

# WHAT MAKES UP THE “DIFFERENT SPIRIT” OF WHICH LUTHER ACCUSED THE ZWINGLIANS?

August Pieper

## Translator's Preface

“**W**e know very well that in theology we are pygmies compared to these giants” (Pieper, *Quartalschrift*, Volume 14, Number 1, January 1917, p. 64). Professor August Pieper wrote those words in the article “*Quo propior Luthero, eo melior theologus.*” He was responding to a charge of arrogance or pride against him and his colleagues because they did not quote the church fathers more. Pieper replied that compared to men like Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, Calov, Quenstedt, and Walther, he and his colleagues were no match in the area of theology. That may be true, yet we can learn much from their writings that deal with the issues of their day, because most of these issues are still the issues of our day.

Hearing a voice from the past will help us see our own times with the clarity and freedom of historical perspective (Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics* IV, p. xii, Translator's Preface). This is one of the reasons for the current translation, making available in English another Lutheran work from a previous generation to a generation that still faces the same challenges. May this article be a way to understand our heritage better.

This is a translation of “*Worin bestand der ‘andere’ Geist, den Luther den Zwinglianern vorwarf?*” written by Professor August Pieper and printed in the *Quartalschrift*, Volume 28, Number 1, January 1931, p. 1-25. A few comments about this translation are in order. Bible quotations are taken from the NIV unless otherwise noted. *Italics* are in the original text unless otherwise noted. Additional paragraph breaks and section headings have also been added. The majority of the footnotes that have been added are to assist the reader with any possibly obscure reference made by Professor Pieper. For the most part, Pieper quoted Luther from the St. Louis edition of Luther's works. In addition to those references to the St. Louis edition, cross-references have also been added to the Weimar and to the American editions of Luther's works for the reader who wishes to study a quotation in its context.

As Professor Pieper encourages in this article, we hope that this translation spurs others to study more of our own past theologians

and their works, but also like them to go *ad fontes* and study the Scriptures even more.

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### Introduction

In the introduction to the article concerning the Marburg Colloquy,<sup>1</sup> we already alluded to the danger that threatens genuine Lutheranism in our country because of the sectarian nature around us. In that volume, our article on the “reconstruction” of that colloquy had no other goal than to offer to every one of our readers the opportunity to examine for themselves the differences between the two positions, and to examine the truths from Scripture in order to recognize which side is scriptural and which is not. Without a clear and certain knowledge of this distinction, we will not for long maintain the Lutheran gospel and the Lutheran spirit in the local churches.

### Reformed Teachings and the English Language

Since the war,<sup>2</sup> we have made giant strides into the English language and so also into English church literature. As long as we ourselves supply the latter, it will still be just as deep and thorough as the original. It would simply be the beginning of a transfer of the more or less penetrating words handed down to us in the German. One certainly may say that the knowledge of the essentials of the Lutheran gospel is still present among us. However, we still cannot maintain that is always enough for a successful defense against the Reformed viewpoints and teachings, which often confront us in English literature with their alluring appearance and very skillful, Calvin-surpassing, logical sophistries. These sophistries are very dangerous, for they seem to be close to Lutheranism in phraseology. Nevertheless they have come from the peculiar Reformed “spirit” and have permeated the basic Reformed ideas about God and objective justification, about sin and grace, about the purpose and final goal of all things.

### The Importance of the Biblical Languages and Luther

Now the thorough and comprehensive study of the Holy Scriptures (which is able to say, “So it is written,” on the basis of the grammar, the linguistic usage, and the biblical languages) can keep us from unconsciously adopting the Reformed spirit, method, theology, and church

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<sup>1</sup>*Quartalschrift*, Volume 27, Number 2 and 4, in the footnote on page 87.

<sup>2</sup>World War I.

practices when we use their exegetical and homiletical literature. We also remember what Luther said in his letter "To the Councilmen" about the necessity and value of the knowledge of the scriptural languages. He left the "simple preachers," who knew the gospel only in translation, in their positions. "But to interpret the Scriptures and to handle them independently and to contend against those who introduce errors to the Scriptures, they are not up to that task—that can't be done without the languages."—"The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; the case in which one holds this jewel; the cup in which one holds this drink; the plate on which this food lies; and as the gospel itself shows [Matthew 14:20], they are the baskets in which one puts this bread and fish and crumbs. Indeed, if we err so that we (God forbid!) allow the languages to disappear, then we will not only lose the gospel, but also will ultimately succeed in not being able to read or write Latin or German correctly."

"St. Paul wants that, in Christendom, every teaching must be judged . . . If someone should judge, then there must also be skill in the languages, otherwise it is lost . . . We should also not be led astray because some brothers boast of the Spirit and pay little attention to the Scriptures, and others, like the Waldensians,<sup>3</sup> think the languages are unnecessary . . . Moreover I certainly know that the Spirit alone does everything. Nevertheless "if I had been too far away from the bushes, [I would have never flushed out the birds]."<sup>4</sup> Then the languages would not have helped me and made me absolutely sure of the Scriptures. I also certainly would have been pious and preached in seclusion. Then I would have allowed the Catholics and the sophists to remain what they are with their entire anti-Christian regime. The devil does not pay attention to my spirit as much as my language and pen when they deal with the Scriptures. For my spirit only takes me from him, but the Holy Scriptures and languages leave him little room on earth and do harm to his kingdom."<sup>5</sup>

According to the Lutheran viewpoint, the true evangelical spirit comes only through intensive study and constant, prayerful pursuit of

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<sup>3</sup>In 1532, the Waldensians adopted the Reformed teachings of John Calvin.

