

# Gerhard – Theologian and Pastor

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## I. The Life of Gerhard

### A. Gerhard the Early Years

Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) was one of the important seventeenth century dogmaticians. In fact he was the greatest of the dogmaticians. It is said that Gerhard was third (Luther, Chemnitz, and Gerhard) in the series of Lutheran theologians and after him there was no fourth. If one were to speak of a fourth, the position would be assigned either to the Prussian theologian Abraham Calov or to Gerhard's nephew, Johann Quenstedt. Even in his lifetime he was considered to be one of the three greats of Lutheranism. Michael Walther wrote in a letter dated 1635 to Gerhard's successor, Salomon Glassius:

That heavenly David, Christ Jesus, has from the beginning of the time of a very necessary Reformation seen and nourished more theologians of this sort in the orthodox Church, truly courageous and very learned. Three of them, however, have without any doubt taken first place ahead of all the rest. There is no one who can reach easily their singular gifts and activities, namely, our countrymen [*Megaländer*] Luther, Chemnitz and Gerhard. (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, pp. 98-99)

Gerhard was born October 17, 1582, in Quedlinburg, Germany. Four days after he was born on October 21 he was baptized into the Christian faith, becoming a child and heir of eternal life through faith in the Savior. By birth he was of noble rank. His father, Bartholomew Gerhard, was the city treasurer and his grandfather Andreas Gerhard had been the court counselor (*Hofrath*) of the abbess of Quedlinburg who controlled both the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the city. His mother was Margareta Bernd who also came from an important Quedlinburg family and was known for her work among the poor and needy. Gerhard was one of seven children. One of his sisters, Dorothea, married Ludolph Quenstedt and their son Johann was a great dogmatician in the generation after Gerhard.

At the age of fifteen Gerhard became very sick and vowed to enter the public ministry if he recovered. During this time Gerhard, as Luther before him, experienced deep pangs of conscience and desired the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God in Christ. In this affliction he found comfort and counsel in his pastor Johann Arndt, the author of the widely read devotional writing *True Christianity* (*Von wahren Christentum*). Arndt exerted a deep and lasting influence on him and the two remained life-long friends. This is seen in Gerhard's excellent devotional material, much of which has again been made available in English. These writings touch the heart and are filled with pastoral concern. His most important devotional work is *Sacred Meditations* (*Meditationes Sacrae*). His *Postille* written between 1613 and 1616 is a treasury of sermons which show a true pastor's heart. (Carl Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, Vol. II, pp. 740-742)

### B. Gerhard the Student

In 1599 he entered the University of Wittenberg, where he attended the lectures of Leonhard Hutter on sacrifice and repentance. In spite of his original intention of entering the pastoral

ministry he spent two years studying medicine as Arndt had done. As result of this, even when he was superintendent in Heldburg he dispensed both pastoral and medical advice to many of his people. In addition he was fond of the use of medical pictures in the presentation of the Gospel. An example of this is found in *Sacred Meditations*: “Great indeed were thy wounds of sin, which could be healed only by the wounds of the living and life-giving flesh of the Son of God; desperate indeed was that disease which could be cured only by the death of the Physician Himself.” (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 2:17)

He resumed his study of theology at Jena in 1603. Here he spent a considerable amount of time in the private study of the Holy Scriptures and the church fathers. In December of 1603 he became extremely ill and he believed that he had come to his end. He prepared his final testament which included a detailed confession of faith much as Luther had done in his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper of 1528*. This testament in many ways anticipated both his *Loci* and his devotional writings. (Johann Steiger, “Das Testament and das Glaubensbekenntnis des todkranken 21 jährigen Johann Gerhard (1603): Kritische Edition und Kommentar,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Vol. 87, pp. 201-254; see also Johann Steiger, *Johann Gerhard*, pp. 160-227)

After he received his master's degree he moved to Marburg in 1604. Here he attended the lectures of Balthasar Mentzer (1565-1627) on the person of Christ and justification and was influenced by him. Gerhard chose him as his principal guide in theology at the time. Mentzer is remembered as the patriarch of true Lutheranism in Hesse. (F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 126) One of his popular productions was his *Handbüchlein*, a handbook of Lutheran theology.

When Landgrave Maurice of Hesse-Cassel accepted the Reformed faith in the Second Reformation of the province, Gerhard left Marburg and went back to Jena. During this time Arndt wanted him to be called as deacon at Halberstadt and Mentzer desired him to become a professor at the new university which he helped organize in Giessen as a result of the Calvinizing of Marburg. Gerhard however remained at Jena and continued to study theology and homiletics. Also at this time he accompanied Mentzer on an educational tour of southwest Germany (Stuttgart, Tübingen, Strassburg, and Speyer) a portion of the country that had been virtually unknown to him before this.

On December 13, 1605, the second Sunday in Advent, he delivered his first sermon in the small village of Kunitz not far from Jena. His sermon was based on II Peter 3:10 encouraging the congregation to be prepared for the Lord's coming on the last day. He probably wouldn't have preached his first sermon even at this time had it not been for the encouragement of his teacher and friend, Johann Major. Gerhard believed that one must be thoroughly trained in theology in order to produce a good sermon. He lectured at Jena and received his doctorate in sacred theology in 1606. This was also the year that *Sacred Meditations* was published.

### C. Gerhard the Superintendent

He spent a number of years in administrative ecclesiastical work. Beginning in 1607 he was superintendent in Heldburg and did a certain amount of teaching at the *Gymnasium Casimirianum* in Coburg. Here he presented a four-year-long series of monthly lectures in which

he covered the entire spectrum of theology as he would later do in his *Loci Theologici*. Also his work as superintendent was not neglected. He oversaw a visitation of the parishes for which he was responsible. He was a true Seelsorger and physician of the souls in his care. In 1615 his prince, Duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (a grandson of John Frederick), over his objections, promoted him to general superintendent of the entire duchy. In this capacity he wrote a new church order for Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. This order which outlined faith and life for his church was printed in 1616.

#### **D. Gerhard the Professor at Jena**

He continued to receive numerous calls to teach. Jena offered him a full professorship in 1610 but he did not feel qualified to take the position. In addition to this his prince, Duke Johann Casimir, did not want to release him from Heldburg. During this time he often accompanied his prince on diplomatic trips. For example, he was present for the election and coronation of Emperor Matthias at Frankfurt am Main on May 24, 1612. (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 59)

Finally in 1616 at the urging of Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony he became a professor at the University of Jena, where he continued as professor until his death. Here, together with Johann Major (1564-1644) and Johann Himmel (1581-1642), he became part of the so-called Johannine Triad of Lutheran orthodoxy at Jena. Concerning this Fischer wrote, "At that time, there were three outstanding men who were teaching theology at the academy of Jena, and all three were named John: John Mayor, John Gerhard and John Himmel. And they were men worthy of that name, for sincere harmony always flourished among this trio of Johns, and as long as Gerhard was alive, no quarrels ever interrupted that." (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 131)

Gerhard lectured on a wide variety of subjects during his years at Jena, but there were two major points that he desired to instill in his students. The first was a deep desire to study the Holy Scriptures. To engender this love for the Word he taught classes on nearly every book of the Bible. He was a true exegete at heart. He had a great love for the Word and was especially fond of the Book of the Psalms. The Psalter became the model for his devotional writings.

The second major point he desired to instill in his students was the importance of organizing the truths of the inspired inerrant Scripture in systematic form. It is very difficult to teach the wonderful truths of the Bible and pass them on to the next generation unless they are organized in a teachable form. For this reason dogmatic or systematic theology was of vital importance to Gerhard.

The library of Gerhard was one of the finest of the time in Europe. This library was a great benefit to Gerhard as a professor and to his students. He owned many of the writings of the church fathers and his massive research in the fathers is evident throughout his works. After his death his library was brought to Gotha.

During his years as a professor it was necessary for Gerhard to defend the faith from attacks that came from a number of directions. A powerful adversary was found in an older contemporary of Gerhard, the influential Jesuit theologian Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621). He was the main systematizer of Roman arguments against Protestant claims and is seen as one of

the best exponents of post-Tridentine doctrine. Bellarmine and the Jesuits were a major force in the counter or Catholic reformation that threatened Protestantism in Germany. Remember how often he is referred to in *Pieper's Dogmatics*. In his dogmatic writings Gerhard exerted a considerable amount of energy to expose the errors of Bellarmine and the Jesuits.

The Roman danger was not the only force facing the embattled Lutheran Church in Germany. This was the period of Calvinization or the Second Reformation when Reformed theology was infiltrating Lutheran Germany. Calvinism was not a legal religion under imperial law until 1648. The only way it could be spread was under the guise of “reformed” Lutheranism. On Christmas Day 1613 Johann Sigismund had the Supper celebrated in the Reformed manner in the Berlin Dom, thus marking the beginning of the Second Reformation in Brandenburg-Prussia which has had major ramifications for Lutheranism. With such events occurring, Gerhard battled also the Reformed error in his writings. The Palatinate had already succumbed to the Second Reformation and there had been a failed attempt in Electoral Saxony (1586-1592).

At a relatively young age Gerhard came to be regarded as the greatest living theologian in Protestant Germany. He was the chief representative of the period of high orthodoxy (1610-1648) in contradistinction to the golden age of Lutheran orthodoxy (1580-1610) and to the silver age of Lutheran orthodoxy. ([1648-1675] see Addendum I). He was called by virtually every university in Germany but he remained at Jena. Gerhard was a prolific writer. With the theological faculty at Jena, he issued countless theological *Gutachten* on diverse matters. His voluminous exegetical, polemical, dogmatic, and practical writings deal with virtually every theological topic. His writings are a true heritage for our generation.

Beginning in 1618 the Thirty Years’ War raged in Europe, bringing terrible devastation to much of Germany. During most of the period that Gerhard was a professor in Jena the war was being fought around him. Still he remained at his post and calmly produced some of the greatest religious literature of the Lutheran Church. Gerhard was frequently asked to advise the dukes in matters concerning the Thirty Years’ War. With his associate, Johann Major, he met Tilly at the city gate of Jena in 1631 and so impressed the general who was about to plunder the city that the general left the city with only a token plunder. Thus he was credited with saving the city. (Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard*, p. 42) The imperial forces were not the only danger in the war. At the beginning of 1636 Gerhard was captured by the Swedes but was released through the intercession of General Johann Baner. In November of the same year the Swedes attacked and plundered Gerhard’s estate, leaving it in ashes. The livestock was stolen and buildings destroyed. In his diary he wrote that during those very hours he was “busy with a revision of the entire Bible (probably the Weimar edition) and, in fact, with the last chapter of Job which lists the very rich blessing of God upon Job after he had endured his cross.” (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, pp. 146-147)

Gerhard, together with Aegidius Hunnius, is remembered for using the terminology "in view of faith" (*intuitu fidei*) in the doctrine of election. This was the terminology that caused such havoc for the Norwegian Synod in the Election Controversy of the nineteenth century. However, it should be noted, as Professor Aaberg indicates, that Gerhard did not by this terminology teach that faith was the cause of one’s election, nor did he ascribe to natural man any responsibility for coming to faith, thus steering clear of synergism. (*Loci Theologici*, Locus 7, Para. 161; Theodore Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill*, p.17) Gerhard used this terminology in contradistinction

to the bare decrees of election found in Calvinism. One is not to look to a bare decree but rather the comfort of election is found in the fact that God chose us from all eternity as His own. He sent His Son to redeem all people with His blood. He sent His Spirit to work faith in that redemption in our hearts and preserves us in the faith unto our end. Thus our salvation, which is completely the work of God, is entirely certain.

At the time of Gerhard there was a renewed interest in Aristotelian philosophy as a result of the Neo-Aristotelian movement. Gerhard is remembered for bringing Aristotelian terminology and distinctions to the aid of Lutheran dogmatics. He makes use of Aristotelian causation (*causa efficiens, causa formalis, causa materialis, and causa finalis*) in his systematic theology. (See Addendum II)

## E. Gerhard's Family and Final Years

In Genesis the Lord said, "It is not good that man should be alone." (Genesis 2:18) Gerhard certainly found this to be true. A God given helper was provided for him in Barbara Neumeyer. As they were about to be married Gerhard wrote this prayer, "Lord Jesus you who instituted marriage in paradise, who was present at the wedding at Cana and who through the bond of chaste love still binds the hearts of spouses today, bless this my intention and give me a peaceful, blessed, and stable marriage." (C.J. Böttcher, *Das Leben Dr. Johann Gerhards*, p. 65) On September 19, 1608, they were married, but Barbara died on May 30, 1611, some time after the death of their only child Johann Georg.

