

Christian Culture

A MAGAZINE
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FEATURING

LCC Inaugural Address

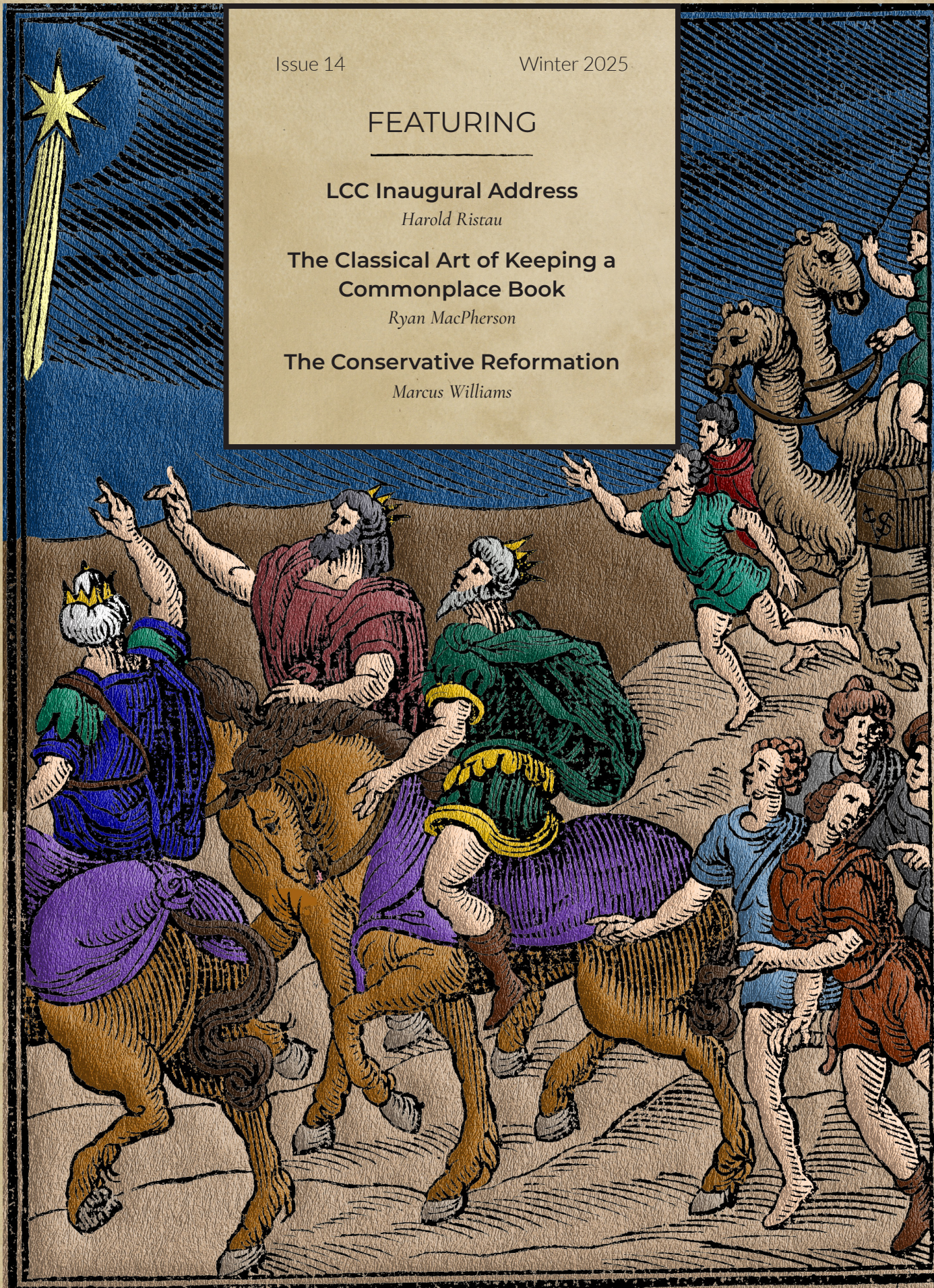
Harold Ristau

The Classical Art of Keeping a Commonplace Book

Ryan MacPherson

The Conservative Reformation

Marcus Williams



Christian Culture Conference:

LUTHERAN EDUCATION FOR TWO KINGDOMS

The *Christian Culture Conference* is an annual conference put on by Luther Classical College in Casper, WY, to promote the bright future of the Lutheran church in America through orthodox Lutheran theology, Christian fellowship, and the transformative work of Luther Classical College.

Featuring five full presentations, three services, and a banquet.

Registration Now Open

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Casper, WY
- ☞ **Cost:** Individuals: \$175
Couples: \$225
Families: \$275
Livestream: \$25 (Free for patrons of LCC)

To learn more visit: lutherclassical.org/conference

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LCC Groundbreaking Sermon: Unexpected Ways and Places

Preached on June 4th, 2024 at the groundbreaking for Luther Classical College.



Thank you all for coming this day and celebrating this historic moment for Luther Classical College. We especially appreciate the presence of our guests from Casper College, our contractors, and our County Commissioner.

As we sang earlier in hymn and psalm, “If the Lord doesn’t build the house, the labour is in vain.” For Christ is the Church’s one and only foundation. Many of you were here last year, and a year later you can see the developments at LCC in so many notable ways: hiring of new faculty and staff, including myself (the new president); the completion of an impressive academic curriculum and calendar that draws from the best that both classical and Lutheran education has ever offered; new partnerships with solid

schools and leaders, especially within our church body, and incredible generosity in funding. We thank you all for your prayers, volunteering, support and financial gifts.

Four years ago, this was only an idea in the minds of many of the visionaries who spearheaded this project, like congregational leaders, district pastors, and especially Dr. Christian Preus, his brothers, and LCMS Wyoming District President, John Hill. It’s exciting to see how this dream has materialized today, by the grace of God, and the Holy Spirit at work through the labours of faithful men and women in this community.

Our school fills a gap in America, by being both classical and Lutheran. With the cultural trends that we witness around us (that undermine the holy Word of God and wholesome education), we have become very attractive to children and parents who care about the spiritual futures of themselves, children and grandchildren.

Yet, at the end of the day, this school is not about us





demonstrating what we can achieve against all odds, or showing that we are right when others had doubts, or proving that we are better than others. It's about glorifying God and serving our neighbour. We are humble servants of Jesus Christ. He loves the world and seeks to embrace all people with His grace through the saving forgiveness of sins that takes us rebellious sinners and restores us into a right relationship with Him as his saints. Luther Classical College is already part of that mission. By forming young people to think clearly and reasonably, fostering godly wisdom stemming from the Divine Word and rooted in history, and the best that Western civilization and tradition has to offer, and cultivating Christian virtue in the hearts and souls of our students, America becomes a better place, as these students serve others through their respective vocations.

At the same time education isn't about improving the world, as an end to itself – lest we fall into the temptation of Babel, mankind's goal to make a name for himself, a juvenile attempt to usurp the authority of God with a devilish spirit that wishes to make himself god. Instead it's largely about setting conditions for the Gospel to be spread and advance, so more lost souls can be received into the citizenship of an eternal community—the one holy Christian and apostolic Church—by the holy means of grace through faith.

Good classical education empowers those who speak the truth, making us more credible, caring, and articulate missionaries and apologists. Good classical education celebrates true beauty and the best of the liberal arts, such as, in the case of music, directing human creatures to their Divine Creator. Good classical education makes hard working tradesmen, faithful husbands and wives, and effective

teachers who, through their words and deeds, lead humbled hearts and minds to the one Lord Jesus Christ with fervent zeal to love their neighbours.

Are we overstating the significance of LCC here? After all, we aren't planning to be that large. We are preparing the grounds for 300 students. Yet the most significant changes to world history have been tiny yet strategic ones that have had tremendously wide-scale effects. Just consider the crucifixion. Consider the effect of this one lone man, hanging on a single cross two thousand years ago. God orchestrated the events surrounding that One very carefully, in the fullness of his time. And through the death of God's one and only Son came salvation for the whole world. God works great things in unexpected ways and places.

Well, this school will consist of disciples of that cross, and the timing of this build and this launch have been in his hands from the start. So, we may be small, but God is big, and that's what counts above all our silly boastings and worries! We at LCC are excited to see what God has in store for this school, and the effect that this school will have on classical and Lutheran education across this country, as well as its positive impact on this local community of Casper, Wyoming.

So today we praise our holy Triune God for his goodness for providing us with this school, and ask for his blessing and protection on the commencement of the building. And we praise God for each of you here for joining us in this most blessed celebration.

In the Name of Jesus, Amen. 🙏

Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau is the President of Luther Classical College.

The Classical Art of Keeping a Commonplace Book



Have you ever had the nagging suspicion that you once knew something, but the memory of it now escapes you? Even when you *can* remember the general concept, have you ever struggled to put that idea into words? And, when you *do* put it into words, have you ever thought to yourself that you once heard or read someone else put it into even better words? If these questions remind you of yourself, then you would benefit from keeping a commonplace book: a notebook in which you record ideas and quotations and index them for future retrieval. Long before smartphones became our surrogate brains, people used commonplace books to aid their memory, to sort their thoughts, and to prepare themselves to wax eloquent at a moment's notice.

"The method of commonplace," according to historian Ann Blair, involves a reader's selection of "passages of interest for the rhetorical turns of phrase, the dialectical arguments, or the factual information they contain; one then copies them into a notebook, the commonplace book, kept handy for the purpose, grouping them under appropriate headings to facilitate later retrieval and use, notably in composing prose of one's own."¹

Commonplacing became widespread among leading scholars during the Renaissance period, but its roots can be traced back to the Greeks and Romans of classical antiquity. Aristotle wrote in his *Rhetoric* about *topoi*, or "topics," meaning a stock of ideas from which an orator could produce a speech.² Cicero wrote similarly of *loci*, or "commonplaces." Cicero's first canon of rhetoric, *inventio*, involved the gathering of material so that one could produce a speech on any subject for any audience on any occasion.³ Whether called *topoi* (in Greek) or *loci* (in Latin) or commonplaces (in English), the keeping of organized notes compensates for deficiencies of memory while also beginning the process of organizing inspirational material for crafting oral or written works of one's own.

