

PAUL GERHARDT: PASTOR AND THEOLOGIAN¹

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Paul Gerhardt, the sweet singer of Lutheranism

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Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus

(A theologian sifted in Satan's sieve.)

I. The Life of Paul Gerhardt**A. Introduction**

The past two years have commemorated important dates in the life of Paul Gerhardt. Last year was the 330th anniversary of his death in 1676 and this year is the 400th anniversary of his birth in 1607. Does this man have any relevance to the students at Bethany Lutheran College and to our Evangelical Lutheran Synod? Some may respond no, but one needs to consider this for a moment. If we open our *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* we will discover 22 hymns written by this author. A pastor in our midst has the name Paul Gerhardt Madson, showing the high regard that our synod has had for this Lutheran poet. From my own life, I remember that we ended every day of Lutheran elementary school with the hymn "Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow." To this day, I comfort myself in night terrors with the beautiful verse:

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
O spread Thy wings above me
And shield me from alarm!
Though evil would assail me,
Thy mercy will not fail me:
I rest in Thy protecting arm.
(ELH 569:5)

Gerhardt's hymns have been sung for generations, in times without number. Catherine Winkworth (1829–1878) translated several of them.² John and Charles Wesley were influenced by Gerhardt's hymns and translated a number of them into English, including "Jesus Thy Boundless Love to Me" (ELH 372). During his imprisonment by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer found comfort in the hymns of Gerhardt, hymns that he had learned as a child.³ In the novel *Heidi*, the Grossmutter is comforted by Gerhardt's hymn, *Die güldne Sonne*. Günter Grass, Germany's finest living novelist, has Paul Gerhardt attend a gathering of literary figures to discuss the devastation following the Thirty Years' War in his *The Meeting at Telgte*. A recent German biography of Gerhardt maintains that more Germans have memorized verses from Gerhardt than verses from Goethe. In his hymns and other writings, the Gospel always predominates as he applies that Gospel truth to the burdens and struggles of the Christian's life. Gerhardt faced the Christian cross and his hymns offer comfort as we face the Christian cross.

What do we really know about this man? Some consider him to be the greatest Lutheran hymn writer and German religious poet that ever lived. Others think that he is somewhat boring. Still others confuse him with Johann Gerhard. Many of his hymns are based on prayers from the *Little Garden of Paradise* (*Paradiesgärtlein voller christlicher Tugenden*) of Johann Arndt. Some

² ELH 115, 400.

³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters & Papers from Prison*, ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971), 22, 38, 53, 128, 170, 369, 375.

would consider Johann Arndt to be the precursor of Pietism. Does this make Gerhardt a Pietist?⁴ His hymns are considerably more subjective than those of Luther. Many of them begin with the German word *ich* (I) indicating that he emphasized personal feelings and emotions. He was pastor for a time at one of the most important churches in Berlin, the Nikolaikirche, and yet he was thrown out by the Great Elector, Frederick William. Was he a great defender of faith or a troublemaker? These are some of the questions we want to consider as we look at Paul Gerhardt, the pastor and theologian.

B. The Early Life of Paul Gerhardt

Gräfenhainichen Years

The little town of Gräfenhainichen was hidden deep in the forest area of the Dübener Heiden between the Elbe and the Mulde rivers and was surrounded by walls for protection. The town of around a thousand inhabitants was located south of Wittenberg on the road to Halle and Leipzig. When Paul Gerhardt was born there on March 12, 1607, it was a part of Electoral Saxony (*Kursachsen*). His father, Christian, operated a farm and a Gasthaus and served as one of three mayors of the town. There are records of his grandfather, Paulus Gerhardt, after whom he was named, living in the town already in about 1569.⁵ His mother, Dorothea née Starke, came from a family of theologians. Gerhardt was the second son in a family of four children. His older brother, Christian (b. 1606), followed in his father's footsteps maintaining the family business. Concerning the rest of his siblings there is little information. As was customary at the time, Gerhardt was probably baptized the day after his birth in the Marienkirche at Gräfenhainichen. Gerhardt's father died in 1619 and his mother in 1621. The early loss of his parents may be the reason that his hymns often compare God's special love for the human soul to that of parents for their children.

Gerhardt's forefathers on his mother's side were valiant confessional Lutherans. She was the daughter of Caspar Starke, the superintendent of Eilenburg. Her maternal grandfather was Gallus Döbler who had been the superintendent of Eilenburg before his son-in-law. When Christian I (1560–1591), the son of Elector August one of the signers of the *Formula of Concord*, attempted to Calvinize Electoral Saxony in a Second Reformation,⁶ Caspar Starke lost his office for a time because he refused to give up the exorcism in Baptism.⁷ Baptismal exorcism had taken on the significance of being a confessional stand against the Reformed. The Lutherans understood exorcism in Baptism as a confession of the scriptural doctrine of regenerative Baptism and the teaching that man was born dead in original sin. Christian I and his chancellor, Nicholas Krell, forbade its use hoping to move Electoral Saxony in the direction of the Reformed. They probably would have succeeded had Christian I not died unexpectedly in 1591. His young son, Christian II (1583–1611), who was surrounded by staunch Lutherans, restored

⁴ Both Arndt and Gerhardt are placed among the Pietists in *The Pietist Theologians* by Carter Lindberg.

⁵ Hans-Joachim Beeskow, *Paul Gerhardt: 1607–1676* (Lübben: Heimat-Verlag, 2007), 9.

⁶ The term "Second Reformation" is used to describe the situation in which a state that is Lutheran in confession is slowly converted to Calvinism. It is also referred to as Calvinization. The implication is that the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough and therefore the Second Reformation was required.

⁷ The exorcism consisted of this phrase in the baptismal liturgy: "I adjure you, you unclean spirit, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that you come out and depart from this servant of Christ. Amen" (*Ich beschwöre dich, du unreiner Geist, bei dem Namen des Vaters, und des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes, daß du ausfahrest und weichest von diesem Diener [dieser Dienerin] Jesu Christi. Amen*).

confessional Lutheranism to the land. Krell was imprisoned and beheaded in 1601, the exorcism was reintroduced in the liturgy, and Starke was returned to his office.⁸ As a result of this controversy, Höe von Höenegg (1580–1645), the court preacher at Dresden, is to have said, “One should rather have fellowship with the Papists and likewise have more trust in them, than [have fellowship] with and [trust] in the Calvinists.”⁹

Grimma Years

Gerhardt’s early education took place at Gräfenhainichen. Here, among other things, he would have been taught the doctrines of the faith, music and the Latin language. At age 15, in 1622, he had the opportunity to attend the *Fürstenschule* (Prince’s school) in Grimma, southeast of Leipzig. This was a German gymnasium which is comparable to our high school and first two years of college. The gymnasium was near Nimbschen, famous for the cloister from which Katherine von Bora, Luther’s wife, escaped on Easter in 1523. The school had been founded in 1550 by Elector Moritz who was known as the Judas of Meissen among the Lutherans.¹⁰ This elite institution, devoted mainly to training Lutheran pastors, was housed in a former Augustinian monastery. Paul Gerhardt’s older brother, Christian, also attended the *Fürstenschule* but was unhappy there and left in 1623.

New regulations for the *Fürstenschule* were established by Adam Siber in 1579 which portray the atmosphere of the school.

These regulations for example fixed punishments on seven levels: 1. Warning, 2. Eating on the floor, 3. Denial of food and drink, 4. Caning, 5. The so called “Fiedel”, a choking collar, which one had to wear in the stocks, 6. Dungeon 7. Expulsion from the school. The school regulations stated in addition that lessons in Christian doctrine and languages must not exceed six hours a day. However, both areas offered the opportunity to include other lessons, for example in music, rhetoric, dialectics and repetition. The essential aim of the St. Augustin *Fürstenschule* however remained to develop the pupils into perfect Latin scholars, to enable them to read the works of the Latin classics, such as Virgil (70–90 BC).¹¹

⁸ As a reaction to Christian I’s move toward Reformed theology, known as the Second Crypto-Calvinism Controversy (1586–1592), Christian II and his advisors had the “Christian Visitation Articles” produced in 1592 which expressed the Lutheran position concerning the doctrines under discussion. These articles are recorded in the *Concordia Triglotta* (pp. 1150–1157). The chief writer of these articles was Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603), a professor at the University of Wittenberg.

⁹ Gustav Niemetz, *Geschichte der Sachsen vom germanischen Stamm bis zum Freistaat* (Spitzkunnersdorf: Oberlausitzer Verlag, 1999), 73. *Man soll lieber mit den Papisten [den Gefolgsleuten des Papstes, den Katholiken] Gemeinschaft haben und gleichsam mehr Vertrauen zu ihnen tragen denn mit und zu den Calvinisten.* Polycarp Leyser is purported to have made a similar statement [Karin Maag and John Witvliet, eds. *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 105].

¹⁰ The royal family of Saxony, the Wettin family, was divided into an Ernestine line and an Albertine line. Frederick the Wise (1463–1525), John the Steadfast (1469–1532), and John Frederick the Magnanimous (1503–1554) were from the Ernestine line. They were Luther’s sovereigns and protectors during his lifetime. After Luther’s death, in the Smalkald War, Moritz of the Albertine line sided with the emperor against his relative, John Frederick, in order to obtain the electorship. Thus, he betrayed the Lutheran cause. Remember that before Luther’s death, the electors of Saxony are from the Ernestine line and after his death they are from the Albertine line.

¹¹ Beeskow, 21.

The curriculum at the institution demanded a high degree of self-discipline on the part of the students who received a thorough training in the classical languages, philosophy, theology, and sacred music. The theological courses at the *Fürstenschule* originally centered on the study of Melancthon's *Loci Communes*. However, after Christian I's attempt at the Calvinization of Electoral Saxony, Melancthon's writings were somewhat suspect. Therefore the new chief doctrinal text used at Grimma was Hutter's *Compendium*.¹² All students were required to memorize Hutter's *Compendium* in Latin. The influence can still be seen in Gerhardt's hymns.¹³

Paul Gerhardt was a faithful student at the Prince's school at Grimma. He was neither the best student nor the worst. His academic work was generally satisfactory.¹⁴ He finished his course of study in December of 1627.

Wittenberg Years

On January 2, 1628, Paul Gerhardt matriculated at the Wittenberg University, the *Leucorea*,¹⁵ where Luther began the Reformation. When Gerhardt entered the university it was about 125 years old and a large number of students were in attendance. It was one of the most important centers of Lutheran theology. It was known as the *Cathedra Lutheri* (Luther's teaching chair).¹⁶ Here orthodox Lutheran theology was taught in accord with the Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Together with the university in Jena where Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) taught, it was the bulwark of Lutheran theology. It was a fortress and defense against the inroads of Calvinization. Here Gerhardt acquired an unswerving loyalty to the *Book of Concord* of 1580.

Many of Gerhardt's teachers at Wittenberg were major Lutheran theologians. They included Jakob Martini (professor from 1623-1649), a leading teacher of Aristotelian philosophy advancing the analytical method; Paul Röber (1627-1651); Wilhelm Leyser (1627-1649); and Johann Hülsemann (1629-1646), one of the chief dogmaticians of the era.¹⁷ Paul Röber was

¹² Leonhard Hutter (1563-1616), the chief representative of the older generation of the period of Lutheran orthodoxy, was a professor at Wittenberg and the teacher of Johann Gerhard. His resemblance of Luther in vigor, energy, and firmness of faith gave him the title of *Lutherus redivivus*. Paul Gerhardt probably memorized the saying of the times: *Leonhardus Hutterus, redivivus Lutherus* (Gerhardt Rödding, *Warum Sollt ich mich den grämen: Paul Gerhardt Leben und Dichten in Dunkler Zeit* [Newkirchen-Vluy: Aussaat Verlag, 2006] 29). His most important symbolical writing was his *Concordia Concors* of 1614 in which he defended the *Formula of Concord* in response to the Calvinist Hospinian. Because of his valiant defense of Lutheranism in response to the attacks of the Calvinists he was known as *Malleus Calvinistarum*— Hammer of Calvinists (Bodo Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the age of Confessionalism* [Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Variorum, 1993], X:182). When Elector Christian II desired a theological textbook for his lands which was in strict conformity with the *Formula* he produced his *Compendium*. This text tended to use only Scripture and the Confessions in the presentation of doctrine. The book became very popular.

¹³ Christian Bunnars, *Paul Gerhardt: Weg, Werk, Wirkung* (Berlin: Buchverlag Union, 1993), 34.

¹⁴ Rödding, 32.

¹⁵ *Leucorea* means "white hill" or "mountain" in Greek. "Wittenberg" has the same meaning in German.

¹⁶ Rödding, 43.