After a period of mourning he married Maria Mattenberg on July 13, 1614. Her father was a physician and consul in Gotha. She was to be his wife for the next twenty-three years, living until March 30, 1660. Ten children were born to this union, six of whom outlived their father. His son Johann Ernst Gerhard (1621-1668), following in his father's footsteps, became a professor at Jena. He collected and edited many of his father's works and was known for his own works in theology and oriental studies.

In May of 1637 Gerhard fell victim to a high fever. At this time he was lecturing on the book of Hebrews. Here he reminded his students of the wonderful comfort that we have in the heavenly fatherland above from such passages as Hebrews 4:9: "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God," and Hebrew 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels." (C.J. Böttcher, *Das Leben Dr. Johann Gerhards*, p. 142) Although he recovered at the time, in August the fever returned. As his end drew near, Gerhard's piety was as evident as it had been throughout his life.

He then bade his colleagues farewell, and on the same day he confessed his sins before God and his pastor, Master Adrian Beyer, archdeacon of Jena. He also took care to equip himself with his final very sacred viaticum. In the burning godliness of his heart he feasted upon the body and blood of His Savior, and with a loud voice immediately began to sing the eucharistic hymn which our blessed Luther composed (or rather corrected) for the use of communicants: "Let us praise and bless Thee, God, etc." (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 289)

He fell asleep on August 17, 1637, two months before his fifty-fifth birthday, trusting in the Savior in whose blood he had been washed through Holy Baptism and assured of the resurrection. Gerhard's funeral service took place on August 20 at St. Michael's Church in Jena, where Johann Major delivered the funeral sermon based on St. Paul's words in II Corinthians 12:9, "'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (See Cotta's Vita of Gerhard in the Preuss Edition of Gerhard's *Loci*.) The full text of this sermon may be found included in Johann Gerhard, *Sämtliche Leichenpredigten*, pp. 251-315.

## II. The Writings of Gerhard

### A. The Dogmatic and Exegetical Writings of Gerhard

The Jena Divine, the light of Thüringen, is best known in church history as a dogmatician, in fact he was the greatest of the dogmaticians. His most significant dogmatic work was his *Loci Theologici* (1610-1625), whose vast nine volumes—a later edition published in twenty-three volumes (Cotta Edition)—became the great systematic theology of Lutheran orthodoxy. Here he made use of the synthetic method in his material, proceeding from cause to effect or from principles to conclusions. The articles of faith are dealt with according to this order: God, man, sin, redemption, etc. His *Loci* are a comprehensive treatment of the evangelical doctrinal position based on a particularly wide range of material.

He completed the *Loci* divided into nine volumes, and they came out, first, in Jena in quarto in this way:

Volume 1, in 1610, containing chapters [or *loci*] on Holy Scripture, on the legitimate interpretation of Holy Writ, on the nature of God, on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, on God the Father and His eternal Son, on the Holy Spirit, and on the person and office of Christ. He added to this volume the inaugural speech which he delivered on that question as to whether all, or some, or any of the divine attributes were communicated to the human nature of Christ.

Volume 2, in 1611, containing the *loci* on creation and the angels, on providence, on election and rejection, on the image of God in man before the fall, on original sin, on actual sins, and on free will.

Volume 3, in 1613, containing the *loci* on the moral law, on ceremonial and forensic laws, on the Gospel, on repentance, and on justification by faith.

Volume 4, in 1614, containing the *loci* on good works, on the Sacraments, on circumcision, on the Passover lamb, and on Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Volume 5, in 1619, containing the *loci* on the ministry of the Church and on the political magistracy.

Volume 7, in 1620, containing the *locus* on marriage, celibacy and related matters.

Volume 8, in 1621, containing the *loci* on death and on the resurrection of the dead.

Volume 9, in 1622, containing the *loci* on the final judgment, on the end of the age, on hell and on eternal life. (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, pp. 319-320)

Gerhard's four-volume *Confessio Catholica* appeared in 1633-1637. In it he sought to refute the objections of contemporary Roman Catholic theology with quotations taken from the Church of Rome's own traditions. The work is similar to the *Catalogus Testium Veritatis* of Flacius and appears to be based on it. The *Confessio Catholica* inspired a number of similar writings by other authors such as Johann Georg Dorsch. Dorsch wrote a book in which he tried to show that Thomas Aquinas could be made to support Lutheran doctrine more than that of Rome. (See also Bengt Hägglund, "Polemics and Dialogue in John Gerhard's *Confessio Catholica*," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 159-172)

All the Lutheran fathers were deeply engaged in patristic studies. Gerhard was probably the first Lutheran to write a book on the subject in which he coined the word "patrology" as a synonym for patristics. Here he points out that the doctrine of the confessional Lutheran Church is in agreement with true fathers of the church. His *Patrologia* was published posthumously in 1653 by his son Johann Ernst.

*The Harmony of the Gospels* (*Harmoniae evangelicae Chemnitio-Lyseriana continuatio* [1626-1627]) was the Jena Theologian's major exegetical production. Here he completed a commentary on the Gospels begun by Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586) and continued by Polycarp Leyser (1552-1610), who edited a number of the writings of Chemnitz. *The Harmony of the Gospels* was so popular that the Missouri Synod translated portions of it in the nineteenth century. This work, entitled *Perikopen*, was published in seven volumes including the historic Gospels of the church year, the festival Gospels, and the Passion history. At the request of Ernst the Pious, Gerhard edited and contributed to the *Weimar Bibel*. It became the Lutheran study Bible of the time. The commentary in this Bible is saturated with Gerhard's devotional spirit. (E.R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, pp. 358-360)

## **B. The Devotional (Erbauungsliteratur) and Homiletical Writings of Gerhard**

Gerhard is viewed by many today as a hairsplitting, bone-dry seventeenth century dogmatian. This is the case especially among those who do not appreciate the intricacies of the theological thought in his *Loci*. His dogmatic orthodoxy is said to have taken all the life out of the Lutheran Reformation. However, in this evaluation Gerhard the practical theologian is forgotten. His activity as a pastor and author of devotional literature is overlooked. (See also Johann Anselm Steiger, "Pastoral Care according to John Gerhard," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 3, pp. 319-339) Even in his dogmatic works one always finds a pastoral or practical use. The devotional writings (*Erbauungsliteratur*) of Gerhard touch the heart of the reader with the saving Gospel of Christ. The Christian needs an intimate relation with the Savior through the means of grace. Here Gerhard offers spiritual nourishment for the faith-life of the believer that warms the heart

with the Gospel of Christ's forgiveness. This literature was intended to strengthen and edify believers, encouraging repentance and spiritual renewal. One of his predominate themes is **union and communion with God through the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments**, as can be seen in his writings.

Into His assumed human nature, Christ at the same time placed the fullness of divine grace and truth. If it is to benefit us, then we must partake of the self-same fullness; that takes place through faith (Joh. 1:16). The Lord Christ became man in order that we men might become partakers of the divine nature; if that is to occur, then we must believe, as it is once more stated in Joh. 1:12: **He did give power to become God's children to such as who believe on His Name.** . . . And, the human nature of Christ thus becomes for us a door to deity, just as faith is a door for us to Christ's humanity. (Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, pp. 24-25)

To me You were given—shall not all things be given to me? My nature is glorified greater in You than it was disgraced in Adam through sin. Because You assumed into the unity of Your person (Christ has two natures, human and divine, in one person) that which was only accidentally weakened by Satan, You truly are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone (Eph 5:30). You are my brother. What can You deny to me, to whom You are most intimately joined by the same essence of the flesh and by feelings of fraternal love? You are the bridegroom [Mt. 22:2], who according to the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father, bound the human nature to Yourself as a bride by means of a personal covenant. With a thankful soul I proclaim and acknowledge that I too am invited to the celebration of this marriage. (Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, [2:4] pp. 41-42)

Some would see the devotional writings of Martin Moller, Philipp Nicolai, Arndt, and Gerhard as the beginnings of pietism. This can hardly be the case when Gerhard's *Loci* was the standard of Lutheran orthodoxy for generations. Rather in these writings Gerhard strives to touch the hearts and lives of believers with the objective truths of orthodoxy. As Luther and Arndt before him, he combines theological orthodoxy with what is good in Christian mysticism. In this literature Gerhard makes considerable use of the Lutheran doctrine of the mystical union of the believer with Christ.

Gerhard's most popular devotional work is *Sacred Meditations* (*Meditationes Sacrae*), which he wrote as a student and published in 1606. It is designed to arouse true piety and promote inner spiritual growth. In style and content *Sacred Meditations* is similar to *True Christianity*. In the preface to the first edition Gerhard criticizes those who do not relate doctrine to the Christian life. Also he acknowledges that after Holy Scripture he is influenced by the writings of Augustine, Bernard, Anselm, Tauler and other fathers that Arndt had encouraged him to read during his student days. It consists of fifty-one devotional meditations and has passed through innumerable editions in many languages. It is an excellent volume for personal devotions.

*Sacred Meditations* present the teaching of Scripture in a devotional and edifying manner. For example Gerhard speaks of the Holy Spirit as the bond of love between the persons of the

Trinity as Augustine did and at the same time reminds us that the Spirit is the bond that unites our hearts to God.

The Holy Spirit, moreover, descended upon the apostles while they were continuing with one accord in prayer (Acts 1:14); for the Spirit of prayer is prevailed upon by prayer, and He it is who leads us to pray. And wherefore? Because He is the bond that unites our hearts to God, just as He unites the Son with the Father, and the Father with the Son; for He is the mutual essential love between the Father and the Son. This spiritual union between God and our souls follows upon faith; but faith, the gift of the Spirit, is obtained by prayer, and true prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 22:119-120; see also *Postille I*, 485)

The *Manual of Comfort* (*Enchiridion consolatorium morti ac tentationibus in agone mortis opponendum; Tröstliches Handbüchlein Johann Gerhards wider den Tod und die Anfechtungen beim Todeskampfe*) was written by Gerhard in 1611. This was a very difficult year for him because he lost his wife, his infant child and finally his own health. He suffered the burdens of Job. In the *Manual* he provides comfort for himself and for everyone that faces sickness, death, and the other burdens of life. The devotions begin with the fears or concerns of the afflicted person, and then comfort is provided.

The afflicted person says: Faith is necessary to receive the blessings of the Word and the Sacraments. To receive any gift, there must be not only a giving hand but also a receiving hand. But my faith is very weak. My heart is tossed back and forth by various temptations. It is often shaken, and I am deprived of the firmness of confidence.

The comforter says: Weak faith is still faith. Faith grasps Christ and in Christ the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life, not because it is strong but because it is faith. A strong faith grasps Christ more firmly, but a weak faith still grasps Christ for salvation. Your Savior, Jesus Christ, will not break a bruised reed nor quench a smoking flax (Is. 42:3). He graciously accepts the one weak in faith (Rom. 14:3). . . God wants to comfort us as a mother comforts her child (Is. 66:13). But a mother deals much more tenderly with a little child that cannot speak, and takes greater care with him than with a grown child. God does not cast away the one who is weak in faith but takes great pains to heal and strengthen him, as we do for one who is physically weak. (Johann Gerhard, *Manual of Comfort*, 18:34)

Another of Gerhard's devotional writings is *The Daily Exercise of Piety* (*Exercitium Pietatis; Tägliche Uebung der Gottseligkeit*) written in 1612. It is divided into the four parts of daily meditation: 1. Confession of sins; 2. Thanksgiving for the benefits of the Lord; 3. Meditation on our personal needs; 4. Meditation on the needs of our neighbor. Here he connects Song of Solomon 2:14 with the wounded side of the Lord, as did much of the Ancient Church. The dove in the cleft of the rock is the believer who finds refuge in the bloody wounds of the Savior. This connection is quite appropriate when one realizes that the Song of Solomon speaks of the relationship between Christ and His bride the church.

