], in which over the course of editions between 1525 and 1546 he made about 1,100 theological modifications). Attempts were made from the early church on to combine Stoic natural law with the authority of the Bible. For the view that natural law stemmed directly from God, he did not shy from drawing upon the opinion of Chrysippus and the Stoics, that the origin of law is to be sought in Zeus (*On the Law of War and Peace* [*De iure belli ac pacis*], Molhuysen, prolegomena, 7). But he is reserved inasmuch as (in contrast to his contemporaries, the Puritans) he does not consider the Old Testament commandments throughout as binding for Christians. Instead, he distinguishes (in the usual way) between special Jewish, Old Testament regulations, not binding on Christians, and the universally valid moral law. In the last-named respect he considers the New Testament a continuation of the Old, “for it is the nature of the New Covenant that it teaches the same things that are commanded in the Old Testament with respect to moral virtues and higher matters)” (*De iure belli* 17).

In the background is the rationalist idea of a basically moral religion with Jesus as exemplar to be followed. The “gospel” Grotius defines in his letter to P. Dupuy as “his new teaching that demands a radical change of mind and promises (for this) forgiveness of sins and eternal life. It was announced by the Baptist in preparation but perfectly revealed by Christ.” According to Grotius, the love command was the core of the message of Jesus (*Annotationes* to Rom 15:7; cf. to Eph 1:4). The ethical emphasis in Grotius’s theology is obvious, although he advocated the forgiveness of sins by Christ’s atoning death (especially in his work, *De satisfactione*, 1621 [*On Satisfaction*]). Yet traditional dogmatic statements, which he completely accepted, play a merely subordinate role for his theology. In his work *De dogmatis, ritibus et gubernatione ecclesiae Christianae* (*On the Dogmas, Rites, and Governance of the Christian Church*), he distinguishes three groups of dogmas. In first place are those “that have in themselves the power to awaken piety and righteousness in the soul, such as the commandments and promises of Christ, for which Christ’s example to fulfill the will of God in his life and death confers great authority” (*Opera*

3:752a). Then in the second and third places follow first the central statements of the confession of faith and the complicated questions of the doctrine of the Trinity, the two natures, and so forth. It is not surprising that in his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (*Opera* 2.1:30–93) Grotius discusses at greater length than any other passages in the Gospels the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7), which in his view contains the “new law” of Christ announced at a second Sinai (on Matt 5:1). (He had begun his interpretation of the New Testament with this piece, too.) He devotes more than two folio pages (*Opera* 2.1:34–36a) to the statement in Matt 6:17 about the continued validity of the law, while Jesus’ call for conversion in Matt 4:17 is completely ignored. On 2 Cor 5:17 Grotius declares: “Whoever confesses Christ is like a new man and to be judged by the progress he makes along the way of Christ” (*Opera* 2.2:842a). He represents a typical humanist piety that in terms of content is clearly distinct from the Reformation doctrine of sin and justification. On Rom 1:17 (a key passage for justification in Luther), Grotius comments, “The gospel teaches in a more perfect way how one is to live,” and adduces as biblical passages for this Isa 62:1; 66:1 (*Opera* 2.2:675b). He can indeed use the traditional formulas that to be justified “does not happen to anyone outside of faith in Jesus Christ” (*Opera* 2.2:725b), but this occurs in the opening to Rom 9 in delimiting the claim of election of the Jews. Vice versa, Grotius elucidates the statement “without the works of the law” at Rom 3:28, another of Luther’s key passages, only briefly with the comment, “as occurs among pagans” (*Opera* 2.2:698a). In so doing there is either only the contrast of Jew–pagan in view or (as in Erasmus) the humanist theory of righteousness among the pagans. Despite his historical interest, then, Grotius is determined by a decisive preunderstanding and cannot be taken as a direct precursor of historical-critical exegesis.