¹⁷ Bunnars, 41. Professors at the University of Wittenberg before the time of Gerhardt included Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603), Leonhard Hutter (1563-1616), Polykarp Leyser (1552-1610) and Balthasar Meisner (1587-1626). Later, Abraham Calov (1612-1686), who influenced Gerhardt during his Berlin years, was professor here. Calov was loved by his friends and hated by his enemies. His enemies called him the "Lutheran Torquemada" and the "grand inquisitor." For a brief biography of Calov see Timothy Schmeling, "Strenuus Christi Athleta Abraham Calov," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 2004), 357-399.

probably the best known preacher in Wittenberg at the time and greatly influenced Gerhardt. At least one of his sermons provides the basis for one of Gerhardt's hymns.¹⁸ Gerhardt probably attended the lectures of August Buchner (1591–1661), a professor of rhetoric and poetics who was an intimate friend of Martin Opitz (1597–1639). Opitz was the author of the *Treatise on German Poetry (Von der deutschen Poeterei)*, written in 1624, which lays the foundation and gives the principles of forming German verse.¹⁹ Therefore it is likely that through Buchner Gerhardt was influenced by Opitz's rules for the language, metric form and content of poetry. Some would even go so far as to say that without Opitz's poetic influence there would have been no Gerhardt.²⁰

Gerhardt remained in Wittenberg for about 14 years. Between 1630 and 1635 he lived in the home of August Fleischhauer, the pastor of the Stadtkirche (city church) in Wittenberg. Here he served as tutor for the Fleischhauer children which was a common assignment for students of theology of the period. He enjoyed the culture of the Fleischhauer household and had his residence in the shadow of the great St. Mary's Church of the city.²¹

Some have speculated as to why Gerhardt's study of theology took such an unusually long time. He was in Wittenberg from 1628 until 1642 and he was still unordained when he left the university at the age of 36. The Thirty Years' War and the plagues that came in its aftermath certainly impeded his progress. In addition many of the churches in the region were destroyed in the war and poverty was widespread. Thus, requests for candidates of theology were not in abundance.

C. The Thirty Years' War

As was noted above, the devastating Thirty Years' War had a detrimental effect on Gerhardt's student years and would continue to have a profound influence on him throughout his life in various ways. The *Book of Concord* brought spiritual peace within the Lutheran Church but it did not end the political hostilities that grew from the conflicting religious confessions in Europe. In 1619, the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 unraveled and war broke out. The Thirty Years' War which resulted can be divided into four main phases: Bohemian (1618–1625), Danish (1625–1629), Swedish (1630–1635), and French (1635–1648). For a while it seemed as if the Lutheran princes and their armies were going to be destroyed, and that Lutheranism in Germany would be pushed into the Baltic Sea. But God roused the great Lion of the North to come to the defense of the suffering German Lutherans who were not all that happy to see him.²² In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, brought his army to Germany to assist the Lutherans. As he entered Wittenberg in 1631 he is to have said, "Dear sirs, from this place the light of the Gospel has come to us from you. But because enemies would darken it here, we must come to you in order

¹⁸ *O Tod, o Tod, du greulichs Bild*; Bunnens, 42.

¹⁹ George Priest, *A Brief History of German Literature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 91.

²⁰ Theodore B. Hewitt, *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and his Influence on English Hymnody* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 14.

²¹ Rödding, 41–42.

²² Historians debate the motives of Gustavus Adolphus for entering the war. Some assume that his motives were mainly political. He wanted to establish a Swedish foothold in northern Germany and thus make the Baltic a Swedish lake. Others believe his motive was entirely religious. His heart went out to the suffering Lutherans of Germany. His motivation was probably a mixture of the two.

that God would soon rekindle that light.”²³ His well-organized army went from victory to victory. Before the battle of Lützen in 1632, the entire army sang, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and “O Little Flock.” His army defeated the Catholic army, but Gustavus died in battle. Gerhardt probably witnessed his funeral procession through Wittenberg on its way to Sweden. The war continued for thirteen more years. After thirty years of savage warfare, the war ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This peace provided equal rights for Lutherans, Calvinists and Catholics, but the prince had the right to decide the religion of his realm (*cuius regio eius religio*).

The effect of the Thirty Years’ War on Germany was devastating. Northern Germany lay in ruin. The land was ravaged by the plundering armies. Armies at that time had no supply lines or support groups. They survived by living off the land, pillaging and looting wherever they went. A friendly army was just as devastating as an enemy army. First the land had to support the imperial armies, and later the Swedish army needed to be supported. The population was reduced to about one-third of what had been before the war. Trade had almost ceased. The war left Germany so exhausted it took a century to recover. The intellectual, moral, and spiritual life was at low ebb. The war was a horrible tragedy and fought in the name of religion. Large areas of Northern Germany were burnt and ruined with the result that the folk song developed:

Maikäfer flieg!
Dein Vater ist im Krieg.
Deine Mutter ist im Pommerland.
Pommerland ist abgebrannt,
Maikäfer flieg!

May Fly, fly away!
Your Father is in the War.
Your Mother is in Pommerland.
Pommerland is burning,
May Fly, fly away!²⁴

Paul Gerhardt suffered personally in the war. In 1637 the Swedes, determined to punish Elector Johann George I²⁵ for signing a separate peace (Prague in 1635) with the Emperor, appeared before the gates of Gräfenhainichen demanding a war tax. It was paid but the soldiers set fire to the city anyway. Gerhardt’s home and the city church, school, parsonage, and castle were destroyed, along with many other buildings. At this time many of the records of Gerhardt’s early life were lost. In the plague that followed the destruction of the city, Gerhardt’s brother, Christian, died in November.²⁶ The city of Wittenberg itself, where Gerhardt lived at the time, was spared attack but here also pestilence devastated the city.

²³ Bunnens, 39. *Ihr Herren, von euch ist aus diesem Orte das Licht des Evangeliums zu uns gekommen; weil es aber durch die Feinde will verdunkelt werden, müssen wir zu euch kommen, um nächst Gott dasselbige Licht wieder anzuzünden.*

²⁴ Heinz Butzlaff, *Pommern, Land am Meer* (Würzburg: Flechsig-Buchvertrieb, 2000), 17.

²⁵ The Albertine electors of Saxony following Moritz were August I (1526–1586), Christian I (1560–1591), Christian II (1583–1611), Johann George I (1585–1656), Johann George II (1613–1680), Johann George III (1647–1691), Johann George IV (1668–1694) and Frederick August I the Strong (1670–1733).

²⁶ Bunnens, 39.

The suffering under the cross in the turmoil and devastation of the Thirty Years' War produced many great poets and poignant expressions of the Christian faith. The orthodox Lutheran faith touched the hearts of many and that warm and vibrant faith was expressed in devotional literature and hymns. In many ways this was the golden age of Lutheran hymnody with such great writers as Johann Heermann (1585–1647), Johann Rist (1607–1667), and Paul Gerhardt.

D. The First Period in Berlin and the Mittenwalde Pastorate

Time in Berlin

Gerhardt left Saxony in 1642 for Berlin, the capital of Brandenburg-Prussia. Before the Thirty Years' War Berlin had a population of about 12,000. As Gerhardt entered the city the population was reduced to around 5000. As in Wittenberg, he supported himself as a private tutor for the children of a prosperous middle class family, the family of Andreas Berthold, a lawyer in the Chancery Court (*Kammergerichtsadvokat*). Berthold would become his future father-in-law. He supplemented his income as tutor by writing occasional poems and hymns. One of his earliest writings was a wedding poem (*Hochzeitsode*) at the marriage of one of Berthold's older daughters to Joachim Fromm, one of the pastors at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin. Gerhardt was well liked and respected by the Lutheran laity and clergy in this city. Occasionally he served as a substitute pastor for the city churches.

At this time he met the cantor at the Nikolaikirche, Johann Crüger (1598–1662), who would eventually be his coworker. In 1647 Crüger produced a collection of hymns entitled *Praxis Pietatis Melica*²⁷ in which 18 of Gerhardt's hymns were set to melodies composed by Crüger. Crüger was born in Gross-Bressen, Brandenburg. He received his musical training under Paulus Homberger in Regensburg. In 1622 he was appointed cantor of the Nikolaikirche at Berlin and he was also called to teach at the Greyfriars Gymnasium. He lost his wife and his entire family in the pestilence of 1636. Thereafter he married Elisabeth Schmidt, who was 17, and together they had 14 children, most of whom did not reach adulthood.²⁸ He wrote no hymns but he was one of the most distinguished musicians and tune composers of his time. He composed around 70 chorales. Through the *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, Gerhardt's hymns became well known in Brandenburg. Without Crüger's melodies, Gerhardt's hymns would not have been so well known.²⁹

First Call, Ordination, Marriage

When the elderly pastor at Mittenwalde died in 1651, Gerhardt was proposed as the minister of the St. Moritz Church. The town council followed this proposal and invited Gerhardt to Mittenwalde. On September 28, 1651, he gave his trial sermon at the St. Moritz Church after which he accepted the call. He served as pastor and *Propst* (head pastor) in Mittenwalde and had supervision over several neighboring congregations. At 44 years of age he was ordained on

²⁷ The full name of this collection is *Praxis Pietatis Melica. Das ist: Übung der Gottseligkeit in christlichen und trostreichen Gesängen* (The Exercise of [Comforting] Musical Piety).

²⁸ Rödding, 70.

²⁹ Crüger died before the conflict with the Elector began in earnest. His son-in-law produced a portrait of him that remained in the Nikolaikirche until 1944. His second wife lived until 1700 when she was buried by Spener (1635–1705) who was then pastor of the Nikolaikirche (Bunnens, 73).

November 18, 1651, at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin.³⁰ A delegation from Mittenwalde was present at his ordination.³¹ At his ordination he pledged himself to the Lutheran Confessions. In January of 1652 he was installed as pastor in Mittenwalde by his friend Andreas Fromm, the pastor of Petrikerche in Cölln.

When Gerhardt moved to Mittenwalde, south of Berlin, it had about 800 inhabitants. Here he had some conflict with the second pastor of the St. Moritz Church. Generally, however, his time at Mittenwalde was a quiet and peaceful period in his life. During this time he continued to write hymns which attracted great attention. They were quickly adopted in hymnbooks in both Brandenburg and Saxony.

Now that he was in a secure position, he thought of establishing his own household and family.³² His thoughts centered on a young woman that he had met in the Berthold household where he had served as tutor. On February 11, 1655, he married Anna Maria Berthold. The service took place in the Nikolaikirche with Petrus Vehr preaching on 2 Corinthians 13:11.³³ Their first child, born in 1656, died in infancy and a memorial plaque in the Mittenwalde church shows their grief. The couple had three sons and two daughters but only one son, Paul Friedrich, survived his parents.

As pastor in Mittenwalde, Gerhardt probably preached two or three times on Sunday and at a number of services during the week. The main worship service on Sunday morning would last from 2–3 hours with an hour-long sermon and the Lord's Supper. Besides the divine services the pastor's activities included Baptisms, visiting the sick and dying with the sacrament, private confessions, weddings and funerals.³⁴ Even with this busy schedule he still found quietude in Mittenwalde, and before this in Berlin, in which he wrote most of his hymns. His fame as the sweet singer of Lutheranism began to spread far and wide. In 1661 the tenth edition of Crüger's hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, was printed where 90 of Gerhardt's hymns appeared.

E. The Second Reformation in Brandenburg-Prussia

The religious situation Gerhardt met in Berlin was considerably different from the staunch confessional Lutheranism of Saxony. The Hohenzollern family, the ruling family of Brandenburg-Prussia, accepted the Reformation in 1539. Joachim II (1505–1571) became a Lutheran in a very conservative Reformation. Very few of the medieval rites were changed. His son, Johann George (1525–1598), was one of the electors who signed the Formula of Concord. However, his grandson, Johann Sigismund (1572–1619), who spent time at the University of Heidelberg, the center of German Reformed learning, was influenced by its theology. In addition to this, it was politically beneficial for him to be of the Reformed persuasion in order to obtain the land of Cleves in western Germany. Thus it seems that Johann Sigismund left the Lutheran Church for both political and religious reasons.

³⁰ Bunnens, 58.

³¹ Rödding, 160.

³² It was generally assumed one could not have a Lutheran parsonage without a parson's wife.

³³ The Nicolai hymn, "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star," was often used as a wedding hymn during this period. Gerhardt wrote a wedding hymn for this melody: "Wie schön ists doch, Herr Jesu Christ" (Rödding, 168).

³⁴ Bunnens, 62.

On Christmas Day in 1613, Johann Sigismund openly embraced the Reformed faith in the first Reformed Communion Service in the Berlin Cathedral. While he became Reformed, his wife Anna remained an ardent Lutheran, and the same was true of most of his people. His court preacher, Simon Gedicke (1551–1631), was totally opposed to the Reformed faith. In this way Prussia differed from the Palatinate, where the people were forced to follow the religion of their princes. This set the stage for the struggle in Prussia between the Lutherans and Reformed which climaxed in the Prussian Union of 1817 bringing many confessional Lutherans to America.