A refuge has been prepared for me in the satisfaction You (Christ) made for my sins. I have a refuge in Your intercession for me at the right hand of the Father. Take flight, O my soul, to the morning light, and as a dove, hide in the clefts of the rock (Sg. Sol. 2:14), that is, take refuge in the wounds of Christ your Savior! Hide in this rock until the wrath of the Lord passes by. And you will find rest in this refuge. You will find protection. You will find acquittal, Amen. (Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, [1:7] p. 31)

Gerhard's longer and later devotional book *Schola Pietatis* (1622-1623) was published as an alternative to Arndt's *True Christianity*. Arndt had been criticized for employing material from individuals such as Paracelsus and Weigel who made use of improper non-Christian elements in their mysticism. Arndt did not fall into this error, but his use of material from these individuals made his work suspect for some. In the *Schola Pietatis* Gerhard used the Bible as his main source of examples and concentrated on the means of grace as the source of the mystical union. He showed why Christians should seek piety and what constitutes new obedience. The first book is an admonition to holiness and contains incentives for piety. The second book teaches the procedure and methods of cultivating holiness. The third book describes the procedure for cultivating holiness on the basis of the first table of the Law. The fourth book discusses the Christian virtues of the fourth, fifth, and sixth commandments. The fifth book is an appendix to the explanation of the sixth commandment and the virtues of the remaining commandments. *Schola Pietatis* was reprinted several times during the seventeenth century but never became as popular as *Sacred Meditations* or *True Christianity*.

### III. Themes in the Theology of Gerhard

Gerhard maintained the preeminence of the **formal and material principles** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as do all confessional Lutherans. Our formal principle is the inspired, inerrant Holy Scriptures, the only source of faith, doctrine, and life. There had been no need for a complete statement on inspiration in the Confessions. There was agreement concerning this important truth at the time of the Reformation. But by his time Gerhard found a need for treating the subject systematically. This he did in his *Locus de Scriptura*, 1610. (*Loci Theologici*, Locus 1, Para. 305, 367; *Tractatus de Legitima Scripturae Sacrae Interpretatione*, p. 25) This inspired Word of God was for Gerhard not only the source and norm of doctrine but also the power of God unto salvation. (Romans 1:16) The Word of God in all its forms, written, oral, and visible, is a powerful means of grace. Christ is the heart and center of this divine Word. "The swaddling clothes of Christ are the Holy Scriptures which are the paper swaddling clothes in which He has wrapped Himself. For the entire Scripture advances Christ. He is the kernel of the Scripture." ([Denn die ganze Schrift gehet auf Christum, derselbige ist der Kern der Schrift.] Johann Gerhard, *Postille* I:67)

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.” (II 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; I Corinthians 12:3) The doctrine of justification, the central article of the faith, is the clear teaching of Gerhard in his *Loci Theologici*. (*Loci Theologici*, Locus 16, Para. 199, 202, 203) This is merely a short summary of these important doctrines. However the purpose of this presentation is not to expound these doctrines but rather to address a number of less familiar themes in Gerhard.

## A. Gerhard and the Care of Souls

For Gerhard dogmatics and all theology had as its primary purpose the care of souls. Every doctrine has a practical application for salvation. (*Theologia est Habitus Practicus*) In the *Loci Theologici* each locus ends with a discussion of the pastoral or practical use (*Usus Practicus*) of the particular doctrine presented. The basis for the care of souls is the incarnation and the redemptive work of Christ for our salvation. All pastoral care finds its source in the **joyful exchange** (*der fröhliche Wechsel*) as Gerhard indicates:

Christ could have assumed a human nature in a different manner, or at the very least could have been born with greater glory; however, it pleased Him so to humble Himself that He could exalt us, for by His poverty we became rich. ([2 Corinthians 8:9] Johann Gerhard, *Postille*, I, p. 57; see also *Postille*, I, pp. 101,111) Wonderful, indeed, is the exchange Thou dost make; our sins Thou takest upon Thyself, and Thy righteousness Thou dost impute to us; the death due us for our transgressions Thou dost Thyself suffer, and in turn dost bestow eternal life upon us. [*Mirabilis omnino commutatio: transfers in te peccata nostra, et donas tuam justitiam; mortem nobis debitam tibi irrogas, et donas nobis vitam.*] (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 10:55; see also *Sacred Meditations*, 8:47)

In the holy incarnation the divine Logos assumed human nature which never subsisted alone into His divine person so that the two natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided and indivisible person. He is both God and man in one person. He became poor and lowly assuming our flesh to raise us to His divine glory and eternal life in heaven. He took upon Himself our sin, our suffering, and death so that we might be as He is, sharing in His righteousness, divine life, and salvation. Gerhard writes, “The Son of God came down from heaven, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:5) God became man, that man might become a partaker of divine grace and of the divine nature.” ([II Peter 1:4] Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 14:76) This wonderful treasure accomplished for all on the cross and announced to all by His glorious resurrection is brought to us personally through the means of grace and is received by faith or trust alone in the Savior which is worked, strengthened, and preserved through those same means of grace.

This salvific work that is the heart of pastoral care, as Gerhard notes in his *Testament* of 1603, is always to be seen in a Trinitarian context. God the Father who created us when we were not and still preserves us, in love sent His Son as our Redeemer. The second person, Jesus Christ, redeemed us from sin, death, and destruction through His rose-colored blood. The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, brought the benefits of the cross to us in the means of grace and

works faith and new life in us to receive that benefit. (C.J. Böttcher, *Das Leben Dr. Johann Gerhards*, p. 23)

### Gerhard and the 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. (II 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 Gerhard, the devotional writers, and the dogmaticans is seen by some as a perversion of Lutheran doctrine and the advent of pietism but nothing could be further from the truth. Our Lutheran Confessions speak of gracious indwelling of the Trinity by faith in the elect who have been justified through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. (FC SD III, 54, *Triglotta*, p. 933-935; see also Luther, WA 28:25-32,39-41) Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608), 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.*] (Philipp Nicolai, *Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens*, p. 67)

Therefore we see that the mystical union was not an innovation of Arndt though definitely taught by him (*True Christianity* II, 6), but rather it is a scriptural doctrine embraced by all the Lutheran fathers.

The biblical doctrine of the mystical union as taught by Gerhard 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 Gerhard explicates 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.

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 entsteht 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 theilhaftig worden.*] (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla Salomonaea*; Johann Steiger, *Johann Gerhard*, p. 97)

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 Gerhard continually preserves the connection between the mystical union and the means of grace. Finally in the mysticism of Gerhard 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.

### Motifs of the Mystical Union

The mystical union is often expressed by the devotional writers and the dogmaticans with the **nuptial motif**. This is based on the second chapter of Hosea, where the Lord speaks to His Old Testament church, “I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.” (Hosea 2:21-22) 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 and bare but He clothed her with the garments of salvation and covered her with robe of righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10) He washed her stains away in Baptism, the holy laver of regeneration (Ephesians 5:26) and He continues to feed her with His own body and blood unto eternal life. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 13:71-75) “The Holy Spirit is called the pledge which God has given us (II Corinthians 1:22) or as it actually says: a dowry. As a bridegroom unites himself with his dear bride in marriage through a wedding ring, so God the Lord when He becomes engaged to us through faith (Hosea 2:20) gives us this pledge, the dowry of the Holy Spirit.” (Johann Gerhard, *Postille* I:486)

In his pastoral care Gerhard makes considerable use of the picture of the **wounded side of the Lord**. This picture was used already by Augustine and it was used throughout church history. (Augustine, *Tractate on John* 120,2; P. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII, pp. 434-435) On that first Good Friday when the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified to hasten their death, they found that Jesus was already dead. Therefore they did not break his bones. "Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water." (John 19:34) Gerhard sees this occurrence at the cross fulfilling the words of

Zechariah, the Prophet, "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son (Zechariah 12:10) . . . On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity." (Zechariah 13:1) The God-man, Jesus Christ, the Almighty Himself, was pierced on the cross for our salvation. The blood and water from His wounded side has provided that wonderful cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness of which Zechariah speaks. It can wash away each stain and mark, each spot and wrinkle. His holy precious blood is the source of redemption for the whole world. (1 John 1:7; 2:2)

That fountain of salvation, opened just moments after His death, where full redemption was accomplished, continues to flow for us today in the blood and the water: in the water of Baptism, the blood of the Lord's Supper, and in His Word which is spirit and life. Here the Lord comes to us with all His blessings as St. John indicates, "This is the one who came by water and blood – Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth." (1 John 5:6) The blood and water flowing from the Savior's side points to the two Sacraments and indicates that the blessings of the Sacraments have their source in the cross. Baptism and the other means of grace indeed flow from the cross of Christ and make present for us all the benefits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. (Johann Gerhard, *Taufe und Abendmahl*, p. 6,10)

The means of grace indeed flow from the wounded side of the Lord and are the true medicine for the cure of souls. At the same time Gerhard views the wounded side as the hiding place where the burdened sinner can find shelter and be united with the loving Savior. As St. Paul he connects the rock smitten in the wilderness with Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:4) Jesus is the Rock of Ages from whose side flows the double cure. Gerhard then adds to this picture the cleft in the rock of Song of Solomon 2:14 where one is to fly as a dove for shelter. Here our soul can fly as a dove and hide in the cleft of the rock, that is, take refuge in His wounded side until all the stormy blasts of life are over. (Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, [1:7] p. 31; see page 12 above) Gerhard writes, "I hear a voice in Canticles (2:14), which bids me, hide in the clefts of the rock. Thou art the immovable rock (1 Corinthians 10: 4), and Thy wounds its clefts; in them I will hide me against the accusations of the whole world." (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 1:15)

Finally Gerhard draws together the wounded side of the Lord and the nuptial motif. "You have a type of how the Lord Christ was to have His side opened up by a spear in Adam, who had his side opened by God, and from the rib which was taken from him was crafted a woman. Thus, as Christ fell into death's sleep on the cross, from His opened side flowed blood and water – the two Holy Sacraments – from which the Church, Christ's Bride, was built up." (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, p. 30) As Adam's bride was taken out of his side while he slept (Genesis 2:21), so the second Adam's bride, the bride of Christ, is cleansed and formed through the waters of Baptism, the blood of the Lord's Supper, and His Word which is spirit and life. This corresponds to what issued from the Savior's wounded side during His three day's sleep in death. (John 19:34) Therefore, Jesus can say of His bride, the church, as Adam said of Eve the mother of our race: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (Genesis 2:23) The church is so intimately united with Christ

through the means of grace that she is one flesh with Him. (Ephesians 5:32)

### **The Benefits of the Mystical Union**

The mystical union of Christ with the believer is an important component in Gerhard's pastoral care. At times Gerhard uses the mystical union as a warning in connection with his application of the Law. The believer should not banish the Holy Spirit from his heart and destroy the blessed union with God by unholy living:

But as the Holy Spirit united the divine and human natures in Christ by His own overshadowing power (Luke 1:35), so also by the outpouring of His gracious gifts upon us He unites us to God and God to us. As long as the Holy Spirit abides in a man, filling him with His gracious gifts, so long does that man abide in a holy union with God. And just as soon as a man through sin falls away from faith and love, and banishes the Holy Spirit from his heart, he is alienated from God, and the blessed union between God and his soul is destroyed. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 22:121)

Gerhard reminds the Christian that every soul is either a bride of Christ or the devil's whore. There is no middle ground. Either the soul clings to Christ the heavenly bridegroom in Christian service and obedience or it lives in adultery. Using the same picture language in a slightly different manner he admonishes that the one who loves sin and willingly sins against the conscience is married to the daughter of the devil and receives the devil as his father. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:129) This is a powerful warning not to turn our backs on Christ the heavenly bridegroom with whom we are united by faith.

While Gerhard at times uses the mystical union as a warning he also employs it to incite Christians to do good works. Out of thanks for all that Christ has done for us, saving us from hell's destruction, and making us the dwelling place of the blessed Trinity, we will strive to live as those who are the divine children of God. We are the temple of the living God, therefore we will desire to live as those in whom the Spirit of God resides. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 132-133)

Therefore God's Son became man so that we might partake in the divine nature through Him (II Peter 1:4) and become the children of God. (John 1:12) We were received as the sons of God, so it is only proper that we should live in divine childlike obedience. We have partaken of the divine nature so we also must lead divine lives according to the example of Enoch. (Genesis 5:22) Therefore the divine nature was personally united with the assumed human nature of Christ, so that our souls would be again united with God spiritually. But where there is such a spiritual marriage and union there is found true holiness. For where sin separates us from God and one another there such spiritual union cannot take place. ([Isaiah 59:2] Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:42)

Many seek rest for the soul in earthly riches, many seek rest for the soul in pleasure, and many seek rest in worldly honors. But each of these things is found wanting. Without Jesus, life has no meaning and purpose and our end is destruction. Without Him there will always be something

missing in our life. There will be a craving within that will not be satisfied with wealth, power, and prestige. Only Jesus can the heartfelt longing still, as St. Augustine wrote, “Our hearts are never at rest until they are at rest in You.” (*Et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.* [Augustine, *Confessions*, 1:10]) Through union and communion with Him as our Savior we have peace and purpose in this life and the blessed hope of the life to come.

