

LUTHER'S WORKS

LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 10

FIRST LECTURES ON THE PSALMS I

Psalms 1–75

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Editor

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General Introduction

THE first editions of Luther's collected works appeared in the sixteenth century, and so did the first efforts to make him "speak English." In America serious attempts in these directions were made for the first time in the nineteenth century. The Saint Louis edition of Luther was the first endeavor on American soil to publish a collected edition of his works, and the Henkel Press in Newmarket, Virginia, was the first to publish some of Luther's writings in an English translation. During the first decade of the twentieth century, J. N. Lenker produced translations of Luther's sermons and commentaries in thirteen volumes. A few years later the first of the six volumes in the Philadelphia (or Holman) edition of the *Works of Martin Luther* appeared. Miscellaneous other works were published at one time or another. But a growing recognition of the need for more of Luther's works in English has resulted in this American edition of Luther's works.

The edition is intended primarily for the reader whose knowledge of late medieval Latin and sixteenth-century German is too small to permit him to work with Luther in the original languages. Those who can, will continue to read Luther in his original words as these have been assembled in the monumental Weimar edition (*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*; Weimar, 1883 ff.). Its texts and helps have formed a basis for this edition, though in certain places we have felt constrained to depart from its readings and findings. We have tried throughout to translate Luther as he thought translating should be done. That is, we have striven for faithfulness on the basis of the best lexicographical materials available. But where literal accuracy and clarity have conflicted, it is clarity that we have preferred, so that sometimes paraphrase seemed more faithful than literal fidelity. We have proceeded in a similar way in the matter of Bible versions, translating Luther's translations. Where this could be done by the use of an existing English version — King James, Douay, or Revised Standard — we have done so. Where it could not, we have

supplied our own. To indicate this in each specific instance would have been pedantic; to adopt a uniform procedure would have been artificial — especially in view of Luther's own inconsistency in this regard. In each volume the translator will be responsible primarily for matters of text and language, while the responsibility of the editor will extend principally to the historical and theological matters reflected in the introductions and notes.

Although the edition as planned will include fifty-five volumes, Luther's writings are not being translated in their entirety. Nor should they be. As he was the first to insist, much of what he wrote and said was not that important. Thus the edition is a selection of works that have proved their importance for the faith, life, and history of the Christian church. The first thirty volumes contain Luther's expositions of various Biblical books, while the remaining volumes include what are usually called his "Reformation writings" and other occasional pieces. The final volume of the set will be an index volume; in addition to an index of quotations, proper names, and topics, and a list of corrections and changes, it will contain a glossary of many of the technical terms that recur in Luther's works and that cannot be defined each time they appear. Obviously Luther cannot be forced into any neat set of rubrics. He can provide his reader with bits of autobiography or with political observations as he expounds a psalm, and he can speak tenderly about the meaning of the faith in the midst of polemics against his opponents. It is the hope of publishers, editors, and translators that through this edition the message of Luther's faith will speak more clearly to the modern church.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN
HELMUT LEHMANN

Introduction to Volume 10

VOLUME 10 presents the first half of Luther's first lectures on the Bible, often referred to as *Initium theologiae Lutheri* ("The Beginning of Luther's Theology"). Johann von Staupitz had persuaded Luther to pursue advanced studies to qualify for the degree of *Doctor in Biblia* and had moved Frederick the Wise to provide funds for promoting Luther's doctorate on the promise that Luther would be a great asset to the University of Wittenberg as lecturer on the Bible. Staupitz himself had held this position with distinction but was now vacating it because of his duties as vicar general of the Augustinians. On October 22, 1512, the new doctor was with appropriate ceremony received as a colleague by the faculty senate and apparently immediately began his preparations for lectures on the Psalms.

These preparations included providing the Latin text of the Vulgate for the convenience of the students. Accordingly, Luther contracted with Johann Grunenberg to print, in a special edition with wide margins and generous interlinear spaces, the Latin text of the Psalter together with appropriate headings and short summaries of the contents of the individual psalms. Into the white space of one of these printed copies Luther then wrote his own interlinear and marginal notes, copied perhaps from slips of paper used during his preparation. These notes are the so-called glosses — brief explanations, mostly of a grammatical and philological nature, of individual words and phrases of the Biblical text. The students were expected to enter into their own, identical copies of the Psalter what Luther dictated from his. This was the normal way to begin such lectures. The glosses would then be followed by the so-called scholia — a wider interpretation of as many phrases or statements of the text as the lecturer chose, touching theological concepts and questions near and far and providing a wide range of support from Scripture generally and from the works of previous recognized interpreters. Again Luther had carefully written out his scholia in complete sentences, but in the lecture hall he may have spoken freely on the basis of his written plans,

adding new ideas that came to mind and deleting whatever by that time may have seemed less appropriate. In the case of the first lectures on the Psalms only Luther's own preparations, however, are extant, and we have no tangible record of what was taken down, and therefore actually said, in the lecture hall. It is of course possible that Luther in this new role began by staying very close to his manuscript and then, as he felt moved by the power of the Word he was treating, dared to depart more and more from the planned program. In a letter to Georg Spalatin written when the lectures were about complete and when there was thought of publishing them, Luther refers to these lectures as *mea dictata super Psalterium*, but this hardly proves anything regarding the method of their delivery.¹ The lectures seem to have begun about the middle of August 1513 and may have continued until the fall of 1515.

Both the glosses and the scholia have come down to us in a single manuscript each. The glosses are preserved in the only extant copy of the Psalter printed by Grunenberg and dated July 8, 1513, containing Luther's interlinear and marginal notes in his own hand. This is the so-called Wolfenbüttel Psalter, preserved in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Lower Saxony. The scholia manuscript, also in Luther's own hand, was most recently preserved in the Landesbibliothek in Dresden, but in the confusion of World War II the original was lost, and now only a photocopy of it remains. Both manuscripts are now available to scholars in microfilm.

Our translation is based on the texts of these manuscripts as published in Vols. III (1885) and IV (1886) of the Weimar edition and as corrected in our own time. Scholars had for some time been hoping to reissue these volumes with improvements in accuracy of transmission of the original text. A commission had hardly begun its work in 1939, when World War II brought it to a halt. But in 1950 the work was resumed, and it has borne fruit in the publication of four fascicles (two each in 1963 and 1973) of what is to be Vol. LV of the Weimar edition eventually. These fascicles have been of inestimable help in providing corrections in the original Latin text and especially in identifying many of Luther's sources. In addition to these helps, our translator has had the benefit of receiving through the kindness of the present editor of Vol. LV of the Weimar edition, Prof. Dr.