The two outward signs of the Second Reformation were the rejection of exorcism in Baptism and the innovation of the *fractio panis*, the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper. The Reformed attempt to change the baptismal liturgy touched the heart of the common people. "A butcher, determined to have his daughter baptized in the proper Lutheran manner, appeared in Dresden's Hofkirche armed with a meat cleaver. He positioned himself next to the baptismal font and threatened to split the minister's head if he dared to omit the exorcism from the baptismal formula."³⁵ Johann Sigismund believed in the main tenets of the Second Reformation. He assumed the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough. Too many medieval customs and doctrines remained in the Lutheran Church. He wanted to "sweep the leftover papal dung completely out of the sheepfold of Christ."³⁶ The attempts by the Reformed at a Second Reformation brought enmity and bitterness between the two church bodies.³⁷

At the time Gerhardt came to Berlin the sovereign and the ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia was the Great Elector, Frederick William (1620–1688). He was the grandson of Johann Sigismund. While the vast majority of people in Brandenburg-Prussia were Lutheran, the ruling family, the Hohenzollerns, were Calvinists. The Great Elector was an excellent political leader for the land. He spent his life trying to restore the economy of Brandenburg-Prussia after the Thirty Years' War.³⁸ At the same time, his religious views were a detriment to the Lutheran Church. The Great Elector hoped to end the distinction between the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church by blurring the distinctive biblical doctrines of the Lutheran Church, especially the doctrines of the person of Christ and the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper. All this he did in the name of tolerance, irenic relations and moderation between churches advocating many of the syncretistic ideas of Georg Calixtus.³⁹ Yet Brandenburg-Prussia, with its

³⁵ Nischan, *Confessionalism*, III:39. There were also skirmishes concerning the use of pictures and images and concerning the adoration of the Supper. Concerning forms of outward adoration such as the elevation, the *ostensio*, and genuflecting, Gedicke explained, "We do this not because we adore the communion bread as if it had been transformed into the body of Christ, but rather...to remind ourselves that through this sacrament our faith is strengthened" (Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*. [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994], 140).

³⁶ Nischan, *Second Reformation*, 117. ...*die noch hinterbliebene Unsauberkeit des Bapstums aus dem Schaffstall Christi vollend aufzufegen*.

³⁷ Kurtz, *Church History*, Vol. III, Ed. by John Macpherson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), 12–13.

³⁸ The Great Elector invited many French Reformed (Huguenots) refugees and other religious refugees to settle in the land. Most of these people were middle class businessmen who stimulated the Prussian economy. Yet, their presence in the predominantly Lutheran land necessitated, as far as he was concerned, more tolerance for the Reformed. The French Reformed refugees began to flood the land after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685 and the Elector offered them safe haven in the Edict of Potsdam of 1685 (Beeskow, 65; Bunnars, 84).

³⁹ The Great Elector Frederick William had been influenced by the syncretistic views of Georg Calixtus (1586–1656) who hoped to unite Lutherans, Catholics, and the Reformed on the basis of the Apostles' Creed, which contained the summary of fundamental doctrines and was sufficient for external fellowship in his mind. Calixtus

two and a half million Lutherans and only around fifteen thousand Reformed, was not interested in union.⁴⁰

F. Life in Berlin and Pastor at the Nikolaikirche

Gerhardt and his family were happy in Mittenwalde but their personal relationships continually drew them to Berlin. At the end of May 1657 the news reached Gerhardt through Martin Richter, a member of the Berlin city council, that he had been called as the second deacon (third pastor) of the Nikolaikirche, the same congregation in which he had been ordained upon acceptance of the call to Mittenwalde.⁴¹ In addition to the office of cantor, to which Johann Crüger was called, there were four ordained offices in the public ministry of the congregation.⁴² In a letter of June 4 that same year he accepted the call to Berlin. A few weeks later, on July 22, he performed his first official act, a Baptism, at the Nikolaikirche. It seems that Gerhardt had some hesitation about leaving Mittenwalde for he accepted the call only after fervent prayer and deliberation.⁴³ Still, both he and his wife were happy to be in Berlin among friends and family making their home at Stralauer Straße 38.

In his position as pastor at the Nikolaikirche, Gerhardt gained much recognition and respect from both the upper and lower classes. He worked faithfully caring for the souls of his flock with the means of grace, holy Word and blessed Sacraments. In the ravages as a result of the Thirty Years' War his people were suffering great losses through devastation, terror, disease, and hunger and were often without hope. Gerhardt viewed his task in this situation to be the spiritual renewal of his members, providing comfort and hope through his hymns, sermons and pastoral care. Because of this he was one of the most well-loved pastors in the city and was held in high regard by all in Berlin. Even Calvinists attended his services including the pious Electress Louisa Henrietta, who was a great admirer of his hymns. He made his stand on the inspired, inerrant Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Beside his hymns all that remains of his written materials are four printed funeral sermons, a prayer paraphrase, several letters and his testament to his son.⁴⁴

further advocated the *consensus antiquitatis* or the *consensus quinquesaecularis* as the proper explication of the Creed for theologians. King Wadislaus IV of Poland issued the call for the Colloquy of Thorn in 1645 hoping to unite the Lutherans, Romanists, and Reformed in his country. Calixtus publicized and promoted the colloquy. The Great Elector invited him to participate in the colloquy. However Calov and Hülsemann barred him from representing the Lutherans. Therefore he assisted the Reformed theologians. This colloquy clearly enunciated the proper biblical teaching of prayer fellowship because the true Lutherans would not pray with the Reformed, Catholics, and syncretistic Lutherans (*Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 64, No. 7 [April 7, 1908], p. 111; Adolph Hoenecke, *Ev. Luth. Dogmatik*, Vol. I, p. 7). Later Electoral Saxony issued the *Consensus repetitus fidei vere Lutheranae* which was a confession against syncretism and which reaffirmed the Augsburg Confession.

⁴⁰ The conflict between the Lutheran and the Reformed in Brandenburg-Prussia was primarily religious. However, there were also political dimensions to the conflict. The Great Elector was striving for absolutism in his government in contradistinction to the rights of the local nobility. The local nobility used their Lutheranism as a method to resist the Reformed Elector's centralization of power (Bunners, 76).

⁴¹ Hermnn Petrich, *Paul Gerhardt: seine Lieder und seine Zeit* (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1907), 107.

⁴² Bunners, 67. At this time, the Nikolaikirche had four pastoral positions: a *Propst* and three deacons, the first deacon being the archdeacon. After the death of Petrus Vehr in 1656, Georg Lilius (1597-1666) became *Propst*, Elias Reinhardt (1625-1669) became archdeacon after the death of Gerhardt's brother-in-law Joachim Fromm in 1657, Gerhardt was called to the position of second deacon, and the position of the third deacon was vacant until 1658.

⁴³ Bunners, 67.

⁴⁴ See Addendum I: *The So-Called "Testament" of Paul Gerhardt for His Son (Early 1676)*.

Together with the other pastors, the cantor Johann Crüger was Gerhardt's coworker at the Nikolaikirche. A close friendship between the men had developed before Crüger died in 1662. The next man who was called as the cantor by the congregation was Johann Georg Ebeling (1620–1676). His life indicated his staunch Lutheran stand, for after the dismissal of Gerhardt he moved to Stettin in Pommern where he could practice orthodox Lutheranism.⁴⁵ Like Crüger, he composed a number of melodies for Gerhardt's hymns, among them the melody for the hymn "Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me?" (ELH 377). His chief publication was *Pauli Gerhardt Geistliche Andachten* in 1666–1667 which contained 120 of his hymns.

Controversy with the Great Elector

As Gerhardt served in his parish in Berlin there was constant strife between the Lutheran and Reformed clergy as a result of the Great Elector's striving to blend the two denominations into one church. In order to receive taxing privileges from the Landtag (state parliament) in 1653 the Elector agreed to preserve the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions in the land.⁴⁶ However, in 1656 he ordered that those ordained should not be asked to pledge themselves to *Book of Concord* but only to the Holy Scriptures and the Augsburg Confession.⁴⁷ The next year he forbid candidates of theology from Brandenburg-Prussia to be examined and ordained outside of the Hohenzollern lands. Both of these regulations had implications for Gerhardt. At his ordination he pledged himself to the Lutheran Confessions, and he had been educated outside of the Elector's realm at the University of Wittenberg in Saxony, the bulwark of orthodox Lutheranism.

In spite of the decrees and prohibitions of the Elector, the Lutheran clergy continued in their protest against his restrictions on Lutheranism. This was especially the case after the Conference in Hessen-Kassel in 1661 where it was purported that general agreement had been reached between the Lutherans and the Reformed.⁴⁸ On July 2, 1662, the Edict of Tolerance (*Toleranzedikt*) was drafted mainly by the Reformed Court preacher (*Hofprediger*) Bartholomäus Stosch for the Elector. The edict ordered the end of all polemics and intolerance between the Lutherans and the Reformed. To be sure there had been strong statements made, such as the one by Pastor Heinzemann who stated in his sermon, "so we now condemn the Papists and Calvinists ... with one word, whoever is not Lutheran, is damned."⁴⁹ However, the real purpose of this tolerance or Reformed irenicism was not to bring peaceful coexistence between the church bodies. Rather it was to protect the Reformed minority, silence the Lutheran preachers, and slowly move toward a Second Reformation. Following the edict, a Lutheran pastor could

⁴⁵ Bunnens, 108.

⁴⁶ Rödding, 187; Beeskow, 46.

⁴⁷ Bunnens, 80.

⁴⁸ The Conference in Hessen-Kassel in 1661 was a meeting between the Reformed theologians of Marburg and the so-called Lutheran theologians of Rinteln. Here it was agreed that the Reformed and the Lutherans did not differ in fundamental articles of the faith. Also these Lutherans agreed to the removal of the baptismal exorcism and the *fractio panis* in the Supper. The results of this conference were rejected by the universities of Wittenberg, Jena, and Leipzig where pure Lutheran doctrine was taught. However this conference gave the Great Elector the incentive to work for the same agreement in Brandenburg-Prussia (Harm Klueting, *Irenik und Antikonfessionalismus im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert* [Georg Olms Verlag: Hildesheim, Germany, 2003], 144).

⁴⁹ Beeskow, 48; Bunnens, 80. *Wer nicht lutherisch ist, der ist verflucht*—This was a condemnation of the doctrine of the Reformed and the Papists, not a condemnation of individuals.

not say from the pulpit that Jesus died for all people (1 Timothy 2:6), for that would be an attack on the Reformed doctrine of limited atonement. He could not say that God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), for that was contrary to the Reformed doctrine of double predestination. He could not say that the flesh and blood, born of Mary, is received by the mouth of both believer and unbeliever in the sacrament (Matthew 26:26–28; 1 Corinthians 11:27), for that was contrary to Reformed representation. He could not say that the whole Christ, both God and man, is present with us always to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20), for Reformed theology said that since the Ascension Christ's body has been in one location, heaven. The edict tried to force the Lutheran pastors to break their ordination oath to teach in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

The Berlin Colloquy

The next blow to the Lutherans occurred on August 21 of the same year (1662) when the Elector specifically forbade his subjects from attending the University of Wittenberg. The same day the Elector called for a friendly and brotherly colloquy (*amicabile colloquium*) between the Lutheran and the Reformed in his land to see if they could come to the agreement that there were no fundamental differences in doctrine between them as the Hessians in Kassel had concluded. The colloquy was not exactly friendly, however, for non-compliance would have probably meant dismissal from office. Supported by Calov⁵⁰ and the Wittenberg faculty, the Lutheran clergy of Berlin prepared for the colloquy. The meetings were held from September 1662 to May 1663 in 17 sessions. The leader of the Reformed was Bartholomäus Stosch. The main spokesman for the Lutherans was Elias Reinhardt, the archdeacon of the Nikolaikirche, while Gerhardt prepared their written defense.⁵¹

The two main points that were to be discussed at the colloquy were these: 1. Was there anything in the official Reformed confessions and especially in the most recent edict that, on the basis of Scripture, should be condemned; and 2. Was there anything in the Reformed confessions that would cause an individual to be damned.⁵² The purpose of these questions was to force the Lutherans to say that there was no difference between the two denominations in fundamental doctrines. The syncretists and the Reformed irenicists believed that there could be church fellowship on the basis of agreement in fundamental articles while various opinions could be held on non-fundamental articles.

