

# LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 12

SELECTED PSALMS I

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

*Editor*



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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations in this volume are translated from Luther's writings or from Luther's German Bible.

## *General Introduction*

THE translations of Luther's works in this edition are intended to make many of his writings accessible in modern English for the first time. The edition is intended, therefore, for the reader whose knowledge of late medieval Latin and Middle High 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. It is the hope of publisher and editor that through this edition the message of Luther's faith will speak more clearly to the modern church.

J. P.

## *Introduction to Volume 12*

THE commentaries on selected psalms gathered in this volume represent several of the ways Luther chose for the exposition of the Scriptures. They come partly from his class lectures in Biblical exegesis, partly from his sermons, partly from the home worship of the Luther family circle. Perhaps the most notable difference among these ways is the fact that in the classroom Luther felt able and perhaps constrained to engage in an occasional excursus on some grammatical and exegetical points that he would have ignored in a sermonic exposition or in one delivered at table. But more striking than this difference is the remarkable uniformity of procedure and method in the several types of commentaries. The handy modern distinction between preaching and Biblical exposition Luther did not know: his preaching is always exegetical, or strives to be; and his exegesis always contains elements of admonition and application which many modern exegetes would find themselves embarrassed to include in a scholarly commentary. This uniformity of procedure also accounts for the fact that unless Luther expressly indicates the origin of a particular commentary or unless we have some reference to it in the writings of a contemporary, it is always difficult and sometimes impossible to determine from the work itself whether it originated in the classroom or in the pulpit.

The longest three of these commentaries belong very closely together chronologically as well as logically: those on Psalms 2, 45, and 51. In their original form they were delivered as classroom lectures, mostly or completely in 1532. A. Freitag, who edited them for the Weimar edition, proposed the following dates for the lectures, all in 1532:

*Psalms 2:* March 5, April 9, April 16, May 27, May 28, June 3, June 5.

*Psalms 51:* June 10, June 11, June 17, June 18, July 8, July 9, July 16, July 22, July 23, July 30, August 6.

*Psalms 45:* August 20, August 26, August 27, October 14, October 15, October 21, October 22, October 28, October 29, November 4.

But A. F. Hoppe, the editor of the Saint Louis edition of Luther's works, proposed the possibility of a change in the traditional dating of the lectures on Psalm 2, a possibility that Freitag did not even consider. Hoppe argued from Luther's reference to Zwingli and Carlstadt (see p. 16 below). The reference, he said, indicates that Zwingli was still alive when Luther made it. Now, Zwingli died in the battle of Cappel, October 11, 1531; and Luther had heard of his death by the end of that year, therefore before the traditional date of the lectures. Carlstadt, whom Luther connected with Zwingli in the reference, had come to Switzerland in May of 1531. Hoppe argued from these facts that the lecture in which the reference occurred should be placed in the spring of 1531 rather than the spring of 1532. His argument is not conclusive, since the reference to Zwingli and Carlstadt is an *obiter dictum* which would have to be much more explicit before it could serve as a basis for contradicting the remaining testimony in favor of the later date. But it does provide an interesting note on the obscurity in which much of the chronology of Luther's life and writings is still shrouded.

The notes on these three sets of lectures came mainly from the hand of that indefatigable scribe, Georg Rörer (1492–1557). On the basis of these transcriptions, and perhaps of his own notes as well, Veit Dietrich (1506–1549) prepared the three commentaries for publication. The *Commentary on Psalm 2* (Weimar, XL, 193–312; Saint Louis, V, 74–189) was the last of the three to appear in print, not being published until 1546, the year of Luther's death. From Melancthon's letter to Dietrich of December 1, 1545, it appears that Melancthon, not Dietrich, is the author of the preface attached to this publication. The *Commentary on Psalm 45* (Weimar, XL, 472–610; Saint Louis, V, 340–471) was published in 1533–1534; as the printer's accompanying preface indicates, Luther permitted its publication only with the greatest reluctance because the press of duties and his health did not permit him to give the necessary attention to revising it. The *Commentary on Psalm 51* (Weimar, XL, 315–470; Saint Louis, V, 472–619) was published in 1538, also by Dietrich. It was the only one of the three whose editing brought criticism upon Dietrich, and that in connection with one particular passage (see p. 332 below). There was apparently no objection to his changing historical references in the commentaries to suit the date of publication rather than the date of delivery (see pp. 29, 31 below). The objection was to what was regarded – or at least could be regarded – as theo-