¹ For the letter in question and the problem of its date, see *Luther's Works*, 48, pp. 18—19. For additional information regarding the style of Luther's early lectures, see *Luther's Works*, 25, pp. ix—xii.

Reinhard Schwarz, now of the University of Munich, a complete list of the corrections made in the original text. We are indeed grateful for this service.

Our translation of these lectures on the Psalms restricts itself to the scholia, drawing on the glosses commentary occasionally in the footnotes, but only when a point made in the glosses seems necessary for the understanding of the scholia text or when Luther himself refers to his glosses comment in the scholia. For more than one third of the psalms, however, no scholia are preserved, either because Luther did not write them out or because his manuscript was lost. Such psalms are therefore not represented at all in this collection. For Vol. 10, which extends to Ps. 75, the psalms not treated are 3, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 43, 46, 47, 48, 61, 67.

As Luther discoursed at greater length on theological themes chosen for the scholia on the basis of a psalm, he allowed himself great freedom to dart back and forth within the psalm without observing a progression by verse numbers. Thus a given verse in the psalm may not be treated at all (the assumption being that the basic comment on it was given in the glosses), or it may receive more than one interpretation at different points in the treatment.

In general, Luther here still follows the traditional manner of his day, presenting a fourfold interpretation of a passage and labeling these interpretations as literal (or historical), allegorical, tropological, or anagogical, but in the printed preface to the Biblical text he announces from the very beginning that all prophecy and every prophet should be interpreted as speaking of Jesus Christ, "unless it is evident in clear words that the reference is to someone else."² Yet after this identification of the prophetic meaning of the Psalter, Luther is not averse to adding extended applications of the meaning according to the fourfold pattern of scholastic hermeneutics.³ His interpretations are, however, all under the control of his basic rule that none of them may come forward with anything that is not elsewhere expressly stated. "Otherwise Scripture would become a mockery."⁴ Christ is in all interpretations the beginning. Thus whenever Luther makes use of the

² Cf. p. 7 below.

³ Luther's stance in these lectures over against the exegetical tradition of his time received a particularly stimulating treatment in Gerhard Ebeling, "Luthers Psalterdruck vom Jahre 1513," *Lutherstudien*, I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971), especially pp. 109—131.

⁴ Cf. p. 4 below.

fourfold interpretation in these *Dictata super Psalterium*, he sees to it that it is under the guidance of the *sensus principalis*, which is Christ. This unity prompts him to say: "In this way all four interpretations of Scripture come together to one magnificent stream."⁵ In fact, he can lump all four under a single heading: "All of these are Christ at the same time."⁶ H. O.

⁵ Cf. p. 52 below.

⁶ Cf. p. 312 below.

**FIRST LECTURES
ON THE PSALMS
I**

Psalms 1–75

Translated by
HERBERT J. A. BOUMAN

PREFACE TO THE GLOSSES¹

I WILL sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also" (1 Cor. 14:15). To sing with the spirit is to sing with spiritual devotion and emotion. This is said in opposition to those who sing only with the flesh. And these appear in a twofold sense: The first are those who with an unsettled and weary heart sing only with the tongue and the mouth. The second are those who indeed sing with a cheerful and devout heart but are still enjoying it more in a carnal way, as, for example, taking pleasure in the voice, the sound, the staging, and the harmony. They act as boys usually do, not concerned about the meaning or the fruit of the spirit that is to be raised up to God. In the same way, to sing with the mind is to sing with spiritual understanding. And there are likewise two opposites of these: The first are those who understand nothing of what they sing, as nuns are said to read the Psalter. The others are those who have a carnal understanding of the Psalms, like the Jews, who always apply the Psalms to ancient history apart from Christ. But Christ has opened the mind of those who are His so that they might understand the Scriptures.

More often, however, the spirit enlightens the mind, the emotions, the intellect, yes, also vice versa, because the spirit lifts up to the place where the illuminating light is, whereas the mind assigns a place to the emotions. Therefore both are required, but the elevating spirit is better, etc.

Jerusalem:	allegorically: the good people tropologically: virtues anagogically: rewards
Babylon:	allegorically: the bad people tropologically: vices anagogically: punishments

¹ This preface appears in Luther's own hand on the back of the title page of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript, which contains the glosses of the early Psalm lectures.

		The killing letter	The life-giving spirit concerning the Babylonian ecclesiastical body	
Mount Zion	}	historically:	the land of Canaan	the people living in Zion
		allegorically:	the synagog or a prominent person in it	the church or any teacher, bishop, or prominent man
		tropologically:	the righteousness of the Pharisees and of the Law	the righteousness of faith or some other prominent matter
		anagogically:	the future glory after the flesh	the eternal glory in the heavens

On the contrary, Kidron Valley from the opposite point of view

In the Scriptures, therefore, no allegory, tropology, or anagogy is valid, unless the same truth is expressly stated historically elsewhere. Otherwise Scripture would become a mockery. But one must indeed take in an allegorical sense only what is elsewhere stated historically, as mountain in the sense of righteousness in Ps. 36:6:² "Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God." For that reason it is best to distinguish the spirit from the letter in the Sacred Scriptures, for this is what makes one a theologian indeed.³ And the church has this only from the Holy Spirit, not from human understanding. Thus Ps. 72:8⁴ says: "May He have dominion⁵ from sea to sea." Before the Spirit's revelation no one could know that this dominion means a spiritual dominion, especially because he adds "from sea to sea" according to the historical sense. Therefore those who interpret this dominion as

² The original manuscript has "Ps. 57." Luther usually cited Scripture from memory, it seems, and one must therefore expect to find a considerable number of inaccurate references.

³ Cf. Luther's expansion of this statement in *Luther's Works*, 26, pp. 115 f.

⁴ The original manuscript has "Ps. 7."

⁵ In his gloss to "dominion" in Ps. 72:8, Luther explains: "spiritual dominion, namely, through faith, not in a secular way, as the Jews understand it." Cf. W, III, 459, 20 f.

[W. III, 12]

referring to the flesh and to earthly majesty have the killing letter, but others have the life-giving spirit.⁶

For that reason I often understand the Psalms as referring to the Jews, because we know that what the Law says it speaks to those who are under the Law. Rom. 3:19.

⁶ Cf. Gerhard Ebeling's penetrating study "Der vierfache Schriftsinn und die Unterscheidung von *litera* und *spiritus*," G. Ebeling, *Lutherstudien*, I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971), 51—53, where Ebeling shows how Luther conceived of the entire traditional fourfold interpretation of Scripture as being governed by the overriding approach either of *litera occidens* or of *spiritus vivificans*, as his scheme here shows.