<sup>4</sup>German: *Wäre ich doch allen Büschen zu ferne gewesen.* AE 45:366 translates "I would surely have never flushed a covey." This phrase refers to a hunting practice of the Middle Ages. People would walk in the forest and beat the bushes to flush out birds from their cover so that hunters could easily shoot them. If one was too far away from the bushes to flush out the birds, the hunt was unsuccessful. If Luther was too far way from the original languages of Scripture, he would not have been convinced of the Scriptures' truth.

<sup>5</sup>The full letter is "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." The above quote can be found in St. L. 10:470, 473-475; AE 45:360, 365-366 and WA 15:38, 42-43.

the Scriptures. The closest resource to it would be the study of Luther himself. Not that the Lutheran pastor, trained in the Scriptures, should accept Luther's writings uncritically like the Scriptures themselves. Luther himself has warned us about that. He only wanted his writings to be a framework for the Holy Scriptures. Luther is not flawless. But when he (as we here admit) has preached the gospel in its purity (like no other teacher of the church since the apostles) against the Catholics and has victoriously maintained the gospel against the enthusiasts, then people will surely find in his writings this real, gospel spirit, which we now call "Lutheran" after him.

Next to the Scriptures, our pastors and professors should thoroughly know and continually study the writings of Luther—if not all of them, then at least the great chief works. Luther was not merely a preacher and teacher of the positive truth. He was also an apologist and polemist against the false teachers of his time. Just as the apostles fought against the false teachers of the early days of the New Testament era, so he fought against the distortions of the gospel in the last days of the New Testament era. He proclaimed God's revealed truth with sharp opposition against the anti-Christian lies as well as against the Roman papacy and rationalism.<sup>6</sup> And these are the errors of the end times with which also the church of our time and in our land has and will have to unceasingly contend.

If we could only get all the teachers of our church to intensively study the Scriptures and Luther's chief works, then the church would prosper in this respect as far as she is to prosper. We admittedly know the obstacles: The overload of practical work with some; the inability with others; the indifference and apathy, with which we all are so strongly tempted; the way of the cross that strongly exposes us to the influence of our people and to a land full of errors. Therefore we must guard against the initial deterioration of the real Lutheran spirit not only in our church practices, but also in church government and in literature, especially in the manner and method of the more theological literature.

### **The Reformed Influence on Our Pastors**

We must confess to ourselves that we no longer have the passion of our first love. The waning of the spirit for this real Lutheranism started long ago among our teachers and hearers. Our teaching no longer captures the hearts of our students with the power of our ancestors. We are all too satisfied to pass down the gospel in the form in which it was handed down. However, over time this leads to an

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<sup>6</sup>In this sentence what seems to be an accidental duplication of words has been removed.

outward appreciation of the true Lutheran gospel but an indifference against the inner substance of the gospel. Then every kind of error which has an appearance of the gospel finds easy access to our students. There is no longer quite the same heart-felt, humble, reverent, modest spirit towards their teachers as there was towards our great ancestors.

Our young pastors are now American and have become strongly independent. In the same measure, they have learned to look down on Germanness in general and also on the standard German theology and church. They have a good measure of the unique American lack of history and even church history. For this, the true story first begins with the discovery of America or the founding of the American colonies, or even first with the founding of their own synods. "What concern is Europe, Germany to us! We are American. We live here. We are born here. We die here.—That's enough!"—Our students are also affected by this spirit. Therefore they quite easily separate themselves in this country from the German-American Lutheranism which is rather strongly ostracized because of its exclusivity. They quickly become English in their entire church life. They accept—unhistorically in this point—the forms of worship from the Calvinistic or high church sects. They base their sermons on the models of the prominent sectarian preachers. They seek to familiarize themselves with the sectarian rhetoric. They seek to adjust their attitude toward the pastoral brothers, the congregational members, and with those outside of the church to the model of the sectarian churches. They also seek to adjust the form and tone of their public meetings to the same. It would take too long to go into the actual details.

This would be not so bad in itself, if it was changing the mere outward forms. What is worse is that we have, for example, almost abandoned the old *Christenlehre*<sup>7</sup> in exchange for the American Sunday school. Of very doubtful value are the specific English-American church organizations, which advise the church in small and great matters as an especially effective means of advancing their cause. The worst of all is the dropping of the Christian day school (connected with that, the exclusive use of the entire Lutheran-Christian model) for the thoroughly destructive state school. It is indeed not coincidental that these things usually happen at the same time or follow closely one after the other. They all have the same source so that, under the sectarian and secular influence of our environment, the burning fire of

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<sup>7</sup>*Christenlehre* was a specific form of catechetical instruction. Either in connection with the Sunday worship service or on Sunday afternoon, the pastor would explain and ask questions on a portion of the Catechism. This was eventually replaced by the Sunday school as mentioned above.

the gospel and Lutheranism in its early form no longer enrapture us as it did our German-American ancestors.

We have already yielded much. We seek to live peacefully with all kinds of people and especially to enlarge the church externally. However this is the most dangerous of all: with the pressure and influence of the times, we would lose the criteria for what is real and evangelical and what is not, what is genuinely Lutheran and what is not. When every Lutheran name and glory is gone from theology and church practices, we fall into the "different" spirit, to which Luther at Marburg with great pains refused the right hand of fellowship—God be praised and thanked! If we associate with that "different" spirit, then original Lutheranism and, with that, the apostolic gospel has ended.