logical tampering. A letter from Melanchthon to Dietrich on October 6, 1538, indicated his misgivings over the passage, apparently on the grounds that Luther might blame the modification upon Melanchthon. The theological controversies in Lutheranism after Luther's death substantiated these misgivings; in the course of those controversies the accusations of such tampering went back and forth between the parties.

But the editorial liberties which Dietrich permitted himself to take are minor in comparison with those involved in the preparation of what we present here as Luther's *Commentary on Psalm 8* (Weimar, XLV, 204–250; Saint Louis, V, 188–237). The basis of the commentary is a sermon Luther preached on All Saints' Day, November 1, 1537, perhaps in the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Like the commentaries on the psalms we have just discussed, this sermon was taken down by Georg Rörer. Andreas Poach (1516–1585) inherited Rörer's notes after the latter's death in 1557. On the basis of the notes on this sermon, Poach prepared the present commentary and published it in 1572. Some of his work is merely an expansion into complete sentences of ideas that were cryptically stated in a word or phrase; some of it is an exposition or quotation where Luther had only an allusion. Comparison of Poach's work with Luther's sermon indicates that he did his work conscientiously and did not consciously read into Luther ideas that were not there. This is all the more noteworthy in view of the fact that just at the time of the publication Poach was involved in bitter theological controversies, as a consequence of which he was deposed from his position in Erfurt in 1572. Yet there appears to be no trace here of his position in the Majoristic and Antinomian controversies.

The sermonic exposition translated here as *Commentary on Psalm 26* (Weimar, XVII-1, 228–243; Saint Louis, V, 292–307) seems to have passed through a similar editorial evolution. It, too, originated with some notes taken down by Rörer, on May 12, 1525, the Friday before Luther ordained him. In its present form it was published by Johann Aurifaber (1519–1575) in the Eisleben supplement to the Jena edition of Luther's works, where it bore the title: "A sermon on Psalm 26, delivered in Wittenberg on the Friday after Jubilate, after the death and burial of Duke Frederick the Elector." Aurifaber took it "from the manuscripts of Philip Fabricius." What form it had in those manuscripts we do not know; but Georg Buchwald, who edited it for the Weimar edition, together with Rörer's notes, concluded

that it was Aurifaber's own expansion of the material contained in the manuscripts before him. The fact that Aurifaber's text contains many Lutheresque ideas and expressions not found in Rörer complicates the question of determining its history, and it may throw some doubt upon the finality of Buchwald's conclusion. On the other hand, we know from Aurifaber's other work that he did engage in the sort of editorial expansion Buchwald attributed to him.

Brief though it is, the *Commentary on Psalm 19* (Weimar, XXXI-1, 580-586; Saint Louis, V, 1332-1339) also underwent a complicated process of transmission. The time and circumstances of its origin are not at all clear. E. Thiele, who prepared it for the Weimar edition, inclined to the view that it came from Luther's stay at the Koburg in 1530, in the course of which he expounded certain of the psalms. A. F. Hoppe suggested the date 1524, and that for the following reasons: the Biblical text is essentially that of Luther's revision of the psalms of 1524; Campegius, the Bishop of Salzburg, and Eck, whom Luther mentions together (see p. 144, note 3 below), dealt with the Protestant issue at Nürnberg and Regensburg in that year. Thiele and Hoppe are agreed that the commentary came from neither the pulpit nor the classroom, but from a private exposition of the psalm which Luther delivered to Melanchthon. Melanchthon took it down in Latin; it is presumable, though not certain, that Luther delivered the exposition in Latin or in his characteristic mixture of Latin and German. Melanchthon's Latin transcription was put into German by Georg Spalatin (1484-1545) and published in 1531. It was not included in any major edition of Luther's works except Walch, the Saint Louis, and the Weimar.