The Lutheran Church teaches that all doctrines of the Bible are to be taught and there is to be no deviation from the doctrines of the Bible. There is to be complete agreement in all the doctrines of Scripture for church fellowship. There is either complete fellowship or no fellowship at all. At the same time the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines is maintained. **Primary fundamental** doctrines are those doctrines that are the basis for salvation. Without a knowledge of them saving faith cannot be worked or maintained. If they are denied,

⁵⁰ It appears that Gerhardt and Calov knew each other personally. There is recorded correspondence between the two. In addition, Gerhardt prepared a poem of comfort for Calov at the death of his daughter, the wife of Wilhelm Leyser, also a professor at Wittenberg (Bunnens, 111).

⁵¹ Rödning, 215.

⁵² Jörg Kubitschek & Gottfried Herrmann, "Paul Gerhardts Kampf und Entlassung in Berlin 1666/67," *Theologische Handreichung und Information*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (May 2000), 10; Jörg Kubitschek, "Der streitbare Liederdichter," *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Volkskalender*, Vol. 118 (2007), 56.

there is no foundation on which saving faith may rest. Such doctrines are the doctrine of the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, and justification by faith alone. **Secondary fundamental** doctrines are related to and support the foundation of faith. They are related in such a way that ignorance of them may not destroy saving faith. Examples of secondary fundamental doctrines are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. **Non-fundamental** doctrines do not relate directly to the foundation of faith. As a result they may be unknown and even denied without destroying faith provided that such a denial is not a conscious rejection of Scripture. An example of a non-fundamental doctrine is the doctrine of Antichrist. Non-fundamental doctrines are not a part of the foundation of faith but where faith already exists, they strengthen it.⁵³

The discussions began with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Reformed asked the Lutherans if the doctrine of the oral eating or reception (*manducatio oralis*) of Christ's body and blood was necessary for salvation. By this question, the Reformed wanted to make the Lutherans say that the bodily eating of Christ's body and blood was not fundamental. Gerhardt carefully worded his response.

When we state that the article concerning the oral reception is a fundamental article of faith, though not a decisive one, yet one which saves, then we would also not dare to prove that without this doctrine no one could come to faith, love, and hope, and thus eternal salvation.⁵⁴

The oral reception for Gerhardt was a fundamental article (secondary fundamental) because the oral eating was salvific: it nourished faith in Christ. He did not mean that one could not be saved without oral eating. Here Gerhardt implies that the Reformed are asking the wrong questions. They should not ask whether an article is necessary for salvation but rather look at the wonderful salvific benefits that the Lord's Supper offers through oral reception. In addition the Lutherans showed that the logical conclusion of denial of oral reception was a denial of the personal union in Christ.⁵⁵

The Reformed responded by stating that the differing view on the oral eating was of minor significance. They were pressing their agenda of unionism with full-force toward syncretism. At this point they added to the agenda of the conference discussions of the doctrine of the person of Christ, Baptism, and the other doctrines that distinguished the Reformed from the Lutherans. They overloaded the agenda causing true doctrinal discussions to become impossible.

Statements were made by Gerhardt and the other Lutherans that implied that Calvinists and Papists were not saved. These statements meant that the Calvinistic system and the Romanist system logically and consistently are faith-destroying. They did not mean that everyone within these denominations was damned. For example it was stated:

⁵³ Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. I* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 80-93.

⁵⁴ E.C.G. Langbecker, *Leben und Lieder von Paulus Gerhardt* (Berlin: Sander'schen Buchhandlung, 1841), 78-80. *Geben wir den articulum de orali manducatione zwar vor einen articulum fidei fundamentalem aus, aber nicht vor einem constituentem, sed conservantem und also dürfen wir auch nicht erweisen, daß ohne dieser Lehre Niemand den Glauben, Liebe und Hoffnung, und also die ewige Seligkeit erlangen könne.*

⁵⁵ Langbecker, 115; see also 84. If the finite bread is not capable of containing the infinite person of Christ because the finite is not capable of the infinite (*Finitum non est capax infiniti*), then the finite human nature of Christ is not capable of containing the infinite divine Logos contrary to Colossians 2:9. Thus the Reformed teaching leads to the destruction of the doctrine of the person of Christ.

A Christian is either one who is baptized into Jesus and confesses Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Savior of the world. Thus it is perhaps possible that not only Calvinists but also Papists be called Christians. Or a Christian is one who has a true saving faith, pure and unadulterated, and also allows fruits of the same to be seen in his life and behavior. Thus as such, I cannot hold the Calvinists to be Christians.⁵⁶

After the 17 sessions of the meeting neither party was convinced of the validity of the other's arguments. The Lutherans were certainly not convinced that the doctrinal differences between the Reformed and themselves were merely a matter of indifference. Their patience had run out and the colloquy ended in failure.

On September 16, 1664, the Elector issued a new edict,⁵⁷ written by Stosch, which again demanded that the Lutherans not preach publicly against the doctrines of the Reformed. The Elector demanded that all the pastors sign the edict or be dismissed from their office.

During doctrinal discussions with the Reformed, Gerhardt staunchly maintained the Lutheran position. He refused to sign the edict promising not to bring polemics against the Reformed into the pulpit. Even from his sickbed, he encouraged the other pastors not to consent to the Elector's demands.⁵⁸ The Elector considered Gerhardt to be the chief instigator of the Lutheran opposition to his plans. As a result the Great Elector deposed him from office on February 13, 1666. Public support for this Lutheran martyr is evident in the edition of his hymns by Ebeling that was begun shortly following his dismissal. Although he was restored to office the following year (1667) because of a general outcry among the people, his conscience would not allow him to remain in his office. As long as he remained a pastor in Brandenburg he was compelled to remain silent concerning the false teachings of the Reformed. Also, remaining in the office implied that he was tacitly agreeing with the Elector's edict.

This was indeed his "Berlin Passion." He was dismissed from the pastoral ministry because of his confession of faith along with other valiant Lutheran confessors. However still another cross was added to his burden. After 13 years of wedded bliss Gerhardt's wife, Anna Maria, died on March 5, 1668. Early in the morning on this date Gerhardt called his wife's confessor, Samuel Lorenz. It was Thursday, the day the church commemorates the institution of the Holy Supper. In the meantime she asked her husband to read the sermon on the Lord's Supper from Luther's *Hauspostille*. When Lorenz, her brother-in-law and confessor, arrived he offered her absolution and the Holy Supper. Later she asked that Gerhardt sing for her some of his hymns, among

⁵⁶ Langbecker, 88. *Ein Christ ist entweder, der auf Jesum getauft ist und Jesum von Nazareth für Messiam und Heiland der Welt bekennet. Also können vielleicht nicht allein Calvinisten, sondern auch Papisten Christen gennennet werden, oder ein Christ ist derjenige, welcher den wahren, selig machenden Glauben rein und unverfälscht hat, auch die Früchte desselben in seinem Leben und Wandel sehen läßt; also kann ich die Calvinisten qua tales nicht für Christen halten.*

⁵⁷ In this edict, the Lutherans were specifically forbidden to accuse the Reformed of being Calvinists, Zwinglians, enemies of the *genus maiestaticum*, and desecraters of the Sacrament. They were forbidden to say that the Reformed rejected the communication of attributes and that the Reformed taught that only a man died on the cross. The Reformed were forbidden to teach that the Lutherans were Ubiquitists, Flacians, Eutyrians, Marcionites and Pelagians. In addition, the Reformed were forbidden to teach that in the Holy Sacrament the Lutherans maintained that the body of Christ was present in a Capernaite manner (Rödding, 218).

⁵⁸ Beeskow, 80.

them “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” With this she died in the Lord.⁵⁹ She was only 46 years old. She was buried beside a number of her children behind the altar of the Nikolaikirche. Samuel Lorentz preached her funeral sermon on the basis of Hebrews 10:36. He reminded Gerhardt that God desired to comfort him in his bitter grief and misery, and that He wanted Gerhardt to continue to comfort devout hearts in the future.⁶⁰ It is said that even the Great Elector was represented at the funeral by several of his officials.

G. The Lübben Pastorate

After being without call for over a year, in November 1668 Gerhardt accepted the call to be archdeacon of Lübben an der Spree in Saxony, where the edict of the Elector was not enforced and the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions was upheld.⁶¹ His relocation there, however, was delayed by prolonged sickness and the death of his wife.⁶² It was not until June 1669 that he began his new duties in Lübben. Here he spent the last seven years of his life as pastor of the town. These were peaceful, quiet years, but they were also years of sadness since his wife was gone, his only remaining child had more than one dangerous illness, and he was separated from his dear friends and family in Berlin. Lübben was a small town which did not offer the cultural advantages of Berlin. His refuge and refreshment were in his devotional hymns. Here he found comfort and strength as he sang and meditated upon the content of these hymns.

The death of Gerhardt occurred on May 27, 1676, in his seventieth year. His last words which he was to have prayed were lines from one of his own hymns, “Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen” (Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me, ELH 377). The hymn speaks about death as that which cannot kill. It reminds us that death cannot destroy forever. Death for the believer is like a door that closes to a world of suffering and opens the way to eternal joy in heaven.⁶³ He was buried at what is now the Paul-Gerhardt-Kirche, Lübben an der Spree, Spreewald, Germany. Ironically this church is a union church today. His remains are in a crypt below the altar. The Lübben congregation commissioned a life-sized painting of him for the church where it still hangs. Beneath it is the inscription, “A theologian sifted in Satan’s sieve” (*Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus*). His life was indeed tested and refined as pure gold through cross and trial.

Paul Gerhardt left behind a testament for his 13 year-old son, Paul Friedrich, which is one of the most personal documents written by him.⁶⁴ He encouraged his son to become a Lutheran pastor and to study at confessional schools that were not controlled by syncretists. As to his Christian life Gerhardt encouraged his son not to follow an evil way of life, but instead the commands of the Lord. He was not to do anything evil in the hope that it would remain undiscovered. In his

⁵⁹ Bunnars, 115–116.

⁶⁰ Beeskow, 86.

⁶¹ As a postscript to the controversy between Gerhardt and the Great Elector it should be noted that shortly after Gerhardt was called to Lübben, the Great Elector withdrew the edict. This probably had to do with the fact that he married a Lutheran woman and was more open to Lutheranism after the death of Queen Louisa Henrietta. His new wife was Sophie Dorothea of Holstein-Glücksburg.

⁶² There were also difficulties finding adequate housing. His household at this time included around 6 or 7 persons: besides himself; his widowed sister-in-law Sabina Fromm, who was his housekeeper; her son Andreas Joachim Fromm, a theological student; his own son Paul; and two or three household servants (Bunnars, 122).

⁶³ Bunnars, 128–129. Specifically ELH 377:5.

⁶⁴ See Addendum I: *The So-Called “Testament” of Paul Gerhardt for His Son (Early 1676)*.

daily life, he was not to be filled with anger. He was to be ashamed of the lusts of the flesh. He was to do good to people whether or not they could do the same to him. He was to flee avarice as he would flee hell. In conclusion, Gerhardt urged him to pray diligently, study what was true, live peacefully, minister earnestly and remain steadfast in his faith and beliefs. Then when his last hour would come he would part this world willfully, joyfully and blessed.⁶⁵

After Gerhardt's death, his son remained in Lübben for a time. Following the advice of his father to study theology, he enrolled in Wittenberg University in 1680. Later he became a pastor in the small town of Bauske, near Riga, Latvia.

II. The Theology and Pastoral Care of Paul Gerhardt

A. The Doctrinal Emphases of Gerhardt

Gerhardt was certainly a child of the age of Lutheran orthodoxy.⁶⁶ He was born and raised in this period and it influenced every fiber of his body and every facet of his mind. His forefathers participated in the controversy concerning baptismal exorcism. His basic doctrine text in gymnasium was Hutter's *Compendium* and at the university he was educated by some of the leading theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy. In Berlin he fought against the movement toward the Second Reformation and the syncretistic tendencies of the Great Elector Frederick William. Theologically he was one with the seventeenth-century dogmatists.

Lutheran orthodoxy did not intend to add anything to the doctrine of Luther and the Confessions. Its purpose was to put the teachings of the Reformation into a logical, concise form. In this systematization of doctrine it was indebted to the *Loci Communes* of Melancthon and the *Loci Theologici* of Martin Chemnitz. The format and organization of these documents became the model of the massive dogmatics of the seventeenth-century dogmatists. In their work they used Aristotelian philosophy, as did the scholastics of the Middle Ages, to bring order to their great doctrinal system. For example, there is a connection between the structure and form of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa* and Johann Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*.⁶⁷

Gerhardt, as all of Lutheran orthodoxy, maintained the preeminence of the formal and material principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Our **formal principle** is the inspired, inerrant Holy Scriptures, the only source of faith, doctrine, and life. In his sermons Gerhardt makes copious use of Scripture references and proof passages indicating that the source of all his teaching is the Bible, the Word of God.