The spirit of the widest unionism has taken possession of the world and the church today. The world and the church are tired of the troublesome arguments over truth and falsehood, over right and wrong. The world's newspapers ring out with exhortations and arrangements for world peace (to the detriment of other people), while everyone seeks to keep the powder in his hand dry.<sup>8</sup> The churches, even the Lutheran ones, join outwardly without being inwardly united. On the contrary, unionism depends so much on one's own opinions—indeed "opinions," that's the problem.

In this way, people sell out one part of the divine truth after another. "Why is there no union with the Reformed sects? They all have the 'fundamentals' of the Christian truth." The last consequence of this philosophy is the union in the American Federation of the Churches of Christ. Modernism<sup>9</sup> is the fellowship with Catholics, lodges, Jews, Turks, and Hottentot.<sup>10</sup> Now one does not need to go this far, but, "What should stop us from having fellowship with the Reformed, who still zealously recognize the true Triune God, Christ's eternal deity, the futility of every human righteousness, Christ's vicarious redemption, *sola fide, sola gratia*, sanctification, and good works as unavoidable fruits of faith? Are the differences between Luther and Zwingli and Luther and Calvin in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, predestination, baptism, and church and world authority so great that for that reason one must rip apart and weaken the Protestant church

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<sup>8</sup>This idiom means to be ready to take action. It originates from soldiers keeping their gunpowder dry and ready to fire, because wet gunpowder will not work.

<sup>9</sup>An aspect of Modernism in religion is the attempt to unite religions with different doctrinal backgrounds.

<sup>10</sup>This last term is now considered a pejorative term for the Khoikhoi people, a native people of southwest Africa. It is probably used here as a generic term for all the non-Christian people of Africa.

in their fight against the Catholics?" These are the ideas of unionism, which daily threaten our young generation of teachers and hearers.

### Luther against the Reformed

There is only one resource against this: the apostolic spirit of Luther. With this, every part of God's Word is valued as holy, invulnerable, and untouchable. "The world counts for nothing."<sup>11</sup> It is so certain of the gospel that it would rather want to have its head cut off a thousand times than to disown the smallest part of God's Word. To those who hold this spirit, the salvation of the soul is more valuable than the friendship of the world. Their heart breaks over the lamentable demise of Zwingli and Oecolampadius.<sup>12</sup> However, this spirit firmly denies to them church fellowship on account of their different spirit. Only as long as this spirit guides the leaders of our church will it remain truly Lutheran. It can be won and preserved only when "we constantly remain"<sup>13</sup> in God's Word and Luther's writings.

Luther's words, spoken against Zwingli and Oecolampadius at Marburg, are remembered in the church like this: "You have a different spirit than we." This is clearly a convenient, popular, condensed version. It was directly prompted by Bucer's question to Luther at the end of the unsuccessful negotiations: He asked whether Luther wanted to recognize him and the Strassburgers (who still then prided themselves as Swiss) as brothers, or whether he considered them false teachers. Luther answered, "I am not your master, not your judge, not even your teacher. *Our spirit and your spirit do not agree*, but it is apparent that *we do not have one and the same spirit*. For it cannot be one and the same spirit, when one side simply believes the words of Christ and the other side *condemns*, fights against, rebukes with lies, and attacks *this same faith* with all kinds of outrageous, slanderous words. Therefore, as I have said before, we commend you to God's judgment. Teach as you want to answer before God."<sup>14</sup>

Previously, especially in his *Large Confession about the Lord's Supper*,<sup>15</sup> and also very decidedly later after Zwingli's terrible death, Luther had spoken out very severely against him. Luther agreed with him on faith, Christianity, and salvation. His earlier judgment is based on this:

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<sup>11</sup>German: *die Welt zu enge macht*.

<sup>12</sup>This event is described below.

<sup>13</sup>German: *alle Stunden warten*. Pieper is quoting a Martin Luther hymn, *Ach Gott vom Himmel, sieh darein*, verse 5 cf. TLH 260 and CW 205, but verse 5 is not included in the latter.

<sup>14</sup>AE 38:70-71; WA 30:150. Andreas Osiander has this Luther quote in his report about the Marburg Colloquy.

<sup>15</sup>St. L. 20:964; AE 37:230-231; WA 26:341-342.

that Zwingli separated the person of Christ with his “damnable alloecosis,” that he denied that God’s Son died for our us and he left a “mere man” to die for us and redeem us. In his *Brief Confession about the Sacrament* (1544), Luther brings up, among other things, the earlier slanders of Zwingli against his own teaching of the Lord’s Supper “and our dear Lord and Savior,” whom Zwingli had called “a baked God, a God made of bread, a God made of wine, a roasted God.” He also called us “flesh-eaters, blood-drinkers, cannibals, Capernaites, Thyesteans”<sup>16</sup> (although he knew well that was not what Luther taught)—“which indeed was a sure sign that there could be no good spirit in him.”<sup>17</sup>

Because in his last book, *The Exposition of the Christian Faith*, which appeared after his death, Zwingli “had still wanted to write such things after our meeting at Marburg, it is certain that he had dealt with us at Marburg with a false heart and mouth, and I had to, as I still do now, doubt about the salvation of his soul, since he has died in such a mindset.” In this book, Zwingli had also spoken as if the heathens Hercules, Theseus,<sup>18</sup> Socrates, Aristides,<sup>19</sup> Antigone,<sup>20</sup> Numa Pompilius,<sup>21</sup> the Catos,<sup>22</sup> and Scipios<sup>23</sup> had died in faith with the likes of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Peter, and Paul. Therefore Luther considered him an open heathen and concluded, “What else can such a writer, preacher, and teacher believe about the Christian faith except that it is similar to all other kinds of faith and that anyone can be saved by his own faith, even an idolater and Epicurean like Numa and Scipio?”<sup>24</sup>

For that reason Luther saw God’s judgment in the terrible death of Zwingli on October 11, 1531 in the Second Battle of Kappel and compared him with Müntzer.<sup>25</sup> (Zwingli was killed by a stone, pierced by a spear, and slain by the sword. Later his corpse was officially quar-

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<sup>16</sup>In Greek mythology, Thyestes, king of Mycenae, was served a meal of his own sons to eat. The modern phrase “Thyestean Feast” is a meal where human flesh is served.