On the other hand, he can definitely be considered a precursor of a historically developmental viewpoint. “The disintegration of the Roman Empire was revealed to John; that it was revealed to Paul cannot be shown by any argument.... It is God’s custom, as each time progresses, to reveal everything more and more plainly to those who are his own. Thus Daniel saw more than Ezekiel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah more than Isaiah (*Appendix ad interpretationem*, *Opera* 3:482b).

Grotius is also distinctive with respect to the importance he ascribed to church tradition, especially in the last years of his life. He was therefore attacked by his Protestant opponents as “Catholicizing,” while Catholic apologists claimed he had come near conversion to Catholicism at the time of his death. He defended himself at length against Rivet (*Opera*

3:723ff.): Scripture, it is true, contains everything Christians must know, believe, and do, but before the apostles wrote anything down, they must have already taught it orally. Many things were also prescribed and came into usage that did not require scriptural form, and hence a tradition arose that in the early church was then required for the interpretation of Scripture and its current application in church practice. It has its importance along with Scripture. Grotius considers this tradition altogether trustworthy. In addition, it is clear that the will of God had been known to the fathers before the origin of the Scripture. "If Scripture had been necessary for knowing the will of God, it would have already been so from the beginning" (*Opera* 3:723). In his pursuit for church unity, then, the faith of the early church and the biblical interpretation of the exegesis of the church fathers played an important role. In this regard, Grotius is indeed not far from the principles of the Council of Trent about the Scripture. He is by no means already an exegete in the modern sense.

On the other hand, Grotius's influence on modern biblical exegesis by his search for a historical approach to the biblical texts was considerable. Corresponding to it was his posthumous fame. In the foreword to the new edition of 1775–1776 of his *Annotations on the Old Testament*, J. C. Döderlein writes to the admirers of the "immortal Grotius": "Who among the theologians draws on any of the theological commentaries that are worth their price without noting that they all ... have drawn whatever good material in philosophical things they contain from these streams" (Vogel 2:3). Herder still recommended that students read the commentaries of Grotius, and Abraham Kuenen, a leading representative of critical exegesis of the nineteenth century, considered Grotius one of the most important precursors of modern biblical criticism.

3.3. DEFENDING THE BIBLE AS INSPIRED: ABRAHAM CALOV

Abraham Calov was born in 1612 in Mohrungen (East Prussia), the son of Peter Calov, the bursar of the Electoral Prince Georg Wilhelm of Brandenburg-Prussia (ruled 1619–1640 in Prussia). After attending school in Mohrungen, Thorn, and Königsberg, he studied philosophy in Königsberg from 1625 to 1632, concluding the study with the master's degree. Decisive for his later position was above all the influence of his theological teacher Cölestin Myslenta (1588–1653), who schooled him in biblical philology as well. Myslenta was one of the chief representatives of strict Lutheran orthodoxy, which successfully defended the Lutheran character of East Prussia against the politics of tolerance issuing from the court

of Berlin after the conversion of the Elector Johann Sigismund (ruled 1608–1619). Calov followed his example as the most important representative of Lutheran high orthodoxy. From 1634 to 1637, Calov worked in Rostock as a master of philosophy. His *Metaphysica divina* (*Divine Metaphysics*, 1636) is an Aristotelian-determined ontology relating to nature and the mysteries of Scripture. After his theological promotion under Johannes Quistorp in 1637, Calov returned to Königsberg, where beginning in 1640 he worked as an assistant professor with unusual success as a teacher. From 1643 to 1650 Calov was pastor of the Trinity church and rector of the academic gymnasium in Danzig. He fought on behalf of the Lutheran affiliation of this Hanseatic city against the Reformed and Socinians. As one of the city's representatives he traveled to the Colloquy of Thorn (1645) sponsored by King Vladislav IV (ruled 1632–1648) of Poland, which sought (without success) to promote reconciliation between the Polish religious parties. He waged a literary battle against the Helmstadt union theology of Georg Calixt (1586–1656), which—like the Brandenburg-Prussia politics of tolerance in Königsberg—he repudiated as “syncretism.” In 1650 he pursued a call to Wittenberg University; in 1652 he became general superintendent, in 1660 *professor primarius*.