The end of a human soul is God Himself, since it is created indeed in His image. It can never then be at rest and peace, except as it attains the end of its being, that is God. As the life of the body is the soul, so the life of the soul is God; as therefore that soul truly lives in which God graciously dwells, so that soul is spiritually dead in which God dwells not. But how can there be rest to a dead soul? This first death in sin necessarily involves that second death unto eternal damnation (Rev. 20:6). (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 32:183)

The primary purpose of the mystical union in all of Gerhard’s writings is to comfort Christians in the burdens of this life and to assure them of the blessed hope of everlasting life. The Christian faces many conflicts and struggles in life but because Christ dwells in him he knows that God is for him, therefore nothing can be against him.

To me You were given—shall not also all things be given to me? My nature is glorified greater in You than it was disgraced in Adam through sin. Because You assumed into the unity of Your person [Christ has two natures, divine and human, in one person] that which was only accidentally weakened by Satan, You truly are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone [Eph. 5:30]. You are my brother. What can You deny to me, to whom You are most intimately joined by the same essence of flesh and by the feeling of fraternal love? You are the Bridegroom [Mt. 22:2], who according to the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father, bound the human nature to Yourself as a bride by means of a personal covenant. With a thankful soul I proclaim and acknowledge that I too am invited to the celebration of this marriage. (Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, [2:4] pp. 41-42)

### Devotional Themes

In his devotional literature Gerhard is influenced by the Book of Psalms in Holy Scripture. Many of the psalms are written in the form of a conversation with the soul. “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits who forgives all your iniquities. . .” (Psalm 103:1-2; see also Psalm 42:6; Psalm 116:7) Gerhard often writes his devotions as a conversation between Christ and the believer or between the believer and his soul. In this literature Christ or the believer speaks to the believer’s soul concerning the comforting truths of Scripture. Here in a dialog with his soul he proclaims evangelical comfort to his wounded heart.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou still doubting the mercy of God? Remember thy Creator. Who hath created thee without any concurrence of thine own will? . . . Will not He who cared for thee before thou hadst any being care for thee now, after He hath formed thee in His own image? I am a creature of God; to my Creator then do I betake myself. What if my nature is corrupted

by the devil; and pierced and wounded by my sins, as by murderous robbers (Luke 10:30), yet my Creator still lives. He who could create me at first can now restore me. He who created me without sin, can now remove from me all the sin which has entered into me and has permeated my whole being, either through the temptation of the devil, through Adam's fault, or through my own actual transgressions. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 8:45)

An interesting aspect of Gerhard's devotional literature is his gathering of Scripture passages. At times he collects many sections of Scripture into a compact form as a special comfort for the Christian. The Scripture, to be sure, is filled with comfort but at times it is difficult for the burdened Christian to cull out the pertinent passages. Therefore, Gerhard combines consoling passages as a balm to soothe the burdened heart. In a funeral sermon he brings the mourners this special consolation:

If I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You Lord are with me. (Psalm 23:4) The Lord is my light and my salvation whom should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life whom should I fear? (Psalm 27:1) On God I will hope and I will not fear what flesh can do to me. (Psalm 56:4) Who sits under the protection of the Most High and remains under the shadow of the Almighty, he speaks to the Lord, "My confidence and my fortress, my God in whom I hope." (Psalm 91:1) Here also belongs another beautiful passage. Fear not I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine. Then when you go through the water I will be by you, so that the streams should not drown you. And when you go through the fire you should not be burned and the flames should not set you afire. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. All this St. Paul summarizes when he says "Is God for us, who may be against us?" ([Romans 8:28] Johann Gerhard, *Sämtliche Leichenpredigten*, p. 97)

The Christian is to diligently read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the life-giving Word as the ancient collect directs. He will meditate on and contemplate upon the Word; that does not mean one quick reading and then off to other things. No, he will contemplate the Word and inwardly digest it. Gerhard, in the *Schola Pietatis*, says that the Christian will ruminate on the Word or roll it over in his mind as a cow chews on its cud. You have seen a cow resting in the pasture quietly chewing away. Thus the Christian will take time to mediate and ruminate or chew on the Word. Gerhard reminds us that Isaac went into the fields in the evening of the day to pray and mediate on the truths of the Lord. (Genesis 24:63) David said that when he lay on his bed he thought about the Lord and when he arose he spoke of Him. (Psalm 63:6) All these examples are to remind a Christian that he is to study and meditate upon the Word. Gerhard maintained the truth of *Oratio, Meditatio, et Tentatio*, just as Luther did. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:291-292)

To assist one in the practice of Christian piety and sanctification Gerhard reminds the Christian that there are five means of help or support. These five are: 1) Hearing or reading the Word of God (*Verbi divine auditus sive lectio, die Anhörung oder Lesung dess Göttlichen Worts*) 2) Receiving the holy Lord's Supper (*Eucharistiae usurpatio, die Niessung dess Heiligen Abendmals*) 3) Holy meditation (*Sancta meditatio, die heilige Betrachtung*) 4) Zealous, diligent, prayer, and godly

appeal (*Seria oratio, eiveriges fleissiges Gebet und Göttliche Anruffung*) 5) The subjugation and mastery of the body (*Corporis castigatio, dess Leibes Beteubung und Zehmung*). (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:272)

Gerhard describes eight kinds of meditations in the *Schola Pietatis* that a Christian may use in his daily life. In each type of meditation he uses different organizational principles for the material. In the **first** type of meditation one is to consider the Creator and His creation. He created all things and still preserves them. He has created us, redeemed us, and sanctified us making us His dwelling place. Out of thanks for all that our Creator has done for us we will strive to practice true godliness. In the **second** type of meditation one is to center his attention on the Lord, himself, and on his neighbor. When he thinks of God he remembers all the blessings that he has received from His fatherly hand. When he thinks of himself he remembers his many sins and great need. When he thinks of his neighbor he remembers his neighbor's many needs and the prayers that he should direct to the Lord for his neighbor's good. Gerhard's **third** type of meditation centers in the two books from which we learn the knowledge of God, nature and the Scripture. The book of nature shows us that God is great and powerful who has provided a wonderful creation. However this knowledge can never save us. Only the Bible points us to our only Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. The **fourth** type of meditation considers the days of creation and what God did on each day. For example, on the fourth day God created the heavenly bodies the sun, the moon, and the stars. This reminds us that Christ is the true light of the world who has enlightened our hearts with the rays of His Gospel. He is the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings. (Malachi 4:2) In the **fifth** type Gerhard refers to a statement of one of the church fathers. He said that each day he read a book that had three pages, one red, one white, and one black. The red page points to the blood of Christ that covers our sin. The white page points to the eternal joy of the elect in heaven. The black page points to the sorrow of the damned in hell. In connection with this devotion Gerhard has one mediate on the passion and death of our Lord for our salvation. The **sixth** type of meditation may be entitled the three-things devotion. In meditation one should contemplate three things: the past, the present, and the future, and in each one of these the Christian should contemplate on three things. For example in the present one should think about the brevity of his life, the difficulty of salvation facing the constant attacks of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh (Philippians 2:12), and the small number of those that are saved. (Matthew 7:13-14) A meditation of this kind is also found in *Sacred Meditations* 28:158. The **seventh** type of meditation reminds us to consider these things above us: the eye that sees all, the ear that hears all, and the book in which all is written. Then the Christian is to remember what is in us, what is around us, and what is below us. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:294-313)

The **eighth** type of meditation is Gerhard's spiritual clockwork. Here he recommends the association of some spiritual idea with each hour of the day so that the life-giving Word will always be in our minds and on our lips. At one o'clock, the Christian should think about the one mediator between God and man. At two, he should meditate on the Son and the Holy Ghost given by the Father, the chief doctrines of the Bible, the Law and the Gospel, the two commandments which summarize the Law (Matthew 22:37-38), and on the two Sacraments. Three o'clock should call to mind the three persons of the Trinity and four o'clock the four kinds of sin. When the clock strikes five one should consider the five wounds of Christ, the five senses, and the five enemies of the Christian—the devil, sin, the world, death, and hell. At six o'clock one will consider the six days of creation, the six periods of life, and the six types of

sacrifices in the Old Testament. At the seventh hour the seventh day comes to mind. This is the day of rest which reminds of our true rest in Jesus Christ. The eighth hour points one to the eighth day on which Christ was circumcised and named Jesus, which means Savior, so that we may obtain spiritual circumcision and eternal salvation. At nine o'clock we remember that Christ died for our salvation at the ninth hour. When the clock strikes ten the Christian is pointed to the Ten Commandments which show him his sin and which he strives to follow out of thanks for salvation. At eleven o'clock the Christian remembers the eleven disciples to whom the Office of the Keys was given in John 20:23. Finally at twelve o'clock we call to mind the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple who showed forth His divine wisdom among the teachers, the twelve Apostles, the twelve sons of Jacob, and the Tree of Life bearing twelve kinds of fruit. ([Revelation 22:2], Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:314-321)

In each of these eight types of meditation earthly things are to lead the reader to spiritual truths. Earthly everyday occurrences should be continually pointing the Christian to the Scripture, the source of life and truth. Here earthly concrete realities are reminders that direct us to heavenly wisdom. In this manner these earthly things receive spiritual significance that assist in the upbuilding and nourishing of the inner man. As a wooden cross receives spiritual meaning through its association with Christ's passion that strengthens the believer, so in Gerhard's spiritual clockwork the hours of the day receive spiritual significance that strengthens us in our faith in the Savior. This is the purpose of each of these types of meditation.

## B. Gerhard and Typology

The Lutheran Church maintains that only the literal sense of Scripture is valid for the establishment of doctrine. This statement is true and correct. One cannot base doctrine on a typological interpretation of Scripture. For example, the fact that nothing should remain of the Passover lamb (the Passover meal is a type of the Holy Supper [Exodus 12:10]) should not be used as a proof passage for the consumption of the *reliquiae* in the Holy Supper. At the same time, for Gerhard this does not preclude a homiletical or a devotional use of Scripture employing allegorical, tropological, and anagogical interpretations. These uses are different applications of the one Spirit intended meaning of Scripture. Concerning this he writes:

There is only one proper and legitimate sense to each Scripture passage, a sense intended by the Holy Spirit and derived from the natural meaning of the words; and only from this one literal sense can any valid argumentation be brought forth. Allegorical, tropological, anagogical interpretations are not different meanings but different inferences drawn from the one meaning or different adaptations to the one meaning and sense that the writings express. ([Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, Locus 1, Para. 67] Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. I, p. 326)

In his *Postille* Gerhard speaks of the mystical manner or method of teaching (*modum docendi mysticum*). Here the teacher is to compare the history of the Old Testament with the New Testament so that one sees Christ and His teaching in the Old Testament and is drawn to Him. Many pictures or foreshadowings of Christ and His work are found when one reads the Old Testament in the light of the New. This is the spiritual or mystical sense of Scripture that builds up and strengthens the inner man. (Johann Gerhard, *Postille*, Vorrede, p. ix)

## The Meaning of Typology

Types are Old Testament pointers which direct one to the New Testament concrete realities. God preordained certain persons, events, and institutions in the Old Testament to prefigure corresponding persons, events, and institutions in the New. These types point to and anticipate their matching historical New Testament antitypes. The antitype is no mere repetition of the type, but is always greater than its prefigurement. This type-antitype relationship can be compared to an object reflected in a mirror. The type is the mirror image or picture of the New Testament reality. Typological exegesis then is based on the conviction that God the Father determined that certain persons and events in the history of Israel would prefigure what He would accomplish in the fullness of time in the person of His only begotten Son. On the other hand allegory gives new meaning to a particular thing in the Old or New Testament for the purpose of application and illustration. For example David's victory over Goliath typologically refers to Christ's victory over Satan while allegorically it may be understood as the victory of the spirit over the flesh within us. (Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, Locus 1, Para. 69; see also Johann Steiger, *Fünf Zentralthemen der Theologie Luthers und seiner Erben*, pp. 194ff.; Bengt Häggglund, *Die Heilige Schrift und ihre Deutung in der Theologie Johann Gerhards*, pp. 229-241)