<sup>17</sup>St. L. 20:1768; AE 37:291-292; WA 54:144-145.

<sup>18</sup>Theseus, in Greek mythology, is best known as the killer of the Minotaur and legendary founder of Athens.

<sup>19</sup>Aristides the Just (530-468 BC) was an Athenian statesman.

<sup>20</sup>Antigone was the daughter of Oedipus. Sophocles wrote a play about her attempt to get a proper burial for her brother, Polyneices, a traitor to Thebes.

<sup>21</sup>Numa Pompilius (753-673 BC) was the second king of Rome.

<sup>22</sup>Cato the Elder (234-149 BC) and Cato the Younger (95-46 BC), his great-grandson, were Roman statesmen.

<sup>23</sup>Scipio Africanus (235-183 BC), Scipio the Elder, was the Roman general and statesman who defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War. Scipio (c.183-132 BC), the grandson of the Elder, was also a Roman general and statesman.

<sup>24</sup>St. L. 20:1767; AE 38:290-291; WA 54:143-144.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas Müntzer (c. 1488-1525) was an Anabaptist who died in the Peasants’ War.

tered in Lucerne and burned. The ashes, mixed with pig ashes, were thrown into the wind.)<sup>26</sup> When Oecolampadius also died a few weeks later out of grief over Zwingli's downfall and in bitterness over the apparent failure of their work, Luther wrote, "Oecolampadius, much too weak to carry on after such an event (Zwingli's death), therefore died out of sorrow. What a heartbreak I myself had for two nights that I also could easily have died, for I had hoped for their conversion. I still must grieve for their souls most of all, because still deep in error, they perished in sin."<sup>27</sup>

The Reformed historian Hagenbach<sup>28</sup> said that, with this judgment, Luther has placed an indelible mark on his own name. That is the opinion of other United Reformed theologians like Güder and R. Stähelin.<sup>29</sup> Equally untrue and only partly factual, they misinterpret the shocking end of Zwingli as "an atonement for his impatient, individual manner and method of pursuing his clearly-held goal"—so still a judgment of God. (Herzog's *Realencyklopädie*, Vol II, p.17, 629)<sup>30</sup> Even if the Reformed can dismiss the insults both Oecolampadius and Zwingli heaped upon Luther's teaching on the Lord's Supper (they had not considered it Christ's teaching, but a blasphemous, Lutheran teaching), it would still be hard for them to consider Zwingli's faith truly Christian because of his words about salvation for any heathen. Nevertheless no one needs to adjust Luther's statement, when he himself warned (as if prophetically) Zwingli and Oecolampadius about God's judgment, which was in store for their slanders against God's truth. It is so very true that in Zwingli the words of Christ were fulfilled, "All who draw the sword will die by the sword." (Matthew 26:52) For us, the only question is: How is Zwingli's downfall connected to his "gospel" and evident of the different spirit, which Luther noticed in all of them?

### The Connection between a Person's Life and Doctrine

Historically the doctrine and life of a man is not completely separated; least of all when he considers himself a teacher of the gospel or

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<sup>26</sup>This account is related by Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church: Volume III*, chapter 5, paragraph 47.

<sup>27</sup>St. L. 20:1765-6; AE 38:289; WA 54:142-143.

<sup>28</sup>Karl Rudolf Hagenbach (1801-1874) was a professor, pastor, and historian at Basel and wrote *Geschichte der Reformation*, 1517-1555, published 1834.

<sup>29</sup>Güder wrote the entry on Zwingli in Herzog's Encyclopedia. Stähelin wrote the revised version in the second edition. Rudolf Stähelin was also a professor at Basel and wrote *Huldreich Zwingli: Sein Leben und Wirken nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Volume I published 1895, Volume II 1897.

<sup>30</sup>Pieper may be using a different edition of this encyclopedia, but the third edition (1908) in the WLS library has the entry for Zwingli in Volume 21, p. 774-815. In the third edition, Volume 2, p. 17 is "Arianism" and p. 629 "Bernard of Clairvaux."

perhaps a reformer of the church. The natural tendencies of his spirit—the shallowness or depth; bluntness or sharpness; clarity or confusion; narrow or wideness of understanding; superficiality or depth of heart; level-headedness or impulsiveness; cheerful or serious nature; fearfulness or boldness; softness or callousness; moral carelessness or seriousness; humility or vanity; ambition and lust for political power; uprightness, simplemindedness and openness or coyness and trickiness in all personal goals and endeavors—for the most part decide not only the life, works, and fate of a man, but also imprint their character on the man's idea of the gospel. However, this does not overcome what is sinful in the man's total spiritual makeup. In fact, all differences of doctrine and every dispute and division come into the church (as into the world) on account of the more-or-less vigorous, forceful, sinful characteristics of one or the other (or both) competing sides.