The value of notetaking has not always gone unchallenged. Socrates, relating a debate between two Egyptian gods, stated the following criticism against the art of writing:

For this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory. Their trust in writing, produced by external characters which are no part of themselves, will discourage the use of their own memory within them. You have invented an elixir not of memory, but of reminding; and you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise.⁴

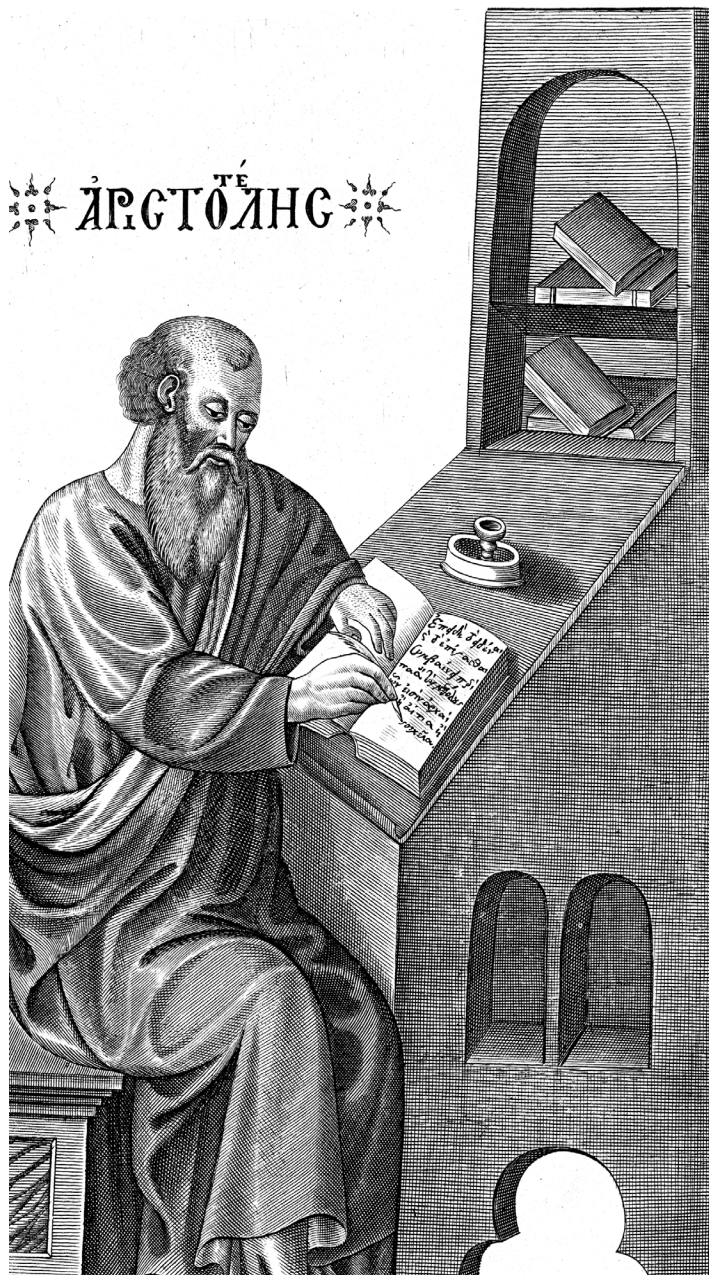
The irony, of course, is that we know of Socrates's words today only because Plato wrote them down, and not Plato only, but also Xenophon, whose *Memorabilia of Socrates* was itself a commonplace book of sorts! If "to the victor go the spoils" and "the pen is mightier than the sword," then it follows that those who write outlast those who do not. By the fifteenth century, it seemed clear that if Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and others whose fame outlived them by far, each kept notes on what they read, then Renaissance scholars should do the same. As Seneca reportedly explained:

We should hunt out the helpful pieces of teaching and the spirited and noble-minded sayings which are capable of immediate practical application—not far-fetched or archaic expressions or extravagant metaphors and figures of speech—and learn them so well that words become works.⁵

However, Seneca's advice concerning how to find good advice also expressed suspicion about the commonplacing habits of others:

We can get assistance not only from the living, but from those of the past. Let us choose, however, from among the living, not men who pour forth their words with the greatest glibness [*verba magna celeritate praecipitant*] turning out commonplaces [*communes locus volunt*], and holding, as it were, their own little private

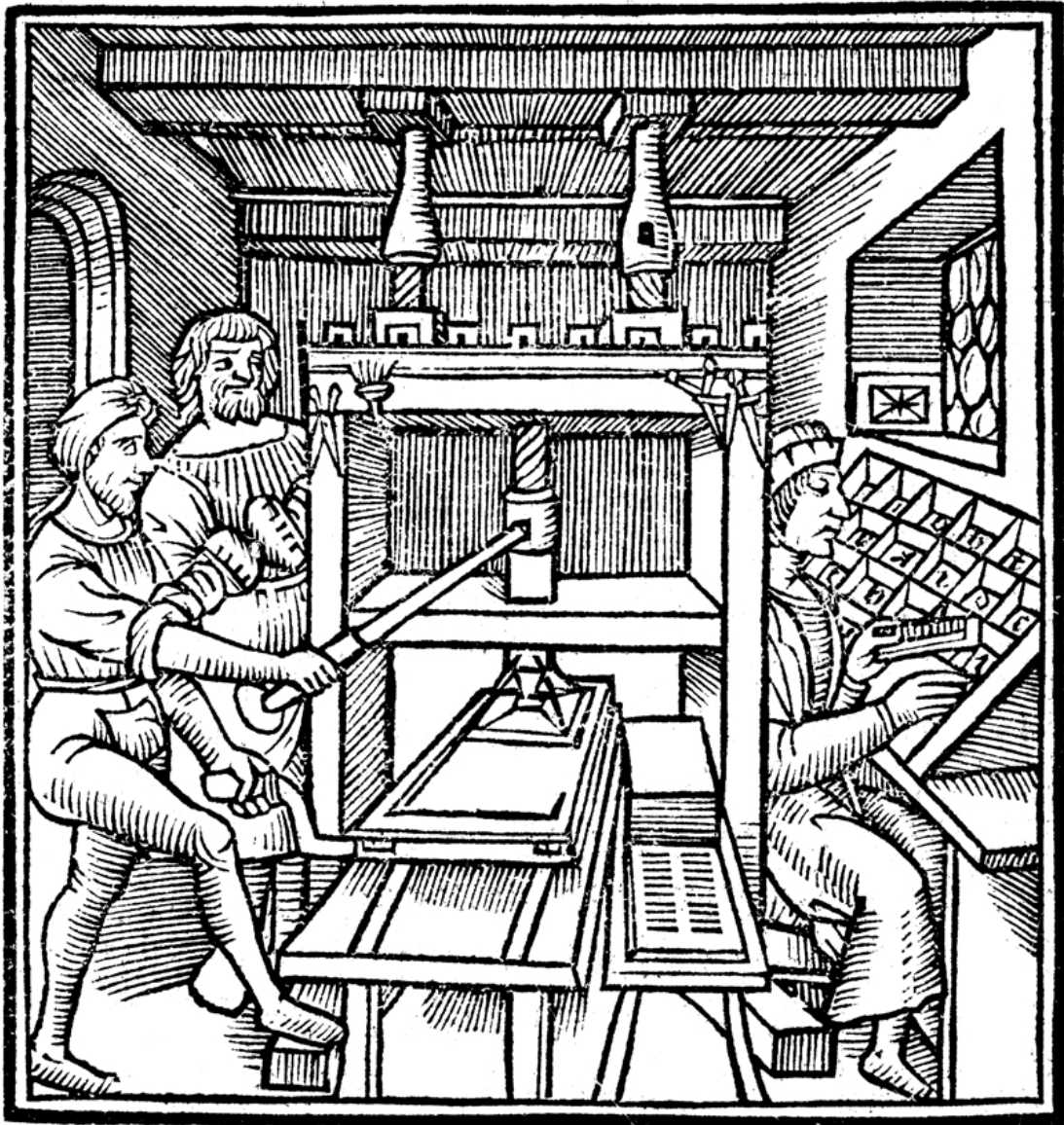
Commonplacing became widespread among leading scholars during the Renaissance period, but its roots can be traced back to the Greeks and Romans of classical antiquity.



exhibitions,—not these, I say, but men who teach us by their lives, men who tell us what we ought to do and then prove it by practice, who show us what we should avoid, and then are never caught doing that which they have ordered us to avoid.⁶

While medieval classrooms deployed commonplacing for pedagogical purposes, Erasmus and his Renaissance contemporaries prepared tutorials for expanding such notekeeping beyond classroom exercises.⁷ By the early modern period, the practice flourished among literary geniuses, such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Montaigne.⁸ As time went on, John Locke, like Erasmus before him, published a tutorial concerning commonplacing. He suggested an alphabetical index (but omitting K, Y, and W, since he thought C, I, and U would do just as well), plus a stock of words and phrases organized by subject.⁹ Jonathan Swift endorsed commonplacing in his “Advice to a Young Poet”:

A common-place book is what a provident poet cannot subsist without, for this proverbial reason, that “great wits have short memories”; and whereas, on the other hand, poets being liars by profession, ought to have good memories. To reconcile these, a book of this sort is in the nature of a supplemental memory; or a record of what occurs remarkable in every day’s reading or conversation. There you enter not only your own original thoughts, (which, a hundred to one, are few and insignificant) but such of other men as you think fit to make your own by entering them there. For take this for a rule, when an author is in your books, you have the same demand upon him for his wit, as a merchant has for your money, when you are in his.¹⁰



Thomas Jefferson, Washington Irving, Victor Hugo, Henry David Thoreau, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Oscar Wilde picked up the habit as well.¹¹ With printing presses churning out books, the modern period saturated readers with information overload; a commonplace book became a necessary coping device (as much as a *copying* device) even for the less famous, more ordinary reader.¹² Nor were such notes kept only as a private repository from which to compose creative works. Commonplace books were published posthumously as testimonies to erudition and as guides to understanding the minds that created the best of modern literature.¹³ Wouldn't you like to read the commonplace notes of one of Shakespeare's early fans? Fortunately, you can!¹⁴

By the nineteenth-century, commonplacing had become so common as to diverge into a myriad of styles, involving both notetaking as well as the clipping of excerpts from publications. Archivists struggle today to classify such documents: are they diaries, commonplace books, or scrapbooks? Or perhaps, simply, "whatchamacallits"? Arguably, the most significant fact about commonplacing relates not to the detailed method, but the ubiquity of the varied practices, encouraged further by the printing of notebooks, keyed for a year's worth of entries, entitled, for example, *Pocket Diary, Daily Remembrancer ... for the Record of Interesting Events ... Etc.*¹⁵

Twenty-first century social media posts, in their own

way, echo the commonplacing of the past, but now as a more disorganized practice that fosters an ephemeral semblance of community without anyone slowing down enough to savor truths that endure. The functional benefit of posting to social media now has less to do with preparing for future speechwriting and more to do with mouthing off on the digital soapbox of one's choice. However, the former practice of pursuing excellence by collecting and rearranging the wisdom of one's ancestors has not been entirely lost. For example, the honors program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has adopted the following plan, effectively reviving the medieval pedagogical method:

- a 250-word preface introducing semester goals.
- a minimum of 3 entries per week. Each entry must include the date, each page must be numbered, and each source must be fully cited. Each entry must include a primary text (quotation, image, etc.) and an analysis of that primary text.
- 21 entries to turn in by Week 8 and 18 more entries by Week 15.
- an epilogue of 200–250 words in which students explain what these accumulated entries reveal about themselves and their first semester. What narrative has emerged? Have they accomplished the goals they originally set for themselves? Have they learned something entirely different?¹⁶

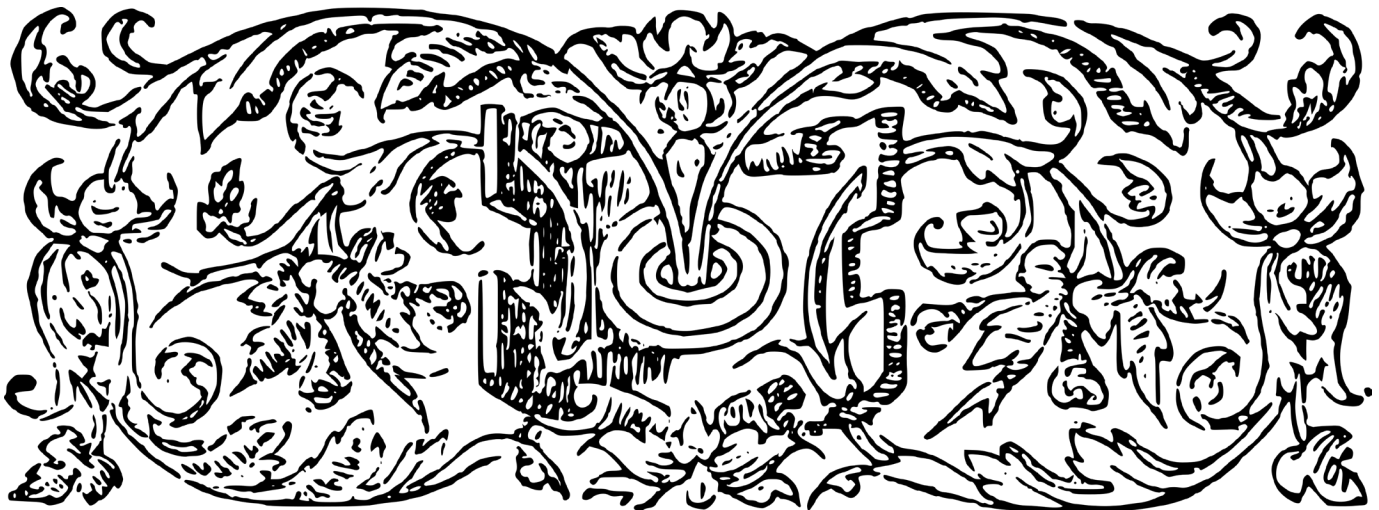
A similar assignment in an Intellectual Heritage class at Temple University led to the establishment of *The commonplace Book Project*, an online repository of common-

place specimens together with a blog plus links to library archives, lesson plans, and books concerning commonplacing—both antiquarian and instructional.¹⁷ Teachers may recommend to students specific questions to address in their commonplace books while reading, or else leave the selection of topics to the students' discretion and curiosity; either way, students will benefit from habitually recording the wisdom gleaned from others plus pre-writing exercises of their own in one readily accessible notebook, a “common” place.¹⁸

When teaching Philosophy 450: Philosophical Readings, at Bethany Lutheran College in the Spring 2023 semester, I asked student to record commonplace entries on the following topics, and to add their own topics as they thought of ways to branch out from these initial themes:

- constitution
- God
- human nature
- justice
- law
- liberty
- morality
- natural law
- revolution
- rights
- rule of law
- tyranny

I provided my students with some sample entries as follows:



Sample Entries

Each entry consists of a quotation or paraphrase, some key words for indexing by topic, and a citation.