PREFACE OF JESUS CHRIST,¹
Son of God and Our Lord, to the Psalter of
DAVID

I AM the door; if anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture." John 10:9. "The words of the Holy One, the True One, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens." Rev. 3:7. "In the roll of the book it is written of Me." Ps. 40:7. "Even what I have told you from the beginning." John 8:25. "Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I"² (Is. 52:6).

THE FIRST WITNESS: MOSES

"If Thy presence will not go with me, do not carry us up from here." "And the Lord said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'" Ex. 33:15, 14.

THE SECOND WITNESS: ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET

"The Lord [Jesus Christ] is the eye, [the light and the vision] of man and all the tribes of Israel"³ (cf. Zech. 9:1).

THE THIRD WITNESS: PETER THE APOSTLE

"And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came afterwards, also proclaimed these days." Acts 3:24.

THE FOURTH WITNESS: PAUL THE APOSTLE

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." 1 Cor. 2:2.

¹ This preface was printed at the head of the Psalm texts provided for Luther and his students by Johann Grunenberg.

² At this point Luther adds the following gloss: "If the Old Testament can be interpreted by human wisdom without the New Testament, I should say that the New Testament has been given to no purpose. So Paul concluded that 'Christ died to no purpose' if the Law were sufficient (Gal. 2:21)."

³ Here Luther adds the gloss: Ps. 34:5: "Look to Him and be radiant; and your faces will never be ashamed." But others make a detour and purposely, as it were, avoid Christ, so do they put off approaching Him with the text. As for me, when I have a text that is like a nut with a hard shell, I immediately dash it against the Rock and find the sweetest kernel.

[W, III, 13]

From these we draw the following guideline for this dark, yet holy labyrinth:

Every prophecy and every prophet must be understood as referring to Christ the Lord, except where it is clear from plain words that someone else is spoken of. For thus He Himself says: "Search the Scriptures, . . . and it is they that bear witness to Me" (John 5:39). Otherwise it is most certain that the searchers will not find what they are searching for. For that reason some explain very many psalms not prophetically but historically, following certain Hebrew rabbis who are falsifiers and inventors of Jewish vanities. No wonder, because they are far away from Christ (that is, from the truth). "But we have the mind of Christ," says the apostle (1 Cor. 2:16).

Whatever is said literally concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as to His person must be understood allegorically of a help that is like Him and of the church conformed to Him in all things. And at the same time this must be understood tropologically of any spiritual and inner man against his flesh and the outer man. Let this be made plain by means of examples. "Blessed is the man who walks not, etc." (Ps. 1:1). Literally this means that the Lord Jesus made no concessions to the designs of the Jews and of the evil and adulterous age that existed in His time. Allegorically it means that the holy church did not agree to the evil designs of persecutors, heretics, and ungodly Christians. Tropologically this means that the spirit of man did not accede to the persuasions and suggestions of the inimical flesh and of the ungodly stirrings of the body of sin. Thus also Ps. 2:1 says: "Why do the nations conspire, etc." Literally this refers to the raging of the Jews and Gentiles against Christ during His suffering. Allegorically it is directed against tyrants, heretics, and ungodly leaders of the church. Tropologically it has to do with the tyranny, temptation, and tempest of the carnal and outer man who provokes and torments the spirit as the dwelling place of Christ. Thus, Ps. 3:1 reads: "O Lord, how many are my foes." This is literally Christ's complaint concerning the Jews, His enemies. Allegorically it is a complaint and accusation of the church regarding tyrants, heretics, etc. But tropologically it is a complaint, or prayer, of the devout and afflicted spirit placed into trials. In their own way we must also judge in other places, lest we become burdened with a closed book and receive no food.

PREFACE TO THE SCHOLIA¹

YOU have come, fathers and excellent men and brothers,² with unanimous and benevolent spirit, I see, to honor the opening and beginning of the study of this illustrious prophet, David. Perhaps I myself should not have failed in the duty to bestow this honor; in fact, I should have taken the lead with some prefatory remarks, obviously complimentary ones, to sing the praises of this outstanding prophet. He is certainly in every way wonderful and most excellent and most worthy of genuine praise. But it seemed more useful to me to omit this, lest I might seem to promise something splendid or lest someone might think there is something in me beyond what he sees. I am certainly aware of how this burden presses down on my shoulders, a burden with which I have wrestled in vain for some time. Compelled at last by my instructions, I give in to it. I confess frankly that even to the present day I do not understand many psalms and, unless the Lord enlightens me through your help, as I trust He will, I shall not be able to interpret them. But there are also other more necessary things that must be said regarding our subject. There is truly much toil in expounding the Psalter by Greek, Latin, and Hebrew scholars in manifold ways and, I think, more than in any other book of the Holy Scriptures. But it has not yet been worked out completely even now, so that in many places the interpretations seem to require more interpretation than the text itself, and scarcely does "night declare knowledge to night" (Ps. 19:2), and it does not transmit it. And we, too, "thought how to understand this," but behold, "it seemed to us a wearisome task," unless, perchance, this might be our light, "to go into the sanctuary of the Lord and understand concerning their end" (cf. Ps. 73:16-17), so that the sense that is first might become the last, and the last first. "But who is sufficient for

¹ In the original Dresden manuscript this preface followed the lectures on Ps. 1. Gustav Kawerau, the first Weimar editor of these lectures, moved it to the present position, but the editors of the Weimar revision (W, LV-II) have restored it to its original position.

² Luther's audience was composed of both his superiors and his peers in the Augustinian order.

[W, III, 14, 15]

these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16). Therefore, since I am undertaking to interpret a prophet, though I am certainly not a prophet nor the son of a prophet (cf. Amos 7:14), I wished, as I have said, to omit this little word of commendation and let the prophet himself show himself to you by his appearance and beauty as the one who provides his own praise. [We know, however, that free gifts are given not for private benefit but for the common good of the church; yes, they are more often given for the retribution and offense of him to whom they are given. And this brought it about that I should be even more courageous for the work in the knowledge that I would be working not only for myself but for all of you together, and from this work may God not desire or be accustomed to be absent.]³ Nevertheless, so as not to be accused of being of an ungrateful and lazy spirit, I shall set forth in a few words what is to be done. I shall not recite the glory of his reign and the brilliant military campaigns he waged in his youth, nor the uncommon humility, marvelous patience, and intense piety of him who was the first king and lion of the tribe of Judah, since, as he says, his soul does not want to make its boast in these matters, but in the Lord (cf. Ps. 34:2). I also omit that he is the illustrious root, the holy seed, the source of blessing, the stem of Jesse, the seed-grain from which the Savior of the world has sprung. These things are so very great that they could fill and adorn not one but a thousand discourses. For our theme let us hear only what he himself says concerning himself in 2 Sam. 23:1-4: "The man to whom it was appointed concerning the Christ of the God of Jacob, the excellent psalmist of Israel said: "The Spirit of the Lord has spoken by me, and His word by my tongue. The God of Israel spoke to me, the Strong One of Israel spoke, the Ruler of men, the just Ruler in the fear of God, as the light of the morning, when the sun rises, shines in the morning without clouds, and as the grass springs out of the earth after the rain.'" It would give me a great deal of pleasure to speak at length on this most beautiful and, so to say, most theological text, but now I want to be brief.⁴ However, I implore you by God, whence comes such great presumption and unique boasting beyond all prophets, and the same often repeated, that the Lord spoke by him, that by His tongue came the latter's speech, "to whom it was