It is likewise to Rörer's diligence that we owe the *Commentary on Psalm 23* (Weimar, LI, 267-295; Saint Louis, V, 254-291). As Luther's *Table Talk* shows, he frequently expounded psalms or other passages of Scripture at table, with no view at all to possible publication. The present exposition originated in that way and came late in 1535 or early in 1536; this is evident from Luther's reference (see p. 175 below) to the eighteen years that had elapsed since he had undertaken his reformatory work. Apparently within a short time after he had taken down the exposition, Rörer prepared it for publication; it appeared in 1536.

J. P.

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# PSALM · 2

*Translated by*  
*L. W. SPITZ, JR.*

## PSALM · 2

1. Why do the nations conspire  
and the peoples plot in vain?
2. The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the Lord and His Anointed, saying,
3. "Let us burst Their bonds asunder  
and cast Their cords from us."
4. He who sits in the heavens laughs;  
the Lord has them in derision.
5. Then He will speak to them in His wrath  
and terrify them in His fury, saying,
6. "I have set My King  
on Zion, My holy hill."
7. I will tell of the decree of the Lord:  
He said to Me, "You are My Son,  
today I have begotten You.
8. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage  
and the ends of the earth Your possession.
9. You shall break them with a rod of iron  
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
10. Now, therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
11. Serve the Lord with fear,  
with trembling
12. kiss the Son,  
lest He be angry and you perish in the way;  
for His wrath is quickly kindled.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.

## A BRIEF PREFACE TO THE SECOND PSALM

**W**E who serve the church and hold the teaching office are certainly in a poor and lowly position, measured by the standard of the world against that of other professions. For we usually earn hostility for our labor and suffer not only haughty scorn but even hunger and want, while others are well rewarded and held in the highest esteem. We find, moreover, that for this reason men of superior ability turn away from our office and follow rather those callings which are profitable and respected.

But if you look at this question in the right way, no matter how miserable and despised he may be, the theologian is in a better position than all the teachers of the other professions. For as often as he performs his duty he not only does his neighbor a valuable service, which is superior to all the favors of all other men, no matter how precious or useful they might be; but he also offers to God in heaven Himself the most pleasant sacrifice and is truly called the priest of the All-highest. For everything that a theologian does in the church is related to spreading the knowledge of God and to the salvation of men.

By the grace of God the abominations of the impious sacrifice of the papists have been done away with, namely, the Mass, which the reprobate pope along with his doctors adorned with the name "sacrifice." And the true worship has now been restored, that is, the preaching of the Word of God, by which God is truly made known and honored. Therefore I, too, as one of the great number of priests of God, wish to take up and explain the Second Psalm. I do this not only to teach you and learn for myself, but also thereby to bring to God a pleasing sacrifice. For why should I not speak in this manner of the work which I am undertaking for the sake of the church of Christ, a work commanded us in the Second and Third Commandments? For how can we use the name of God in a holier way than to instruct ourselves and others in the Word of God? How can we better use our time and better sanctify the Sabbath in these miserable times

than to mitigate the most certain and most serious perils with the consolations of the Scriptures?

Let us, then, unite our studies and labors — you by hearing, I by teaching. And so, as our calling requires, we shall perform this service to God which He everywhere demands of us, so that by this discussion of the Word of God, faith will be confirmed in us and the glory of God will be increased. This is a sacrifice pleasing and acceptable to God. With this “fruit of our lips,” as the prophet puts it (Hos. 14:2), He is more pleased than with all works, no matter how costly and difficult they may be. It is therefore fitting that we approach with a cheerful mind labors so holy, so necessary, and so useful. For we are certain that in so doing we not only do no wrong, but are occupying ourselves with the most sacred labors, which will bring forth a sure and, indeed, an eternal fruit.