“So Gréndel rúled // in defiance of ríght.”

[NATURAL JUSTICE; TYRANNY; Anglo-Saxon tetrameter/alliteration]

Beowulf, line 144

“Prevent them [civil rulers] from exercising tyranny over Your people, so, after wearing glittering clothing and elegant gems, they do not descend, naked and wretched, to be tormented in hell.”

[TYRANNY]

Johann Gerhard, *Meditations on Divine Mercy*, tr. Harrison, 4:3 (p. 139)

“The characteristic feature of science is warranted uncertainty, which leads to intellectual humility. The characteristic feature of scientism is unwarranted certainty, which leads to intellectual hubris.”

[SCIENTISM / TYRANNY]

Aaron Kheriarty, “Technocracy and Totalitarianism,” *Epoch Times*, 11/30-12/6/22, A15.

“It is more choiceworthy, therefore, to have law rule than any one of the citizens. ... The law is reason unaffected by desire.”

[RULE OF LAW]

Aristotle, *Politics*, 3.16, 1287a17,32

A “mere mortal” cannot “override the laws of the gods, unwritten and unshakable. They are not for now and yesterday, but live forever.”

[NATURAL LAW]

Sophocles, *Antigone*, 445–447

Soon their own examples outperformed mine, as they gleaned from the assigned readings, as well as from some of their own pleasure reading, brilliant insights grouped topically for future reference.

Now serving as Academic Dean at Luther Classical College, I have included commonplace notebooking across the curriculum, with programmatic discussions launching the project during the first semester of study in Theology 181: Christian Culture, intending that this activity continues to the senior thesis and beyond. Several members of LCC's board of regents and faculty also have been practicing the art of commonplace notebooking. Together we look for-

Several members of LCC's board of regents and faculty also have been practicing the art of commonplace notebooking. Together we look forward to mentoring our students, both classically and especially "Lutheranly."

ward to mentoring our students, both classically and especially “Lutheranly.”

During the Lutheran Reformation, the term *Loci* (“commonplaces”) took a different meaning than what the commonplace notebook tradition represents. Melancthon's *Loci Communes et Theologici* (1521) was neither a personal collection of semi-organized passages from Scripture nor a formalized work of systematic theology, but rather something midway between: a thoughtful, rehearsed presentation of the chief doctrines of Holy Scripture, arranged to assist in the proper interpretation of the Bible and, above all, to comfort troubled consciences with the pure Gospel of the Atonement in Christ alone, to be received by faith alone, through the means of grace alone. Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* (1610–1625), coming a century later, was an erudite refutation of heretical doctrines, reminiscent of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, but with the same passion of a *Seelsorger* (a caretaker of souls) that one finds in Mel-

anchthon's and especially Luther's works. Since the *Loci* of Melanchthon and Gerhard were polished as coherent and complete presentations of their chosen subject matters, they go beyond the basic meaning of *topoi* or *loci* as found in Aristotle, Quintilian, and the Renaissance-to-present commonplace afficionados.

Nevertheless, Melanchthon's and Gerhard's chosen titles are defensible in another sense: even by keeping the most basic and provisional commonplace book, a reader is always striving toward the fullness of understanding that those Lutheran theologians achieved in their published works. If there ever is to be another Melanchthon or Gerhard—one who can bring together so many different subjects in harmony with the teachings of Holy Scripture and present them, well-ordered, for the edification of others—then that person would be wise to begin now to collect examples in a commonplace notebook. ☞

Dr. Ryan MacPherson is the Academic Dean of Luther Classical College.

End Notes

¹ Ann Blair, "Humanist Methods of Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53, no. 4 (1992): 541–55, at 541.

² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I.12, 1358a11–26, and *passim*.

³ Cicero, *De Inventione*; Sara Rubinelli, *Ars Topica: The Classical Technique of Constructing Arguments from Aristotle to Cicero* (n.p.: Springer, 2009).

⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275a–275b, translated by Harold N. Fowler, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0174%3Atext%3D-Phaedrus%3Asection%3D275b>.

⁵ From an unconfirmed quotation attributed to Seneca: <https://ryanholiday.net/how-and-why-to-keep-a-commonplace-book>.

⁶ Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Letters*, 52.8.

⁷ Desiderius Erasmus, *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* (Cologne, 1540).

⁸ Victoria E. Burke, "Recent Studies in Commonplace Books," *English Literary Renaissance* 43, no. 1 (2013): 153–77.

⁹ John Locke, *A New Method of Making Common-Place-Books* (London: J. Greenwood, 1706).

¹⁰ Jonathan Swift, "A Letter of Advice to a Young Poet," excerpted from *English Essays: Sidney to Macaulay*, The Harvard Classics (1909–14), <https://www.bartleby.com/27/10.html>, accessed December 2, 2022.

¹¹ Lynee Lewis Gailler, "Commonplace Books and the Teaching of Style," *Journal of Teaching and Writing* 15, no. 2 (n.d.): 285–294, at 287; "A Brief Guide to Keeping a Commonplace Book," <https://notebookofghosts.com/the-notebook>, accessed December 2, 2022; "Reading: Harvard Views of Readers, Readership, and Reading History," <https://library.harvard.edu/collections/reading-harvard-views-readers-readership-and-reading-history>, accessed December 2, 2022.

¹² Alan Jacobs, "A Commonplace Book," *First Things*, May 2008, 14–15, at 14.

¹³ For example, Alfred J. Horwood, ed., *A Common-Place Book of John Milton and a Latin Essay and Latin Verses Presumed to Be by Milton* (Westminster: Nichols and Sons, 1876).

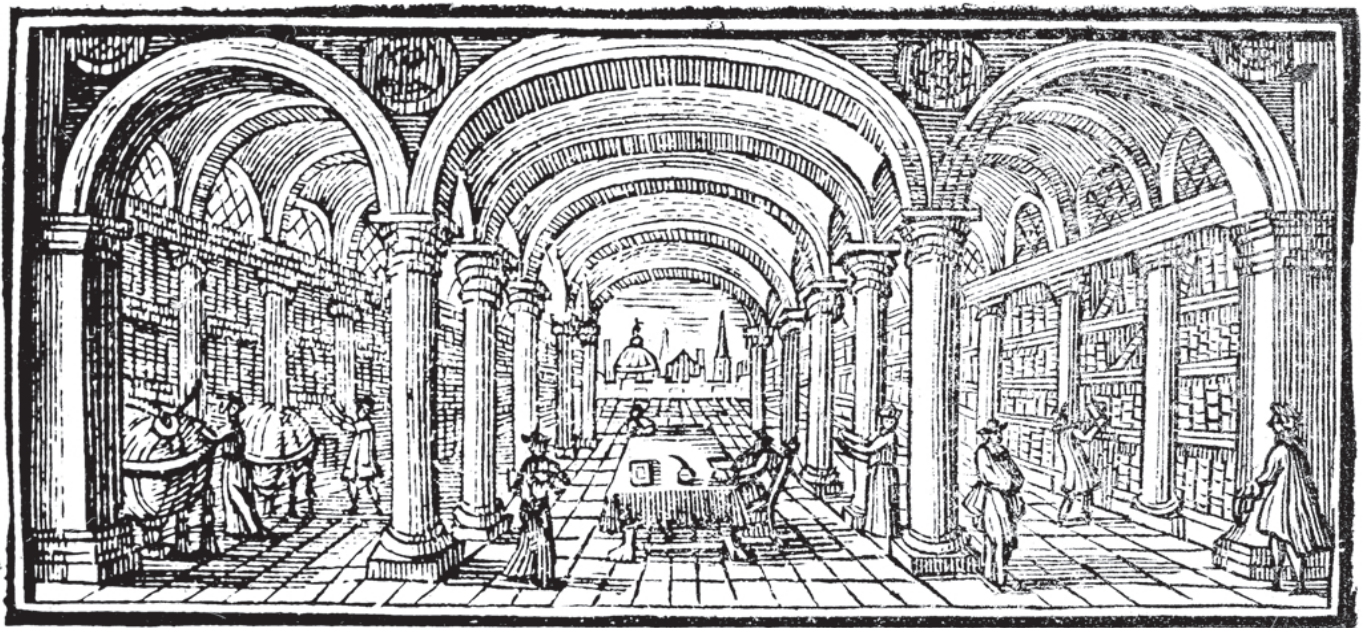
¹⁴ "A Common Place Book," ca. 1622–1625, <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/shakespearean-extracts-included-oxford-commonplace-book>, accessed December 2, 2022.

¹⁵ Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, "Is It a Diary, Commonplace Book, Scrapbook, or Whatchamacallit? Six Years of Exploration in New England's Manuscript Archives," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 44, no. 1 (2009): 101–23, at 104.

¹⁶ Kate Krueger, "The Commonplace Book Project," *Honors in Practice* 16 (2020): 205–207, at 206.

¹⁷ *The Common Place Book Project*, www.thecommonplacebookproject.com, accessed November 28, 2022.

¹⁸ Gayle B. Price, "A Case for a Modern Commonplace Book," *College Composition and Communication* 31, no. 2 (May 1980): 175–82.



The Conservative Reformation: Lutheranism, the Guarantor of the Ancient Faith



strange fact continues to loom over the Confessional Lutheran Church. That is, a countless number of Christians continue to turn from our confession of faith and, in many cases, end up either in the Roman Catholic Church or the Eastern Orthodox Church. As troubling as this trend is when it occurs among the laity, all the more grievous is it when men, ordained to the Office of the Holy Ministry, reject and condemn what they previously confessed as the pure exposition of the Word of God, namely, the doctrine contained in the 1580 Book of Concord, in preference to the so-called ancient faith as expressed either in Rome or the East.

Troubled by the lack of unity they see among their own church bodies, many Confessional Lutherans imagine that both the fulness as well as the unity of faith are better expressed and preserved in Rome or the East. As disconcerting as it is to see the extent to which error is tolerated within various Lutheran church bodies, Lutherans, both pastors and laity alike, need to be fortified against the draw toward the so-called Apostolic churches on the supposition that, in fact and truth, both the fullness as well as the unity of faith *are* better expressed and preserved in Rome or the East.