Interestingly enough, Gerhardt often uses the Apocrypha in his writings. For example, in the funeral sermon for Joachim Schröder in 1655 he quotes from the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach and Tobit.⁶⁸ This shouldn't surprise us that much. Luther states concerning the Apocrypha,

⁶⁵ Beeskow, 94.

⁶⁶ For the periods of the age of Lutheran orthodoxy see Gaylin Schmeling, "Gerhard—Theologian and Pastor" *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 2004), 347–348.

⁶⁷ See Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

⁶⁸ *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger: Vier Leichenpredigten desselben aus den Jahren 1655, 1659, 1660 und 1661* (Zwickau: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1906), 37, 38, 41.

“These books are not held equal to the Scriptures but are useful and good to read.”⁶⁹ One certainly has the right to quote from the apocryphal books just as one would quote from the Catechism or other Christian literature. Even Walther based one of his wedding sermons on a text from the book of Tobit.⁷⁰

The **material principle** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law. A person is justified or declared righteous not by anything he does or accomplishes but alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ that is ours by faith. On the basis of Christ’s sacrifice and His perfect keeping of the law in our place (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:18–19), God does not impute (count or reckon) sin but declares the whole world righteous or innocent. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them” (2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:5; Romans 5:18; Romans 3:23–24). This verdict of “not guilty” the Holy Ghost brings to the individual through the means of grace and is obtained by faith (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3). This, the central article of the faith, is the main source of comfort in Gerhardt’s funeral sermons.

In the second part our dear Lord and Savior wants us to be aware that such a faithful and steadfast Christian heart is not a work of men. It does not come out of our own flesh and blood that a Christian clings secure and unmoved to his Redeemer and Savior. Rather it occurs only and alone through His divine power and strength that He Himself inculcates a lion’s heart and a hero’s courage to a Christian, particularly that He set before his eyes the beautiful crown of life and honor which hereafter will be put on those who fought valiantly through life and death to reach their Lord Christ.⁷¹

The doctrine of the **Trinity** is maintained in Gerhardt’s writings. He does not necessarily present an in-depth study of the Trinitarian doctrine, but his hymns and sermons are saturated with a Trinitarian emphasis. He speaks mainly of the economic Trinity referring to God as “God-is-towards-and-for-us” (*opera divina ad extra*). He points to the Father as creator and preserver, the Son as the redeemer and the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier. For example, he ends one of his sermons with this benediction: “Help and bring us all together there (heaven), O God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, the one undivided Trinity, highly praised now and in all eternity.”⁷² In his hymn “O Enter Lord Thy Temple” (ELH 400), he prays that just as the Holy Spirit gave us a “second birth more blest” in Baptism, that He would continue to strengthen our faith-life in the “darkest hours” through the means of grace. At the same time, he does not neglect the ontological Trinity referring to God as “God-is-unto-Himself” (*opera divina ad intra*). Here we are referring to the terms unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding. The Father is unbegotten, the fountain source of the Trinity (John 1:1); the Son is begotten of the Father before all worlds (Psalm 2:7; John 1:1); and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9). These are the terms that distinguish the persons of the Trinity and their internal working. In the sermon mentioned above, Gerhardt explains

⁶⁹ LW 55:337.

⁷⁰ C.F.W. Walther, *Predigtentwürfe* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1903), 383.

⁷¹ *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger*, 29.

⁷² *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger*, 83.

that the second person of the Trinity is the only begotten of the Father from all eternity as confessed in the Nicene Creed.⁷³

The **personal union** in Christ, together with the Lord's Supper, was at the center of the controversy with the Reformed in Berlin in Gerhardt's time as was noted above. The Lutherans maintained that the Reformed did not teach a true communication of attributes, specifically the *genus maiestaticum*: that the divine attributes were communicated to the human nature in Christ.⁷⁴ The Reformed rejected the communication of attributes and the *genus maiestaticum* because they could not accept that the finite human nature of Christ is capable of receiving infinite divine attributes (*Finitum non est capax infiniti*). In his sermons Gerhardt explains the personal union in Christ in a simple biblical way for his parishioners:

Therefore also the "he" in our text must refer to another David than the earthly and bodily one, namely, the heavenly and spiritual one, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For He is the proper true firstborn; partly according to His eternal and godly birth for He is true God from eternity of the essence of His Father begotten in an inexpressible manner. Partly He is also the firstborn according to His human and bodily birth for He in the fullness of time both as God and man was born of the Virgin Mary. "For Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son" as Luke states in chapter 2. Thus His kingdom is an eternal imperishable kingdom for it is a spiritual kingdom, a heavenly kingdom, a kingdom that is not of this world. Therefore it cannot fall with the kingdoms of this world.⁷⁵

The basis for the central article of justification is the **redemptive work** of the God-Man Jesus Christ. This redemptive work is portrayed in the hymn "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" (ELH 331), which is in many ways Gerhardt's *Agnus Dei*. In verses 1-4, Gerhardt points to the Savior as the Old Testament lamb led to the slaughter for our salvation. He is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquity. On the altar of the cross, the true Lamb of God poured out His blood, that crimson flood, covering the mercy seat of God, atoning for the sins of all men. Then in verses 5-10, he goes on to picture how the redemptive sacrifice is brought to us. That rose-colored treasure flows to us from the wounded side of the Savior (verse 7). Here Gerhardt is alluding to the Lord's Supper, and one is reminded of the altar paintings with blood flowing from the Savior's side into the communion cup. Gerhardt assures us that we eat of the heavenly manna and we drink from the fountain of waters and are satisfied (*Soll mich dies Manna speisen, Im Durst solls sein mein Wasserquell*; verse 8). Finally he sees us at the wedding feast, dressed in the purple blood of Christ, prepared for the bridegroom. In the Supper we have the wedding feast of heaven in foretaste (verse 10).

Sanctification is by no means ignored in Gerhardt's writing. Out of thanks for Christ's redemptive work, the Christian will strive to walk in Christ's loving footsteps. For example, he states in one of his hymns:

Use all this well, and because you have become

⁷³ Paul Gerhardt als Prediger, 68; see also ELH 405:3.

⁷⁴ Langbecker, 116.

⁷⁵ Paul Gerhardt als Prediger, 68.

Now clean in Christ
 So live and do also as a Christian
 And hold Christ's order (for life).
 Until there in eternal joy
 He lays the garment of honor and joy
 Around your soul.⁷⁶

The **means of grace** are a predominant theme in Gerhardt's writings as in the writing of all Lutheran theologians. The way the treasures of the cross are brought to the Christian is through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Here forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are brought to the individual and faith in Jesus as the Savior is worked to receive those benefits.

Baptism played an integral role in the life of Gerhardt. Before he was born, his great grandfather faced the controversy concerning baptismal exorcism. On the day after he was born, he probably was born again in the baptismal water of the Marienkirche. Throughout his life he defended the important biblical doctrine of regenerative Baptism. His hymns and sermons often allude to Baptism. In addition to this, he has one hymn totally dedicated to the sacrament, "You People, Who Have Been Baptized" (*Du Volck, das du getauffet bist*).⁷⁷ This hymn begins by teaching the doctrine of original sin. Before we were born and first sucked milk, we had turned from the highest good, the eternal God (verse 2). We were slaves of Satan and imprisoned in his kingdom (verse 4). Yet the water-bath of holy Baptism changed all that. It replaced what Satan corrupted and what we added thereto by our evil nature (verse 5). Baptism frees us from sin and we inherit everything that Christ inherited as the Son of God (verse 6). Alluding to a *Christus victor* theme, Gerhardt tells us that in Baptism death dies and can strangle no more. Here hell is broken and all its hosts must lay under our feet (verse 7). In Baptism we put on Christ and cover our shame (verse 8) and thus we are prepared to face death (verse 11) and to live properly as Christians in our earthly vocation (verse 12). Baptism was Gerhardt's comfort and stay throughout his life, and he was still defending the biblical doctrine as he faced the baptismal exorcism question at the end of his career.

Surrounded by the influence of Reformed theology, Gerhardt fought to maintain the biblical doctrine of the **Lord's Supper** in his surroundings. As noted above, in the second part of his hymn, "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth," he views the believer receiving the purple blood of Christ from His wounded side in the Lord's Supper and refers to the Supper as the manna for the way. Only one of Gerhardt's hymns is classified as a Lord's Supper hymn: "Lord Jesus, My Love" (*Herr Jesu, meine Liebe*).⁷⁸ This hymn he wrote to his beloved congregation in Berlin while he was pastor at Lübben. He was strengthening them in the biblical doctrine of the Supper now that he was no longer with them. In this hymn he gives a detailed explanation of the Lord's Supper, defiantly teaching the oral reception of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament (*manducatio oralis*) in opposition to the Reformed. He begins the hymn by recounting the Christian's continual struggle in life. His daily sin and failure causes him to feel separated from God. Satan with his devices strives to gnaw at his spirit. He has a thousand ways to draw us from the Lord (verses 1-2). However such harm is repelled at the table instituted by Christ

⁷⁶ See Addendum II, verse 12.

⁷⁷ See Addendum II.

⁷⁸ See Addendum III.

where He distributes His precious flesh and blood. He bids the Christian come to Him and find comfort (verse 3). In verse 4, he leaves no question concerning what is received with the mouth in the Supper:

Here is present in the bread
 My body, which was given
 Into the bands of death and the cross
 For you, who have strayed from me.
 In the wine is what flowed
 To blot out your offense,
 My blood, that I shed
 In meekness and patience.
 Take them both with the mouth
 And consider also with this
 How good from the foundation of my heart
 I, your Redeemer, am.

His body and blood received with the mouth forgive the sins of all, strengthen and nourish our faith life, comfort when one is about to be lowered into the grave and make us princes in the golden heavenly banquet hall (verses 5–8). In verse 8, we hear the echo of the eschatological “already and not yet.” In the Supper, we already participate as princes in the heavenly banquet which we will receive in all its fullness in the feast of heaven. We have the feast already in foretaste but not yet in its fullness.

B. The Sermons of Gerhardt

Beside Gerhardt’s hymns and his testament to his son, very little remains of Gerhardt’s written works. Four sermons of Gerhardt have been preserved. These four sermons are funeral sermons. The first sermon was written for the funeral of Nikolaus Wernicke (April 24, 1659) at the Nikolaikirche. It is based on Micah 7:7–9. The second sermon was preached at the funeral of Joachim Schröder (May 17, 1655) in Zossen, a small town outside of Berlin. The text for this sermon is Psalm 71:9. The third sermon is a funeral sermon for a small child conducted at the Nikolaikirche (August 19, 1660). Friedrich Ludwig Zarlang was the son of dear friends of Gerhardt and members of the Nikolaikirche. The sermon is based on Psalm 89:26. The fourth sermon was written for the funeral of Anna Weber (February 10, 1661) at the Nikolaikirche. The sermon is based on Psalm 86:11.

C. Gerhardt and Lutheran Spirituality

There is no doubt that Paul Gerhardt stood firmly in the fold of Lutheran orthodoxy and the seventeenth-century dogmatists. At the same time, he was a part of the devotional movement that swept the Lutheran lands in the seventeenth century. This movement promoted a practice of piety which focused on an intimate union between the heart of Christ and the heart of each faithful Christian. Thus Gerhardt often uses the personal pronoun *ich* (I) in his writings, rather than the *wir* (we). Unlike the later Pietists who overemphasized sanctification and devalued the means of grace, the devotional writers held that the means of grace, the liturgy, personal devotions, and piety went hand-in-hand. Gerhardt was no more a Pietist than the other great

devotional writers of the time. Gerhardt's hymns were used in the practice of Lutheran spirituality and spiritual formation.⁷⁹ While terms like this were not used, the devotional writers made considerable use of piety (*pietas*, *Frömmigkeit*) and godliness (*Gottseligkeit*). This devotional literature (*Erbauungsliteratur*) was to encourage proper meditation on the Word and contemplation of the loving Savior through reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting the Word, as the ancient collect states. Through this process the Word said or sung was to be brought from the mind to the heart, touching one's whole being with the comforting love of Christ. While there were others before him such as Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608) and Martin Moller (1547–1606), the main founder of this movement was Johann Arndt.