With this we do not intend to eliminate God's gracious and just rule over men. Ultimately, God alone does everything—except the sinfulness of men. His hand rules over creation as well as redemption, over the kingdom of nature as well as the kingdom of grace. With a mother's love he raises his tools for great and small works in the world and church. He equips people with every strength of body and soul which are necessary to do the task given to them. Through his grace and his Spirit in the gospel, the sinfulness in them never completely wins, but it is at one time more victorious, at another time less victorious. However, the measure of the Spirit is given to everyone according to God's good will.

### **Luther's Spirit Defined**

Luther's powerful natural talents are well-known to the reader of his writings, so we here omit a detailed description of Luther for convenience's sake. His talents required an extraordinary measure of a sharp mind, a deep disposition and a strong will to victoriously introduce again the genuine gospel against all the hostile powers of world at that time and to unswervingly establish it for the future. The spirit of the gospel was also in him; truly powerful, but not controlling everything in his life.

Even he did not completely grasp the sense of the Scriptures in every detail. He did not understand the gospel to its greatest depth. His line of reasoning in conflicts against the Catholics and enthusiasts is not always convincing. His zeal for the Scriptures and the gospel is not always "pure from foreign fire."<sup>31</sup> He could have been spared from

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<sup>31</sup>Perhaps an allusion to the introduction of "foreign fire" into the tabernacle by Aaron's sons (Le 10:1).

painful humiliation in the conflict with Henry VIII of England if he would not have given free rein to his natural crassness. His personal treatment of opponents (especially the Swiss) surely is not excusable, but it is in line with the rudeness of his time—there were, however, polite people even then. At that time, his actions were more harmful than useful, and that is still the case today.<sup>32</sup>

But apart from that, with his natural abilities and his spiritual gifts, Luther is very great and powerful throughout his life and work. The true evangelical Christian forgives Luther's human weaknesses and faults for this reason: He had preached to the world and future generations with such a great simplicity and deep humility, with such a fervent love, with such a firm loyalty to Christ and his Word, with such a great self-denial, and with a courageous contempt for death. For all of this was not from the old Adam, but it was from the fullness of the Holy Spirit's grace and power to which we owe the retention of the pure gospel, to which the Reformed churches owe a great measure of the correction in their flawed theology, to which also the Catholics owe so much of the external removal of their past abuses.

What made Luther a true reformer of the church and kept him from every false teaching was, first of all, his unparalleled knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; for the adult Luther, the realization of its gospel; and from the Holy Spirit, his heart's unswerving certainty in the truthfulness of his understanding about God's mystery. Second, there was his heart's humble, childlike simplicity, free from every self-ish goal and endeavor. It honored every word and smallest letter of God's revelation and, opposite to that, it "plucked out the eyes"<sup>33</sup> of the contrary, carping human reason. Third, it was his cheerful willingness (given to him by the Holy Spirit and preserved until his death) to rather give up the praise and friendship of the entire world and to die a thousand deaths than to deny even the smallest tittle of the saving truth.—That was Luther's spirit, to which we owe our pure gospel.

### **The Christian Spirit of the Reformed**

What, then, was the different spirit of Zwingli and his followers?

We have previously described the harsh judgment Luther had about Zwingli's personal Christianity before and after Marburg. At Marburg itself, where Luther spoke the words "different spirit," he considered Zwingli and his friends who were present to be Christian. When Luther called Bucer to his face a "good-for-nothing" (*Nichtnutz*)

<sup>32</sup>For example, his language against the Jews (*AE* 49:268-288) .

<sup>33</sup>German: *die Augen austach*. This appears to be an allusion to Judges 16:21, where the Philistines plucked out Samson's eyes. The same vocabulary is used there in Luther's German Bible.

person, it was said half in earnest, half as a friendly warning. Luther often had called Oecolampadius a godly man and thanked him at Marburg for his personal, friendly behavior. Generally the personal tone of the colloquy was kept within suitable, Christian limits. If there was someone who forgot the tone at times, it was Zwingli. Luther also gave him an example of Christian behavior. Indeed, he would not have negotiated with Zwingli, if he had sincerely considered him an unbeliever. However, above all, Luther's drawing up of the Marburg Articles<sup>34</sup> proves that he had gone as far as possible in the recognition of the Christian nature of Zwingli's doctrine in view of Zwingli's Marburg concessions and the promise of a future, friendly attitude towards him. Thus Luther did not deny to Zwingli the *Christian spirit*.

No, we do not want to deny the Christian spirit to Zwingli and his associates; (the more profound but also more dreadful) Calvin and his followers; or least of all the great number of Reformed believers. Throughout many of the Reformed confessional writings there is a very clear, pure, deep, and embracing knowledge of the gospel's great focal point. There is a rather godly mindset. There is a rather holy zeal for the preservation of God's Word and for the increase of Christ's kingdom, and also especially for the salvation of the individual believers and for good order in all church life. Even the heart of the strict Lutheran glows in thanks to God for all of this. Indeed, whoever believes he is firmly grounded in Lutheranism (when he reads the best Reformed literature) will have to concede that Lutheranism does not have everything, but that we can still learn much from the Reformed church.

But there is still another, non-Lutheran spirit here! Of what does that consist? It is commonly agreed that Luther had a *great* spirit; Zwingli and his associates had a much smaller spirit (not only in a purely human sense, but above all in a theological sense and in the sense of being a reformer). Calvin himself said that Zwingli was not at all comparable to Luther. Calvin, not Zwingli, has given the Reformed movement its characteristic, lasting impression in theology and church life, and its permanence. Nevertheless they were essentially of the same spirit theologically.