It may very well be the case—especially within the Eastern Orthodox Church—that strict canonical prescriptions in externals helps to guarantee uniformity in practice, thus papering over the disunity that exists in Rome and the East, whereas the abuse of *adiaphora* among Lutheran church bodies exaggerates the disunity of faith among us. In point of fact, all struggle with disunity to one degree or

another and so the consideration of those who are tempted to reject the faith confessed in the 1580 Book of Concord must turn not only to the confession of faith as contained in the same, but, likewise, to the very disposition—namely a conservative reformatory disposition—that produced the Lutheran Confessions in the first place. For, not only in the faith confessed by our forebears, but in their very methodology, do we find the guarantor of the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Both Rome and the East obscure and, therefore, traduce the Gospel of our salvation, whereas it is nowhere more clearly articulated than in the Augustana and the other confessions of our Church. It has been observed that, with the exception of Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, both of which predate the Augustana, all other confessions within the Book of Concord are commentaries on the Augsburg Confession of 1530. It might also be said, all of the confessions contained within the Book of Concord are commentaries on the Three Ecumenical Creeds, which, outside the prophetic and apostolic Scripture, are the earliest articulations of the faith. The Three Creeds are also confessions of first importance in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which continues and will forever be not only the preserver of, but, likewise, the guarantor for the ancient faith of the Christian Church. This is owed to the fact that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the Church of the Conservative Reformation.

In 1871, the Rev. Charles Porterfield Krauth wrote a seminal work titled *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*. In summary, Krauth asserts the necessity of what the Rev. Theodore E. Schmauk called the confessional prin-



ciple. For his part, Schmauk, in 1911, wrote a book by that very title—*The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church*—and it was his conviction that “the weakness of Protestantism today is its failure to recognize the necessity and the value of a common witness by the connected from generation to generation Church, and, consequently, also the necessity of using and maintaining a common Testimonial authority, or Confessional Doctrine.” Both Krauth and Schmauk were firmly convinced that what was the weakness of Protestantism, more broadly considered, did not (or, at least, should not) characterize those committed to the Conservative Reformation.

In the Preface to his work, Krauth defined the characteristics of the Conservative Reformation, but he first identified two other movements within the holy Christian Church that failed to synthesize the two principles of conservatism and reform, preferring either conservatism without reform, on the one hand, or progress without conservatism on the other. “The history of Christianity,” Krauth writes, “in common with all genuine history, moves under the influence of two generic ideas: the conservative, which desires to secure the present by fidelity to the results of the past; the progressive, which looks out, in hope, to a better future.”²

Those who pursue conservatism without reform run headlong into encrustation. The principle of unqualified fidelity to the results of the past fails to recognize that the history of the Christian Church contains both faithful preservation of the faith once for all delivered to the saints (e.g., the theology of St. Athanasius), but, likewise, even in so-called Ecumenical Councils, accretions and errors

alongside such faithful preservation (e.g., the so-called 7th Ecumenical Council and the theology of St. Theodore the Studite on icon veneration). Conservatism without reform, according to Krauth, characterizes both the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

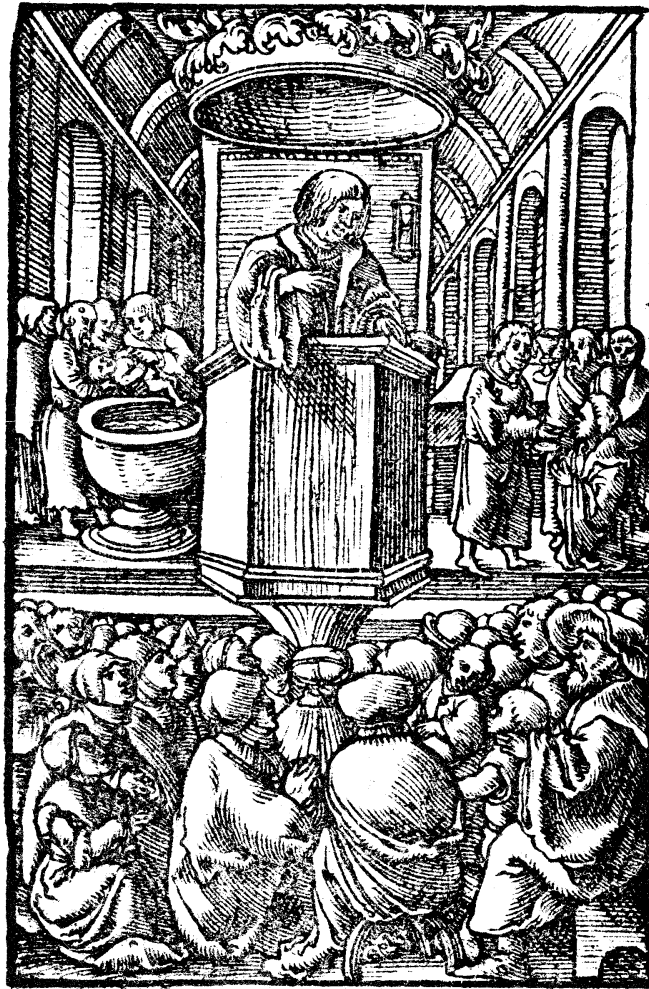
The others who pursue progress without conservatism run headlong into revolution because the Progressive, as C. S. Lewis and G. K. Chesterton both observed, never stops to ask the question, “Progressing toward what end?” As a

consequence, one is committed to progress solely in the name of progress. Such revolutionaries or radicals commit errors both in mistaking wheat for tares (e.g., Zwingli’s rejection of Baptismal regeneration and Real Presence) and, in turn, are “so hasty and violent that even when [revolution] plucks up tares it brings the wheat with them” (e.g., the hasty reforms of Carlstadt in regard to “both kinds” in the Sacrament while Luther was hidden away in the Wartburg castle, 1521).

Krauth asserts that the Conservative Reformation is opposed to both extremes. Characterized by moderation and sober judgment as it is,

Reformation is the means by which Conservatism of the good that is, and progress to the good yet to be won,

is secured. Over against the stagnation of an isolated Conservatism, the Church is to hold Reformation as the instrument of progress. Over against the abuses of a separatistic and one-sided progressiveness, she is to see to it that her Reformation maintains that due reverence for history, that sobriety of tone, that patience of spirit, and that moderation of manner, which are involved in Conservatism.⁴



Krauth identifies two possible church bodies and their confessions that are in keeping with the goal of Conservative Reformation, namely, the Anglican Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Of course, he ultimately asserts that the Evangelical Lutheran Church upholds both the disposition of and goal toward which Conservative Reformation aims.

Anglicanism fails to be a truly conservative reformatory church body, as Krauth sees it, because like all movements within the Reformed Church, it relies upon doctrinal indeterminateness.⁵ “While the Church of England stated doctrines so that men understood its utterances in different ways, the Lutheran Church tried so to state them that men could accept them in but one sense.”⁶ This accounts for why, within the one communion of the Anglican Church, two priests can hold disparate views regarding Real Presence in the Lord’s Supper and, nevertheless, receive communion from one another. Whereas Martin Luther and the Lutheran Reformers are blamed for what Schmauk says is Protestantism’s greatest weakness, it is really the doctrinal indeterminateness of the Anglican Church and other Reformed groups, as well as the unrestrained revolutionaries like Ulrich Zwingli, that caused the rejection of “the necessity of using and maintaining a common Testimonial authority, or Confessional Doctrine.”

In view of these things, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the guarantor of the ancient faith. She recognizes the necessity of maintaining a common Testimonial Authority, or Confessional Doctrine, and so acknowledges that she has her Creeds from an historic Church, which she also confesses as the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. This guards against harboring unrestrained revolutionaries who progress beyond what is written, as opposed to standing guard in front of the deposit of faith while also “recognizing the value of a common witness by the connected from generation to generation Church.”

On the other hand, and most importantly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church most earnestly upholds and asserts that phrase in the Third Article of the Nicene Creed, namely, that the Holy Spirit “spoke by the prophets.” It is easy to overlook this short phrase, which contains within it the true sense of *sola Scriptura*. The Holy Spirit “spoke by the prophets” precedes the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, not only in the arrangement of the Creed, but in point of fact. It is the Word of God that both gives rise to and governs the Church, and she can only be the dispenser of the ancient faith so long as Sacred Scripture is maintained as the highest authority and court of appeal that the Lord has given to her. When such a conviction is main-

tained the Church is guarded against the *modus operandi* of trying to secure the present by an encrusted fidelity to the results of the past.

That the Evangelical Lutheran Church remains the guarantor of the ancient faith is true, despite the fact that very many revolutionaries (e.g., the Lutheran World Federation) continue to find refuge under the moniker “Lutheran.” It remains true despite the fact that, even within Confessional synods, much error and disunity is plain for all to see. Who among all the representative Church bodies *does not* have these very problems, which even the Apostles endured and of which they warned? The Evangelical Lutheran Church remains the guarantor of the ancient faith, not because she is yet perfected. Rather, it is because, in the Formula of Concord we uphold two principles: Namely, the inspiration and authority of the Word of God as the sole rule and norm for theology and life, thus eschewing the encrustation of Rome and the East. In addition, we assert the necessity of symbols and confessions that, in agreement with God’s sufficient and perspicuous Scripture, aim to set forth the chief articles of Christian doctrine, to be understood in one sense, and thus reject the unrestrained impulse of progressives. Ours is the faith and methodology of the ancient Church. Ours is the faith and methodology of our fathers. The Evangelical Lutheran Church will forever be and remain the place where the faith once for all delivered to the saints is believed and confessed. ☞

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End Notes

¹ Theodore E. Schmauk, *The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church As Embodying the Evangelical Confession of the Christian Church*, (Philadelphia: The General Council Press, 1911), iv–v.

² Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1871), vii. One might consider the work of economist Thomas Sowell, *The Conflict of Visions* in which he asserts that all conflicts, whatever their specific nature, can be boiled down to the conflict of two visions; what Sowell refers to as the constrained and unconstrained visions.

³ Ibid., viii.

⁴ Ibid., viii.

⁵ Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the newest Reformed denomination, the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), which are altogether governed by one Constitution and Book of Procedures, nevertheless permits each local congregation to be governed by one of ten different ranging from the 39 Articles to the 1689 London Baptist Confession. Some within the CREC are even advocating that the 1580 Book of Concord be included on such a list. The CREC is what Krauth would have identified with what he called the “eclectic reformation.”

⁶ Ibid., ix–x.

In the Very Midst of Life:

Sermon for Trinity 24



Death teaches us that we are not in control. We cannot decide when we die or when we live. Suffering is a form of death. We all have to face it to various degrees, and God wants us to face it in faith. Whether you stub your toe or you have a terminal illness, God is teaching you through your suffering to face the pangs of death with faith in his mercy. He is teaching you not to rely on your own strength but to take refuge in your Lord who died and rose for you and promises you eternal life. God uses death to teach us that we cannot contribute anything to our eternal destiny. It is only by his grace and mercy that we live even a second in our bodies. And it is only by his grace in Christ that we have hope for the life to come. He therefore teaches us to rest in his promise of life and salvation. Commend your life and your death to him who created you, redeemed you, and set you apart to be his own.

Sadly, this is the problem with our dying world. The sinful flesh imagines that it can control death. But any attempt to take control of death only results in more of it. Those who promote so-called euthanasia – falsely labeled a “good death” – promise that people will die with dignity if they have the ability to end their own suffering. Canada, several countries in Europe, and about five or six states in our country allow the practice of assisted suicide in which someone with an illness is administered lethal drugs by a physician to end one’s own life. We are not talking about a cancer patient deciding to end his treatment and commend his life into God’s hands. No, these laws allow people to end their lives with poison given to them by a physician.

Another way in which this dying world imagines it can control death is how it treats the tragedy of barrenness. Specialists take and fertilize a woman’s egg outside of the womb and then implant it into a woman’s womb. Often, this results in removing the extra human embryos, freezing them, or throwing them away. It is a sensitive topic for people, because who would deny that the inability to conceive a child is sad and tragic? But the answer to this sad and tragic situation is not to play God. We have no right

to think that we can create human life and then discard it or reserve it for some other purpose. This only results in more death and confusion.