³ The passage in brackets Luther added in the margin without indicating precisely where the insertion was to be placed.

⁴ In 1543 Luther did write a separate treatise on this text. See *Luther's Works*, 15, pp. 265—352.

appointed concerning the Christ of the God of Jacob, the excellent psalmist of Israel"? Other prophets used the expression "The word of the Lord came to me." This one, however, does not say, "The word of the Lord came to me," but he says, in a new manner of speaking, "His word was spoken by me." With this expression he indicates some extremely intimate and friendly kind of inspiration. Other prophets confess that they spoke, but this one declares that in a unique way it was not he who spoke but the Spirit who spoke through him. Although the Spirit spoke by all the prophets, as we sing,⁵ it is not stated thus regarding any of them.

⁵ The reference is very likely to the statement in the Nicene Creed "Who spake by the prophets."

PSALM ONE

THE first psalm speaks literally concerning Christ thus:

1. *Blessed is the man.* He is the only blessed One and the only Man from whose fullness they have all received (John 1:16) that they might be blessed and men and everything that follows in this psalm. He is “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29), “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20), so that He might also be the firstfruits of those who are awake, namely, in the Spirit. For it is also written in the roll of this book concerning Him, to do the will of God (Ps. 40:8). He is a “man” in a threefold sense: first, because He is a man of manly virtue; second, because He is not a boy to be educated but is manly in grace; third, because He has a bride. This is the Man whom a woman has embraced, because as a bridegroom He went forth not only after but also from His chamber (cf. Ps. 19:6), having His own bride from the beginning. *Who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly*, that is, He did not consent to the designs of the Jews, who afterwards crucified Him. This is the first stage in which all kinds of sins are included. For in whatever kind of sins one sins, one departs from God into the counsel of the ungodly. Ungodliness is against God and also against His worship, which is godliness. The addition of the word “counsel” denotes the vice of the will, because such people do evil on purpose and willingly, deliberately and advisedly, not out of ignorance. Some indeed act in an ungodly manner advisedly, from an evil will, while others depart into this their counsel by consenting to it ignorantly and because they are led astray.¹ *Nor has stood in the way of sinners.* The way of sinners is the very life of the ungodly, which has already been mentioned, a way upon which those who become ungodly enter. But this second stage is worse. It commits the first sin twofold, and now they are not simply ungodly, but what is more, they are sinners. The word “sin” is quite frequently used in Scripture for idolatry. But this is a double sin, to stand, to defend, to withstand one who tries to correct and recall, to

¹ Luther makes use of the scholastic distinction between *peccatum malitiae* and *peccatum ignorantiae*.

refuse to agree, like Saul, in 1 Sam. 16:15, to turn the heart to words of evil for the purpose of excusing the excuses for sins, to justify oneself after he has sinned, and thus to confirm his iniquity against God and His righteousness, that is, to repudiate God and fashion an idol for oneself, the work of his hands, to refuse confession and glory to God. This is what the Jews did against Christ then and are still doing until now. Therefore they are already not merely ungodly, involved in a simple sin, but they are also sinners in a twofold sense. Thus Jeremiah, Lam. 1:8, says: "Jerusalem sinned grievously, therefore she became unstable." He says she "sinned a sin," that is, she doubled a simple sin. In chapter 2 of the same prophet (Jer. 2:13) we read: "My people have committed two evils." This is why he said in the following, "I have not sinned" (cf. Jer. 2:23), although, of course, the people had sinned. [Prov. 30:20: "This (namely, as follows) is the way of an adulteress: she eats, and wipes her mouth, and says (that is, excusing herself), 'I have done no wrong,' that is, the synagog.]² Hence Is. 55:7 promises: "Let the wicked forsake his way . . . and the Lord will have mercy on him." But Amos 2:6³ says concerning them: "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not convert him." The "three transgressions" are all sins, namely, sins of weakness against the Father, sins of ignorance against the Son, and sins of evil or concupiscence against the Holy Spirit. But the "four transgressions" means to add to the sins already mentioned excuses with regard to them and to refuse to confess them.⁴ These cause the person to "stand in [his own] way" with a very stiff neck. And therefore he is not converted and cannot be converted, because he directly shuts the door of mercy to himself and resists the Holy Spirit and forgiveness for himself. Therefore for three crimes they might well be converted, but not for three and four at the same time. And this second stage is the

² A marginal addition without specific indication as to where it should be inserted.

³ The Weimar text has "Amos 1." In that chapter the same formula "For three transgressions, etc.," occurs five times, each time applied to a different place or people. Luther probably meant to refer to all eight occurrences of the formula in Amos 1 and 2, adding the specific reference only to the last of these, Israel, and then as a marginal note.

⁴ Concerning the "four transgressions," Jerome, *Commentaria in Biblia*, Amos 1, states: "The first sin is to have had evil thoughts. The second is to have acquiesced to evil thoughts. The third is to have made the decision in the mind to perform this in an actual deed. The fourth is not to repent once the sin has been committed and to be satisfied with the transgression." Jerome describes this interpretation as "according to tropology." *Patrologia, Series Latina*, XXV, 996.