The syncretistic dispute broke out again in 1661 because of the Cassel Colloquy, the outcome of which was that Landgrave Wilhelm IV of Hesse-Cassel (ruled 1650–1663) was able to agree to a “church peace” between the Lutherans and the Reformed in his land. The disputed points of the Lord's Supper, predestination, Christology, and baptism were judged to be nonfundamental in Calixt's sense. Here, and in similar efforts in Brandenburg, he took part through various polemical works defining Lutheranism. He was finally issued an injunction prohibiting him from publishing polemical works in electoral Saxony. The dispute did not end until his death in 1686.

Despite the numerical preponderance of dogmatic and polemical writings (against Socinians, the Reformed, Calixtians, Catholics, and Remonstrants) among Calov's numerous publications, he held fast to the priority of biblical theology. Thus he emphasized in the foreword to readers of the *Biblia Novi Testamenti illustrata*: “What is more useful than biblical theology? Theology without Scripture is not even deserving of its name. A theologian who speaks without Scripture should be ashamed!” At the time, it should be added, a separation between dogmatic and biblical theology was unknown. Dogmatic statements in Protestantism, as before, required a biblical foundation. False is the charge that the orthodox interpretation of Scripture saw in the Bible only a collection

of prooftexts (*dicta probantia*) with which pre-given dogmatic statements could be subsequently confirmed. It is quite the opposite: dogmatic statements were derived from Scripture and could be considered correct only if they agreed with it. This, of course, does not happen without biases, but these were in line with what was pre-established in Lutheran or Reformed theology as Reformational knowledge, such as the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of the representative atoning death of Christ. But there also are publications of Calov in which the Holy Scripture is expressly the center. It is characteristic of Calov that they usually had a polemic-apologetic occasion. But it must also be considered that he was a successful preacher for decades. He would have been unable to imagine theology without biblical practice.

An important work for his understanding of the Bible is *Criticus sacer Biblicus* (*The Critic of the Holy Bible*; 1646; 2nd ed., 1673). The catalyst providing the occasion for the book's origin was Johannes Morinus (1591–1659). Morinus, a Catholic theologian, had published for theologically polemical purposes a work, *Exercitationes biblicae de hebraei graecique textus sinceritate* (*Biblical Exercises on the Authenticity of the Hebrew and Greek Text*, 1633), in which he sought to demonstrate the corruption of the Hebrew text and the higher value of the Septuagint (hence the Vulgate). Since the Reformation declared “Scripture alone” (*sola scriptura*) to be one of its fundamental articles and Luther had accepted the Hebrew canon as binding (in such a way that the so-called deuterocanonical writings contained additionally in the Vulgate were not acknowledged as canonical), a core confessional issue was touched on. Calov argued not only against Morinus but particularly Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), who earned this attention as an important representative of Counter-Reformation exegesis.

The organization of the work is in precise alignment with the points of controversy between the orthodox Lutheran and Roman Catholic views of the Bible of the time. One of the first inquiries (*Diatrise* 1–40) has to do with the inspiration and the scope of the Old Testament canon. The basic claim is: “All divine books of the Old Testament are written by prophets ... for it is necessary that all canonical books are inspired by God [2 Tim 3:16 was the key proof of the doctrine of inspiration], or by the authors of whom it is certain that they were inspired by God” (5). The other books in the extended canon are not this. Calov endeavored to demonstrate that the canon could embrace only the books written in Hebrew (and Chaldean [Aramaic]). In so doing, the canonicity of the deuterocanonical writings was contested. A second reason for this, according to Calov,