Of course, the most common example of this dying world attempting to control death is the killing of an unborn child. A young woman who finds that she is pregnant may feel as if her life has ended. The fear of miscarriage is a very real thing, which many of us are all too familiar with. The deceitful promoters of abortion take advantage of these genuine fears. They scare vulnerable women into thinking that if they are not able to abort their children, then they will be denied treatment when they suffer a miscarriage or that they will not be able to deliver the child in times of emergency. This, of course, was never the case with our Missouri laws, but the ads on television straight up lied to people to get them to vote in favor of this wicked amendment. They appealed to the natural, yet deceitful, notion that we can control the outcome of life and death.

But what God creates is always good, even though it has been corrupted by sin. Even if someone is conceived as a result of a sinful act, that little life is still precious to the Lord. The active killing of a child never rights any wrong, no matter how heinous that wrong was. And again, we’re not talking about removing an unborn child in an emergency, giving the child as much care as possible, and ultimately commending the child’s life to God. No, those who promote abortion are promoting the active murder of unborn children. And they do so precisely because they think that they can be in control of what only God controls.

In the midst of earthly life, snares of death surround us. We live in a dying world. We live in dying bodies. Where shall we go for refuge? To our own ingenuity? To our own imaginations? Should we simply ignore death, cover it up, and have professionals deal with it for us so that we do not have to pay attention to it? If we do this, then we are only letting the Foe confound us. That’s exactly what the devil does. He deceives and lies so he can cause murder and despair. No, we cannot ignore death. Instead, we must face it. We must admit that we deserve it. We must face God who alone has the power over it. As we just sang,

We mourn that we have greatly erred,
 That our sins Thy wrath have stirred.
 Holy and righteous God!
 Holy and mighty God!
 Holy and all merciful Savior!
 Eternal Lord God!
 Save us lest we perish in the bitter pangs of death.
 Have mercy, O Lord!
 (LSB 755.1)

Jesus was approached by the leader of a synagogue. Mark and Luke tell us that his name was Jairus. They say that his daughter was dying. In Matthew's account, Jairus tells Jesus that his daughter is already dead. It sounds like Jairus said both that she was dying and that she was dead. This is how death is. It's something that engulfs us on every side. Whether she was on this side or that side of death, she was hovering over death's door. She was facing death. The sooner we see this about ourselves, the more equipped we are to face our Maker and find our refuge only in him. Jairus had nowhere else to go. He begged Jesus to come with him. So our Lord, full of compassion, followed the man to his house.

While they were walking to Jairus's house, there was a woman who had a flow of blood for many years. According to Leviticus 15, a woman who had a discharge of blood would be considered unclean. When she finally stopped bleeding, she would count seven days and then give two turtle doves or young pigeons to the priest for him to offer as sacrifices. These ceremonies of cleanliness were meant to teach the people to rely only on the Lord to cleanse them. He would provide the atoning sacri-

fice for them. He would purify them from sin. He would save them from death.

But this woman's case was especially sad, because her flow of blood would not stop. She was plagued by death every day, and she did not have the luxury to ignore it. Mark tells us that she had spent all her money on doctors, but her condition only got worse. She had no control. Where could she for refuge go, where for grace to bless her? As we sang in the hymn, "To Thee, Lord Jesus, only!"

God provides all sorts of remedies to help us deal with suffering and death. He provides medicine and doctors, family and loved ones. He richly and daily provides for all we need to support this body and life. It is good to seek treatment for your illness, your inability to conceive, your chronic pain, or your terminal illness. But do not be fooled into thinking that you can somehow control the outcome. Do not imagine that you do not need to face death. Instead, commend yourself to the Lord. Face him who made heaven and earth, who forms the light and the darkness, and who kills and makes alive. Turn to the Judge of the living and the dead, who alone can save us from the terror of the fiery pit of hell. Recognize that there is nothing you can give him, nothing you can contribute, nothing you can control. And instead, listen to his words and promises.

That poor woman thought that if she only touched Jesus' garment then she would be healed. In fact, she said, "I will be saved!" Giving up on anything else in the world to save her, she was convinced that even the slightest touch of Christ's cloak would give her what she needed. She was right. Her flow of blood stopped immediately. Jesus turned to look at her. Mark and Luke tell us the woman was trembling with fear. After all, she was face to face with



the One who is Lord over life and death. We should approach this altar with the same reverence, because here he comes to us in his body and blood. But what did the Lord say to her? He said, "Cheer up, daughter! Your faith has made you well." He said, "Your faith has saved you."

God has designed a woman's body to produce life. Yet the curse of sin has caused pain and toil to accompany child-bearing. This does not only include the pain that exists going into labor. It also includes the disappointments, the miscarriages, and any number of things that go wrong inside their bodies. The dying world pretends to care about these things, but their prescription is only more death. If you want to help women like this poor lady in our text, then point them to Christ. Show them that death has lost its sting because Jesus has died for our sins and was raised for our justification. Pray for them. And treat them as daughters of Almighty God. Because when all other earthly help proves to have its limits, when we must all face death and find that our souls are not in our own control, then only the words of our Savior will prove true. Only his mercy will save us.

The woman's faith saved her not because it was so great a virtue. Her faith saved her because of what it held onto. She held onto Jesus, even if she touched only his garment. So when Jesus arrived at the home of Jarius, and that poor father was informed that his daughter had died, Mark and Luke record these encouraging words of our Lord. He said, "Only believe, and your daughter will live." Only believe. Faith alone saves, not because faith has some magic power, not because it is so great of an achievement. Faith alone saves, because only faith holds onto the words of Christ. As Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!"

In the midst of utter woe
When our sins oppress us,
Where shall we for refuge go,
Where for grace to bless us?
To Thee, Lord Jesus, only!
Thy precious blood was shed to win
Full atonement for our sin.
(LSB 755:3)

God has designed a man to be a protector for his wife and his family, but the curse of sin has caused toil and sweat

to accompany his work. Many men, like Jairus, find themselves in helpless situations, overwhelmed and struggling to lead and provide for their homes. Sadly, some even take their own lives, deceived by this dying world that they can control what only God can give. So if you want to help a father whose children are in danger or whose home seems to be crumbling, consider what he needs. Does he need some moral or even financial support? I'm sure he could use that. It no doubt wouldn't hurt for him to learn how to get his house in order so he can lead his family. But as helpful as these things can be, they also have their limits. If you want to help a guy who is sinking under the pressure of being a husband, a father, and a man, then point him to Jesus. Point him to the God Man who bore the sin of the world on his shoulders. Pray for him, and treat him as a son of Almighty God.

We cannot solve everyone's problems in this world. Many people promise to do this, but it only leads to disappointment. All of our earthly help has its limits. But the one thing, which excels all help, is the message of the Gospel. That Christ has made atonement for our sins and promises to raise us up on the last day – this is truly the answer to all our fears. This message alone turns your grave into a soft bed and your death into a nap. Yes, to a dying world, this is laughable. It seems entirely impractical. But it is true. As surely as Jesus took the daughter of Jairus and commanded her to wake up, and as surely as he came out of the tomb on Easter morning, he promises that we will hear his voice as well. We will rise to face him as the Lord over death. And we will know him forever as the Resurrection and the Life. This is what our faith rests in. Therefore, let us pray:

Holy and righteous God!
Holy and mighty God!
Holy and all merciful Savior!
Eternal Lord God!
Lord, preserve and keep us in the peace that faith can give.
Have Mercy, O Lord! Amen.
(LSB 755:3) ☞

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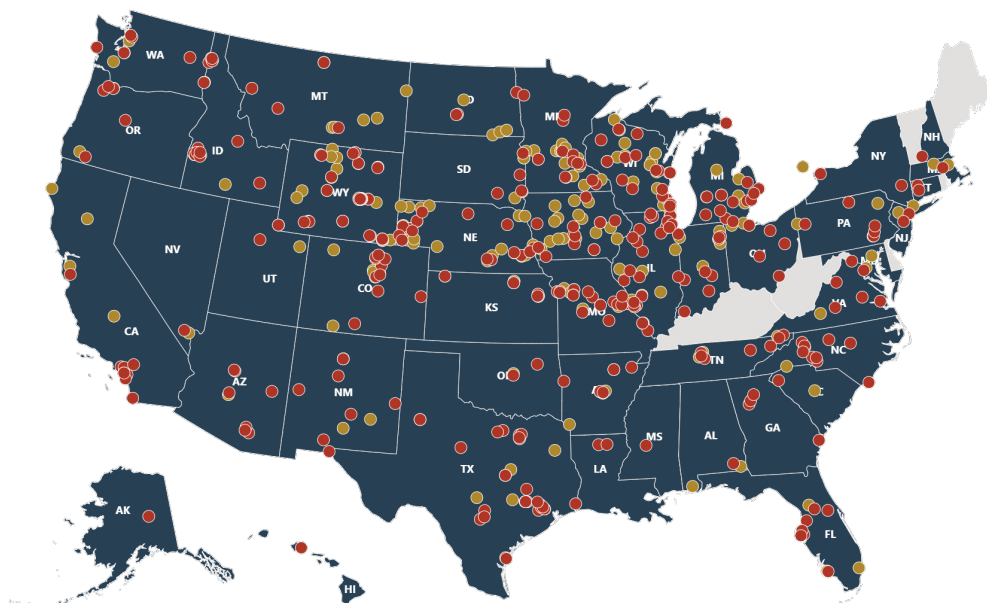
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Poetry, Theology, and the Church



he first thing man uttered was a poem: “This one at last, bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh. / This one shall be called Woman, / for from man was this one taken (Gen. 2:23).”¹

Moses, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Solomon, and David were all inspired poets. The prophetic writings, especially Isaiah and Job, contain passages of soaring poetic beauty. At the Visitation the Virgin Mary’s heart was moved to say the *Magnificat*. As the Lord suffered on the cross, He quoted the Psalms, the ancient poems of the Israelites. And in the Revelation to St. John, we come across angels and saints praising the Trinity with poetic language. Indeed, poetry sung and spoken can be heard across the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, yet many Christians today take little or no interest in poetry. In fact, many claim to dislike or even hate poetry. In what follows I argue that poetry matters a great deal, for it is nothing less than a central part of man’s original calling and a participation in God’s plan of creativity. Therefore, the decay of poetry is the sign of society’s decay, and bad poetry reflects a bad and barbarous age that has forgotten or rejected the Christian vision of man and the revelation of God. Before settling on these conclusions, though, it would be helpful to answer a couple of basic questions, specifically, “What precisely is poetry, and how could we as Christians formulate a *Theology of Poetry*?”

The word “poetry” is from a Greek verb, ποιέω (*poiéo*), which has a wide range of meanings from “I make” to “I play.” Poets are found in every age and every culture. In the Church a host of believing poets have sung the praises of Christ, from Gregory Nazianzus and Synesius in the ancient Church to Hildegard of Bingen and Dante in the Middle Ages to Christina Rossetti and T. S. Eliot in modern times. Great and classic poetry is far from banal self-reflection on interior feelings. No, for most of human history, poets – whether ancient pagan or Christian – were the ones inspired to give words to man’s religious impulses, to chronicle the feats of heroes, and to record the deeds of kings. Their poems allowed societies to remember, to celebrate, and to emulate. They strengthened the link from earth to heaven via the power of the spoken and written word, a word that was capable of blessing, of revealing, of sanctifying.

Just as the original Greek root-verb *poiéo* has a variety of meanings, through the centuries, poems have taken a variety of forms, but in every instance, a poem is identified by a *special* use of language; that is, a high, elevated style that sets itself apart from prose. A poem typically follows literary conventions, such as rhyme, as well as meter – the pleasing cadence of syllables. It must always have an artful structure which forms its stylistic architecture. Poems aim at an economy of language and beauty of form, though in more contemporary poetry, such aims are increasingly ignored, which usually leads to stylistic formlessness and spiritual impoverishment.