[W. III, 16, 17]

last in itself, than which none can become worse. Then follows the third which already reaches to others; to others, I say, to corrupt them with the same plague and to draw them along into the same destruction, so that he who in the first stage committed all evils against God in the second rejected all grace of forgiveness and now in the third teaches others to do the same. Upon this follows *nor has sat in the chair of pestilence*. Ungodliness did not have a place to go to within itself, except to set itself up as righteousness. Therefore, behold, it had to go beyond itself now and proceed also to others. So the apostle says, 2 Tim. 3:13: "Evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived." This is that horrible thing that Hos. 6:10 saw in the house of Israel. Therefore the chair is the public ruling office, while pestilence is that death-dealing doctrine by which the Jews corrupted, stained, and killed themselves and their own against Christ. For Christ sits in the chair of salvation and of costly ointment of spikenard (Mark 14:3). This is therefore truly a spiritual pestilence which kills souls by a continuous slaughter. But the force of this sickness is hidden. And this is what they prophesied about themselves when they said, "And the last fraud will be worse than the first" (Matt. 27:64). For to deny that it is a sin to have crucified the Lord is worse than to have perpetrated the sin itself, that is, to do the crucifying. Therefore the last error and the last sin are unforgivable. Oh, what a horrible example that wrath is for us! Cursed be every pride that imitates that error to the present day!

2. *But his will is in the law of the Lord*, that is, not only does the hand do the law of the Lord, either compelled by the necessity of the fear of punishment or attracted by the hope of earthly gain, without any desire, but he does it with a cheerful and free will. This does not apply to those who are under the Law in a spirit of bondage in fear, but to those who are in grace and a spirit of freedom. Thence Christians are called free, *נְדָבָה* (Ps. 110:3), spontaneous and willing, because of their Christ, who is the first of this kind. But the Jews are wearisome and unwilling and in the Law only with the hand. For although the Law could restrain the hand through fear of punishment and provoke to works through the hope of good things, it could nevertheless neither loose nor bind the will inwardly; it could not, I say, loose toward freedom, nor bind its desires. For this happens only by the bonds of love, which not the Law but Christ has given in His own spirit. Thus He Himself says in Ps. 40:8: "I delight to do Thy will,

O My God; Thy law is within My heart." "I delight," He says, that is, "it is My desire, and not the compulsion of fear or the hope of gain. And therefore Thy law is not in the outer edges and skin of My heart, but in the inside, in innermost and complete dedication." But with the Jews it scarcely grazed their heart gently because of fear. Again He says: "And out of My desire I will confess to Him" (Ps. 28:7). And again: "With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to Thee" (Ps. 54:6). [Ps. 119:35: "Lead me in the path of Thy commandments, for I delight in it"; and Ps. 112:1: "Who greatly delights in His commandments."] ⁵ It must be noted, however, that the freedom and will of the Christians is not such that they are without fear (even of punishments) in the law of the Lord, since this would be false. For he who fears the future punishment and for that reason observes the Law is doing it by faith in any case, since he would not fear unless he believed. And therefore he is not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12:34). In fact, such a fear is clean and holy, because it sanctifies not only the hands but also the soul. For with that kind of fear he guards not only the work, but certainly also the will from sin. But fear induced by the Law is not like this, because there bodily punishment, both present and temporal, was feared. This is so because the Law ordered them to be killed, stoned, etc. And therefore they did not fear the future punishment by faith, but the present punishment by experience. Therefore they did not restrain the will by that kind of fear. And this useless fear — for it does not sanctify the soul, because it is not holy — holy "love casts out" (1 John 4:18), and it brings in the fear already mentioned and, being "perfect," it diminishes it yet does not entirely remove it. Therefore the first root of all good is to have delight in the law of the Lord. For nothing forced is permanent, and what is held without love and delight is not held for long, because the grain that fell on rocky ground does not have root (Matt. 13:20-21). For even the heathen poet said, "I was wrong in thinking that that kingdom which is established by force is stronger than that which is joined together by friendship." ⁶ Therefore Christ does not want His rule to rest on force and violence, because then it would not stand firm, but He wants to be served willingly and with the heart and the affections. In this way His kingdom is eternal and will not be destroyed, since it

⁵ A marginal addition without specific indication as to where it should be inserted.

⁶ Terence, *Adelphi*, 65.

[W, III, 17, 18]

does not rest on force. "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). It is for this that He gave His Spirit. Therefore, "anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him" (Rom. 8:9). But "all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). These are the ones whose delight is in the law of the Lord, since this is not something that comes out of us apart from the Spirit of God.

However, there are some even today who strive to twist this prophet's mouth and pervert his tongue. By their inflated thoughts and twisted works they want the law of the Lord to be in their pleasure and not their delight in the law of the Lord. This also the Jews wanted (beyond the fact that their delight was not in the law of the Lord, as stated above) when they desire that what pleases them, what they determine, what they affirm be acceptable to God. But in this way they set up the Law for God, as if He were bound to take what they wished and chose, rather than that they received the Law from Him in order to do what He chooses and wishes. Such people, I say, chiefly many of the religious now are. They have reserved judgment to themselves beyond the command of their superior, and they want to make their own decisions and teach him what he ought to be commanding them. Or certainly, before they do what they are ordered to do, they want him to give the reason for it and to show them why and for what purpose he issued this order. And in this they are like the Jews, who demanded a sign and said, "What sign have you to show us for doing this?" (John 2:18), that is, "give me a reason and a sign and demonstrate to me why you are giving this order." And they would not do it except because they have the arrogance to want to do the judging and not be judged, and their delight is not in His law, but precisely His law is at their pleasure. Now certainly this is not being under the superior but over him. However, the Lord gives a sign: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). And they do destroy the temple of His mystical body (that is, they scandalize and destroy the whole convent by a bad example). "And in three days," that is, by three substantial vows, it is "raised up," as if to say "O brother, behold, this is the sign, this is the reason, and none other, why I command this: Because you have promised obedience, poverty, and chastity. This reason should suffice for you, and I need not give you another. It is for you to obey. For no other sign is given you except this sign of Jonah (Matt. 12:39), namely, that in the span of three days you are in the bosom of the earth. You therefore are the one who

breaks and destroys the temple as much as lies in you, but it is for me to build it up again (by your being corrected).” These are the words of the superior to his subordinate. Otherwise, “if anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him” (1 Cor. 3:17). But alas, that desolating sacrilege is set firmly in this holy temple of God, and now is truly the time to flee to the mountains (Matt. 24:15-16).