## Typological Themes in Gerhard

**The Exodus Theme:** Gerhard compares Israel in Exodus with God's New Testament people as St. Paul does in I Corinthians 10:1-4. The people of Israel were enslaved by Pharaoh in Egypt. Like Israel in Egypt we, by nature, were hopelessly enslaved in sin. Satan, that cruel Pharaoh, so controlled us that we did his every bidding and even did it willingly. Yet Jesus, the Valiant One, came to our defense. In the battle of the ages on the cross, He suffered all that we deserved for sin so that He might crush the old evil foe, our cruel task master, and free us from his tyranny. Jesus is the true Passover Lamb who came to save all people from everlasting death with His blood. As Israel became God's people passing through the waters of the Red Sea, so we became a part of spiritual Israel, the Holy Christian Church, passing through the waters of Baptism. We are now in this present wilderness where we are tempted by the evil one as Israel of old. Yet, all the way through life's wandering, the Lord Jesus feeds us with the heavenly manna, the life-giving Word and the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood. Here He strengthens us to face all the difficulties of life until we cross the Jordan reaching the heavenly Canaan, the promised land with milk and honey blessed. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 9-10, 215-216)

**The Adam/Second Adam Theme:** The Adam/Christ Typology permeates the New Testament, but the most comprehensive summary of this typology is found in I Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. In Romans 5, St. Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ indicating that Christ is infinitely greater. The whole human race fell into sin in Adam's fall. But in the mystery of the incarnation, the second Adam came, who brought new life to man. He lived a perfect and harmonious life with God and man to restore us to the original righteousness and innocence of the creation. Then on the cross He gave His life as a ransom for all. All that the first Adam lost in the fall the Second Adam restored in Himself—and more, eternal life in heaven. After Gerhard compares the fall of Adam and the resurrection of the Lord he continues: "Through

this it is sufficiently shown that Christ's resurrection is a certain witness that everything we lost in and through Adam has been restored through Him." (Johann Gerhard, *Postille* I:341-342)

And as the first Adam was created from earth when the earth still had not been cursed, so Christ the heavenly Adam desired to assume a human nature out of such flesh and blood from which through the power of the Holy Ghost the poison of sin had been removed and which was subject no longer to the curse. (Johann Gerhard, *Postille* I:55) The first Adam had lost the treasure of heavenly goods through eating of the fruits of the forbidden tree. Therefore the second and heavenly Adam has desired to ordain the eating and drinking His body and blood through which He again obtained the lost heavenly goods. (Johann Gerhard, *Postille* I:326; see also Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 373)

As he expounds the second Adam theme, Gerhard connects the creation, John 19:34, the Sacraments, and the bride of Christ, the church. As Adam's bride was taken out of his side while he slept (Genesis 2:21), so the second Adam's bride, the bride of Christ, was taken from His side as He slept in death. (See pages 16-17 above)

**The Greater David Theme:** When the lives of David and Jesus are compared, we see many amazing similarities. They were both born in Bethlehem and originated from the stem of Jesse. (Isaiah 11) As David shepherded the flocks of his father and fought for the defense of the sheep (I Samuel 17:34-36) so Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." (John 10) David defeated the giant Goliath, freeing Israel from the bondage of the Philistines, but Jesus defeated a much greater giant, the Devil, freeing all people from the bondage of sin and death. David endured many years of humiliation treated like a common criminal by Saul, but was finally raised to the throne of all Israel. So Jesus after His Great Passion arose triumphant from the grave and was raised to the position of power and authority at the right hand of God. (Johann Gerhard, *Postille* II:32-33)

In II Samuel 15, it is recorded that David, as he was fleeing from his son Absalom, left Jerusalem, crossed over the brook of Kidron and went up the Mount of Olives with weeping and sadness. This sad departure by David was a type of the departure which the Son of David, Jesus Christ, with similar sadness and trembling, would one day take across the brook of Kidron [and] up the Mount of Olives as the time of His suffering finally arrived, His spoiled children running from Him for their lives. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 45-46)

**Other Types and Pictures:** In his passion sermons Gerhard, by his voluminous use of Old Testament prophecies and types, shows that the Old Testament is indeed the book of Christ.

Also appropriate to the historical contemplation of Christ's suffering is the diligent examination of the prophecies and types of the Old Testament which point, in general, to the history of the sufferings, or point especially to specific portions of it, and then compare them with the [passion] history. For since St. Paul testifies in 1 Cor. 15 that Christ died "according to the Scriptures," it

undeniably follows that in the Scriptures of the Old Testament there had to have been a prior proclamation of the suffering and death of Christ. St. Peter even more clearly verifies this in the first chapter of his first epistle: the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, had previously testified to the sufferings which Christ went through. Thus, in the first Gospel promise about the woman's Seed in Gen. 3, it is announced that the hellish snake would sting Him in the heel. This heel-prick is none other than the sufferings of Christ. Psalm 16 says of the Messiah: I must suffer on behalf of you. This Psalm is applied to Christ. In Acts 2 and 13 [and] in Psa. 22 are described the abusive words which the Jews poured out against Christ. Judas' betrayal is prophesied in Psa. 41 and 55, and in Psa. 69 it is announced how Christ was given to drink of gall and vinegar in His great thirst. In Isa. 50 are prophesied the beating and insulting of Christ with which He was blasphemed. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah looks at the whole passion of Christ. In Zec. 11 are mentioned the 30 pieces of silver for which Christ was sold; in Zec. 12, the opening [piercing] of His side. There are similar glorious types of the suffering of Christ in the Old Testament, as, for example, in Joseph, who was sold by his own brothers (Gen. 37); in the fetters of Samson (Jdg. 16); in the offering up of Isaac, who himself carried the wood (Gen. 22); in the previous lifting up of the serpent (Num. 21); in the Levitical sacrifices; in Jonah, who was in the belly of the whale-fish for three days and three nights (Jonah 2); in the opening of Adam's side as he slept (Gen. 2); in the Passover lamb (Exo. 12)—even as the Scriptures of the New Testament refer to certain of these same prophecies and types with clear words, [cf.] Mat. 12, John 3 and 19, Heb. 9. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 7-8)

### C. The Sermons of Gerhard

Many of the writers in the Reformation era and the Post-Reformation era produced sermon books or postils. (The word *postil* is from the Latin phrase *post illa verba textus*, "after the words of the text," a reference to the exposition of a text of Scripture just read, either the Gospel or Epistle lesson for the day.) These books were intended as a guide and an example for pastors in their preaching. They were also read publicly by pastors who did not have the proper education and ability to write an adequate sermon. Gerhard's *Postille* is a rich treasury of evangelical preaching filled with illustrations, pictures, and types.

The *Postille* is divided into three parts with an appendix. The first part includes sermons on the historic Gospels for the Sundays of Advent through Pentecost, the second part has sermons for the Trinity season, and the third part for the minor festivals of the church year. The appendix contains twenty-nine sermons on free texts. A translation of one of these sermons from the appendix based on Psalm 42:2-3 is found in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4, pp. 240-251.

In the preface of the Gerhard's *Postille* he give a review of homiletics for the reader. He lists eleven methods of teaching or preaching that the pastor may use in his presentation of the text.

The **first** method he names is the grammatical method of teaching, which involves especially plucking out the explanation of the words and the emphasis of the statements. The **second** is the logical method of teaching which concerns itself very much with the divisions and subdivisions of the text. The **third** is the rhetorical method of teaching, which is interested in the magnificent style and rhetorical figures. The **fourth** is the histrionic method of teaching, which is most interested in the action; that is, in the dialog and gestures. The **fifth** is the historical way of teaching, and this gathers histories [or episodes] of every kind. The **sixth** is the ecclesiastical method of teaching, and it provides explanations and statements of the fathers. The **seventh** is the catechetical method of teaching, and it instills, after a clear explanation of the text, useful and suitable doctrines into the audience. The **eighth** is the scholastic method of teaching, and it treats thoroughly and in detail a single doctrine according to the rules of the method. **Ninth** is the refutatory method of teaching, and it frees the text from the corruptions of the adversaries. The **tenth** method of teaching is the mystical method, which looks to the edification of the inner person and takes special pleasure in appropriate allegories. The **eleventh** is the heroic method of teaching, which mixes doctrines into the explanation; and after a long digression, as it were, from the text, it returns appropriately to it in the custom of the blessed Luther in his Church and home *postilla*. After passing judgment on each of these modes of teaching, he shows that he has united the catechetical and mystical methods in these *postilla* as most suitable for edification. (E.R.Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, pp. 380-381; see also Johann Gerhard, *Postille Vorrede*, pp. v-x)

### The Christmas Sermons of Gerhard

These sermons are valuable resources for any pastor preaching in the Christmas season. They cut through the fluff and nostalgia of the holiday season and present the real reason for the season, the incarnate God who came for our salvation. An example of this is found in the following quote in which Gerhard explains why Jesus was born at night.

Relevant here also is [the point] that Christ was born in the winter time in the darkness of night. [The choice of time] indicates that the entire world was in total darkness and that the people were at the same time in darkness and in the shadow of death; but by this birth a light arose for them from the Lord, as Isaiah testifies in ch. 9, v. 2: **The people who were wandering in darkness, see a great Light, and upon those who live in a dark land shines daylight.** Joh. 1:5 - **The Light shines in the darkness.** Before Christ becomes born within us in a spiritual manner, there is nothing but complete darkness in our reason and heart. Also, love is actually grown cold in the same [i.e., in us, our reason and heart]; but when Christ is born therein in a spiritual manner, a light goes on within [us], which simultaneously enlightens [us] to confess God and inflames [us] to love God—as is written in Eph. 5:14 - **Wake up, you who sleep; thus Christ will enlighten you.** (Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 7)

In his Christmas sermons Gerhard explicates the wonders of the incarnation for our salvation which is the main theme of the Christmas season. In addition he connects the Christmas event

to our lives as he does below in speaking of a three-fold birth of Christ. The Christian desires that Christ be born in his heart through faith so that the blessings of Christ's incarnation can be received.

To begin with, it needs to be made known that the holy Scriptures hold before us a **three-fold birth of Christ**. The first is His eternal **divine birth** from the heavenly Father. The second is the **physical birth** by which He, in the fullness of time, was born of Mary as a true Man. The third is the **spiritual birth** by which He becomes born in the hearts of the believers. The first takes place from everlasting to everlasting, it has no beginning or ending. The second occurred in the fullness of time. The third happens daily. (Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 85)

### The Passion Sermons of Gerhard

The Passion sermons of Gerhard point the Christian to the cross of Christ. When we look to the cross we first see the magnitude of our sin. Our sinful thoughts caused Him to wear the crown of thorns. Our sinful words caused the mockery and the spit in His face. Our sinful actions nailed Him to the accursed tree. We look to the cross and see the terribleness of our sins, but then we look again and see His great love that would not let us die. There He paid for all our sins in full washing them into the depths of the sea. In Him there is full forgiveness for all. In his Passion sermons Gerhard helps the believer ponder anew and meditate on all that Christ did for our salvation. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 65-66) In the quotation below the Jena Theologian touches on the motif of which he is quite fond, union with Christ and participation in the divine.

Christ is here condemned by a unanimous decision of the ecclesiastical court for confessing that He is the Son of God. Our first parents wanted to be like God. If this wrong was to be atoned for, if we were once again made to share in the true divine nature, 2 Pet. 1, and if we were again to be given the power to become the children of God, John 1, then, for that reason, the true only-begotten Son of God had to allow Himself here to be publicly condemned for confessing to be God's Son. So also the Lord publicly confesses that He thus suffers as the Christ, that is, as the truly anointed King and High Priest, and that He takes His kingdom upon His shoulder, Isa. 9. And, as the true High Priest, He intended to offer Himself up to God as a sweet fragrance. For that reason—since Christ is God's Son [and] our King and eternal High Priest—His suffering and death has such a power that it serves as payment for our sin. Thus, to that end God disposes [so directs things] that in the midst of His passion Christ publicly confesses to be God's Son and our only King. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 133-134)

### The Easter Sermons of Gerhard

The resurrection of our Lord is the high point of the Christian calendar and the church year. It declares to us that the Father has accepted His Son's sacrifice for sin and now there is complete

forgiveness for the entire world. In the introduction to one of his Easter sermons Gerhard shows that the history of Jonah foreshadowed the death and resurrection of Christ.