### **Zwingli's Background**

Zwingli was not as educated as Luther and Calvin. He did not even compare to Oecolampadius in this respect. Although he was a smart man, his short and abbreviated course of studies had not given him the basic knowledge of the Catholic system of doctrine and

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<sup>34</sup>St. L. 17:1939-1943; AE 39:85-89; WA 30:160-171.

church, scholasticism, and least of all, the Holy Scriptures and the gospel. The observations of his teacher, Wittenbach at Basel, for a necessary reconstruction of church doctrine in contrast to scholasticism had truly piqued his interest, but did not win over his heart. He was hardly out of school, and his view on life was formed from the humanistic ideas he had absorbed. After he had gotten a Masters, the twenty-two year old young man became a priest at Glarus. He rather quietly carried out his office in the Catholic sense, and he read almost nothing except the old heathens to learn from them the truth and rhetoric. He learned Greek to be able to read the New Testament only after seven years in the priesthood, and he began the study of Hebrew only after sixteen years. He dabbled in Augustine and the other prominent church fathers. He consulted Erasmus to continue his diligent study of the New Testament. He also heard Erasmus' opinion about the present abuses in the church.

That being the case, by careful comparison of church doctrine with Christ's and the apostles' teaching and because of the open moral corruption and lack of discipline (more evident among the clergy than the people), Zwingli more strongly committed himself to the idea of reforming the church, at least the church in his homeland. There were initial, still humanistic, church ideas which stirred the hearts of many learned and educated people in the larger South German and Swiss universities. However, people did not think about such things as a change to the church hierarchy and the elimination of the papacy. Through his study of the Scriptures, he took hold of the gospel and was firmly convinced of its truth. Called from Einsiedeln (where he had fought against the fraud of the pilgrimages<sup>35</sup> rather mildly, and very fiercely against Samson's selling of indulgences)<sup>36</sup> to Zurich—and with wise assessment of the situation, Zwingli initially refrained from any direct attack against the Catholics in his sermons and continued to diligently preach the positive gospel with surprising success.

If people compare the progress of the reformation in the north-western part of Switzerland with the reformation in Germany, it is astonishing how in comparison everything happened smoothly and quickly in the former. The resistance was little. There were various reasons for this. Switzerland was remote. The organization there was more open. Under the free arrangement of the Swiss Confederation and state governments, the people took more part in public life than in the German principalities and were spiritually freer. After the Swiss

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<sup>35</sup>At Einsiedeln, there is the Shrine of Our Lady of Einsiedeln, a black Mary statue, which attracts pilgrimages with its supposed healing powers.

<sup>36</sup>Bernard Samson (or Bernhardin Sanson) was a Franciscan indulgences seller, whom Zwingli first encountered in 1516 at Einsiedeln and later in 1519 at Zürich.

had been cut free from the Hapsburgs, they had cultivated a strong sense of nationalism and independence. The people (more than in Germany) also had a dislike for foreign oppression by church authorities.

Zwingli's reforms of the current situations were not entirely a result of the positive gospel that was preached. There was the unbelieving mis-administration, immorality, and tyranny of the papacy, which, after its victory over every political power, swept over the world. The papacy had provoked every spiritual and physical power in war against it. There was humanism. There was the "Hundred Grievances of the German Nation."<sup>37</sup> Read also Luther's *To the Christian Nobility* and *The Babylonian Captivity*. In Switzerland, the purely human opposition against Catholic oppression was much stronger and more outspoken than elsewhere. Every Swiss was a thorough patriot.

Zwingli had become a passionate patriot through the nightly stories from his mother about Winkelried<sup>38</sup> and William Tell and the victories at Morgarten<sup>39</sup> and Sempach over the Austrians. His restless, adventurous, and patriotic mindset had already twice driven him from the lonely homeland mountains into war as a chaplain during his time at Glarus (1512 and 1515). It was the destiny of his entire work of being a reformer and finally of his life.

The gospel is purely spiritual, divine, and heavenly. It only deals with the removal of sins in mankind, the restoration of his relationship to God, his justification, sanctification, and salvation. Moderate patriotism is a beautiful thing. Excessive patriotism is purely earthly. It overestimates the value of one's own nationalism, and elevates its people, its race, its family, and its own individuality over all other people. It is essentially political and is the impetus for all political intrigues. Zwingli's excessive patriotism made his success as a reformer easy for him with his patriotic people. However, it basically destroyed his gospel, his priestly duties, and his arrangements with the parish and established church.

In sharp contrast to Luther (in whose soul religion as a political driving force was absolutely hated) Zwingli from the beginning was always connected with politics. Certainly it was evident in the sermons and the many public disputations and meetings arranged by him as well as in pastoral care and in private discussion. It was essen-

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<sup>37</sup>During the Diet at Nürnberg in 1522 and 1523, the German princes had presented to the Catholic representatives a list of the complaints they had against the Roman Catholic church, the *Centum Gravamina*.

<sup>38</sup>Arnold von Winkelried is a legendary Swiss hero during their victory at Sempach (1386) over the Hapsburgs.

<sup>39</sup>Morgarten (1315) and Sempach were key victories in the Swiss independence from Austria.

tially the gospel which first of all won for him Zurich, the Bernese Highlands with the capital and the highland cities, but it was not the gospel alone. With Zwingli, the goal of his evangelism to Switzerland was connected to the other goal of the political union of the cantons into one united alliance like the old Swiss Confederation. With all his reforms in Zurich and the other provinces, he always depended on the political councils of the communities and cantons. He almost regularly mixed into the public meetings a discussion about the condition of the homeland and state. The church and civic groups were to him basically one and the same.