Therefore let everyone beware most diligently, lest he ever discuss or pass judgment on the order of his superior before he carries it out! Let him not say, “Why did God command me not to eat of this tree?” (cf. Gen. 3:1 f.). It is a most certain sign of the serpent, whenever you begin to ask internally and to say with regard to a command of the superior, “Why? Why is this command given to me? This does not seem right, this is not useful, this would be better so or so, this is completely in vain, this contributes to my irritation.” And so with regard to other endless questions which this devilish why produces. For soon it arouses envy against the one who issues the command, as if he were hostile or spiteful, and one does not see what good lies in what is commanded or what purpose it serves. Therefore this very why must promptly be checked at the beginning, and one must consider, not why, but how and how quickly a thing is to be done. I call attention to this because, as with Adam in Paradise, God, through the superior, does not always command what is useful or necessary, or great, but often a single sign is given so that the thoughts of the hearts might be revealed, and no other fruit than obedience alone is sought. For just as in the case of Adam, where only one command was given him as a sign by which his obedience might be tested, so now a mean command and a lowly sign is sometimes given. But a great obedience is there neglected when it is changed into a sign that is spoken against, and then their thoughts are revealed (cf. Luke 2:34-35), because they are proud and arrogate judgment to themselves. Thus it becomes a sign of destruction to them, and a sword of grief and affliction pierces the soul of the superior who is the mother of that convent. This, then, is the folly of the fools, that they measure the greatness of obedience by the greatness of the work, or its smallness and meanness by the meanness of the work commanded. God does not want sacrifice but obedience (1 Sam. 15:22). He does not care about our great works, because He Himself can do greater works. All He asks for is obedience. So also Saul spared the fat cattle and the exceedingly fat Agag (1 Sam. 15:9). Many people imitate this and at times perform great

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and useful works according to their own idea but meanwhile neglect to do anything lowly that is commanded. Yet in that lowliness the most valuable obedience is hidden, just as the vilest kind of disobedience is concealed in that valuable usefulness. Like a treasure hidden in a field (Matt. 13:44), so is the value of obedience to a worthless and contemptible command. Again, like the bones of the dead and the whole filth in a tomb whitewashed on the outside, so is disobedience most foul in a great and notable work (Matt. 23:27). Therefore hear the command and teaching of the Holy Spirit: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord (namely, the law of the superior), etc."

And on His law he meditates day and night. Meditating is an exclusive trait of human beings, for even beasts appear to fancy and to think. Therefore the ability to meditate belongs to reason. There is a difference between meditating and thinking. To meditate is to think carefully, deeply, and diligently, and properly it means to muse in the heart. Hence to meditate is, as it were, to stir up in the inside, or to be moved in the innermost self. Therefore one who thinks inwardly and diligently asks, discusses, etc. Such a person meditates. But one does not meditate on the law of the Lord unless his delight was first fixed in it. For what we want and love, on that we reflect inwardly and diligently. But what we hate or despise we pass over lightly and do not desire deeply, diligently, or for long. Therefore let delight be first sent into the heart as the root, and then meditation will come of its own accord. It is for this reason that the ungodly do not meditate on the law of the Lord, since as false plants they did not take root. Yet they meditate on other things, namely, on things in which their delight is rooted, things they themselves desire and love, such as gold, honor, and flesh. But the Jews meditate on vanities and false frenzies according to their own ideas about the Scriptures, as has been prophesied concerning them in a variety of ways. But David prays (Ps. 119:36): "Incline my heart to Thy testimonies and not to gain!" All of the following do not meditate on the Law, but outside the Law: the greedy, the carnal, and the arrogant. Or they meditate on glosses of the Law, or dross and hulls.

But what is the meaning of *day and night*? Here is a large sea. First, literally, it means at all times, or incessantly, since day and night comprise all of time. However, time is divided not only into day and night but, second, also into good times and bad times. Thus the day is the time of prosperity, while night is the time of adversity. Third,

it is divided into a time of grace and a time of sin. Fourth, into a time of life and of death. Prov. 31:18 reads: "Her lamp does not go out at night," that is, in the time of death. Fifth, into a time of quiet and of activity, or rest and work. Hence quiet (according to the spirit) is the day, but activity is the night. According to these distinctions there is a variety of uses of these words in the Scriptures. Therefore he who is rooted willingly and spontaneously in the law of the Lord, no matter what time it is, does not go back, does not forget, does not put off meditation on the law of the Lord. The fool, however, and he whose delight is not in His law, changes at every difference in time. And though he may meditate on it sometimes by day, he stops at night, because he has no root (Luke 8:13).

Here, too, there are some perverted people (as in the first part of the verse) who in a similar way twist and pervert this word of the Holy Spirit. Their meditation is not on the law of the Lord, but rather, to the contrary, the law of the Lord is in their meditation (which is a horrible situation). They are the ones who twist the Scriptures to their own understanding and by their own fixed meditation compel the Scriptures to enter it and agree with it, when it ought to be the other way around. In this way, then, the law of the Lord is in their meditation, and not their meditation on the law of the Lord. They do not want to agree with their adversary on the way (cf. Matt. 5:25), but they want the adversary to agree with them. They do not want to be holy with the holy, but they want the holy to be profane with them. Such were the heretics. Such are all who seek to approve their own empty opinion by the authority of Scripture, Judaizing with Jewish treachery.

Against these blessed Hilary, *De Trinitate*, I, 18, says: "The best reader is the one who looks for the understanding of the words from the words themselves, rather than imposing his own understanding, and takes something out, rather than bringing something in, and does not force the words to seem to contain what he had assumed must be understood before reading."⁷ Hence the Lord complains through Malachi (cf. Mal. 3:8) that evil and perverse interpreters stab Him and do violence to Him. Indeed, their own sayings are like goads and nails, says Eccl. 12:11, whereby, when the truth is forbidden, the Lord is pierced, so that the truth may not freely move and be seen. Thence, in line with this image, the Lord remained crucified to the Jews, and

⁷ *Patrologia, Series Latina*, X, 38.

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He never appeared to them again, except to the remnant of Israel. To this very day they crucify Him within themselves, as the apostle accuses them (Heb. 6:6), because they keep the truth pierced through and continue to stab it with their extremely hard iron lies (which are their goads). Thus to this day they do not know what they are doing, just as they did not know then. They scourge, stone, and kill the prophets and scribes in the same way as did their fathers. And just as the fathers did it literally, the Jews now do the same mystically. For a prophet is killed when his sermons are choked as to the living sense which the Holy Spirit intends. See how much learning there is in this one verse! Therefore we must take the utmost care that we do not quickly believe our own idea and that we must expound Scripture in all humility and reverence, because Scripture is the stone of offense and rock of scandal for those who are in a hurry. But Scripture turns that rock into pools of water (cf. Ps. 114:8) for those who meditate on the law of the Lord. Therefore the Lord also reproves those who seek Him thus, but Is. 65:1 tells us that those who did not seek Him in that way find Him.