is that “each canonical book of the Old Testament is by divine intention written for the canonical use of the Hebrew church” (8). With regard to content, it is remarkable that Calov speaks here of a “Hebrew” (in other passages, of an “Israelite”) church. Although its legitimate successor is the Christian church, not the synagogue, “the Jewish religion has to its credit that it has preserved this Scripture intact (11–12). In any case, canonicity is constituted by church usage. On the other hand, the second investigation (40–71) argues that the authority of the Holy Scriptures is not dependent on the church’s judgment but confirmed by the witness of the Scripture itself. The third investigation serves to demonstrate that the Hebrew language was the original language of the Old Testament, one of the reasons mentioned being that it is found there in purest form (80–81). A fourth, especially lengthy, train of argumentation (90–145) deals with the origin of the Hebrew letters in the Old Testament and, above all, the authenticity of the pointing. Its descent, which we know today—it goes back to the medieval Masoretes—still remained polemically disputed for a long time, although the proof was already published: *Arcanum punctuationis revelatum* (*The Mystery of Punctuation Revealed*, published anonymously in 1624). Its author is Ludwig Capellus (1585–1658). The Basel Hebraists Johann Buxtorf, father (1564–1629) and son (1599–1664), had already countered doubts about their authenticity, which were raised by the Roman Catholic side especially—their intention being to remove one of the chief weapons of their theology from under the feet of the Protestants—with their thesis that the Old Testament text had remained totally intact at least since Ezra.

Calov also argues for this view at length. He was, of course, aware of the view advocated by “very many” that the punctuation was added to the text much later, the vocalization of which was passed on orally and only thereafter supported by vowel signs, but they are not to be so acknowledged, because then the reliability of the text would rest only on human, hence fallible, tradition (the tradition of the “Jewish church” is purely human). For an infallible, divinely inspired wording it is necessary instead that the points were revealed at the same time as the letters (90–92). Consequently, he does not even want to admit that the so-called *tiqqune soferim* (improvements of the text by the Masoretes) are legitimate, for divine providence could not have permitted all the manuscripts of the Holy Scripture to be corrupt (153). Herein an admission is made: individual manuscripts might definitely exhibit errors, yet this could be corrected on the basis of others that remained intact. Thus the purity of the Old Testament texts is demonstrated in detail once again in a sixth

process of investigation (161–204). Since this remained unscathed, it also deserves priority in text-critical questions (200). A section on the original New Testament text (seventh investigation, 205–21) follows. An important recognition is stated: the New Testament was written in Hellenistic Greek (218). Attached to this is a discussion (eighth investigation, 221–68) of the purity of the New Testament texts. Here, of course, Calov must admit that the diverse New Testament manuscripts are not without scribal errors, but in numerous individual cases that he discusses he nonetheless repeatedly reaches the conclusion that the original text is demonstrable in the most and most reliable manuscripts. This applies, for example, even for the section about the adulteress in John 8:1–11, which Luther had not found in the manuscript he translated and therefore left out of consideration in his German Bible. Against this, however, Calov mentions that Beza encountered it in one very old manuscript, and it is therefore original (238–482). Other controversial texts were handled in a similar fashion. Very lengthy also is then the section (ninth investigation, 269–617) discussing the authenticity of the Vulgate, to which a concluding section (482–617) on the Septuagint is attached. It is important that orthodoxy worked with text-critical observations, but they finally served to confirm the version considered authoritative.

The Bible was confirmed with respect to its contents as well. This applies, for example, to biblical chronology. The figures in the Old Testament are authentic; contradictions are harmonized. It is characteristic that in the title of the German Bible work appearing in 1681 the explanation states: “Which is the 5681st year from the creation of the world.” Also striking here is how faith statements (e.g., “It is not really to be believed that the Holy Spirit contradicted himself either in calculating the years from the exodus from Egypt to the rule of Solomon ... or in the numbering of the generations before Abraham,” 570) could be found alongside complicated arguments. The standpoint taken seems ultraconservative from today’s vantage point. It is worth noting, however, how much scholarship is concealed behind these remarks. Calov had a command of not only biblical and postbiblical Hebrew but Syriac and Arabic as well as Latin and Greek. He knew not only the Christian and classical tradition from the church fathers to the modern philologists and theologians, but also the Jewish tradition. An intimate knowledge of the Bible is a self-evident presupposition. Calov by no means dodges disputed questions either but engages in constant debate over contested individual texts with Bellarmine and others in greatest detail. By way of example, he defends the originality of the reading of the Hebrew text in Zech 9:9, “one, who