After a very hard fight against the papal party, he had won most of the people and the governments in the great majority of the German cantons. He was also valued as the great political leader of the Reformed church of the homeland—to his and their disaster. For he now plunged himself always more eagerly, indeed predominately, into politics. As the papacy tried in vain to do something spiritually against Zwingli's reformation of the church, the church organizations of Catholicism were supporting the remaining Catholic cantons for a political counter-reaction. At this point, Zwingli started that restless and hurried attempt to form political alliances. His feverish effort to join with Philip of Hesse for a Swiss "Christian Civic Union" was only a part of this effort and initiated the Marburg Colloquy.

When the gospel seemed to have failed, Zwingli now wanted to conquer the remaining five Catholic forest cantons with the sword and to force the reformation on them. After he had almost cut off their indispensable food supply, it came to war. The people of Zurich suffered a crushing defeat and Zwingli met a terrible end.

### **Mixing of Church and State** **(The First of Three Features of Zwingli's Spirit)**

Where Zwingli had carried out his reformation with the help of the small and large civil governments, he also enforced a state-church constitution for the individual congregations and the synod at large. In this constitution, the authorities drove the people to church with secular laws and also punished the violation of all church ordinances with secular punishments.—*The mixing of secular and spiritual*, of state and church is a main feature of Zwingli's spirit. It has clung to every Reformed theology, preacher, and members even to today in the sectarian churches of this country. None of their prominent theologians teach correctly about the mission of the church in this world. Calvin and Beza knew that the church is the congregation of saints on earth. In practice, they placed that aside and (just as much as the Pope) made the church a visible kingdom, which should ensure that

the kingdoms of this world, have "become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15).

In this view, not only should the church directly rule and unite the hearts through the gospel, but the state as an institution must be made Christian. With the force of the state, it must enact and effect Christian laws about keeping Sunday holy, church attendance, eating, drinking (Prohibition!), smoking, clothing, etc. It must keep the godless in line. The kingdom of God is realized in the Christian state and the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth is prepared. (Millennialism is an almost nonnegotiable idea for the Reformed.)<sup>40</sup> Likewise the state schools must be made Christian. With or without a biblical text, the "good" sectarian pastor preaches very little gospel, but more morals. His regular audience may not want to hear any "doctrinal sermons." It wants to hear about the political and social questions of the day, the improvement of the state and country organizations, and a hundred other things. And he does this, while individuals are hungry and spiritually pining for the gospel. However, instead of that there is church work, church extension, mission, and charity! For faith is not the essence of Christianity, but love, because it indeed never fails. Mary did not choose the good part with her hearing of the word, but Martha with her service. The important thing is service, service, serve Christ at the table. That is the Reformed spirit.

### **Rationalism** **(The Second of Three Features of Zwingli's Spirit)**

Another feature of Zwingli's spirit (which is very closely related with the above) is *rationalism*. It happens especially in two ways. On the one hand, it happens in the thorough and direct effort to reform practical life and morality. "Moreover, one actually does not need to be a Christian. Ultimately every reasonable heathen wants morals, and the devout Catholic is as good as the liberal humanist." The world has never been free of moral philosophers and preachers of morals—the private, religious, and political reformers of the world. Zwingli was already a highly zealous man against the immorality of the people and of the spiritual state, when he was still a faithful follower of the Catholic system at Glarus and Einsiedeln. He knew and said little about the gospel. He was especially outspoken against the political sin of "mercenary service" and the acceptance of foreign princes' pensions on the part of Swiss mercenaries. Even in the gospel, the sanctification of life was indeed its actual goal for him. Therefore he considered justification and faith really only as a means for producing the holy

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<sup>40</sup>This is not true today of most of the real "Reformed," i.e., Calvinists. Pieper is using the term "Reformed" in a broader sense which would include modern day Evangelicals.

life. Thus his sermons and writings were not full of comfort for the troubled and burdened conscience. All his teachings and struggles for the conformity of church doctrine with Scripture carry an equally legalistic tone like his warnings, punishments, and reforms.

On the other hand, the worse part of Zwingli's rationalism was that he was not able to keep his human reason in check to the clear words of Scripture and to make it properly obedient to Christ, 2 Corinthians 10[:5]. It was exactly this side of Zwingli's mindset which was daily evident in his opposition with Luther at and after Marburg about the Lord's Supper, also incidentally baptism and the Word as a means of grace. For that reason, Luther threw him and his associates finally into the same boat with Karlstadt,<sup>41</sup> Müntzer, Schwenkfeld,<sup>42</sup> and others as enthusiasts.

### Zwingli's Rationalism at Marburg and Luther's Response

Instantly at the beginning of the Marburg Colloquy, Luther pointed to the opponents' rationalism as the actual basis for their interpretation of the clear, simple words of Christ, "This is my body." "These are your fundamentals: You ultimately want to prove a body cannot be in two places. You speak about a limited body. You point to the natural reason. I do not want to hear about reason. Human evidence, geometric arguments, I entirely reject. God is more powerful than all our thoughts. He is above all mathematics. One must yield to God's Word. The words of God are marvelous to honor and to do. Moreover God commands: Take, eat, this is my body! I also ask for sound proof from Scripture (to not take Christ's words literally, but to take it in another way than they read, and that his body and blood are not actually in the Lord's Supper essentially)."<sup>43</sup>

Now this is the line of argument Zwingli used: It is entirely impossible for Christ's body to actually really be present in the Lord's Supper, because Christ's body as a true, human body takes up space, it can only be in *one* place and not many places at the same time. Christ's body was still physically sitting before the disciples during the institution of the Lord's Supper, but after his Ascension, it sits locally in heaven. It cannot really be everywhere like his divine nature. The assertion of the

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<sup>41</sup>Andreas Karlstadt, or Carlstadt, (1481-1541) was an early reformer at Wittenberg with Luther. He tried to enact the Reformation at Wittenberg without first educating the laity. He differed with Luther on the means of grace, free will, and the bondage of the will.