Finally there are some who meditate and take delight in the Law, but not in the law of the Lord. These are the jurists, whose delight is in various doctrines of men and traditions of the elders, and on these things they meditate day and night. [For that reason he speaks in the singular and says, "in the law," not "laws"].⁸ What are the doctrines of men if not civil and human laws? But the traditions of the elders are the decrees of the popes. For "elder" is "presbyter" in Greek and is equivalent to "priest." So also Peter and John called themselves elders in their letters (1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1). Therefore men are now intensively occupied with these laws and have in them a limitless arena for questions, disputes, fights, words, glosses, and there is no fruit at all, except only that of gain and honor. But enough of this.

3. *He is like a tree planted beside the running waters, that will yield fruit in its season.* I said that anyone whose delight is in the law of the Lord has root. Therefore the psalmist here says, "is planted," that is to say, "has thrust roots." Without a doubt he was not planted elsewhere." Therefore he who said earlier, "but his delight is in the

⁸ A marginal addition without specific indication as to where it should be inserted.

⁹ Following the suggestion of the Weimar editor, we have deleted *erit* from this sentence.

law of the Lord," now rightly continues, "he is like a tree or wood planted," that is, living wood, whose root is delight in the law of the Lord, and therefore firmly planted. But what there is in the Law out of fear is wood that has been forcibly driven in and not planted. It is willingness and not force that produces a firm purpose. Furthermore, having said earlier, "who meditates on His law," he now correctly continues, "beside the running waters." For to those who meditate on the Law the very rock of Scripture gushes forth abundant streams and flowing waters of knowledge and wisdom, and grace and sweetness besides. This is the promise: "Seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7). Therefore to meditate means like Moses to strike the rock, and the waters running down means to have many meanings and an abundance of understanding burst forth. Therefore he who meditates on the law of the Lord is at the same time necessarily established alongside the running waters and full streams. But he speaks of "running" as of something running down from above. So also the Jordan is named because of its downward course.¹⁰ Since Holy Scripture is above us and deals with higher matters, it is water to which we do not go down (unless when we descend to it from pride). But neither can we go up to it. Since it has been fortified, we cannot go to it.¹¹ Therefore it is a descent. It comes down to us and over us. So Joel 2:23 says: "He has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the latter rain." He also calls it a descent because "His Word runs swiftly" (Ps. 147:15), and by the grace of the Holy Spirit he knows nothing of sluggish attempts. "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God" (Ps. 46:4), and "My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe" (Ps. 45:1). The experienced person knows that one who meditates on the law of the Lord is taught many things in a short time and suddenly, and a deluge of insights rushes in with "the voice of His cataracts" (Ps. 42:7), so that it is truly a flow, where human endeavor finds it difficult to crawl and move haltingly to the same abundance of truth. Therefore, whoever desires to be richly educated and, as it were, be flooded with the flowing waters of knowledge, let him surrender himself to meditation on the law of the Lord day and night, and he will learn by experience that what the prophet says in this verse is true.

¹⁰ Jerome had already interpreted *Jordanis* to mean *descensio* in his *Interpretatio nominum Hebraicorum*.

¹¹ Perhaps Luther still has the comparison with the river Jordan in mind and is thinking of its general inaccessibility. Cf. *Luther's Works*, 22, pp. 414—415.

Third, he says *beside*, that is, next to, or near, since in the future we shall walk into and be swallowed up by these waters. Meanwhile we are here at the place where the water runs down. At the present time it flows by us, but then it will flow in upon us altogether. In what sense knowledge and grace are water has been noted elsewhere, except that knowledge of Scripture is water in a very special way in that it washes, irrigates, and makes fertile. For "grace is poured upon your lips" (Ps. 45:2), so that it is gentle, clear, calm, and pure, and whatever other characteristics water may have. Therefore we shall here drink the river "flowing down from Lebanon" (Ps. 4:15), and afterwards the fountain of living water itself.

That yields its fruit (that is, fruitful work), *etc.* This is a great and unique gift of God, to know, I say, when you ought to do any work, namely, that you do it in its own season and opportunely. This is the gift of consideration and the judgment which the honor of the king loves (cf. Ps. 99:4). Prov. 25:11 reads: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver." On the other hand, Prov. 26:9 tells us: "As if a thorn should grow in the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools." And earlier (Prov. 26:7) we read: "As a lame man has fair legs in vain, so a parable is unseemly in the mouth of fools." This is wisdom, the leader and director of virtues, the judge of the times. Many produce fruit at an improper time, according to their own head and thought, and not fruit in its season, so that a person studies when he ought to be at work on behalf of others, or, on the contrary, he wants to rule and run when he ought to be praying or studying. So in secular matters he is wise who reaps during harvest time and not before or after the harvest; or the one who buys when the market and the marketing days are there. Thus "the sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8).

But this opportune time is easy for the monk, since this obedience alone is their wisdom. When it demands or prohibits, then is its own opportune season for fruits. But even here there are many who are of unsound mind and set up their own time. Yet without doubt this is always foreign and unsuitable for their work, and for that reason the fruit itself is rather a thorn in his hand than actual fruit or grapes, etc. It pricks his conscience and renders both work and hand useless at the same time.

And his leaf will not fall off. Leaves are words. It is clear, however, in which way these words of Christ have not withered, since they are written most splendidly in the Gospels and in the hearts of the faithful. The words which He speaks are life and spirit (John 6:63). Therefore they are worthy to be written not on stones and in dead books but in living hearts. Therefore *does not fall off* says less and means more: Heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will not pass away (Matt. 24:35). He is therefore the "tree of life" (Rev. 22:2), firmly "planted in the house of the Lord" (cf. Ps. 92:13), producing His fruit in its season, the firstfruits of all the trees that imitate Him in these. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together (Gen. 3:7), that is, they fabricated words of excuse for their sins in order to cover and excuse their shame. Therefore their leaves fell off. And this fig tree which bore such leaves was cursed by the Lord, and it dried up at once (Matt. 21:19). But perfect as the man is who makes no mistakes in a single leaf (cf. James 3:2), more perfect is certainly he whose leaves are blooming and plentiful, but most perfect is he whose leaf does not fall off, who is worthy to have his thoughts and sayings deserve eternal remembrance and authority. Thus Ecclesiastes says in the last chapter (Eccl. 12:11): "The words of the wise are like goads and like nails firmly fixed, which by the counsel of masters are given by one Shepherd."