Lutherans have always written and enjoyed poetry; Luther himself was a poet and hymn writer. His translation of the Bible displays a great deal of poetic understanding. Through the centuries, many Lutherans have put their poetic talents to use in writing hymns for the churches to sing. Indeed, as one can see by our countless hymns and liturgical songs, there is a rich poetic tradition within confessional Lutheranism both on the continent and in North America.²

Poetic expression involves careful organization, harmony, and attention. As one contemporary Christian poet puts it, poems are *ascetic* and *aesthetic*; that is, writing and reading them involves a kind of trained attention, while accompanying this ‘work’ is the joy and beauty that a poem creates.³ In this way a theology of poetry would stem from a more fundamental theology of the Word. The eighteenth-century Lutheran writer Johann Georg Hamann exclaimed, “Gott ein Schriftsteller!” – “God an Author!” – on the first page of his personal meditations on Scripture when he realized that the Author of life and salvation is *also* the Author of the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Indeed, the God who speaks creation into existence (Gen. 1:3) is the incarnate Word who teaches us of the Father (John 8:26). The Word then promises that His followers will receive the Spirit who will give them *words* to speak (John 14:26). In thankful response to God’s graciousness, believers (and angels) return songs and psalms (sung poetry) to the blessed Trinity (e.g., Rev. 7:12). As Christians, our own words can channel God’s Word and communicate His blessings to others (e.g., Psalm 96:3).

One of the most fascinating twentieth century writers who ruminated at length on the theological meaning of his

poetic craft was the Welshman David Jones. In an essay on the eighteenth century poet Christopher Smart he writes, "For I hope it is permitted to say that as through and by the Son, all creation came into existence and is by that same agency redeemed, so we, who are co-heirs with the Son, extend, in a way, creating and redeeming influences upon the dead works of nature, when we fashion material to our heart's desire." By "heart's desire" Jones does not

mean the passions of fallen man but the redeemed loves of a Christian. He is highlighting the truth that every disciple is called to be a ποιητής - a poet, a craftsman and shaper of words, who uses words while participating in both creation, by a positive art, and in redemption, through witness and proclamation. Therefore poetry, the artful use of language to reveal what is true, is itself a reflection of man's divine image. He is a little creator, mirroring the Divine



Creator, and participating in God's own work by creatively speaking, writing, and singing the supreme goodness of God.

Here I might add that Christian Poetry is *antiphonal*. God speaks; we respond. You teach me words; I deliver them back to you. A pastor chants; the congregation chants back. Poetry is a beautiful representation of all creative activity because it encapsulates the truth that reality itself is antiphonal.⁶ We are always responding to God with the gifts that He has already given us. Our words are from His Word, and so they reflect and magnify Him. In fact, all of creation antiphonally gives back to God what He has already given (e.g., Psalm 42:7). Again, as Hamann puts it, "Speak, that I may see you!—This wish was fulfilled by creation, which is a speech to creatures through creatures..."⁷ Creation is God's speech act to us, and our poetry can be a speech act to one another and back to Him in loving response.

This leads us to the often sad state of poetry today. But is it any wonder if some of the most award-winning contemporary, secular poems are hopeless and nihilistic, given the fact that our society has so devalued human life? Where man is trampled and denied, what becomes of poetry? What is its purpose, if there is no beauty, no truth, no God? A mere arrangement of words – a distraction – until death and destruction by either bombs or cancer.

But there are glimmers of hope. Christian poets are restoring beauty and meaning to the craft. Older theological poets are receiving new translations and greater academic and popular attention than ever before. Holy poetry is being re-discovered and re-claimed by a new generation of Christians that desires traditional beauty and rejects the contemporary fads.

Our Lutheran churches are in a unique position to participate in this revival of Christian poetry. As I have written in a previous article, painting, sculpture, and other arts need not be relegated to fine art galleries; in our own

congregations we have people brimming with talent, who want to use their gifts *liturgically* and *devotionally*. Poems are not only for literary journals and college classes, but for churches! Gifted children could produce poems that go in newsletters or onto prayer cards for reflection after Holy Communion. Those with poetic gifts could add much to congregational meetings, helping people direct their attention to what is good and holy. Pastors with poetic skills could use them effectively from the pulpit. Devotional reading of all would be enhanced by knowledge of and access to great Christian poets from the past. May each of our congregations join the poets in praising God and directing our hearts to the Source of all words, the Fountain of all Beauty. ☞

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End Notes

¹ Translated by Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: Norton, 1996), 10.

² For the standard English translation of many of the finest Lutheran hymns, see *Seventeenth Century Lutheran Meditations and Hymns*, ed. Eric Lund (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2011).

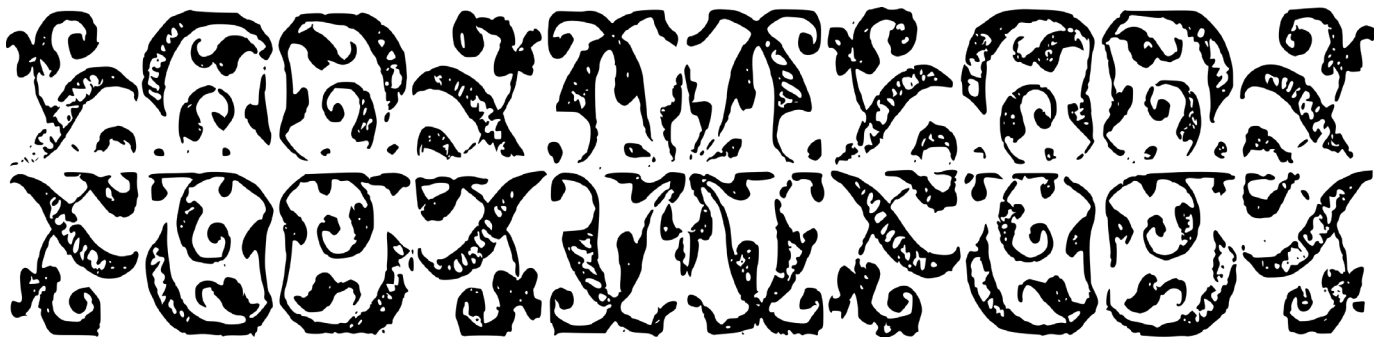
³ Timothy E. G. Bartel, *The Poets and the Fathers: Theology and Poetry from Gregory Nazianzus to Scott Cairns* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2024).

⁴ Johann Georg Hamann, "On the Interpretation of Sacred Scripture," *London Writings*, trans. John W. Kleinig (Evansville: Ballast Press, 2021), 1.

⁵ David Jones, *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. Harmon Grisewood (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), 286.

⁶ Note how this *antiphonal understanding* shows that there is neither a hard, dramatic separation between God and His creation, nor is there a mystical blending so that there is only ever one single substance. Rather, God calls things into existence which then call back to Him in an endless round of jubilant, loving song (e.g., Psalm 66:4; Rev. 5:13).

⁷ Johann Georg Hamann, *Aesthetica in Nuce*, in *J.G. Hamann: Writings on Philosophy and Language*, trans. & ed. Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 65.



Introducing Esaias Heidenreich (1532-1589)



Esaias Heidenreich was born in Löwenberg on April 10, 1532, to Laurentius and Elizabeth Heidenreich. Laurentius was a Roman Catholic priest who became acquainted with and persuaded by Luther's writings. He later met Luther in person and witnessed the Leipzig Debate of 1519. After twelve years as a Catholic priest, Laurentius was won over to the Reformation and became the first Lutheran preacher of St. John's in Zittau in 1521. He served as a Lutheran preacher for thirty-six years.

As a child, Esaias's pious parents ensured he received a sound education, and in 1548, at the age of sixteen, he went on to study at the University of Frankfurt, where he eventually became a Doctor of Theology. Esaias was first a pastor in Lemberg (Lviv, Ukraine), then in Schweidnitz (Świdnica, Poland), and finally in Breslau (Wrocław, Poland), where he was the pastor of St. Elizabeth, a professor of theology at the gymnasium, an inspector of the churches and schools, and a member of the consistory. He served for twenty years until his death on April 26, 1589, at the age of 57.

While not a well-known figure from the Lutheran tradition, Heidenreich published many of his sermons and wrote several works aimed at the edification of the laity through prayer and meditation on God's Word. One such work is a book of prayers on the Gospel lessons appointed for the Sundays and Feast Days of the Church Year, from which the following prayers on Luke 2:41–52, the Gospel appointed for the First Sunday after Epiphany, are taken.

On the First Sunday after Epiphany

Gospel: Luke 2:41–52

FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS, TO IMPORE GOD THE LORD FOR A BLESSED REARING OF CHILDREN

Almighty and eternal God, we poor parents, whom You have called to the difficult governance of home and rearing of children in these most perilous times, rightly recognize that the fruit of our body, the dear youth, are

Your gifts, Your holy seed and tender seedlings, which are created and ordered for the spread of Your most holy name. So grant us and all Christian parents Your Holy Spirit that we may care well for those whom You have entrusted to us for guidance. Grant us to rightly go before our youth as good examples in doctrine, life, and conduct, so that they may grasp and learn from us Your Word, the most holy Sacraments, and all Christian cultivation and discipline. And since we have presented and dedicated them to You and Your dearest Son, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, in Holy Baptism, bestow Your Holy Spirit upon them and upon us, that with blessing they may further grow up in Your grace. Give us also to justly chasten their will with the rod from their youth onwards and to guide them with honorable discipline. Consecrate and bless all Christian teachers, pastors, preceptors, schools, and churches, that they may be found industrious and diligent in their rearing of Your tender seedlings. Kindle the heart of the youth, that they obey Your Word and good admonition. Accompany them with Your dear angels to school, church, and wherever they go, unto the honor of Your name, that the evil foe and wicked company may find no part in them, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, our Redeemer. Amen.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN YOUTH

Lord Jesus Christ, at the age of twelve You sat in the temple in Jerusalem among the teachers, listened to them, asked questions, gave answers, and thereby sanctified and blessed our schools, churches, and all godly youth who study unto the honor of Your heavenly Father, so that, by Your grace, we may also find in such gatherings a place before You. We beseech You, according to Your example, grant that we may highly regard Your holy will, obey our parents, pastors, caretakers, schoolmasters, schoolmistresses, and those who teach and discipline us, and show ourselves submissive in every just matter. Through Your obedience, blot out all our disobedience, sin, and transgressions, which we have committed against You, Your commandments, and our parents. And through Your glad-some incarnation, grant us to increase in wisdom, age, and grace, with God and men, to the praise and honor of Your holy name, and to the help and benefit of our neighbor. Amen. ☩

Translated by Dylan Smith. Smith is a graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary (M.Div. 2022; S.T.M. 2023) and a current Ph.D. student at the University of Texas at Austin.

Review: The Aeneid



The first words of the Augsburg Confession are, “Invictissime Imperator, Caesar Auguste, etc.”

Following the conventions of the Holy Roman Empire, the confessors here invoke an idea that first goes public following the battle of Actium in 31 BC, an idea celebrated by Virgil in his epic poem about the birth of the proto-Roman people from refugees from Troy, the *Aeneid* (19 BC). Caesar Augustus, Invincible Emperor. As witnessed by these words—and incidentally by the title of the Augsburg Confession itself (in Latin, it’s *Confessio Augustana*)—Christianism and the west more generally has followed in the steps of this idea ever since.