is saved," against the reading in the Septuagint and Vulgate (which even Luther took over). The rationale is partly philological, "the sources are not to be judged by the translations, but the translations by the sources," and partly biblical-theological. According to Heb 5:7–9, the Messiah Jesus Christ has been first saved from death himself so that he can become the Savior for others (191).

As we see, the viewpoints have decisively narrowed as compared to the situation at the beginning of the Reformation. Luther was still able to discount entire books of the Old and New Testament without any misgivings because he was directed by a central content of Scripture: "whatever promotes Christ." The motto "Scripture alone" applies only in context with "Christ alone." Already in Melancthon are the makings for what then becomes the main thing in orthodoxy. The prooftexts of Scripture serve as the means of proving the truth of theological statements, and the question now becomes more and more decisive whether the text has been preserved unfalsified from the time of original revelation to the present. Thus, scholastic ways of thinking again came to the fore; dogmatics governed exegesis. Skilled Roman Catholic controversial theologians attacked this weak point of the Protestant position and now forced a correspondingly narrow defense.

On the other hand, the close connection to Scripture in orthodoxy is maintained, and hence the Lutheran (or Reformed) position is preserved in essential statements of doctrine. Calov deals with the theological significance of Scripture in various contexts. For example, in his later work *Apodeixis articulorum fidei* (*Evidence of the Articles of Faith*, 1684), the baroque title in its entirety is itself important: *Evidence of the Articles of Faith from Scriptural Passages Alone, Their Context, Preceding and Following as Well as Parallel [Passages], Corresponding to the Sources, Hebrew and Greek, as Demonstrating What Is to Be Believed, Which Can Serve as a Guideline to Decide for Certain All-Contested Theses from the Holy Scriptures and to Confirm the Truth of Faith Reliably*. Significant in this are both the principle—articles of faith can be proved as obligatory truth only from the Scripture—as well as the method: it is the early rabbinic exegesis already known to us (see *History* 1:105–18) and the "plain" interpretation throughout church history, which views the entire Bible on one level and considers for the understanding of a statement the context as well as parallel passages (wherever they occur). A historical development within Scripture does not come into view. The entire Bible becomes a dogmatic textbook that can lay claim to genuine truth. An important presupposition in this is the christological interpretation of the Old Testament,

which makes the two Testaments theologically a unity. A distinction with regard to time of origin loses its significance if all the authors of the Old Testament books, beginning with Moses, are considered to be prophets whose words were inspired by the Spirit and who therefore also had the gift of foreseeing the future centuries away. Grotius, as we saw, made stark differentiations here and articulated precisely this in contrast to the orthodox view of uniformity.