To his orthodox biblical Lutheran doctrine Gerhardt fused the devotional emphasis of Johann Arndt, Johann Gerhard and the other devotional writers. Seeing his parishioners suffering great losses through terror, disease and hunger in the wake of the Thirty Years' War, Gerhardt, as Arndt before him, saw his decisive task to bring spiritual renewal. This he did through his hymns. When one reads the devotional writings of Gerhard and Arndt and the hymns and sermons of Paul Gerhardt, one finds a warm piety and the power of God unto salvation which touches the heart. The Christian needs a personal relationship with the Savior through the means of grace. This literature was intended to nourish and strengthen believers through the Gospel, encouraging repentance and spiritual renewal and formation. One of the predominant themes of Lutheran Spirituality is **Union and Communion with God through the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments.**

The Arndt and Gerhardt Connection

In many ways Gerhardt follows in the footsteps of Johann Arndt (1555–1621). Arndt was the most influential devotional author that Lutheranism produced. He was called as pastor in Badeborn, Anhalt in 1583. In 1590, when Anhalt faced the Second Reformation, he was deposed for insisting on the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the right to use the baptismal exorcism. After this he served as pastor in Quedlinburg, where he influenced Johann Gerhard; in Braunschweig, the city of Chemnitz; and in Eisleben. His final position was superintendent in Celle. His most important work was *True Christianity* (*Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christentum*). It was one of the first German Lutheran devotional book for the common people. Next to the *Imitation of Christ* it is the most widely circulated devotional book in Christendom. When our forefathers came to this country they brought the Bible, the catechism, the hymnbook, and *True Christianity*.

The connection between Arndt and Gerhardt is evident in Gerhardt's use of the prayers in Arndt's *Paradiesgärtlein* as the basis for a number of his hymns.⁸⁰ He used devotional motifs common to Arndt and the other devotional writers such as the creation, nuptial and wounded side motifs. The relationship between the two is especially seen in his use of Bernardian mysticism and the mystical union. Gerhardt's contemplation of the cross in Bernardian mystical form is seen in the hymn "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" (ELH 334).

⁷⁹ This refers to the ways in which our faith-life is formed, nourished and strengthened.

⁸⁰ Otto Schulz, *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842), 125–135. Here five hymns are listed that are based on prayers from Arndt's *Paradiesgärtlein*. See also Elke Axmacher, *Johann Arndt und Paul Gerhardt* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2001), 233–238.

Mysticism and Mystical Union

When faith in the Savior is worked in the heart by the Spirit, an individual is totally forgiven on the basis of Christ's atoning sacrifice and he stands justified before God. At the same time new spiritual life is worked, our new man and the entire Trinity makes its dwelling in us (John 14:22-24). This indwelling of the Holy Trinity is referred to as the mystical union (*unio mystica*). The mystical union is the union between God and justified man wherein the Holy Trinity dwells in the believer substantially and operates in the same by His gracious presence. Thus the believer has union and communion with God, partaking in the divine (2 Peter 1:4). This union is effected by God Himself through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament.

The doctrine of the mystical union as employed by Paul Gerhardt, the devotional writers, and the dogmaticans is seen by some as a perversion of Lutheran doctrine and the advent of Pietism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our Lutheran Confessions speak of the gracious indwelling of the Trinity by faith in the elect who have been justified through the imputation of Christ's righteousness.⁸¹ Philipp Nicolai, the great Lutheran hymn writer and preacher, made considerable use of this doctrine in providing comfort for Christians:

Above all this, the fact that God out of great love dwells and rests in His elect and again that they rest tenderly and sweetly in Him and eternally rejoice, this indwelling of God in His elect produces great benefits and much heavenly fruit as Christ says: He who remains in me and I in him the same brings forth much fruit. [*Ueber dies alles, dass Gott aus grosser Liebe in seinen Auserwählten wohnt und ruht, und sie hinwiederum sanft und lieblich in ihm ruhen und sich ewiglich erfreuen, schafft diese Einwohnung Gottes in seinen Heiligen auch grossen Nutzen and viel himmlische Früchte, wie Christus sagt: Wer in mir bleibt, und ich in ihm, der bringt viel Früchte.*]⁸²

Therefore we see that the mystical union was not an innovation of Arndt though definitely taught by him,⁸³ but rather it is a scriptural doctrine embraced by all the Lutheran fathers. One of the places that Gerhardt uses the comforting doctrine of the mystical union is in his Christmas hymn, "I Stand Beside Thy Manger Here":

This only, Lord, I humbly pray,
O grant it, dearest Savior,
That Thou wouldst dwell in me this day
And here abide forever.
So let me be Thy cradle blest.
Come! Come, within my heart to rest,
My precious Joy and Treasure!
(ELH 129:5)⁸⁴

⁸¹ FC SD III, 54, *Triglotta*, 933-935; see also Luther, WA 20:229.

⁸² Philipp Nicolai, *Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens von Philipp Nicolai*. Edited by Rudolf Eckart (Elberfeld: Verlag des Lutherischen Büchervereins, 1909), 67.

⁸³ Johann Arndt, *Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christenthum* (Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf), II:6, 216-219.

⁸⁴ See also ELH 115:14; 161:4; 517:7.

The biblical doctrine of the mystical union as taught by Gerhardt is not to be confused with the false mysticism of the enthusiasts and the pagan world. In the mystical union the distinction between the divine and human is not confused. The soul of man is not absorbed into the divine. Rather the Lutheran theologians explicate the mystical union using the analogy of the personal union in Christ. As the human and the divine in Christ are united into one person and yet the natures remain distinct, so in the mystical union the Trinity makes its dwelling in man but God and man remain distinct. There is no essential or substantial union, but there is a union of substances.⁸⁵

This gracious union with God is conveyed and preserved through the means of grace. Many of the medieval mystics and Reformed enthusiasts believed that outward means were unimportant in the union with the divine. In other words the Spirit conveys and maintains this union without external means. Contrary to this, Gerhardt continually preserves the connection between the mystical union and the means of grace. Finally in the mysticism of Gerhardt man does not climb to God through contemplation, but God Himself descends to us in the manger and the cross. Christ unites us with Himself in the Word, He clothes us with Himself in Baptism, and He feeds us with Himself in the Holy Supper so that we have union and communion with the divine.

Devotional Themes

The mystical union is often expressed by the devotional writers with the **nuptial motif**, which has its roots in Scripture (Song of Solomon; Hosea 2:21–22; Revelation 21:2). As husband and wife become one flesh, so Christ unites Himself to His bride the church and to each believing soul, giving her all His divine gifts and taking upon Himself her burden of sin. The bride by nature was naked but He clothed her with the garments of salvation and covered her with a robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). With these thoughts in mind, Gerhardt ends his hymn, “The Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth,” “And there, in garments richly wrought as Thine own bride, I shall be brought to stand in joy beside Thee” (ELH 331:10). This motif often includes Luther’s joyful exchange (*der fröhliche Wechsel*).⁸⁶ Christ, my husband, takes upon Himself my sin, death and hell and gives me, His bride, in exchange His forgiveness, life and salvation. Gerhardt makes this same connection: “Lord, my Shepherd, take me to Thee. Thou art mine; I was Thine” (ELH 377:7). Christ, my husband, who gave His life for me will never abandon me. What comfort this is!

⁸⁵ “As the personal communication of attributes arises out of the personal union of the divine nature and the human nature in Christ so out of the spiritual union of Christ and the church, of God the Lord and a believing soul, arises a spiritual communion not only in the kingdom of glory and in eternal life but also in the kingdom of grace and in this life. Therefore Saint Peter says concerning the true believers that they have become partakers in the divine nature.” (*Wie aus der persönlichen Vereinigung der göttlichen und menschlichen Natur in Christo entstehet die persönliche Mittheilung der Eigenschafften / also entstehet aus der geistlichen Vereinigung Christi und der Kirchen / Gottes des Herrn und einer gläubigen Seele / eine geistliche Gemeinschaft / nicht allein im Reich der Herrlichkeit und im ewigen Leben / sondern auch im Reich der Gnaden und in diesem Leben / Dannenhero S. Petrus 2. Epistel 1. v. 4. von den wahren Gläubigen spricht / dass sie der Göttlichen Natur sind theilhafftig worden.*) (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla Salomonae* in Johann Steiger, *Johann Gerhard*, 97.)

⁸⁶ LW 31:351–352.

In his pastoral care Gerhardt makes considerable use of the picture of the **wounded side of the Lord**. This image is based on John 19:34.⁸⁷ This picture was used already by Augustine and it was used throughout church history.⁸⁸ On that first Good Friday after Jesus completed salvation for all men, His side was opened showing how the treasure of salvation is distributed to all people. It flows to us in the water and blood: the water of Baptism, the blood of the Lord's Supper and in His Word which is spirit and life. Gerhardt uses this picture when he writes, "My greater treasure, Jesus Christ, is this which from Thy wounds most blest flowed forth for my salvation" ([*Mein großer Schatz Herr Jesu Christ, ist dieses, was geflossen ist aus deiner Leibes Wunden*], ELH 331:7). In another hymn he speaks in Bernardian mystical style of kissing the wounds of the Savior,⁸⁹ showing how greatly he prizes the treasure flowing from the wounded side of Christ. At other times, the devotional writers speak of hiding themselves in the wounded side of the Savior until all the stormy blasts of life are over. Here there is rest and peace in the outrageous fortune of life.

Following the lead of Johann Arndt, Gerhardt makes a considerable use of the **pictures from nature and creation** in his works. He points to the wonderful blessings of the creation. He directs his readers to the beauty of the seasons, the magnificent splendor of God's creation (*Die güldne Sonne*, ELH 57). At the same time he uses these pictures from nature to point to our spiritual life. As the sun descends and seems to be defeated, Gerhardt tells us we have another sun, Christ the Sun of gladness, dispelling all our sadness ("Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow," ELH 569:2). The beauties of the summer should remind each Christian of the wonderful splendor of the summer of heaven. The fall points to the end of the world and to the fall of our life. Every evening as we remove our clothes and go to sleep, we are to think of our mortality. When we arise and dress, we are directed to the glorious garment in which we will be dressed in heaven's morning. At the same time the rhythm of the day reminds us of our dying and rising in Baptism (ELH 569:4). Everything in mundane life should point us to the spiritual.

The **wanderer or traveler motif** was common among the devotional writers. The great Lutheran dogmatician from Strassburg, Johann Conrad Dannhauer (1603–1666), even entitled his main theological work *Hodosophia christiana (The Christian Way of Wisdom)*. The theme of Gerhardt's sister's funeral sermon was, "The Last Battle of Spiritual Pilgrims and Wanderers."⁹⁰ This motif is based on the Old Testament Exodus. As Israel of old we were all liberated from the great satanic pharaoh. We passed through the Red Sea of Baptism and now we are traveling through this present wilderness, nourished by the heavenly manna until we cross the Jordan of death, reaching the heavenly Canaan above. Gerhardt's hymn, "I Am a Guest on Earth,"⁹¹ employs this imagery. He speaks of himself wandering here on earth striving to reach the heavenly *Vaterland*.

⁸⁷ See also Zechariah 12:10, 13:1; 1 John 5:6. For a complete presentation of the wounded side motif see Gaylin Schmeling, "Gerhard – Theologian and Pastor" *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 2004), 307–309.

⁸⁸ Augustine, "Tractate on John" CXX:2, Phillip Schaff, ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 434–435.

⁸⁹ Schulz, 9. *Ich umfangte, herz und küsse der gekränkten Wunden Zahl und die purpurroten Flüsse Deiner Füß' und Nägelmal.*

⁹⁰ Bunnens, 132. *Letzter Kampf geistlicher Pilgrime und Wandersleute.*

⁹¹ Schulz, 37. *Ich bin ein Gast auff Erden.*

The wanderer motif is also found in Gerhardt's hymn "Commit Whatever Grieve Thee" (TLH 520; ELH 208). This hymn is based on Psalm 37:5: "Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (*Befiehl dem Herren deine Wege und hoffe auf ihn; er wirds wohl machen*). In its German form the hymn is an acrostic on Psalm 37:5, formed by the initial words of the stanzas.

1. **Befiehl** du deine Wege
2. **Dem Herren** mußt du trauen
3. **Dein'** ewge Treu und Gnade
4. **Weg'** hast du allerwegen
5. **Und** ob gleich alle Teufel
6. **Hoff'**, O du arme Steele
7. **Auf**, auf, gib deinem Schmerze
8. **Ihn**, ihn laß tun und walten
9. **Er** wird zwar eine Weile
10. **Wirds** aber sich befinden
11. **Wohl** dir, du Kind der Treue
12. **Mach'** End, o Herr, mach' Ende⁹²

An interesting aspect of Gerhardt's sermons and devotional literature is his **gathering of Scripture passages**. At times he collects many sections of Scripture into a compact form as a special comfort to the Christian.