Just as Jonah advised that one should toss him overboard into the sea in the midst of such violent tumult [so that] the sea would become calm. . .so also Christ Himself suggested in the counsel of the Holy Trinity that He wanted to assume human nature to stand in place of the human race and become a curse and cleansing sacrifice on its behalf. He Himself wanted to slash death's throat so that the huge thunderstorm and huge swells of God's wrath might be stilled, which then actually did occur. For the divine wrath which washed over all of us was stilled by the death of Christ. And thus, one Man died for all the people so that the entire world did not perish, John 11:50. Furthermore, as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, so also Christ was stuck for three days and three nights in the mouth of death. . .But, just as Jonah did not remain in the belly of the fish, so also Christ did not remain in the grave. Rather, He ripped Himself loose from the power of death on the third day, after it became impossible that He could be held captive by him (death), as Peter says in Acts 2:24. Just as Jonah preached repentance to the people of Nineveh after he had been rescued from the belly of the fish, so also Christ let repentance and forgiveness of sins be preached by His Apostles to the entire world after His resurrection, as He Himself testifies in Lk. 24:46. (Johann Gerhard, *Eleven Easter and Pentecost Sermons*, pp. 8-9)

## D. Baptism in the Writings of Gerhard

In all of Gerhard's works one finds a high regard for the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. The means of grace bring the treasure of the cross to the individual living in the here and now and work and strengthen the faith to receive it and make it our own. The Jena Divine functions with the common definition of a Sacrament used by Lutherans. It is a sacred act instituted by God Himself in which certain visible elements are connected to the Word and through which He offers and gives the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. With this definition there are only two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Gerhard speaks of Baptism as the Sacrament of Initiation and the Lord's Supper as the Sacrament of Confirmation. ([*Derselben Sacrament sind im neuen Testament zwei von Christi unserm Heilande eingesetzt: Das erste ist das Sacrament der heiligen Tauffe / dasselbe ist Sacramentum initiationis. Das ander ist das Sacrament des heiligen Abendmals / dasselbige ist Sacramentum confirmationis.*] Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:60) Gerhard's book *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper* (1610) is an excellent overview of the scriptural and confessional doctrine of the Sacraments.

### Types and Pictures of Baptism

Gerhard refers to many types and allusions to Baptism throughout the Scripture, such as: the creation, the flood, circumcision, and the pool of Bethesda. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 17:93-97) In a number of places he makes use of the Exodus theme as a type of Baptism. II Corinthians 10 is the source of this biblical type.

For just as the Israelites were led out of the land of Egypt through the Red Sea, so also we were rescued from spiritual enslavement to the hellish “Pharaoh” through the salvation-giving water of Baptism. Conversely, just as Pharaoh and his whole horde were drowned in the Red Sea, so also the Old Adam with all his lusting and doings is drowned in holy Baptism. Subsequently, this leading out of the Red Sea is called a Baptism because the Israelites became bound to faith and obedience through this wondrous action by God and by His servant Moses. So also, in similar fashion, we became obligated to a life of service and obedience to Christ our Savior through holy Baptism. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, pp. 9-10)

### **The Baptismal Command**

The Sacraments are not human ideas or a development of the church, rather they are commanded by God. Gerhard maintains the divine institution of Baptism. This truth he teaches on the basis of Matthew 28 and other sections of Scripture.

As with all Sacraments, this Sacrament of Baptism was instituted by God Himself. For since God’s grace and heavenly goods are offered and imparted through the Sacraments, no one but God the Lord can institute Sacraments, since He alone can give power and divine accomplishments. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 21)

In a number of places the Jena Divine makes the connection between Christ’s Baptism and our Baptism.

Christ, with the touching of his most holy body in the water of holy Baptism, sanctified water for this Sacrament. He also came to Baptism as the Lamb of God on whom was laid the sins of the entire world. As our stand-in, He let Himself be washed from sin and placed into the water of holy Baptism all of His merits and righteousness so that we might thereby become clothed as with a garment of salvation. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 43)

### **The Nature of Baptism**

The external element or the matter of Baptism is natural water. This truth is confirmed by St. Paul when he speaks of Baptism as the “the washing of water by the word.” (Ephesians 5:26) Gerhard assumes that God used water in Baptism because water was used in the Old Testament Levitical cleansings and because it is one of the most common elements in the world. The water of Baptism portrays the inner cleansing of the Spirit which He performs in, with and through Baptism. As water washes the dirt from our body, so in Baptism our sins are washed away. ([Acts 22:16] Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 52-53) According to Gerhard water and only water is to be used in the Sacrament. Some have assumed that since any Christian may baptize in the case of an emergency one may also use a different element in the case of an emergency. Here Gerhard disagrees.

There is a vast difference between these two cases. For a servant who baptizes is not a vital part of Baptism; the efficient cause, especially the ministerial efficient cause, never enters the essence of that subject [*causa efficiens, præsertim ministerialis nunquam ingreditur rei essentiam*], but the water is matter and an essential part of holy Baptism. Therefore, someone other than an ordained servant of the Church may baptize in case of an emergency. However, there should not and may not be brought to Baptism a different external element than water, for one of the essential parts of Baptism would be altered in such a case. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 55)

The Lutheran Church has always maintained that one particular mode or manner of Baptism is not commanded in the Scripture in contradistinction to another. In Mark 7:4 the verb *baptizein* is used to speak of "the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches" showing that this verb simply means "to wash in any manner." Immersion is not the only proper way to baptize. Pouring and sprinkling may also be used. Gerhard makes this observation concerning John's Baptism.

John the Baptizer without a doubt also baptized that way, i.e., by pouring water over the heads of those he wanted to baptize. For since John openly baptized in the Jordan, it is not credible that he completely immersed his baptismal candidates into the water. Further, that they would be immersed in the Jordan with their clothes on seems unlikely. That the same huge horde of men and women, who without distinction came to John's Baptism, would strip down naked to be totally immersed in the Jordan is even more preposterous. It is most highly plausible, then, that they stood on the shore of the Jordan, or stepped in at the edge, and [that] John thus poured water over their heads. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 67-68)

The water in itself does not make Baptism. St. Paul calls Baptism "the washing of water by the word." (Ephesians 5:26) Baptism is not merely lowly water because it is formulated in God's Word and combined with the Word. According to Matthew 28:19, the Word which is connected to water, the baptismal formula is: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Gerhard explains the meaning of the baptismal formula in this way: "I testify herewith that through this Sacrament you [the person being baptized] are being received into God's covenant of grace; that God the Father takes you as His child; that the Son washes you from sins with His blood and clothes you with His righteousness; that the Holy Spirit regenerates and renews you to everlasting life. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 57) This indicates the close relationship between Baptism and the Holy Trinity.

### **Infant Baptism**

Gerhard faced a rejection of infant Baptism by the Anabaptists and a rejection of regenerative Baptism by all the Reformed. Remember the Reformed had made inroads in many Lutheran lands, striving for a Second Reformation as had occurred in the Palatinate. One of the signs of the Second Reformation was the removal of the exorcism in Baptism which was understood as a rejection of baptismal regeneration. Therefore the Jena Theologian is quite adamant in his defense of infant and regenerative Baptism. He promotes infant Baptism on the basis of the

“all nations” of the baptismal command in Matthew 28. “Christ even adds the word ‘all’ to indicate that no distinction as to nationality, gender, or age is to be observed in the offering of Baptism. Rather, children may and should also be baptized if the parents believe. The apostles demonstrate this in that they baptized believers along with their entire household.” (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p.127) He sees that children are included in the baptismal promise of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit found in Acts 2:38-39 and he concludes that, as children were circumcised in the Old Testament, so children should be baptized in the New Testament. (Genesis 17:7; Colossians 2:11-12)

Children are desperately in need of Baptism. Gerhard teaches that children by nature are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) and, conceived in original sin, dammed to destruction. (Psalm 51:5) Then in connection with John 3:5-6 he explicates: The children are flesh born from flesh; if they are to enter eternal life they must be born again. But there is no other means for rebirth than holy Baptism. The Word of God is also a means for rebirth, but God deals through it only with the adults, with the informed. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 128)

Finally Gerhard points out that infants and little children can believe (Psalm 8:2-3; Matthew 18:6) and that Baptism is a means that the Holy Ghost uses to work faith in the Savior in the heart.

Among other apparent grounds for denying Baptism to little children, not the least of them is that holy Baptism does not benefit little children because they do not believe. We have already given answer to this above in chapter 19, point of contention 8 – that, indeed, little children by nature do not have faith and do not bring faith to Baptism. Yet God the Lord wants to awaken the same in their hearts through the Sacrament of holy Baptism, since, along with other effects, God ignites faith in and through Baptism, as demonstrated in chapter 13, #1. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 159; see also pp. 3,137)

### **The Blessings of Baptism**

In Baptism God offers and gives full forgiveness of sins. The baptismal waters wash away all sin and iniquity. (Acts 22:16) Baptism is a means or channel through which the forgiveness of sins is brought from its source, the cross, to us living today. As all the Levitical cleansings were used for purification and the muddy bath of Naaman washed away his leprosy, so Baptism washes away the leprosy of sin. It is a wonderful cleansing that can wash away each stain and mark each spot and wrinkle. ([Ephesians 5:26-27] Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 76) In Baptism we are indeed washed in the blood of the Lamb.

For just as common, natural water usually washes the body from all uncleanness, so also the water in holy Baptism – since it is encompassed in the Word of God and the entire holy Trinity wants to work through the same – is thus a powerful means through which we are washed of all uncleanness of sins and become snow-white. Pertinent here also is that Christ’s blood not be locked out [excluded] from holy Baptism. Rather, Christ is present [in Baptism] as God and Man. He actually and certainly sprinkles and washes us with His blood as we are sprinkled with the water. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 95)

Baptism delivers from death and the devil and gives us new life as the sons of God. We were ransomed from the dominion of Satan through the blood of Christ and now we are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, partakers in the divine with an eternal destiny. Our Baptism assures us of eternal life in heaven. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:65-71) “Those who are baptized into Christ put on Christ (Galatians 3:27), and thus the saints are said to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14) The perfect righteousness of Christ is the glorious robe of the saints; let not him therefore who is clothed in this robe fear the least spot of sin.” (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 17:94) Dressed in this glorious wedding garment we are prepared to stand forever in the wedding feast of the Lamb. (Isaiah 61:10; Matthew 22:11)

As was stated above, Gerhard valiantly defended the truth that Baptism is regenerative in opposition to the Reformed. Baptism is regenerative or it gives rebirth because it works in our hearts trust in Jesus as the Savior. Discussing Titus 3:5, where Baptism is called the washing of regeneration, he makes this comment:

For since Baptism is (as previously stated) a bath of regeneration and is (as will follow later) an effectual means for the forgiveness of sin, [that is] for sonship with God and for eternal life, so also must faith be ignited and awakened through holy Baptism (understand that this refers to the hearts of those who do not stubbornly resist the working of the Holy Spirit), since the entire Scripture testifies that no one can be regenerated or receive forgiveness of sins or become a child of God or inherit eternal salvation without faith. On account of that, Baptism is not ordinary water, but the Word of God is also there, making it the means through which people are regenerated. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 76)

Gerhard sees an interesting correlation between the creation and our regeneration. “As it was at the creation, so is it at our regeneration. For as at the creation of the world, the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2), and imparted to them a vital energy, so in the water of baptism the same Holy Spirit is present to render it efficacious for our regeneration.” (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 17:93-94)

The most common picture of Baptism among Lutherans is that of rebirth or regeneration. From this the Jena Divine does not deviate. However Gerhard does not neglect other major biblical picture of Baptism, which is dying and rising with Christ. (Romans 6:3-11) In Baptism we were united with Christ's great passion. Our sinful flesh was buried with Christ in the grave and we died to sin. Then as Christ arose the third day so we arose to new life in Baptism by the power of Christ's resurrection. (Colossians 2:12) This dying and rising continues throughout the believer's life as he daily returns to his Baptism in true repentance and faith, drowning the old man and allowing the new man to come forth and arise. This daily dying and rising of Baptism will culminate in the resurrection of the body on the last day. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:71-73)

## E. The Lord's Supper in the Writings of Gerhard

In Holy Baptism we were born again as the children of God through faith in Jesus as the Savior. Now through the Holy Supper we are nurtured and strengthened for eternal life in heaven. As we were taken into God's covenant of grace through Baptism so through the Supper we are preserved in that covenant of grace unto our end. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 209)

### Types and Pictures of the Lord's Supper

Gerhard enumerates many Old Testament pictures of the Lord's Supper. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham, the father of believers, points to the meal of salvation of our great high priest Jesus Christ. Pictures of the Supper are seen in the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, the Passover lamb, the manna in the wilderness, in David's invitation to Mephibosheth to eat at his table (II Samuel 9:13), in Elijah's food (I Kings 19:6-8), in Ahasuerus's feast (Esther 1:3), and in Isaiah's burning coal. (Isaiah 6) Allusions to the Supper are found in the poor that eat and are satisfied (Psalm 22:26), in the Good Shepherd who prepares His table in the wilderness (Psalm 23; John 10), and in Psalm 111 where the Lord's wonderful works are remembered, His convent of redemption stands forever, and He gives food to those who fear Him. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 212-218; *Loci Theologici*, Locus 21, Para. 11-12, Preuss ed. 5:6-7)

### The Command and Institution of the Lord's Supper

The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:15-20, and in I Corinthians 11:23-25. Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and Man, the night before His great passion prepared this meal as His last will and testament for His followers of all times. In this Sacrament He gives us His true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine wherein He bequeaths to His church in every age all the blessings of His redemptive sacrifice on the cross. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 219; see also *Schola Pietatis*, 1:73-74)

As do all Lutherans, Gerhard confesses the real presence of Christ's body and blood in contradistinction to Rome and the Reformed. He does not teach the transubstantiation of Rome or the representation of the Reformed. Notice what Jesus said concerning the bread which He was offering His disciples: "*This is my body.*" Jesus did not say, "This is a picture of my body," nor did He say, "This only represents my body." Rather he said, "This is my body." It is the very body that was born of the Virgin and died on the cross and the very same blood that flowed from His wounded side.