*The Interpretation of the Second Psalm*

*by Dr. Martin Luther*

*Presented Publicly in the Month of March, 1532*

AS we learn from the Book of Acts (4:25), this Second Psalm supplied the first prayers and words of thanksgiving to God in the church of the New Testament. For when the disciples were gathered together, they sang, praised God, and prayed that in the face of such great perils and the great madness of the adversaries their spirits might remain steadfast and that they might preach the Word with confidence. This passage is sufficient proof that this psalm contains something extraordinary. For the Apostles had recently been filled with the Holy Spirit; and in their first trial or affliction they seize upon it, pray it, and in this way both console and fortify themselves against all the power of their enemies. Moreover, both are certainly necessary for us in these latter days, since for the sake of the Word of God we are attacked by Satan and the world with force and deceit, with various offenses, and every kind of evil.

It is, moreover, a prophetic psalm, in which we also shall praise God, with the Apostles shall pray against the raving of the world, and with the Apostles shall certainly receive the consolation which

# PSALM · 8

*Translated by*  
*JAROSLAV PELIKAN*

## PSALM · 8

**W**E want to talk a little about our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For He has commanded us to remember Him till He comes, and He has also deserved never to be forgotten. To give us an occasion to talk about Him, we shall take up the Eighth Psalm of David, which was written about our Lord Jesus Christ, and follow the example of this prophet as he prophesies to us.

1. *O Lord, our Ruler, how glorious is Thy name in all the lands! Thou to whom thanks are given in heaven.*

2. *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest destroy the enemy and avenger.*

3. *For I shall look at the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou art establishing.*

4. *What is Man that Thou art mindful of Him, and the Son of Man that Thou dost care for Him?*

5. *Thou wilt let Him be forsaken of God for a little while, but Thou wilt crown Him with honor and adornment.*

6. *Thou wilt make Him Lord over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under His feet,*

7. *All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,*

8. *The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea.*

9. *O Lord, our Ruler, how glorious is Thy name in all the lands!*

The prophet David wrote this psalm, and the title testifies that David is its author: "A Psalm of David." The title contains the words: "to be sung upon  $\text{נְתִיב}$ ." The word  $\text{נְתִיב}$  also appears in Psalm 81 and Psalm 84. Since the Aramaic text always uses the word *cinnora* for it, I believe that the  $\text{נְתִיב}$  was a stringed instrument, a harp or violin.<sup>1</sup> In David's time music was not as artistic as it is nowadays. An instrument like the lyre with ten strings was just about the highest and most glorious and most artistic they had, while ordinary instruments had three or four strings. Now music has grown enormously, and we have many instruments that are more artistic; but in David's time there were only lyres, harps, violins, pipes, cymbals, and so forth.

The statement in the title, "to be sung upon  $\text{נְתִיב}$ " should be taken to mean that a priest or a Levite sang this psalm, and another one played the harp or violin. David had ordained four thousand singers to praise the Lord and divided these into four groups, to worship, thank, and praise God on all sorts of stringed instruments before the Ark of the Covenant. Therefore there must have been constant singing and ringing all year, with cymbals, lyres, and harps, as we can see from 1 Chronicles 25:1 ff. David himself wrote the songs they had to use for worshiping and praising God in His works. Hence this book is called  $\text{סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים}$ ,<sup>2</sup> that is, a book of praise or a book of thanks. Therefore it has so many psalms of thanks, which worship and praise God for all sorts of blessings; mingled with these there are many prophecies and promises for the pious as well as warnings against the ungodly. The priests and the Levites were ordained to sing and to accompany on stringed instruments such songs of thanks written by David. So much in brief on the title.

This psalm is one of the beautiful psalms and a glorious prophecy about Christ, where David describes Christ's person and kingdom and teaches who Christ is; what kind of kingdom He has and how it is formed; where this King rules, namely, in all lands and yet in heaven; and the means by which His kingdom is founded and regulated, namely, only through the Word and faith, without sword and armor. Therefore this is the way he begins:

<sup>1</sup> The word signifies either an instrument, as Luther states here, or a mode of singing.

<sup>2</sup> The name of the Book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible.