But in death, we should observe that we should not fear so greatly before death. We should not be dismayed so greatly before the grave. We should not be disheartened in the pains of our life and the loss of all our body's strength. Rather then, we should turn with Christ to God in heaven and say, You are my Father, You are my God, You are my refuge who helps me [Psalm 89:26]. Because You are my God and my Father You will not forsake Your child, You fatherly heart. You are my light and my salvation, before whom should I fear? You are the strength of my life, before whom should I be afraid [Psalm 27:1]? So I am also certain that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature may separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord [Romans 8:38-39].⁹³

Theology of the Cross

Every aspect of Gerhard's theology is influenced by the cross. Here he is following in the footsteps of Luther who reminds us, "He who does not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering.... God can be found only in suffering and the cross."⁹⁴ Gerhardt does not look for God in the great and spectacular things of this world but in the humble child in the manger and the crucified one. This is seen in his hymn, "O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is" (ELH 161), where he beholds his God as the humble child in the manger.

⁹² Schultz, 64.

⁹³ Gerhardt als Prediger, 81-82.

⁹⁴ LW 31:53.

Salvation is not accomplished through great and powerful signs in the eyes of the world. God chose not to accomplish redemption through His bare majesty and power. Rather Gerhardt shows us that salvation was accomplished in the death of God and His seeming defeat as he points out in his hymn, "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" (ELH 334). The channels of God's salvation are not to be found in magnificent signs or in things that the human mind could understand. Rather the means of grace are a seemingly insignificant book, a palm-full of water, and some bread and wine. Gerhardt's battle in Berlin centered in this very point. The Reformed could not accept the fact that the baptismal water could be regenerative and that the host and chalice were Christ's body and blood. God chose to hide His power in these insignificant things. Gerhardt realized that the church was not a great and powerful outward organization such as the Elector hoped to accomplish through uniting the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Brandenburg-Prussia. Rather the church is found in the insignificant gathering around the means of grace.

The theology of the cross also affects the life of the Christian. The Christian should not expect that his life will always be outwardly easy. But his life is always at its best under the cross because his gracious Father is guiding his life. This we see in Gerhardt's life. His life did not appear to be outwardly successful. But in the conflicts and struggles (*Anfechtung*), God was at his side. God is not closest to us in peace and leisure but in the suffering of the cross. This is Gerhardt's attitude toward the cross.

Though a heavy cross I'm bearing
 And my heart Feels the smart,
 Shall I be despairing?
 God, my Helper, who doth send it,
 Well doth know All my woe
 And how best to end it.
 (ELH 377:2)

Comfort (Troost) of the Lord

The main purpose of the devotional literature of the time was doctrine (*Lehre*) and comfort (*Troost*). The people of Gerhardt's time were in need of comfort as a result of the Thirty Years' War, and they needed to be instructed continually in the doctrine on which that comfort was based. Their land lay in ruin. Education and business had nearly ceased. More importantly, the church had suffered great loss in its outward organization. Churches were burnt, pastors driven out of their congregations and the normal rhythm of parish life disrupted.

Our times appear outwardly quite different. We are rather well-to-do: we have one of the highest standards of living that there has ever been, and one would assume that all should be right with the world. Yet all around us there are people who are on the verge of despair. They can find no meaning or purpose in life. For them, life is "an aimless mote, a downward drift from futile birth," as another hymn writer explains.⁹⁵ Rick Warren and Joel Osteen are looked to

⁹⁵ "O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth" (CW 400:1), written by Martin Franzmann (1907-1976), the anniversary of whose birth we are also celebrating this year.

for comfort, yet what they offer will not help us make it through the day. We often feel burdened with our sins, forsaken and alone. Even in the best of times our fast-paced lives leave us trying to catch our breath, never quite at peace within ourselves. Our world is definitely in need of the comfort.

The comfort that Gerhardt has to offer is not sunshine and lollipops. Gerhardt does not promise us paradise in the here and now. He does not promise us a rose garden. But in the midst of trial and tribulation, he offers confident hope. Gerhardt fills his literature with words of comfort such as *Schirm und Schild, Hilf und Heil*. He emphasizes *Trost* in all he writes. We are not left alone and hopeless in the ravages and misfortune of life. We have the greatest helper there is: God the Father in heaven. Therefore Gerhardt can confidently sing,

Commit whatever grieves thee, Into the gracious hands
Of Him who never leaves Thee, Who heav'n and earth commands.
Who points the clouds their courses, Whom winds and waves obey,
He will direct thy footsteps And find for thee a way.
(TLH 520:1; ELH 208)

Not only can our great Helper help in every need, we have the certainty that He will help. He already did the greatest thing for us. He sent His Son to lay down His life on the altar of the cross to pay for our sins and chose us as His own in Baptism where faith was worked in our hearts. If He already did this, the greatest thing, then He will be with us in all the other needs and struggles of our lives, working all for good (Romans 8:28), even turning evil into good in our lives (Genesis 50:20). This is Gerhardt's point when he writes:

I build on this foundation: That Jesus and His blood
Alone are my salvation, The true eternal good.
Without Him all that pleases Is valueless on earth;
The gifts bestowed by Jesus Alone my love are worth.
(ELH 517:3)

Through the doctrine of the mystical union, Gerhardt adds to the assurance that our Savior God will be with us in our needs. The Christian faces many burdens, but because Christ dwells within him, he knows that God is for him; therefore nothing can be against him. "If God Himself be for me, I may a host defy" (ELH 517:1).

Finally in Gerhardt's hymns we are taught the holy art of dying (*ars moriendi*). United with His cross by faith in the Savior, we can be unafraid of living and unafraid of dying as he so beautifully points out in the hymn:

Be Thou my consolation, My Shield when I must die;
Remind me of Thy passion When my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee, Upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfold Thee, Who dieth thus dies well!

(ELH 335:8)⁹⁶

Our Helper is the one who can do all for He is almighty. He will take care of us for He already gave His life for us on the cross and made His dwelling within us. This one strengthens us in all the difficulties of life through His means of grace, Word and sacrament. The means of grace are our nourishment for the way, the fortress in battles and the rock of help. Here we receive the strength to do all things through Him (Philippians 4:13), the power to overcome and obtain the victory (1 Corinthians 5:57).

III. Conclusion

Before Gerhardt's death, his hymns were sung throughout the German Lutheran world. He was influenced by Lutheran orthodoxy, and he in turn influenced it. His impact did not stop there. His hymns were well loved by the German Reformed, and his hymn, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," was soon found in the hymnbook of the Roman Catholics. The impact of his work continued in the age of Lutheran Pietism. Philipp Jakob Spener (1535-1705), one of his successors at the Nikolaikirche and the father of Pietism, had a high regard for his hymns.⁹⁷

At the time of the confessional Lutheran renewal (*Erweckungsbewegung*) in the nineteenth century, Gerhardt was a hero of those who made their stand against the Prussian union. His stand in the time of the Great Elector was reminiscent of their situation. When they made their exodus to America, as he had done to Lübben, they brought his hymns with them, and they sang them as their comfort and strength. All the hymnals of confessional Lutheran synods contained his hymns. They were translated into English and are still a source of spiritual nourishment, comfort and strength today.

Paul Gerhardt was the greatest German hymnist of the seventeenth century. Along with Luther he is regarded as one of the greatest hymn writers in all of Lutheranism. More of his lyrics have made their way into the English language than those of any other German writer and their popularity continues to increase. His 139 hymns and poems are an indispensable part of the Christian heritage. In his hymns and other writings, the Gospel always predominates as he applies that Gospel truth to the burdens and struggles of the Christian's life. He faced the Christian cross, and his hymns offer comfort as we face the Christian cross. His enemies considered him to be as thickheaded as a mule and as stubborn as one, but his friends knew that his strong convictions were based on the salvific Word of the Lord. This divine, sifted in Satan's sieve, is indeed the sweet singer of Lutheranism.

⁹⁶ See also ELH 20:3; 334:9; 341; 372:7; 377:4-5. This medieval genre of literature was common to the devotional writers. For example, Martin Moller wrote a book entitled *Handbüchlein zur Vorbereitung auf den Tod, oder Heilige Sterbekunst*.

⁹⁷ Bunners, 259; Rödding, 146.

Addendum I**The So-Called "Testament" of Paul Gerhardt
for His Son (Early 1676)**

Now that I have reached the 70th year of my life and also have the joyful hope that my dear, holy God will soon rescue me out of this world and lead me into a better life than I have had until now on earth, I thank Him especially for all His kindness and faithfulness which, from my mother's womb until the present hour, He has shown me in body and soul and in all that He has given me. Besides this, I ask Him from the bottom of my heart that when my hour comes He would grant me a happy departure, take my soul into His fatherly hands, and give my body a peaceful rest in the ground until the dear Last Day, when I, with all of my [family] who have been before me and also may remain after me, will reawake and behold my dear Lord Jesus Christ face to face, in whom I have believed but have not yet seen. To my only son whom I am leaving behind I leave few earthly goods, but with them I leave him an honorable name of which he will not have to be ashamed.

My son knows that from his tender childhood I have given him to the Lord my God as His possession, that he is to become a servant and preacher of His holy Word. He is to remain now in this and not turn away from it, even if he has only few good days in it. For the good Lord knows how to handle it and how sufficiently to replace external troubles with internal happiness of the heart and joy of the spirit.

Study holy *theologiam* ["theology"] in pure schools and at unfalsified universities and beware of the syncretists [those who mix religions or confessions], for they seek what is temporal and are faithful to neither God nor men. In your common life do not follow evil company but rather the will and command of your God. Especially: (1) Do nothing evil in the hope that it will remain secret, for nothing is spun so small that it is not seen in the light of day. (2) Outside of your office and vocation do not become angry. If you notice that anger has heated you up, remain still and speak not so much as a word until you have first prayed the Ten Commandments and the Christian Creed silently. (3) Be ashamed of the lusts of the flesh, and when you one day come to the years in which you can marry, then marry with God and with the good advice of pious, faithful, and sensible people. (4) Do good to people even if they have nothing with which to repay you, for the Creator of heaven and earth has long since repaid what humans cannot repay: when He created you, when He gave you His beloved Son, and when He accepted you in Holy Baptism as His child and heir. (5) Flee from greed as from hell. Be satisfied with what you have earned with honor and a good conscience, even if it is not all too much. But if the good Lord gives you something more, ask Him to preserve you from the burdensome misuse of temporal goods.

In summary: Pray diligently, study something honorable, live peacefully, serve honestly, and remain unmoved in your faith and confessing. If you do this, you too will one day die and depart from this world willingly, joyfully, and blessedly. Amen.

(Translated by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, May 4, 2007)

Addendum II

Von der Heiligen Taufe*Paul Gerhardt*Melody: *ES IST DAS HEIL* (ELH: 227)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Du Volck, das du getauffet bist
Und deinen Gott erkennest,
Auch nach dem Namen Jesu Christ
Dich und die deinen nennest,
Nims wol in acht, und dencke dran,
Wie viel dir gutes sei gethan
Um Tage deiner Tauffe.</p> | <p>1. You people, who have been baptized
And know your God,
Also by (according to) the name of Jesus Christ
You name yourself and yours,
Consider and reflect thereon,
How much good happened to you
On your Baptism day.</p> |
| <p>2. Du wahrst, noch eh du wurdest gebohrn
Und eh du Milch gesogen,
Verdampt, verstossen und verlohnr,
Darumb das du gezogen
Aus deiner Eltern Fleisch und Blut
Ein Art die sich vom höchsten Gut
Dem ewgen Gott stets wendet.</p> | <p>2. You were still before you were born
And before you sucked milk,
Doomed, rejected and lost,
Thus you were drawn
Out of your parent's flesh and blood
A nature which continually turned
Itself from the highest good, the eternal God.</p> |
| <p>3. Dein Leib und Seel war mit der Sünd
Als einen Giffit durchkrochen,
Und du wahrst nicht mehr Gottes Kind,
Nach dem der Bund gebrochen
Den unser Schöpffer auffgericht
Da er uns seines Bildes Licht
Und herrlichs Kleid ertheilte.</p> | <p>3. Your body and your soul were with sin
Permeated as with poison
And you were no more a child of God,
According to the covenant that was broken
Which our Maker established
When He imparted to us the light of His image
And a glorious garment.</p> |
| <p>4. Der Zorn, der Fluch, der ewge Tod,
Und was in diesen allen
Enthalten ist vor Angst und Noth
Das war auff dich gefallen:
Du wahrst des Satans Schlav u. Knecht
Der heilt dich fest nach seinem Recht
In seinem Reich gefangen.</p> | <p>4. The anger, curse, and eternal death,
And what is in this all
Is the basis for the angst and need
That has fallen on you:
You were a slave and servant of Satan
Who held you fast according to his right
Imprisoned in his kingdom.</p> |
| <p>5. Das alles hebt auff einmal auff
Und schlägt und drückt es nieder
Das Wasser-Bad der heiligen Tauff,
Ersetzt dargegen wieder
Was Adam hat verderbt gemacht
Und was wir selbstn durch gebracht
Bei unserm bösen Wesen.</p> | <p>5. That all was canceled once for all
The water-bath of Holy Baptism
Struck and pressed it down,
It replaced again
What Adam had made corrupt
And what we ourselves accomplished
By our evil nature.</p> |