Even though we indeed receive bread and wine in the holy Lord's Supper, yet it is not ordinary bread and wine. Rather, the bread that we bless (received and eaten) is the fellowship of the body of Christ; the chalice which we consecrate in the holy Lord's Supper (received and drunk) is the fellowship of the blood of Christ, I Corinthians 10:16. Therefore, no less than the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are present in the holy Lord's Supper. . . (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 258)

In this quote Gerhard uses the interesting terminology that the blessed bread “is the fellowship of the body of Christ or a partaking in the body of Christ” (*ist die Gemeinschaft des Leibes Christi*) that he draws from I Corinthians 10:16. The use of this terminology is not intended to weaken the real essential presence of Christ’s body and blood but it is used as a clear rejection of Rome’s instantaneous change of one substance into another with only the accidents remaining. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, pp. 308-309)

Gerhard assumes that the earthly elements in the Supper will be bread and wine. The chalice is to contain the “fruit of the vine” (Matthew 26:29) which is the normal biblical term for wine made from grapes. The bread in the Supper may be any bread made from grain whether leavened or unleavened. The earthly elements are bread and wine and no substitute. He argues, for example, that one is not at liberty to use dried fish in Norway for the Sacrament because bread was not available. This is contrary to God’s command and institution of the Supper. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 229)

According to Gerhard the Words of Institution should not be omitted in the Lord’s Supper celebration. It is through these words that the presence of Christ’s body and blood is effected in the Supper.

Yet it is necessary in the administration of the holy Supper that the Words of Institution be repeated. . .Accordingly, when the preacher [pastor] who administers the holy Supper speaks the Words of Institution over the bread and wine in public assembly, it is not a mere historical recitation of what Christ did. Rather, he shows thereby. . .that. . .he therewith sets aside the bread and wine that is present for this holy Sacrament, so that it no longer shall be simple [plain] bread and wine, but the means through which Christ’s body and blood are distributed. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, pp. 224-225; see also pp. 258, 301, 450)

Here Gerhard is in complete agreement with the Lutheran Confessions which declare that the Words of Institution, by virtue of Christ's original institution, cause the presence of Christ's body and blood. "For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup (wine), and the consecrated bread and cup (wine) are distributed, Christ Himself through the spoken words, is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution, through His Word, which He wishes to be there repeated." (FC SD VII, 75 [Triglotta, p. 999])

In Gerhard’s presentation of the Supper both the Augustinian Rule and the Nihil Rule are upheld. According to the Augustinian Rule the Word comes to the element and it becomes a Sacrament (*Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*). It is the Word that makes Baptism a gracious water of life and it is the Word that causes Christ’s body and blood to be present in the Supper. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 305) At the same time Gerhard agrees with the Nihil Rule our Confessions: Nothing has the character of a Sacrament apart from the divinely instituted use or action. If there is no distribution and reception there is no Sacrament. If the consecrated elements are not distributed and received there is no Sacrament, that is, no real presence. The entire sacramental action (consecration, distribution, reception) must be carried out in order to have a valid Sacrament. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, p. 357) Because sacramental union exists only in the sacramental action, the remaining species

(*reliquiae*) at the completion of the Lord's Supper celebration are outside the use and are simply bread and wine.

Gerhard has been understood as teaching that Christ's body and blood are present only at the eating not before. However, he writes, "If it is asked regarding the order of nature, we state that the presence is prior to the eating, for unless the body of Christ is present in the bread it is not able to be eaten sacramentally." (*[Si de ordine naturae quaeritur, praesentiam priorem statuimus manducatione, quia nisi corpus Christi in pane praesens adesset, non posset a nobis sacramentaliter manducari]* *Loci Theologici*, Locus 21, Para. 195, Preuss ed. 5:187; see also Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 348) As our Lutheran Confessions Gerhard does not teach that one must believe that the presence begins immediately after the Words of Institution are said or that one must believe that Christ's body and blood are present only for the reception. Rather he maintains that Christ's body and blood are present, distributed, and received in the Holy Supper.

### The Lord's Supper and John 6

John 6 has been understood by some as speaking directly to the institution of the Lord's Supper. John 6 is to be St. John's institution narrative of the Sacrament. However the eating and drinking in John 6 refer to the eating and drinking which a believer does by faith through the means of grace, receiving all the blessings of Christ's body and blood offered up for salvation. Therefore Gerhard teaches that John 6 does not specifically apply to the Lord's Supper because here the eating and drinking are figurative, while in the Words of Institution the eating and drinking are literal. The second reason that John 6 does not refer directly to the Supper is that the sermon recorded in John 6 occurred a year before the institution of the Supper. Therefore, the sermon in John 6 cannot apply to the dogma of the Sacrament. The third and most important reason Gerhard rejects this viewpoint is that the eating in John 6 always results in salvation (John 6:51), while in the Lord's Supper many eat judgment to themselves. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 340ff., 454)

At the same time, Gerhard maintains that there is a definite connection between the Words of Institution and John 6. John 6 speaks of the spiritual eating that is necessary for worthy participation in the Holy Supper. All communicants, both the worthy and unworthy, eat sacramentally with the mouth the very body and blood of Christ born of the Virgin, but only those who eat spiritually through true repentance and faith receive all the wonderful blessings offered through that body and blood. Thus, John 6 applies to worthy participation in the Sacrament, and in this sense speaks to the Holy Supper as our Confessions state. (FC SD VII, 61)

There is a great difference between natural food and this heavenly food. The other, namely, the natural food is in itself dead and receives life in men. But this food is alive and is the essence of life. Therefore it makes us alive, that is, partakers of the spiritual life that is from God: "I am the bread of life which comes from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever." ([John 6:51] Johann Gerhard, *Postille* I:326) The Israelites were fed with manna in the wilderness as with bread from heaven (Ex. 16:15); in this Holy Supper we have the true manna which came down from heaven to give life unto the world; here is that bread of heaven, that

angels' food, of which if any man eat he shall never hunger (John 6:35, 51). (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 19:104)

### **The Proper Preparation for the Lord's Supper**

In order to receive the benefits of the Holy Supper, we are to be worthy and well prepared, as Paul tells us in I Corinthians 11:27-29. To be worthy and well prepared means that we have a sincere sorrow over our sins. We will confess them, striving to do better, and earnestly long for the forgiveness of sins. At the same time this worthiness includes a confident faith in Jesus the Savior. He paid for the sins of the whole world on the cross with His body and blood, and He gives us that very body and blood in the Supper for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Certainly then a worthy preparation is needful, that we may not, unworthily eating of it, find death instead of life, and receive judgment instead of mercy. . . . When Uzziah rashly and inconsiderately drew near to the Ark of the Covenant, the Lord immediately smote him with leprosy (II Chronicles 26:16); what wonder that he who eateth of this bread and drinketh of this wine unworthily, should eat and drink to his condemnation? For here is the true ark of the covenant, of which the old was only a type. The apostle tells us in one word what constitutes true preparation; "Let a man examine himself," he says, "and so let him eat of that bread." (I Corinthians 11:28) But as every holy examination must be made according to the rule of Holy Scripture, so it is in the case of this which Paul requires. Let us consider then, first of all, our human weakness and imperfection. . . . Let us consider, in the second place, our unworthiness. . . . man is unworthy in very many and more grievous ways, for by his sins he has offended his Creator. . . . And in our preparation for this Holy Supper, let us not simply examine ourselves, but let us also consider this blessed bread, which is the communion of the body of Christ, and then will it appear to us as a true fountain of God's grace, and an inexhaustible spring of divine mercy. . . . Thus this Holy Supper will transform our souls; this most divine sacrament will make us divine men, until finally we shall enter upon the fullness of the blessedness that is to come, filled with all the fullness of God, and wholly like Him. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 20:108-111)

### **The Blessings of the Lord's Supper**

Gerhard never tires of pointing out the great blessings of the Holy Supper. This makes his study of the Supper truly devotional and a benefit for all who read it. The Lord gave His Church this Holy Supper not as a point of controversy but as a wonderful comfort for His people of all times. As Luther before him Gerhard emphasizes that the chief blessing of the Supper is the **forgiveness of sins**. He points this out in his explanation of the Words of Institution.

Accordingly, we say that by virtue of the institution, the holy Supper was established by Christ and was used by the believers chiefly to this end: that the promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins should be sealed and our faith should

thus be strengthened. Then, too, we are incorporated in Christ and are thus sustained to eternal life; in addition, subsequently, other end results and benefits of the holy Supper come to pass. Yet, both of the fruits indicated above always remain the foremost. First of all we say: Christ instituted His holy Supper (also it is used by believers for this purpose) because the promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins is sealed to the believers and thereby their faith is strengthened. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, p. 369)

Together with the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament, we receive life and salvation. Our Lord's body and blood are **true spiritual nourishment** for our faith-life. As our physical life needs food, so our spiritual life born in Baptism needs the spiritual nourishment and strengthening of the blessed Supper.

Christ's flesh is a life-producing flesh, which He has assumed into the unity of His Person through the personal union and [which He] has filled with the treasure of eternal heavenly blessings without measure. So that we, who are by nature dead in sins (Col. 2:13, Eph. 2:1), might now dip from this flowing Fountain of Life the legitimate spiritual life and be nurtured for eternal life, Christ desired to ordain His life-producing flesh to be eaten and His blood to be drunk for this very purpose in the holy Supper. (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, p. 374)

We tend to forget that **we receive the Holy Ghost in the Supper** together with the body and blood of Christ even though we know that the Spirit comes to us in all the means of grace. He comes in all His fullness with all His many gifts. Commenting on I Corinthians 12:13 where St. Paul speaks of being given one Spirit to drink, Gerhard writes, "We drink one and the same Sacrament so that we also receive one and the same Spirit; just as we receive one and the same Baptism, so that we be one body." (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 375; see also Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatas*, I:74) I Corinthians 12 has been understood in this manner by a number of other confessional Lutheran theologians. (See M. Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, p. 193; C.M. Zorn, *Die Korintherbriefe*, p. 106)

Throughout his devotional literature Gerhard is encouraging Christians to live the Christ-like life. The Lord's Supper is a source and motivation for the **sanctified life**. Since the flesh and blood of Christ are life-giving they provide the strengthening that a believer needs to live a more sanctified life. Out of thanks for all that Christ has done for us we will desire to follow His example of love and kindness. Yet as we view our lives we see failures on every side. Therefore we come to this blessed meal to be strengthened through this life-giving food. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatas*, I:79)

The Holy Supper was instituted by Christ our Lord to this end that not only should the evangelical promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins be sealed in us and our faith strengthened, but also that through it we are incorporated into Christ and are fed unto eternal life as He Himself speaks in John 6:56: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." This fruitful reception of His body and blood serves this purpose that He remains in us and we in Him and that we are made fruitful in all good works, as He says in John

15:5: "He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit. (Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, II:284)

It should be noted that as the other Lutheran fathers the Jena Divine makes considerable use of the vine and branches picture of John 15 in connection with the Supper. By receiving His body and blood we are ingrafted into Him, drawing life from Him as branches from the vine bearing abundant fruit. This picture language illustrates the union with Christ that is ours through the Sacrament and it points out that the Supper and the other means of grace are the power source of the sanctified life.