1. *O Lord, our Ruler, how glorious is Thy name in all the lands! Thou to whom thanks are given in heaven.*

He turns to the King and addresses Him, as though he wanted to say: "Before Thy coming to earth, O King, Thou art praised and thanked only in the tiny narrow corner of Judea and in Jerusalem. But after Thy coming there will be more ringing and singing, thanking and praising, not in the narrow corner of Judea alone, but in all the lands under heaven, throughout the world." By this he prophesies and proclaims at the very beginning of this psalm that through this coming King God will be praised and worshiped throughout the world.

*Lord, our Ruler.*

But he calls this King "Lord" and "Ruler." These are two names. In all of Holy Scripture the word "Lord" (יהוה) is never ascribed to anyone except to the Divine Majesty. For it is the great name of God, which in our German Bibles is written in capital letters to distinguish it from the other names. The name Lord (יהוה) is ascribed to no creature on earth, no, not even to an angel in heaven, but only to God. Therefore it is a special and proper name of God and means "the right, true, and eternal God."

But the word יהוה, lord or ruler, is a common name, which Holy Scripture uses even for princes and heads of the household. It does not mean "Lord" as God is called Lord, but as men are lords and reign. Thus Sarah calls Abraham her lord: "I am old, and my lord יהוה is also old" (Gen. 18:12). Joseph calls Potiphar, Pharaoh's chamberlain and courtier who had bought him from the Ishmaelites, his "lord" (Gen. 39:8). Joseph himself is called "lord" by the Egyptians, as he acknowledges when he says: "God has made me lord over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 45:8). Aaron calls Moses his lord: "Let not the anger of my lord turn hot" (Ex. 32:22). The word is used this way in many other passages. Therefore the word "ruler" here does not mean the Divine Majesty in its secret, heavenly being, as the Father is and is called Lord and God, and the Son is and is called Lord and God, and the Holy Spirit is and is called Lord and God. But it means the human nature and the external rule of this King over us men.

Since, then, this King is called "Lord, our Ruler," it follows that He must be true God and true man at the same time. For if He were not true God, He could not be and be called "Lord," since God will

# PSALM · 19

*Translated by*  
**JAROSLAV PELIKAN**

# PSALM · 19

## THE WHOLE CONTENT OF THIS PSALM

**T**HIS is a prophetic and didactic psalm. It prophesies that the Gospel will be preached in the whole world. Secondly, it talks about the manifold and great value of the Gospel, how it acquired this, and what it works and accomplishes.

Thirdly, the prophet David appends a prayer, in which he confesses his sin and asks God to protect him, lest the ungodly heretics and preachers deceive him with their show of wisdom, righteousness, and success.

Therefore this is a descriptive type of psalm,<sup>1</sup> setting forth the form that Christ's kingdom will take, and teaching much that really helps to strengthen faith and to comfort consciences against offenses which make the hearts of Christian believers fearful and faint. For it appears that Christ's kingdom is weak and that Christendom will run aground and be ruined. But this psalm teaches that Christ and His Gospel cannot be hindered any more than one can hinder the course of the sun.

This psalm teaches further that God's Word will be active and will work and accomplish great things.

This psalm teaches similarly that a new Word will be preached, namely, one that will go through the whole world and save those who believe in it; for the Law of Moses was given only to the Jews.

Finally, this psalm also teaches that the kingdom of Christ will be a spiritual kingdom, since it is extended through the Word and not through any physical shield or weapon. And it refutes the Jews' dream of a physical kingdom and their opinion that the kingdom of the Christ will consist of physical things.

<sup>1</sup> The original phrase is *genus demonstrativum*; it probably comes from Melancthon (see Introduction, p. x).

In addition, at the end of this psalm there is a very useful lesson about repentance; for it shows that we always have sins and that we are redeemed from them not by our work but by God's grace and mercy.

1. *The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.*

This is to say: "The glory of God is preached everywhere in all the lands under all of heaven."

The emphasis is on the word "telling," to remind us that we should esteem the oral and external Word.

The "glory of God" is the Gospel, for through the Gospel God is known.

The "handiwork" of God is all the works wrought by the Gospel, like justification, salvation, and redemption from sin, from death, and from the kingdom of the devil.

2. *Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.*

This is to say that the Gospel will always be preached and that the Christian Church will stand and remain eternally.