6. Es macht diß Bad von Sünden loß,
Und gibt die rechte schöne.
Die Satans Kercker vor beschloß,
Die werden frei, und Söhne
Deß, der da trägt die höchste Kron,
Der läßt sie, was sein einger Sohn
Ererbt, auch mit ihm erben.
7. Was von Natur vermaledeit
Und mit dem Fluch umbfangen
Das wird hier in der Tauff erneut
Den Segen zu erlangen.
Hier stirbt der Tod, und würgt nicht mehr
Hier bricht die Höll, und all ihr Heer
Muß uns zum Füßen ligen.
8. Hier ziehn wir Jesum Christum an
Und decken unsre Schanden,
Mit dem, was er für uns gethan
Und willig außgestanden.
Hier wäscht uns sein hochtheures Blut
Und macht uns heilig fromm und gut
In seines Vaters Augen.
9. O grosses Werck! O heilges Bad,
O Wasser dessen gleichen
Man in der gantzen Welt nicht hat!
Kein Sinn kan dich erreichen.
Du hast recht eine Wunder-Krafft,
Und die hat der, so alles schafft
Dier durch sein Word geschencket.
10. Du bist kein schlechtes Wasser nicht
Wies unsre Brunnen geben.
Was Gott mit seinem Munde spricht,
Das hast du in dir leben.
Du bist ein Wasser das den Geist
Des Allerhöchsten in sich schleußt
Und seinen grossen Namen.
11. Das halt O Mensch in allem Werth,
Und dancke für die Gaben,
Die dein Gott dir darin beschehrt,
Und die uns alle laben
Wenn nichts mehr sonst uns laben wil.
6. This bath makes one free from sin,
And gives the proper beauty.
Before them (*the baptized*) Satan's prison is shut,
They are free, and sons,
Of whom He who bears the highest crown,
Permits them what His only-begotten Son
Inherited, also to inherit with Him.
7. What was cursed from nature
And with the curse surrounded
That is here in Baptism renewed
The blessings obtaining.
Here death dies, and can strangle no more
Here Hell is broken, and all its hosts
Must lay under our feet.
8. Here we put on Jesus Christ
And cover our shame
With that which He has done for us
And willingly endured
Here He washes us with His highly precious blood
and makes us holy, pious and good
In His Father's eyes.
9. O great work! O holy bath,
O water like which
One in the entire world does not have!
No intellect can reach (fathom) you.
You truly have a wonder-power,
And this is what He who created all things
Has given you through His Word.
10. You are not simple water
Not a product our fountain gives.
What God speaks with His mouth,
That you have living in you.
You are a water that encloses in itself
The Spirit of the Most High
And His great name.
11. This hold, O man, in greatest value,
And give thanks for this gift,
Which your God herein bestows to you,
And which refreshes us all
When nothing otherwise will refresh.

Dis laß, bis daß des Todes-Ziel
Dich trifft, nicht ungepreiset.

This do not allow until the death-goal
To meet you unextolled.

12. Braucht alles wol, und weil du bist
Nun rein in Christo worden
So leb und thu auch als ein Christ
Und halte Christi Orden.
Bis das dort in der ewgen Freud
Er dir das Ehr - und Freuden - Kleid
Umb deine Seel lege.

12. Use all this well, and because you have become
Now clean in Christ
So live and do also as a Christian
And hold Christ's order (for life).
Until there in eternal joy
He lays the garment of honor and joy
Around your soul.

From:

Otto Schulz. *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842), 228-229.

Literal English translation by the essayist.

An English translation of this hymn is found in the *Lutheran Service Book*, 596. It includes verses 1-2, 5, 8, 11-12.

Addendum III

Von heiligen Abendmahl*Paul Gerhardt*Melody: *NUN LOB, MEIN SEEL* (ELH: 456)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Herr Jesu, meine Liebe,
 Ich hätte nimmer Ruh und Rast,
 Wo nicht fest in mir bliebe
 Was du für mir geleistet hast.
 Es müst in meinen Sünden
 Die sich sehr hoch erhöhn
 All meine Kraft verschwinden
 Und wie ein Rauch vergehn,
 Wen sich mein Hertz nicht heilte
 Zu dier und deinem Tod,
 Und ich nicht stets mich kühlte
 An deines Leidens – Noth.</p> <p>2. Nun weist du meine Plagen
 Und Satans meines Feindes, List.
 Wenn meinen Geist zu nagen,
 Er emsig und bemühet ist,
 Da hat er tausent Künste,
 Von dier mich abzuziehen:
 Bald treibt er mir die Dünste
 Des Zweiffels in den Sinn,
 Bald nimmt er mier dein Meinen
 Und Wollen aus der Acht
 Und lehrt mich gantz verneinen,
 Was do doch fest gemacht.</p> <p>3. Solch Unheil abzuweisen,
 Hast du, Herr, deinen Tisch gesetzt,
 Da lässest du mich speisen,
 So daß sich Marck und Bein ergötzt.
 Du reichst mir zu genießen
 Dein theures Fleisch und Blut
 Und lässest Worte fließen,
 Da all mein Hertz auf ruht.
 Komm, sprichst du, komm und nahe
 Dich ungescheut zu mir,
 Was ich dir geb, empfahe
 Und nims getrost zu dier.</p> | <p>1. Lord Jesus, my love,
 I would never have peace or rest,
 If it did not remain firmly in me
 What you have achieved for me.
 All my power would be bound
 To disappear in my sins
 Which are greatly increasing
 And would like smoke fade away,
 If my heart did not avail itself
 To You and Your death,
 And I did not continually refresh myself
 On the necessity of Your suffering.</p> <p>2. Now You know my afflictions
 And my enemy Satan's devices.
 When he diligently strives
 To gnaw at my spirit,
 He has a thousand arts,
 To draw me from You:
 Shortly he drives the haze
 Of doubt into my mind,
 Shortly he takes from my attention
 Your will and view
 And teaches me to deny totally,
 What you have established.</p> <p>3. Such harm to repel,
 You have, Lord, Your table instituted,
 There you let me be fed,
 So that my marrow and bone are delighted.⁹⁸
 You distribute to me to partake of
 Your precious flesh and blood
 And let the words flow,
 On which all my heart rests.
 Come, You speak, come and draw near
 You without dread to Me,
 What I have given you, receive
 And take it to comfort you.</p> |
|---|--|

⁹⁸ Whole being

4. Hier ist beim Brot vorhanden
 Mein Leib, der dar gegeben wird
 Zum Tod und Creuzes Banden
 Für dich, der sich von mir verirrt.
 Beim Wein ist, was geflossen
 Zu Tilgung deiner Schuld,
 Mein Blut, das ich vergossen
 In Sanftmut und Geduld.
 Nims beides mit dem Munde
 Und denck auch mit darbei
 Wie fromm im Herzensgrunde
 Ich, dein Erlöser, sei.

5. Herr ich wil dein gedenken
 So lang ich Lufft und Leben hab,
 Und bis man mich wird sencken,
 An meinem End ins finstre Grab.
 Ich sehe dein Verlangen
 Nach meinem ewgen Heil:
 Am Holtz bist du gehangen
 Und hast so manchen Pfeil
 Des Trübsals lassen dringen
 In dein Unschuldigs Hertz,
 Auf das ich möcht entspringen
 Des Todes Pein und Schmertz.

6. So hast du auch befohlen
 Das, was den Glauben stärcken kan,
 Ich bei dir solle hohlen,
 Und soll doch ja nicht zweiffeln dran,
 Du habst für all Sünden
 Die in der gantzen Welt
 Bei Menschen je zu finden
 Ein völligs Lösegeld
 Und Opffer das bestehet
 Vor dem der alles trägt,
 In dem auch alles gehet,
 Bezahlet und erlegt.

4. Here is present in the bread
 My body, which was given
 Into the bands of death and the cross
 For you, who have strayed from me.
 In the wine is what flowed
 To blot out your offense,
 My blood, that I shed
 In meekness and patience.
 Take them both with the mouth
 And consider also with this
 How good from the foundation of my heart
 I, your Redeemer, am.

5. Lord I will remember You
 As long as I have breath and life,
 And until one will lower me
 At my end into the dark grave.
 I see Your desire
 For my eternal salvation:
 On the wood (cross) You were hung
 And have let so many arrows
 Of tribulation penetrate
 Into Your innocent heart,
 So that I might escape from
 The pain and agony of death.

6. Thus You also have commended
 That what can strengthen faith,
 I should by You obtain,
 And should indeed not doubt,
 You have for all sin
 In the entire world
 Found in mankind
 A full ransom
 And offering accomplished
 Before Him who sustains all,
 Unto Him also all goes
 Paid and deposited.

7. Und das ja mein Gedanke
 Der voller Falschheit und Betrug
 Nicht im geringsten wancke,
 Als wär es dir nicht Ernst genug,
 So neigst du dein Gemüthe
 Zusamt der rechten Hand.
 Und gibst mit grosser Güte
 Mir das hochwehrte Pfand
 Zu Essen und zu Trincken.
 Ist das nicht Trost und Liecht
 Dem, der sich läst bedünckten
 Du wollest seiner nicht.

7. And that my thoughts
 Which are full of falseness and deception
 Would not in the least waver,
 As if it were not serious enough for You
 Thus You incline Your heart
 Together with the right hand.
 And give with great goodness
 To me the highly treasured pledge
 To eat and to drink.
 Is that not comfort and light
 To him, who lets himself think
 That You do not want him.

8. Ach Herr! Du wilst uns alle!
 Das sagt uns unser Hertze zu.
 Die so der Feind zu Falle
 Gebracht, ruffst du zu deiner Ruh.
 Ach hilff Herr! hilff uns eilen
 Zu dir, der jederzeit
 Uns allesamt zu heilen
 Geneigt ist und bereit.
 Gib Lust und heilges dürsten
 Nach deinem Abentmahl,
 Und dort mach uns zu Fürsten
 Im güldnen Himmels-Saal !

8. O Lord! You desire us all!
 That assures our hearts.
 Which if the enemy causes (them) to fall
 You call (them back) to Your peace.
 O help Lord! Help us to hasten
 To You, who always
 Is inclined and prepared
 To completely heal all of us.
 Give desire and a holy thirst
 For Your Supper,
 And there make us princes
 In the golden heavenly banquet hall.

From:

Otto Schulz. *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842), 230-231.

Literal English translation by the essayist.

Addendum IV

**Paul Gerhardt:
Outline of His Life and Work**

1580—	Book of Concord
1598— <i>April 9</i>	Birth of Johann Crüger
1607— <i>March 12</i>	Birth of Paul Gerhardt in Gräfenhainichen
1612—	Printing of Johann Arndt's <i>Paradiesgärtlein</i>
1613— <i>Christmas</i>	Johann Sigismund celebrates the Lord's Supper in the Reformed manner at the Berlin cathedral
1618— <i>May 23</i>	Beginning of the Thirty Years' War
1619—	Death of his father Christian Gerhardt
1621—	Death of his mother Dorothea nee Starke
1622—1627	Gerhardt attends the Fürstenschule in Grimma
1622— <i>May 19</i>	Birth of Anna Maria Berthold
1628—1642	Gerhardt's theological study at Wittenberg
1637—	Gräfenhainichen set on fire by Swedish soldiers
1642—1651	At Berlin; where he wrote <i>Gelegenheitsgedichte</i> , 18 of which Crüger published in his <i>Praxis Pietatis Melica</i>
1648— <i>October 24</i>	Peace of Westphalia
1650—	Abraham Calov is a theological professor at Wittenberg
1651— <i>November 18</i>	At age 45 he was ordained in the public ministry at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin where he bound himself to the Book of Concord of 1580
1651—1657	Pastorate in Mittenwalde
1655— <i>February 11</i>	He married Anna Maria Berthold in Berlin
1657—1667	Gerhardt's Ministry at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin

- 1661 – Publication of the tenth edition of Crüger’s hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, where 90 of Gerhardt’s hymns appear
- 1662 – The “Edict of Toleration” by Elector Frederick William
- 1666 – *February 13* Gerhardt is removed from office for the first time
- 1667 – Gerhardt is restored to his office for a short time, but his conscience will not allow for him to remain in the public ministry in Brandenburg where he must remain silent concerning the false teachings of the Reformed
- 1668 – *March 5* Death of Gerhardt’s wife, Anna Maria
- 1668 – Gerhardt is called to Lübben in Saxony where he may teach in accord with the Book of Concord
- 1676 – *May 27* Gerhardt joins the Church Triumphant, forever singing the chants and praises of saints and angels

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