Before themes of dogmatic content are handled, the Holy Scripture is itself thematized. Calov writes on *The Principle of Theology, Divine Revelation* (29ff.) and in it offers an introductory definition: "Holy Scripture is by divine revelation and inspiration not only in principle ... but also with respect to the individual and the whole that is contained in it, not only with respect to the sense or the intent of what is said but also with respect to the phraseology and the words themselves, just as the individual works are directed to the prophets and apostles by the Holy Spirit as they are contained in Scripture" (§4.29). Further definitions appear: Holy Scripture is "sound to its individual words and punctuation marks, as it comes from the hand of the prophets and apostles and is further preserved until the end to the world" (§5.32–33). It is "worthy of belief [*autopistos*] in itself from itself and deserves faith because is the word of God ... because God said it, not because our understanding conceives it and understands it to be true" (§6.35). Section 7 (37) reads: "The Holy Scripture transmits perfectly and sufficiently everything that is necessary for a Christian life and faith.... Therefore for all controversies of faith and religion, the undeniable and sole infallible judge is the Holy Scripture or the Holy Spirit who speaks and decides." Section 9 (43) speaks of understanding Scripture: "Holy Scripture is clear in all things necessary to be known for salvation, and it is its own interpreter [*interpretes sui ipsius*] so that it can be understood by all who appropriately inquire." Section 10 (46) adds that no one ought to be excluded from its reading or research. Section 11 (48) stresses that, although all sorts of figurative speech appear in Scripture, yet a definite teaching is always meant, neither anything ambiguous nor several senses but only one sense in each case. According to section 12, this sense must be understood from the context. Each of these theses is then substantiated in subdivisions. The chapter as a whole contains a complete doctrine of Scripture and can serve as an example for similar sections, as they customarily appear at the start of orthodox dogmatics. In Calov himself one finds the same, for example, as early as in his writing against the Socinians coming from his early Wittenberg years, *Socinianismus profligatus* (*Profligate Socinianism*, 1652). Even in this polemical work

the proposition "On the Foundation of Faith, the Holy Scriptures" (2.57) is the presupposition for everything that follows. It shows that orthodoxy by no means sought to bind biblical understanding to dogmatic presuppositions, as it has sometimes been accused. To the contrary, the Bible is the presupposition and the sole material from which dogmatic statements can be developed, down even to the smallest detail. It is characteristic of the orthodox position that the two premises, inspiration and faith, stand behind every argument as self-evident points of departure. The Bible is thus from the outset far away from critical questions. One will find many parallels to this view in the significance the Qur'an holds for Islam today. Such a position provides a great deal of inward certainty, but many possibilities of conversation with others, too.

In his later years Calov wrote two more voluminous biblical works. The Latin *Biblia Veteris Testamenti illustratae* and the *Biblia Novi Testamenti illustrata* (*Illustrated Bible of the Old and the New Testaments*, 1672–1676; new edition, 1719) is an erudite investigation in which Calov polemizes against other views. He directs himself against Grotius particularly; the text of his *Annotationes* to the two Testaments is reprinted in full in the left column, the refutation on the right hand. Here also it is preceded by a reflection on the principles of interpretation giving a negative account of the causes of mistaken biblical interpretation (*Biblia Veteris Testamenti* 1:14ff.). Among these causes are the overestimation of rabbinic exegesis, excessive references to pagan authors, preference for patristics and scholastics, and, finally, "skepticism and Pyrrhonism" (after Pyrrhon, third century B.C.E), that is, the bad habit of asking for every conceivable interpretation instead of being content with the single correct one. Traits of the way of interpretation in Grotius and other humanists are mentioned here, of which the orthodox view could only stand over against repudiating. Vice versa, the German biblical work *The Holy Bible according to ... Dr. Martin Luther's German Translation and Explanation* (1681–1682). Introduced in the dedication are twenty-one positive principles for biblical understanding, beginning with a call for diligent, repeated reading and reflection on the Bible. These include: (1) emphasis on the literal sense (in delimitation from multiple senses, points 2 and 13), with specifics belonging to it; (2) the principle of analogy: one should attend to the "similarity of faith" (dogmatically, *analogia fidei*) and the self-interpretation of the Holy Spirit (points 9 and 12); (3) Christ as the center of Scripture (point 21), including that all the prophecies refer to Christ, not, say, to David (point 10; cf. 6), and Old Testament figures and events are, although real, only types in correspondence to New Testament antitypes

on which everything depends; (4) it is concerned (traditionally Lutheran) with “healthy usage,” the practical effect of the Bible (points 14–18), that is, in accord with 1 Tim 3:16 and Rom 15:4, with sound doctrine, refutation of error, improvement of life, and instruction in righteousness.