How much of ancient and classical history can we tie into the *Aeneid*, and where to begin? We might begin with Julius Caesar, leading his army across the Rubicon (49 BC). Or, for good measure, we might begin a decade earlier with Caesar’s later rival, Pompey, as he crosses another sacred boundary: in 63 BC, Jerusalem fell to the Romans, creating the Roman province of Judea, and the victorious general Pompey entered the sacred precincts of the holy Temple and invited himself behind the curtain—the selfsame curtain that would be rent asunder on Good Friday. Wherever we begin, Julius Caesar consolidated the threads of power in the Roman Republic in himself when he defeated Pompey in civil war (48 BC). Julius Caesar adopted as his son and heir his great-nephew Octavius, and after Julius fell on the Ides of March, 44 BC, to the daggers of Brutus, Cassius, et. al., this Octavius ended the competition for the legacy of Caesar when he defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium (31 BC). The rise of Octavius as Caesar’s successor brought an end to the Roman Republic and made permanent the Roman Empire. As Emperor, Octavius received the title Augustus, the legacy of which title is invoked at the opening of the Augustana, and under which title he himself joins us on Christmas Eve, via Luke 2, “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree, etc., etc.”



All of the above is more elegantly rehearsed in Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, or can be quickly reviewed on Wikipedia. However we access it today, for Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro, d. 19 BC), the accession of Augustus brought the consummation of Roman destiny and great promise for the future. By this time, the myth was already old amongst the Romans that the true nobility of the Latin elite came to Italy, long before Romulus and Remus, from Homer’s Troy. It was also believed that the Julii, the noble family of Julius Caesar and of Augustus, descended from Iulus (more often called Ascanius), son of Aeneas, a Trojan hero of the war with the Greeks who, conveniently for everyone involved, escaped the city’s destruction. Like Odysseus, Aeneas is a secondary character in Homer’s *Iliad*, and his character, survival, and destiny are already sketched therein. So, as Augustus inherits the

earth, Virgil picks up this scrap of Roman history hanging on a loose end in Homer and weaves the *Aeneid* to valorize and immortalize the nativity of Roman glory in the person of Augustus, Invictissimus Imperator, etc., etc.

In the basic outlines of the story, and in comparison to Homer, the *Aeneid* is not very original, nor does it intend to be. Whereas the *Iliad*-*Odyssey* begins with a land war outside a city and continues with adventures at sea, the *Aeneid* begins with adventures at sea and concludes with a land war.

Aeneas is a Trojan hero and the son of Anchises and the goddess Venus. The poem opens as he is leading a group of Trojans, survivors of the city’s fall, through the Mediterranean toward a promised new homeland.

They seek refuge in the North African city of Carthage, where they are welcomed by the queen, Dido, and where Aeneas relates the end of Troy and their escape. Dido falls in love with Aeneas, and he somewhat with her, but he must (like Odysseus) pull away from the temptation of the affair and continue toward his destiny, to found a city that will give birth to the Romans. As the Trojans leave Carthage, Dido kills herself; her wounded rage is the ultimate source of the later Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage, Virgil tells us.



Further adventures lead the Trojans to Italy. There, Aeneas is guided on a journey through the underworld, where he is given insight into the cosmic and chthonic forces working to bring about his own destiny, and the rise of the noble race of Romans. Thereafter, the Trojans find allies and enemies among the tribes of Italy. As Achilles had Hector for a rival, so Aeneas has Turnus. As Achilles has armor from Hephaestus, so Aeneas has armor from Vulcan (Vulcan being the Latin name for Hephaestus). In the end—and every good reader of Virgil is supposed to know the end before he reads—the Trojans win their destiny, found the city of Lavinium, adopt the language, customs, and gods of the Latin tribe, and thus become the Latins.

Someone who has worked his way through the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* might fairly ask, what is the special value in covering all of this ground again? Isn't Virgil just giving us an "expanded universe" composed of recycled Homeric

plot-points to celebrate his Imperator?

A few points in response. First, Virgil himself would not be insulted by that assessment of his work; bringing Homer's Muse to Italy, and into the Roman consciousness, is precisely the point.

Second, whereas Homer is probably best experienced as oral song (and I say "probably" because I'm relying on experts, not my own experience), Virgil is amenable to readers of books, and this has long been recognized. Robert Fagles' is the most delightful of the translations I've sampled and, while of course it's the standard text in Latin, I've occasionally questioned what business anyone has doing anything classical who hasn't found joy in reading the story in English.

And that's a third point: it is, in fact, the *Aeneid*, more than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, that has formed the mythic-historical mind of the west, including western Chris-

tendom. At the end of the day, while our best ideas might come from the east, even we barbarians are Romans, and not the Byzantine kind; if any founding myth is a classic for us *after* the Bible, it should be the *Aeneid*.

Finally, I'll expand on a last point to encourage readers: Virgil has an eye, an ear, and a sense for tying together grand themes, like fate or destiny, with both high human ideals, like piety and courage, and also with scenes of pathos, nostalgia, and poignancy. I will not hazard the analysis that this is different from Homer, much less better than Homer, but I will simply say that scenes and themes from the *Aeneid* have stuck with me in a unique way. A few examples follow.

In Book 1, as he wanders in Carthage, Aeneas finds a grand depiction of the Trojan War adorning the walls of a temple. Here, alone, he discovers that the history he lived through has already become mythic memory to adorn far-away buildings in foreign cities. Yet through these images, he has an immediate and fresh experience of the past, through which Virgil means to give us an immediate and fresh experience of the *Iliad*, but while standing next to a forlorn Trojan survivor. Now, the *Iliad* comes to you not as a memory of a poem you read, but as a memory of something you suffered together with Aeneas. How did Virgil do that?

But this is only to stir your feelings and prepare you for Book 2, in which Aeneas relates the last hours of his home city and the cruel conditions of his escape. In a sense, this is the scene Homer's audience has been wanting for a long time. There were premonitions in the *Iliad* and hints in the *Odyssey*, but Virgil senses what we've been craving and delivers. It is worth pointing out that this core memory that many of us have from Greek mythology, the images in your head of how the Greeks finally entered the city of Troy, this memory never came to you from the Greek Homer, but from the Latin Virgil, and it is experienced from the perspective of the Trojans. Out of the Bronze Age Collapse comes our hero, carrying on his back the weight of the past (his father, Anchises), guiding with his hand the hope of the future (his son, Ascanius Iulus), straining toward Italy. Read, and see if you've remembered all this right.

Finally, if you're looking for some meaty theme to chew on and turn over in your mind as you read the *Aeneid* and reflect upon it, I'd suggest you start by asking about destiny (fate) and duty, what the Romans meant by *pietas*, and the self-confidence of the west. Some questions: was it duty or destiny that brought Aeneas to Italy and made Octavian into Augustus? Or, better, does that question even make sense in Virgil's poem? Perhaps destiny is duty, and

the joining of these two in one human life is the *pietas* by which Rome was built (I say this not to give you an answer, but to pick a fight in your mind as you read). And Virgil has no doubt that things are going to be great going forward from Augustus in Rome; the proof is in Aeneas. Is that confidence warranted, or mere superstition? And where has that confidence gone, in the west? When did we lose it? Can we get it back? And would it be pious for us to pursue it today?

But to pick up a loose end I've left above, and if you'll pardon the pun, the Achilles' Heel of the western world from Augustus onward has always been this very thing that Virgil underlines in the *Aeneid*: all of our best western ideas, muses, confessions; all of our founders, saviors, gods, and all of our noble blood; whatever light we still have in the west, dawned not from our midst but rose upon us: from the east. Rome is that Nazareth out of which, what good can come? But to which came all good things from Ilium, Achaea, and the little town of Bethlehem.

Augustus could not have known the consequence of the decree that all the world he had won at Actium, all the world that was his birthright from Aeneas, was to be registered, each in his hometown. And Virgil did not know how to write by St. Luke's Muse, or how to bring Him to Italy, but He would come when and where He willed, through the desolation they called the *Pax Romana*.¹ And though they did not know the deepest secrets of heaven and earth, they did their duty and I suppose that destiny has given them—Augustus, Virgil, and even Aeneas—a small and far-off corner adjacent to every Nativity scene.

The world in which Christmas, Easter, and the Reformation took place was the world built by Augustus and converted by the Spirit of Christ, created by Virgil and recreated by the Bible. And speaking of the Bible, the last written words of Martin Luther are, "Hanc tu ne divinam Aeneida tenta, sed vestigia pronus adora."² 🐼


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End Notes

¹ So a certain Calgus alleges, "Auferte, trucidare, rapere, falsis nominibus imperium, atque, ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant." That is, "They [Romans] plunder, slaughter, steal, and falsely name it 'Empire.' Where they make a desolation, they call it 'Peace.'" Translation from the Editors; see Tacitus, *De vita et moribus Iulii Agricolae*.

² "Do not test this divine Aeneid [the Bible], but bow down and adore its path." Translation from the Editors.

Joseph Smith: The Prophet of Palmyra

“he fact is that by the power of God I translated The Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics, the knowledge of which was lost to the world; in which wonderful event I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries...” (Joseph Smith to James Arlington Bennet, 13 November 1843).

By 1805 the Second Great Awakening was well on the way to transforming American Christianity. Into this world came Joseph Smith, Jr. He was born into a struggling farm in Vermont. His family of modest means moved frequently during Joseph's early childhood. In 1811 they settled in the town of Palmyra, New York. The family struggled financially, spiritually, and socially. These circumstances would come to form one of the most significant American religious figures.

Palmyra was not a particularly large or noteworthy town but it was home to Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian congregations. The town was in a period of religious revival and all denominations were competing for converts. Joseph reflected in his writings that the fervor he saw in these revivals played a significant role in his spiritual development. Of notable interest to him was the diversity of doctrines among the various denominations.

As a youth Joseph was curious about religion and listened to what the various teachers had to say. He was greatly distressed by denominations claiming theirs was the only path to salvation. In this confusion he sought clarity. In his teenage years he experienced what he called an “awakening” and felt a “great and abominable” sense of confusion as he struggled to find peace.

According to Joseph's words, in the spring of 1820 at the age of 14, he went into the woods to pray for guidance concerning which denomination was true. This moment is known as the First Vision. Outside of the alleged discovery of The Book of Mormon this is perhaps the most significant event in Latter-Day Saint History. Smith claimed that, while praying, he was visited by two divine figures: God the Father and Jesus Christ. In his narrative, Joseph described how the two figures instructed him not to join



any of the existing denominations, for they were all corrupt and had strayed from the true gospel.

This vision serves as the foundation for many of his later theological claims. Here we find the genesis of Joseph's restorationist movement. Joseph claimed that after this first vision he felt a deep sense of spiritual authority and responsibility to proclaim the truths revealed to him. He kept this vision secret for some time.

From this initial experience Joseph claimed to be visited by the angel Moroni. He claimed this angel informed him he was chosen to translate an ancient book, an account of ancient America, buried in a hill in Palmyra.

After some struggles Joseph claimed to have at last unearthed what he described as a book of metallic plates con-

Many, both contemporary with Joseph and today, have questioned the authenticity of The Book of Mormon and the method by which Smith purportedly translated it. Skeptics have pointed to the lack of tangible evidence for the existence of the gold plates and criticized the book's complex narrative structure and theological claims.

taining the lost history of an ancient American civilization. Joseph claimed these plates were written in a language called “Reformed Egyptian.” He further claimed he had been given divine power to translate them. Inside the area containing the alleged book were tools he called the “Urim and Thummim” which were, at least in the earliest accounts, used to translate the book. The translation process began in 1827. The translation was completed in 1829. The plates would become better known as “The Book of Mormon.”

Many, both contemporary with Joseph and today, have questioned the authenticity of The Book of Mormon and the method by which Smith purportedly translated it. Skeptics have pointed to the lack of tangible evidence for the existence of the gold plates and criticized the book's complex narrative structure and theological claims. However, believers in the Latter-day Saint faith regard The Book of Mormon as divinely in-

spired, and it remains one of the foundational texts of their religion.

Nevertheless, Joseph was now preaching that a new scripture had been revealed. It was time to bring it to the masses, for in these pages was the fullness of the gospel and Joseph was the prophet raised up to restore the visible church.