3. *There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*

Here is what this means: "The Gospel will be preached in all lands, nations, and languages, not only among the Jews, not only in Jerusalem, but in all tongues."

In addition we should note that he explicitly mentions the Word of God.

Likewise the way of God, that is, the knowledge of God; for through the Gospel God is known, as St. John says in his first chapter (v. 18): "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known."

For the Law reveals God's wrath and not God's grace to us. But now through the Gospel God's grace is revealed to us. Therefore now God is rightly known.

The prophet David says further "their voice," all of which clearly shows that this psalm speaks of the office of preaching.

# PSALM · 51

## THE PSALM MISERERE

*This excellent exposition of the Fifty-first Psalm by the Reverend Father Dr. Martin Luther has been published for the glory of Christ and the good of the church*

LAST year, we expounded the Second Psalm, on Christ the King and His spiritual and heavenly kingdom, how He is received in this world, vexed and wounded by kings and people, yet how He conquers and triumphs.<sup>1</sup> Now I have begun the exposition of the Psalm *Miserere*, which teaches about repentance. I cannot promise that I shall lecture satisfactorily, for I admit that I have not fully grasped the Spirit who speaks there. Still it gives us an opportunity and a basis for thought and study, so that I can become a student with you and await the Spirit. Whatever He gives, we shall receive with thanks.

A knowledge of this psalm is necessary and useful in many ways. It contains instruction about the chief parts of our religion, about repentance, sin, grace, and justification, as well as about the worship we ought to render to God. These are divine and heavenly doctrines. Unless they are taught by the great Spirit, they cannot enter the heart of man. We see that our opponents have expended great effort and discussed this doctrine in many huge volumes. Yet none of them really understands the nature of repentance, sin, or grace. These words are like a dream to them, which leaves some traces in the mind but itself has utterly disappeared from the mind and the eyes. The reason for this blindness and ignorance is that true knowledge of these doctrines does not depend upon the intelligence and wisdom of human reason, nor is it born, so to speak, in our home or our hearts. But it is revealed and given from heaven. Where is there a man

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 3 above.

who could speak about repentance and the forgiveness of sins the way the Holy Spirit speaks in this psalm?

This psalm is commonly called a "penitential psalm," and among them all it is the most widely used in church and daily prayers. Whoever first gave it this name, knew what he was doing. But the rest of the crowd, who either chant or pray it daily in order to perform the works required by the bishops, have understood nothing of it at all. They have applied this psalm to the penance of works, to actual sin, which they define as "anything said, done, or thought against the Law of God." This definition is far too narrow to portray the greatness or power of sin. We must look at sin more deeply and show more clearly the root of wickedness or sin, not simply remain with the "elicited acts," as they call them.<sup>2</sup> From this error, their failure to understand sin properly, there comes, of course, the other error, their failure to understand the nature of grace properly either. This accounts for their ineptitude in comforting timid consciences and consoling hearts against death and divine judgment. How can anyone give consolation if he does not understand what grace is? Hence they fell into the foolishness of persuading men troubled with sorrows of conscience to put on cowls, accept monastic rules, and the like, by which they believed they would please God. This clearly shows that they did not properly understand either sin or grace and that they were simply teaching a theology of reason without the Word of God.

They taught the same way about repentance: People were to collect all the transgressions of the past year, sorrow over them, and expiate them by satisfaction. I ask you, does not a judge hang a thief if he confesses his theft and is sorry for it? Yet these people think God is satisfied if they pretend to be sorry by dressing differently, walking differently, and eating differently. The reading of this psalm will be especially useful in teaching us to understand these points of our doctrine properly and in providing us with a learned and serious refutation of our opponents, who argue so wrongly about such serious issues. I have experienced for myself how useless their profane arguments were when my conscience was in need. I have also urged the church very often to be grateful for this great gift of the Word and pure doctrine, that with the darkness driven away He has lighted the clear lamp of the Word.

<sup>2</sup> The Roman Catholic notion of an *actus elicited dilectionis* was a favorite target of Reformation polemic; cf. the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV, 9.