On the baroque title page of *Biblia Novi Testamenti Illustrata* Calov’s entire program of interpretation is unfolded in nine points. It has to do with a biblical work in which

(1) the emphases (*emphases*) of the terms and the original sense of what is said are identified from the sources, context, and analogy of Scripture; (2) the most important translations are to be compared with the Greek text, the authenticity of which being proved throughout; (3) the interpretations both of ancient and of modern interpreters are identified; the fathers who are more true, the godly Luther, and other theologians are established in their own words; (4) uncertain textual passages, historical, genealogical, and other questions are explored; (5) apparent contradictions are explained; (6) various theoretical and practical questions are resolved; (7) most of the classic *loci* are handled in an appropriate way; (8) the errors of heretics and others are repudiated in clear fashion; (9) the distortions and pseudo-hermeneutics of Grotius are stopped by sound judgment, and refuted.

But of greatest importance is the primary intention, printed in capital letters: “What is pursued with zeal above all is to demonstrate and confirm a single literal sense of Scripture overall.” In this respect, Calov is a true student of Luther.

Here an exegetical program develops that includes all the traditional steps of method, in so doing above all lays worth on the classical theological view of Scripture in keeping with the Lutheran tradition, but in this respect is above all apologetically oriented, as can be seen in the lengthy debate with Hugo Grotius, whose significance for the history of interpretation and so also the danger for his own system Calov clearly recognized.

With the distance of time, we see the strengths and weaknesses of the viewpoints more clearly than contemporaries did. The path to the critical exegesis of the following centuries led from Grotius rather than from Calov. Orthodoxy in its late phase had to struggle, finally succumbing to Pietism, on the one side, and historical criticism, on the other. On the other hand, it kept alive the most important theological knowledge of the Reformation, though by narrowing the focus to somewhat “frozen” revelation bound to the biblical book. One should also not over-

look the individual exegetical observations, which are sound on many points. Unfortunately, these voluminous works have not been reissued since the eighteenth century. A new printing would be something to undertake. In Calov's preaching, sustained by personal piety, we see that orthodoxy was by no means lifeless. Whoever assumes it was has fallen victim to the polemics of its opponents.

CONCLUDING WORD

The third volume of our presentation has led us through a turbulent epoch. While the Middle Ages despite all historical vicissitudes seems in retrospect as a period largely unified culturally and theological-historically in which traditional literature played a leading role, between the fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries a series of far-reaching cultural and intellectual upheavals took place.

Reconsideration of antiquity begins at the start of this period. Classical literature, largely slumbering unnoticed in dusty manuscripts in monastic libraries, was awakened to new life. The newly discovered art of printing enabled the appearance of printed editions that assured the most important works of antiquity a distribution hitherto inconceivable. At the same time, the humanists put their efforts into the classical languages. In contrast to the Latin language of the church and scholarship of the Middle Ages, unruly but living, Cicero becomes the model of a rediscovered, purified Latin, Quintilian the master of grammar and rhetoric, both of whom were to be emulated. Greek also rises to new life and is taught in humanist academies and universities of humanist stamp. This also was to be of benefit to the understanding of the Bible: Lorenzo Valla had discovered the original New Testament text; John Colet made the epistles of Paul come alive for a wide audience. While Erasmus still had to use the Vulgate edition as its basis, his edition of the *Novum Instrumentum* (later, *Novum Testamentum*) put the original New Testament text in the hands of everyone interested in it.

Even Hebrew, hitherto cared for by Judaism alone, is made available to Christian biblical interpreters. Inseparably connected with this undertaking, after the beginning Manetti made, is the name of Reuchlin, who first laid the overall foundations for this by lexicon and grammar. The original text of the entire Bible was now available for Christian exegesis.