As a Christian travels in this life, he faces problems and troubles all the way. There are often difficulties in our work place, bitterness in our homes, loss of friends, sickness, and even the death of loved ones. Yet in every difficulty of life the Lord says, "Come to My table and I will give you rest." (Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, p. 471) Here He gives us **strength to face all the problems and troubles of life** and to do all things through Him.

What is so intimately joined to Him as His own body and blood? With this truly heavenly food He refreshes our souls, who are as miserable worms of the dust before Him, and makes us partakers of His own nature; why then shall we not enjoy His gracious favor? Who ever yet hated his own flesh (Eph. v. 29)? How then can the Lord hate us, to whom He giveth His body to eat and His blood to drink? How can He possibly forget those to whom He hath given the pledge of His own body? How can Satan gain the victory over us when we are strengthened and made meet for our spiritual conflicts with this bread of heaven? (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 19:105)

The Early Church fathers often spoke of the Supper as the *viaticum*, the medicine of immortality, the food preparing us for eternal life. This designation for the Holy Meal goes all the way back to Ignatius of Antioch (Ephesians 20) as Chemnitz shows.

Beautiful is that statement of Ignatius, which is found in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he calls the Eucharist *pharmakon athanasias, antidoton tou mee apothanein, alla zeen en theoo dia Iesou Christou, katharterion alexikakon*, that is, "a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils." (Martin Chemnitz, Ex. 2,234)

Gerhard is fond of medical pictures, as has already been stated. (See p. 4 above) In this fondness he follows in the tradition of Augustine. Therefore it is only natural that he would speak of the Sacrament as the medicine of immortality. "This is the only sovereign remedy for all the diseases of our souls: here is the only efficacious remedy for mortality; for what sin is so heinous but the sacred flesh of God may expiate it? What sin is so great but it may be healed by the life-giving flesh of the Christ?" (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 19:105-106; also see p. 8 above)

Probably Gerhard's most common way of expressing the blessings of the Lord's Supper is **union and communion with Christ through His body and blood.**

From now on I cannot doubt concerning the indwelling of Christ, since it is sealed for me in the imparting of His body and blood. From now on I cannot doubt concerning the assistance of the Holy Spirit, since my weakness is strengthened by such a support. I do not fear the plots of Satan, since this angelic food strengthens me to do battle. I do not fear the allurements of the flesh, since this life-giving and spiritual food strengthens me by the power of the Spirit. I eat and drink this food so that Christ may dwell in me and I in Christ. That Good Shepherd will not allow the sheep, fed by His body and blood, to be devoured by the infernal wolf. He will not allow the strength of the Spirit to be overcome by the weakness of my flesh. Praise, honor, and thanksgiving to You, O kindest Savior, forever, Amen. (Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, [2:13] p. 56)

Together with union with Christ, Gerhard's other favorite way of expressing the blessings of the Supper is to speak of it as **partaking in the divine**. This salvific theme is based on a number of passages from Scripture (II Corinthians 3:18, 8:9; Galatians 3:26,4:7; John 17:23; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2; Psalms 82:1-6; Genesis 1:26), but first and foremost on II Peter 1:4, "By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." This theme was common among the Early Church fathers and especially the Eastern fathers. Luther at times expresses the blessings of the Holy Supper in this way. "So, when we eat Christ's flesh physically and spiritually, the food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself and out of fleshly, sinful, mortal men makes spiritual, holy, living men. This we are already, though in a hidden manner in faith and hope; the fact is not yet manifest, but we shall experience it on the Last Day." (LW 37:101; also see 37:132, 134) Chemnitz likewise uses this theosis theme:

Therefore, in order that we might be able to lay hold on Christ more intimately and retain Him more firmly, not only did He Himself assume our nature but He also restored it again for us by distributing His body and blood to us in the Supper, so that by this connection with His humanity, which has been assumed from us and is again communicated back to us, He might draw us into communion and union with the deity itself. (Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, 188)

For Gerhard there is no more blessed event filled with comfort and assurance than to partake in the divine nature having union and communion with God.

There is no natural thing, speaks Tauler in his sermon on the Lord's Supper, that comes so near and so inwardly to man as eating and drinking. For this reason He established this way that He unites Himself with us in the nearest and most inward manner. It is on account of us that (He) became man (so) that we through Him would become children of God (John 1:12) and partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). But His love was still not great enough. He also wanted to become our food. Nothing is more closely related to the Lord than His assumed human nature, His flesh and blood, which He personally united to Himself; likewise nothing can be nearer to us men than what we eat and drink because this same thing penetrates us in the most inward manner (Johann Gerhard,

*Postille* I:325). Thus this Holy Supper will transform our souls; this most divine sacrament will make us divine men, until finally we shall enter upon the fulness of the blessedness that is to come, filled with all the fulness of God, and wholly like Him. (Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 20:111)

The Jena Divine continually points to the great blessings of the Sacrament for the Christian's life. With His body and blood the Savior gives and seals to us the full forgiveness of sins accomplished on the cross. Here is the Manna for the way that nourishes and strengthens us on the way through this wilderness all the way to the heavenly Canaan above. Here is union and communion with Christ a participation in the divine, a foretaste of heaven.

### **Conclusion**

Johann Gerhard was the light of Thüringen in the shadow of the Thirty Years' War. He was the leading theologian of the age. What made him truly great was that he was not only the greatest dogmatician of the time but also he was one the greatest devotional writers of the era. His *Loci* has never been surpassed in Lutheran dogmatics. In addition he wrote comforting devotional literature which nourished and strengthened his readers in the devastation and disaster of the Thirty Year's War. This literature is still relevant and edifying today as we pass through this *Jammertal* striving to reach the homeland above.

## Addendum I

## The Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy

### I. Lutheran Theology During the Seventeenth Century

- A. As the Thirty Years' War raged, Lutheranism, as well as the Reformed tradition and the Roman Catholic Church, went through a process of systematization and clarification of the doctrinal positions that each of these bodies had taken during the previous century. Therefore the seventeenth century is known as a period of confessional orthodoxy.
- B. Lutheran orthodoxy did not intend to add anything to the doctrine of Luther and the Confessions. Its purpose was to put the teaching 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 dogmaticians. In their work they used Aristotelian philosophy, as did the scholastics of the Middle Ages, to bring order to their great doctrinal system.
- C. **Aquinas and the Seventeenth Century Dogmaticians:** In 1656 John Dorsch, a Lutheran dogmatician, wrote a book in which he tried to show that Thomas Aquinas could be made to support Lutheran doctrine more than Roman Catholic doctrine. (Preus, *Post-Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 36) Aquinas' *Summa* was the model for all future dogmatics. For example, there is a close connection between the structure and form of his *Summa* and Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*.

### II. The Period of Orthodoxy 1580-1675

- A. The Golden Age of Orthodoxy 1580-1610  
Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, Nikolaus Selnecker
- B. High Orthodoxy 1610-1648  
Johann Gerhard, Leonhard Hutter, Aegidius Hunnius
- C. The Silver Age of Orthodoxy 1648-1675  
Abraham Calov, Johann Quenstedt, Johann Dannhauer
- D. **The Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy:** It is common to refer to the ages of Orthodoxy as the golden, high, and silver ages. Another way to outline Orthodoxy is to use the following framework: The first period is **Early Orthodoxy** (Frühorthodoxie) which begins at the Peace of Augsburg 1555 and continues to the time of Gerhard. Some would include him but I would not. The second period is **High Orthodoxy** (Hochorthodoxie) which begins with Gerhard and continues until the death of

Abraham Calov in 1686. The third period is the **Late Orthodoxy** (Spätorthodoxie) that begins in 1680 and continues at least until 1750. (Ernst Koch, *Ernst Salomon Cyprian*, p. 10)

- E. The Pomeranian divine David Hollaz (1648-1713) was the leading theologian of Late Orthodoxy. However three other individuals are also important in this era. They are Ernst Salomon Cyprian (1673-1745), Erdmann Neumeister (1671-1756), and Valentin Ernst Löscher. (1673-1749)

## Addendum II

**The Theological Method of the Dogmaticians**

Dogmatics was not yet a discipline of its own but was considered a part of exegesis. Its purpose was to gather the scriptural teachings concerning the main topics of Christian doctrine. This first method for dogmatics was designated the **commonplace or loci method** (*ordo locorum*) which Melancthon popularized. This method dominated Lutheran works throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This method was based on Aristotle's *Topics*.

A change took place at the turn of the century with the works of Francisco Suarez (1548-1617) and the Italian Jacopo Zabarella (1532-1589) who believed that there were two ways to present a given proposition. The first was the compositive order and the other was the resolutive order. These ideas were drawn from the works of Galen the Physician, an Aristotelian commentator.

The compositive order (*ordo compositivus*) or the **synthetic method** proceeds from cause to effect or from principles to conclusions. This method could imply that theology was a theoretical science. However Lutheranism rejected the notion that theology was a theoretical science. Here the articles of faith are dealt with according to order: God, Man, Sin, Redemption, etc. **Gerhard** used a form of this method in the period of high orthodoxy. (Appold, *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio*, p. 23)

The resolutive order (*ordo resolutivus*) or the **analytical method** begins with the goal in view and sets forth the ways to reach this goal. The analytical method seeks to treat theology inductively, proceeding from effect to cause, viewing theology in the light of its ultimate goal, man's blessedness and salvation. The analytic method was an attempt to present all theology as a unit and to show the practical application of every doctrine for salvation (*Theologia est Habitus Practicus*). In the study of every doctrine one had to answer the question how does this doctrine effect my final salvation. Therefore it was considered to be practical in contradistinction to theoretical.

This analytical method suited Lutheran theology better than Reformed theology, since Lutheranism had a soteriological emphasis which became the *finis* or end goal of Lutheran dogmatics as opposed to the theocentric viewpoint of the Reformed (Appold 29). Balthazar Mentzer first used the analytical method among Lutherans but it did not come into vogue until Calov made use of it in his *Systema*. It was the predominate method in the silver age of orthodoxy.

In the synthetic method a doctrine was treated comprehensively. Justification included all of salvation. It became very wordy. In the analytical method the doctrines were divided more and repetition was cut down. However it could turn theology into an airtight system which was based more on logic than Scripture.

The ***ordo salutis* or order of salvation** was an attempt to lay out what occurred from the call to glorification. For example Abraham Calov's *ordo salutis* consists of call, illumination, regeneration, conversion, justification, penitence, mystical union, sanctification, and glorification. (Calov, *Systema*, X) While this particular order is not the only possible order, some parts of the order cannot precede others. For example regeneration must always precede

justification. Justification must always be followed by sanctification. The *ordo salutis* first appears in the devotional works of Philipp Nicolai, Johann Arndt, and Nikolaus Hunnius' *Epitome Credendorum*. However it was popularized in Lutheran dogmatics by Abraham Calov using the analytical method.

C.F.W. Walther said he preferred the synthetic method. (A. Suelflow, *Servant of God*, 106) Walther said this because Johann Gerhard had used this method and because he felt the analytical method had caused more problems. However it appears that Johann Gerhard favored the analytical method after he had completed his *Loci Theologici*. In addition Adolph Hoenecke seem to be a proponent of the analytical method and Franz Pieper said either method could be legitimately used. (F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, p. 422)

## The Aristotelian Causation and Baptism

### The Four Aristotelian Causes

**Causa Efficiens or Effecting Cause:** The means by which it is brought – the Holy Trinity.

**Causa Formalis or Formal Cause:** Its essence or what it is – baptismal formula.

**Causa Materialis or Material Cause:** The material of which a thing is made – water.

**Causa Finalis or Final Cause:** Its end or that for the sake of which it exists (Telos) – rebirth, new life, and eternal salvation.

### Full Causation of Baptism according to Johann Baier

**Causa Efficiens Principalis** or the principle effecting cause is Christ, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Holy Trinity.

**Causa Efficiens Minus Principalis** or the minor principle effecting cause is ordinarily the ministry of the church, extraordinarily performed in the case of necessity by the laity – even a woman.

**Causa Impulsive Interna** or the internal impelling cause is the divine goodness.

**Causa Impulsive Externa** or the external impelling cause is the merits of Christ.

**Causa Materialis** or material cause is water.

**Causa Formalis** or formal cause is the words of institution.

**Subjectum** or subject of baptism is a human, whether male or female, adult or infant.

**Causa Finalis** or the final cause is a drawing near of the baptized ones to regeneration and rebirth. Ultimately the final cause is eternal salvation.

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