And all that he does will prosper, all that He instituted and ordained to be done by the apostles and disciples, in sacraments and mysteries. Not only will the Doer Himself prosper, as Ps. 45:4 says, "Set out, proceed prosperously," and Ps. 118:25, "O Lord, give good success," but also the things He does will prosper, make headway, move forward, and will not be hindered by any who try to stand in His way. For "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), because the things He does will prosper. What things? New heavens, a new earth (Is. 66:22); yes, He who sits on the throne makes all things new (Rev. 21:5). This is the world to come, which God subjected not to angels, as the apostle says in Heb. 2:5, but to the Son, that "Blessed Man." Therefore these works of the Lord are "great and wonderful, exquisite for all His wishes" (cf. Ps. 111:2). These are the ones of which it is here stated that they will prosper. And they were fulfilled, as we see, because the church, which is the work of His splendor, has filled up the whole world. "His work is praise (that is, Judea or

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Judith¹²) and magnificence" (Ps. 111:3). And again, "Judah (that is, the church) became His sanctuary" (Ps. 114:2).

4. *The ungodly are not so.* That is a complete denial, as complete as was the affirmation of all that has gone before. The ungodly are not blessed, not men, their delight is not in the law of the Lord, they do not meditate on the Law as stated above, they are not like a tree planted beside the running waters that yields its fruit in its season, and they will not prosper in whatever they might do. "The desire of sinners shall perish" (Ps. 112:10). What then? *The ungodly are not so but are like dust.* Dust does not have roots, nor can it be planted, just as they do not have the root of their desire in the Law. But it is earth crumbled and reduced to nothing and parched by the searing of the sun. Therefore he applies the meanest term of all to them, since they have been crumbled and made the meanest of all. So the Lord says through Obadiah (Obad. 2): "Behold, I have made you small among the nations, you are exceedingly contemptible." Therefore some of them also produce fruit, but not in their season; yes, rather at an unsuitable time, namely, the works of the Law in a time of grace, which is not the season for such works. Therefore also Obadiah says (Obad. 7): "there is no wisdom in him." Thus they are not beside the running waters. For He turned "springs into thirsty ground and fruitful land into a salty waste because of the wickedness of its inhabitants" (Ps. 107:33-34). Therefore its leaf fell off. As Is. 1:30 says, "You shall be like an oak with withered leaves and like a garden without water." For what they teach today is proved to be false tomorrow, and everything they do will not prosper. But everything they arrange they arrange in vain. *Which the wind drives from the face of the earth.* The wind is the force of God's wrath and the breath of His anger, which was in the Romans, through whom He scattered them and drove them from their land to the present day. For all were driven off the face of the earth (that is, from the area of Judea) by that strong wind of God's wrath, and they were like weak dust, without strength to resist. They are well named "dust." For just as dust is earth divided into very small particles and not sticking together in any part, so there was at that time extreme and profound dissension among the Jews, and there was no coherence or agreement. For that reason they were

¹² Jerome's *Interpretatio nominum Hebraicorum* had called attention to "praise" as the meaning of these names: *Judith: laudans aut confitens, aut Iudaea.*

scattered. Their heart was divided (Hos. 10:2), and therefore they have now perished.

In the same manner we interpret mystically. The wind of temptation always casts the proud, the extraordinary, the disagreeable, etc., down from their station and possession or peace. For as brother aided by brother is like a solid city (Prov. 18:19), so brother against brother is like not one stone upon another (Matt. 24:2) and like dust on the face of the earth.

5. *Therefore the ungodly will not rise in the judgment.* He did not say "in the day of judgment," but "in the judgment." The judgment of the world is going on even now, although it has not yet been revealed what will happen on the day of judgment. Therefore the Lord is already judging the peoples in fairness, by His graces distinguishing the good from the bad, and He transfers them out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9), separating light from darkness. In this judgment a man rises in the first resurrection according to the soul. The image and cause of this resurrection is the resurrection of Christ, as the apostle theologizes in many places. But the Jews do not rise in that judgment. Why not? Because they do not want to, because they excuse themselves for their sins and justify themselves, and thus resist. It is, however, a multiple judgment. (1) It is a passive judgment, in which we are judged by the Lord, namely, by His separating us from the midst of the evil. This takes place according to the body through discipline and chastisement and according to the soul through grace. Thus the apostle says (1 Cor. 11:32): "When we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world." (2) It is a judgment by which we judge ourselves. This takes place when we accuse ourselves and confess our sin, and thereby we acknowledge that we are worthy of punishment and death. Thus we read Rom. 2:3, 1: "You judge those who do such things, etc.," and again, "You are doing the same things which you condemn," that is, you acknowledge and discern evil deeds and things not to be done. Therefore, when we acknowledge such things in ourselves and impose punishment on ourselves because of them, we are passing judgment on ourselves. Therefore the ungodly do not rise in the judgment. *Nor sinners in the council of the righteous*, that is, Jews in the church of the Christians. These alone are righteous, made thus by our only righteous Lord Jesus Christ.

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6. *For the Lord knows the way of the righteous.* For to the ungodly He says (Matt. 25:12): "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." Therefore He knows [the way of the righteous] because He is pleased with them. But *the way of the ungodly will perish* at the same time, because the Lord will destroy them. He is blessed forever. Amen.

Finally, from what has been said it follows that Holy Scripture uses words more aptly and better than inquisitive disputers in their studies. Yes, unless one would renounce their imaginations and with Moses remove his sandals, he would not be able to draw near to that burning bush, for it is holy ground (Ex. 3:5). For look, if you said, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord" (v. 2), that is, an act of the will or the power of the act is in the law of the Lord, the sense is hard and meaningless. Yet that is what those people say. But if you spoke with the spirit in this way, "who gladly and willingly does the law of the Lord," see, the sense is healthier already. But it is worth asking why he did not say, "the delight and the hand are in the law of the Lord." For "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), and "they preach but do not practice" (Matt. 23:3). The answer is that he expresses only the will in a twofold reason. The first reason is that a good tree cannot bear evil fruit and every good tree bears good fruit (Matt. 7:17-18). Therefore the will, which is the tree, or the root of the good tree, can do nothing but good and produces good fruit in its season. For that reason he then compared man with a planted tree, after he had first put down its root, namely, the will. When a man's will is good, the whole man is good. Thus the tree is good when the root is good. Then indeed it produces good fruit, entirely according to its own kind, and if not always, it does so at least in its season, after the winter has passed over. The winter is the time of the Law and the synagog, while the spring, the loveliest time of the year, is the period of the primitive church, where the Holy Spirit produced the most lovely season with blossoms, fruits, etc. Hence also the leading out of Egypt was accomplished in the first month and in spring, for this season is the beginning of sprouting things according to Amos 7:1, for then the winter has passed. The summer is the fullness and progress of the church, in which greater renown was achieved and the truth of the faith was published for all to know. The autumn stands fast and then presses on, the season in which the crops and the grapes are harvested, the time of the Last Judgment. Here the chilling of love begins again. A psalm (Ps. 74:17) tells us: "Thou hast made summer and spring."