The linguistic presuppositions opened by humanism—not the humanist picture of the world with man, his worth, and his actions at its center—formed the basis for the Reformation movement that with the

great Reformers Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin as well as their numerous associates brought the unity of medieval culture to its end. The Reformers failed in their goal of a new formation of the entire church, due to the old church's resistance backed by the political powers; the outcome of their work was the emergence of separated, although once again inner-evangelical, confessional churches. Indirectly, however, it set in motion a reform process even within the Roman Catholic Church, which called forth new spiritual powers in the Counter-Reformation. The Bible played a central role for the Reformation, which Luther repaid above all by his discovery of justification by faith alone in his interpretation of the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans. His German biblical translation, which put the Holy Scripture in the hands of the laity, was also epoch-making, first in that it called to life a new form of popular piety bound to Scripture and also in that it first created the overall foundation for a German written language.

Zwingli and Calvin were the most influential of the Reformers, who, against the backdrop of urban governments, aimed at forming a common public life by unified secular and churchly action and brought it about within their own areas of influence. For this also the Bible supplied the standards. While holding firm to the basic theological insights of the Reformation, they created in the process another type of ecclesial and political culture, which expanded in western Europe and the United States especially and became influential there into the present.

In addition to the Reformers of the people's churches, individuals and groups who separated themselves from the main stream of Reformation called upon the Bible. Various labels have been used to characterize them. Luther called them "enthusiasts" (*Schwärmer*), a term that the free churches, their successors today, consider derogatory. The label suits the spiritualists best, but the Bible greatly receded into the background among them because they gave priority to the direct inspiration of the Spirit, the inner word over the external word. As a typical representative we have learned of Sebastian Franck: We could have dealt with Caspar Schwenckfeld as well. The groups that can be called "radical" Reformers are those for whom the implementation of Reformation did not go far enough because they repudiated its political considerations and demanded a literal implementation of the Bible, understood as a collection of unconditional commandments. The Zurich Baptists are an example of this position; the Baptist kingdom of Münster represents a situation in which the Baptist circle gained political power in a city and took the standards for their government predominantly from the Old Testament. Pilgram

Marpeck is noteworthy precisely because he approached the Old Testament with reserve. In reworking Rothmann's "Confessions," he set out in relief his own position, which focuses on the New Testament.

The Reformation's central reference to Holy Scripture provoked a reaction among adherents of the old faith, which for its part now again ascribes a significant place to the Bible. To represent the large number of Catholic exegetes active in this period, we gave the word to Maldonatus. This is warranted in that the Jesuits were the most active champions of the Counter-Reformation, that in so doing they developed a wide-ranging educational activity, and that representatives of "positive," that is, exegetical, theology in the universities frequently belonged to the Jesuits. In so doing they worked overall very successfully in terms of their mandate. But they did not make substantial contributions to the methodological progress of exegesis. Their dogmatic and disciplinary boundedness prevented this.

It is otherwise with Hugo Grotius. As a later representative of humanist tradition, he embodied its classical education in its fullness, passing it on and putting it to use in the service of biblical interpretation. Its humanistic ideals are his as well. Among them were his efforts, though of no avail, for a reconciliation of the separated churches. Pointing toward the future, however, is his historical interest, which often surfaces in his biblical exegesis and gained him recognition from later representatives of historical criticism, although this was itself unknown to him. His legacy remains alive today in the Netherlands, to the history of which his shifting fortune is closely tied.

Finally, (Lutheran) orthodoxy should not be forgotten, the biblical understanding of which may indeed many times seem to readers today fundamentalist but which had nourished a much more positive relationship to the Reformation tradition and more lively dealings with Scripture than the opinion spread widely by its opponents, the Pietists, suggests. We meet in Abraham Calov one of its most outstanding representatives. He worked at a time when orthodoxy was still dominant in many theological faculties. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, still within the last years of Calov's lifetime, this position already began to totter.

The departing seventeenth century brought an epoch to its end. New developments made themselves known in various lands of central and western Europe. Hence it seems appropriate to delve into them in a fourth and final volume of this series, which is to set forth the history of biblical interpretation in a number of its most important representatives until nearly to the present.

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