In 1829 Joseph and his close friend and believer Oliver Cowdery claimed to have been visited by John the Baptist. Here they were allegedly given the keys to the Aaronic Priesthood and thus the authority to baptize. While it could be argued The Book of Mormon reflects Joseph's latent Methodism, in the visit of John the Baptist it was clear the Mormons were deviating openly from mainstream Christianity.

Next the two were visited by Peter, James, and John, who granted unto them the Melchizedek Priesthood. With





these keys they were now able to offer up higher and, heretofore, unrevealed ordinances.

In 1830 the Church of Christ (later renamed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, among other names) was organized in Fayette, New York. The church would swiftly attract a multitude of converts entrenched in the revivalism of the time and hungry for something new. The teachings further expanded from here.

Colorful characters like Sidney Rigdon, Raccoon John Smith, Porter Rockwell, and Brigham Young would appear. Soon the new converts, now coined colloquially as “Mormons,” had communities in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and Missouri, among other places.

In later articles we will detail just what happened to this nascent movement. This movement has had greater reach than any other of the new religious movements of the Second Great awakening. In fact, it is the most likely to ring your doorbell.

From the beginning of the church in 1830 we find ourselves traveling to Ohio and suffering with the Latter-day Saints in the midst of a banking collapse. We will

see extermination orders for Mormons enacted by a sitting governor. We will follow wagon trails down into Missouri and Illinois. We will stand outside the Carthage jail as the Prophet of Palmyra meets his death. From there it is on to the great plains of the West and into the Salt Lake Valley where a juggernaut will take on not only the established churches but also federal troops and American settlers.

This is perhaps the most fascinating story in American religious history and one with far reaching consequences for religious freedom, pluralism, and even the setting of territorial boundaries.

N.B. This article is meant as a brief historical sketch of the early life of Joseph Smith. The scope of this article cannot adequately discuss apologetics, contradictions, or detailed history concerning the veracity of Joseph Smith's purported visions nor of the composition of The Book of Mormon. For a detailed history from a Lutheran perspective see <https://wordfitly.podbean.com/e/episode-45-the-early-life-of-joseph-smith/> 🎧

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Getting to Know the Fathers: Basil the Great



asil of Caesarea, better known as Basil the Great, was one of the most prominent theologians and bishops of the Eastern church from the generation following the Council of Nicaea. Although born about five years after that pivotal conference, the issues addressed there dominated his career as a teacher and defender of the Faith.

Born to a prominent Christian family in about AD 330, Basil was raised to be a man of faith. He was one of ten children, five of which are now considered saints. Basil and two of his brothers, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Peter of Sebaste served the church as bishops. Another brother, St. Naucratus lived as a Christian hermit. His elder sister, St. Macrina the Younger became a much admired ascetic.¹ It was his sister Macrina who appears to have had the greatest influence on the young Basil's formation, encouraging him toward a life of piety and self-sacrifice. As a young man from a wealthy family, he received a very fine formal education, studying in Alexandria, Constantinople and Athens, where he became acquainted with St. Gregory of Nazianzus, a man would become one of his closest friends, and the future emperor Julian the Apostate with whom he also corresponded.² Basil, like his father and many other prominent gentlemen, initially pursued a career as a rhetorician. It would not be long, however, until he abandoned that path for another destiny, that of a life dedicated to the service of God and of His Church.

We learn much about Basil from the more than 360

of his letters that have survived to our day, letters which give the reader a glimpse into the personality of the man himself, as well as into the political, social and theological milieu in which he lived and worked. The main picture that emerges of Basil is of a man of genuine piety, often afflicted with illness, but kind and with a good sense of humor, who was passionate about theology and about the well-being and unity of the Church. Many of his letters written during his tenure as bishop of Caesarea address conflicts among

the clergy and the general struggle to re-establish unity among the churches during the ongoing crisis fueled by the continued rise of Arianism under Constantine's successors.

But his correspondence also reveals a man who valued his relationship with his family, friends, and with his fellow bishops. His affection for his friends, especially Gregory of Nazianzus and Athanasius of Alexandria, was profound, as was his love of his brothers, sister, and uncle (who was also an important bishop). We see, however, that just as in our relationships, Basil's were not without conflict and sometimes estrangement. Over several letters, for example, he addresses a situation in which



BASIL

some rumor about him had reached the ears of his uncle (also a Gregory) associated with the Arian controversy and his handling of it in his parish, which caused his uncle to refuse to visit him or even to answer his letters; and in which his brother Gregory fabricated replies from the uncle to Basil in a good-hearted but wrong-headed attempt to smooth things out in the family.³ In Basil's response to the situation one sees his love of family and his passion for Truth meet and embrace.

Although he composed homilies and other works dealing with a great number of subjects over his relatively brief episcopacy, as every pastor must, arguably his most important and famous work is his short book on the Holy Spirit. Whereas his friend and mentor, Athanasius, in *On the Incarnation*, defended and promoted the orthodox, catholic teaching concerning the person of Christ, Basil took the next step and produced one of the earliest and most profound treatments defending the divinity of the Holy Spirit and explaining His work. He took up his pen at the request of a fellow bishop, Amphilochios of Iconium, in response to a new twist in the ongoing Arian controversy.⁴ Some who had not fully accepted the language of Nicaea (among those now called Semi-Arians) had put forth opinions concerning the Holy Spirit that called into question His place in the Godhead. These became known as the Pneumatomachians—those who “fight against the Spirit.” Basil’s response is both eloquent and profound, his rhetoric firmly rooted in Holy Scripture.

He writes concerning the person of the Spirit, for example:

“...we are compelled to direct our thoughts on high, and to think of an intelligent being, boundless in power, of unlimited greatness, generous in goodness, whom time cannot measure. All things thirsting for holiness turn to Him; everything living in virtue never turns away from Him, He waters them with His life-giving breath and helps them reach their proper fulfillment. He perfects all other things, and Himself lacks nothing; He gives life to all things, and is never depleted. He does not increase by additions, but is always complete, self-established, and present everywhere. He is the source of sanctification, spiritual light, who gives illumination to everyone using His powers to search for the truth - and the illumination He gives is Himself. His nature is unapproachable; only through His goodness are we able to draw near it. He fills all things with His power, but only those who are worthy may share it. He distributes His energy in proportion to the faith of the recipient, not confining it to a single share. He is simple in being; His powers are manifold: they are wholly present everywhere and in everything. He is distributed but does not change. He is shared, yet remains whole. Consider the analogy of the sunbeam: each person upon whom its kindly light falls rejoices as if the sun existed for him alone, yet it illumines land and sea, and is master of the atmosphere. In the same way, the Spirit is given to each one who receives Him as if He were the possession of that person alone, yet He sends forth sufficient grace to fill all the universe.”⁵

Basil’s position was accepted at the ecumenical Council of Constantinople the year after his death, and became enshrined in the Creed as we have it today: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life... who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified...”

Basil’s other extant writings show him to be not only a brilliant proponent of the right theology of the Holy Spirit, but also an insightful thinker on a host of other subjects. Both his work on the days of creation and his *On the Holy Spirit* influenced St. Ambrose of Milan’s treatments of the same subjects.⁶ Concepts that are traditionally associated with St. Augustine, such as the cause and definition of evil, can be found in Basil’s homilies a generation earlier.⁷ His liturgy is still in use among Eastern Christians. His works on social justice, the proper use of wealth,



and other issues of Christian life remain as relevant today as when they were composed more than sixteen centuries ago. There can be no doubt that Basil, who died from illness at the relatively young age of 49, is an author whose short career helped steer the course of the Church of his day, and whose work continues to anchor us today in the right understanding of God's Word, as well as in pious, sometimes struggling, faithful living. ☞

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End Notes

¹ Johannes Quasten, *Patrology, Volume 3: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature From the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon* (The Newman Press, 1963), 204.

² Quasten, 204.

³ Letters 58-60.

⁴ David Anderson, "Introduction," in St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, Popular Patristics (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 7.

⁵ Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 43-44.

⁶ Jerome, Epistle 84:7. <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3001084.htm>.

⁷ See e.g. Basil's "Homily Explaining that God Is Not the Cause of Evil" in *On the Human Condition*, Popular Patristics (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005), 65-80.



Lord, Keep Thy Servant Humble

7.6.7.6.D.

Bewahre, Herr, in Demut

Andrew Richard, 2022

Nathanael Hahn, 2022

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. The score includes a variety of musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, key signatures, time signatures, and various note values and rests. The lyrics are as follows:

1. Lord, keep Thy ser - vant hum - ble; Let not the dev - il's pride
2. God laid the earth's foun - da - tion Be - fore I came to be
3. And yet my flesh would cher - ish Man's emp - ty flat - ter - y,
4. But Je - sus shows me clear - ly That He thought it no loss

Mis - lead my foot to stum - ble Or from Thee turn a - side.
And by His dec - la - ra - tion Set lim - its for the sea.
And it would rath - er per - ish Than ev - er low - ly be.
To stoop down and be near me And bow be - neath a cross.

Lord, make me know my na - ture, Thou ma - dest me from
"Canst thou per - form such won - ders?" He asks who sits on
How soon I am in - fla - ted With vain - glo - ry of
He called it ex - al - ta - tion To con - de - scend to

dust. Pride threat - ens me with dan - ger, But Je - sus, Thee I trust.
high. I trem - ble at his thun - ders. Be - hold, how small am I!
men, Who will like grass be fa - ded And turn to dust a - gain.
me, To win for me sal - va - tion By His hu - mil - i - ty

5. Give me a humble spirit
To take the lowest place.
Lord, do not let me fear it;
Remind me of Thy grace.
I know Thou wilt embrace me
And down to me wilt bend
And rather than debase me,
Say, "Move up higher, friend!"

6. So let my boast be only
In Thee, by whom I'm named.
Make me to praise Thee boldly
And never be ashamed.
And let me not be haughty
Or think I am my own.
O Jesus, Thou hast bought me,
And I am Thine alone.



Summary of Genesis


Johannes Brenz, 1552



nly Holy Scripture, as properly contained in the genuine books of the Old and New Testaments, shows and teaches us the proper knowledge and the true and certain way by which we may attain to the true and eternal salvation and blessedness which the pagan philosophers have always sought according to human reason and wisdom, but have never been able to find or obtain. For this alone is the one thing that has been taken up in Scripture: that it teaches the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, declares His honor and glory, and presents such knowledge and glory of Christ to the entire human race. As it is said, this is the beginning and end of all Holy Scripture. All that is contained therein looks to this, desires this, is directed toward it, and everything finds its end in it. Without further delay, I now wish to show this and to go over all the books of Scripture.

Although the Book of Creation, or Genesis, which is the first book of Moses, may be regarded as if it were written for this purpose—that is, as if this were its use—that those who are descended from Adam might recognize and know the beginning of this world, and how the human race increased and multiplied, the flood, the destruction and ruin of Sodom, and the history of the patriarchs and the forefathers, what it especially teaches above all else is

Christ, the Son of God, since in this book the grave fall and sin of humanity are described. The punishment that comes on account of sin, namely death, is also soon added, and the promise of the seed of the woman, which is Jesus Christ, is described, and thereafter the same promise is again renewed. It flowed through the seed of Abraham, as through the Holy Spirit, and not long afterward comes through the family of Judah, the son of Jacob. This promise is not merely one precious gem or pearl in the Book of Creation, but rather it is the entire treasure to be taken from it. The patriarchs and forefathers carried this promise on with preaching, teaching, and with offering sacrifices in their generations and among their people. They were also made pious and righteous before God through faith in the promise of God. In great adversity, even at last in the midst of death, they were preserved and saved through it.

Johannes Brenz, *Kurtzer Begriff und Inhalt der gantzen Heiligen Schrift* (A Brief Summary of the Content and Scope of the Entire Holy Scriptures, 1552). 

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God creates man in the Garden of Eden by unknown artist, 18th century

Funding Secured for First On-Campus Student Residence



Otto House is scheduled for completion in May



Rendering of completed Otto House

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