<sup>42</sup>Caspar Schwenkfeld, or Kaspar Schwenckfeld, (c.1490-1561) was part of the so-called spiritualists of the 16th century. His teachings are condemned by Article XII of the Formula of Concord. (Trig. p.1101, KW p. 658)

<sup>43</sup>This appears to be a paraphrase, cf. AE 38:16, 45, 67, 75; WA 30:112, 130-131, 147, 153.

omnipresence of Christ's body by virtue of his exaltation removes the essence of the human nature.<sup>44</sup> Therefore it is impossible to believe in the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It is impossible that Christ commands us to really eat his flesh. One must compare the scriptural passages with one another: Scripture often uses the word "is" figuratively. John 6, which discusses the eating of Christ's body, proves that the actual eating of his body is nothing useful. "If we have this spiritual eating, what need is there of the physical eating? The eating of the flesh is nothing useful, but the eating of the spirit is useful. Thus we must watch for what is useful and pay attention to God's will. Luther speaks about the external Word not the inner Word. The essence of the Word brings us something that the external Word only wants to hint for us: the will of the Father. Christ said in John 12:8: 'I will not be visible with you,' so he also is not bodily in the Lord's Supper. Christ taught in John 3 [:3], 'No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.' Moreover that proves this point: The physical eating of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper is not necessary and useful. We can neither grasp nor believe that the body of Christ is present. God gives us nothing impossible to believe."<sup>45</sup>

On the other hand, Luther simply and in a childlike way remained firmly with the clear words of Christ. He wrote them on the table and always again pointed to them as compelling. He showed the opponents' arguments as simply conclusions of reason. He disproved their proof taken from supposed figurative passages of Scripture, especially their use of John 6, which does not discuss the eating of the Lord's Supper, but the spiritual eating of Christ through faith. He finally said to them as they stubbornly insisted on their arguments from reason: "You have a different spirit than we."

Now people would have thought that the disputing sides would have left divided from one another. But the opposite happened. The Zwinglians earnestly insisted on a common, unconditional subscription to the fifteen Marburg Articles written by Luther, where they very much conceded to Luther's teaching in every point. However in the third, fourth, sixth, ninth, and implicitly also in the thirteenth and fifteenth article, they rejected the Zwinglian teaching. In anticipation of those articles, Luther had said, "They will not accept this."—They nevertheless accepted it at the end of the actual negotiations.—"To the surprise of the Lutherans about the inconsistency of these people" (Brenz), they had in an extraordinary way sought for brotherhood and fellowship with the Lutherans. We know why from the previously

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<sup>44</sup>This is a strawman argument by Zwingli since the Lutheran defense of the sacramental presence is related to the personal union in Christ, not to the exaltation.

<sup>45</sup>This appears to be a paraphrase, cf. AE 38:23, 80; WA 30:120, 157.

stated reasons. It would have strengthened their political power against their Catholic-Swiss opposition.—That introduces us to a new feature of that "different spirit," which is a legitimate fruit of its rationalistic essence, *unionism*.

### **Unionism** **(The Third of Three Features of Zwingli's Spirit)**

The rationalistic spirit has led Reformed theology into much enthusiasm. Luther counted his Zwinglian opponents with the worst "enthusiasts" as "one cake." He understood enthusiasm as nothing other than the abandoning of the written word and a seeking after the divine truth in the air, i.e., in one's own spirit. For him the only difference between the moderate and the extreme enthusiasts was that the latter rave in human imagination and the former rave in "sound" human understanding. The similarity between them was the departure from the Scriptures and the deriving of doctrine from human ideas. "They are spirits, so they boast to have the Spirit without and before the Word. Therefore they judge, interpret, and stretch the Scriptures or oral word to their liking . . . as if the Spirit cannot come through the Scriptures or oral Word, but he must come through their writings and word."

This enthusiastic spirit has split the Reformed church into a hundred or more sects in one way or another named according to their unique, particular teachings. Even where it has kept the original name, in different countries it has always created a new confession differing in this or that point from all the others. There is no end to their establishment of sects. Nearly everything which we see about the sects around us is ninety percent Reformed.

However, at the same time the unionistic spirit runs in the blood of every Reformed sect. The Prussian Union was and became a work of the Reformed in the Prussian palace of the king. "The Lutherans should finally come to their senses and respect the Reformed as brothers." The community services in our smaller towns always originate from this or that local Reformed sect. The rationalistic and unionistic sectarian spirit has created the great union of Reformed sects in the modern American Federation of the Churches of Jesus Christ. The strength of the church lies in the exterior union. It does not get to the unity in the full truth of the gospel. Every side may keep their own particular teaching as their own opinion. We all can see how strongly the unionistic spirit has taken hold of the majority of the American, English, Scandinavian, and also lately some of the mostly German Lutheran churches. Rationalism always produces unionism. As a faith of reason, it does not know the truth from God's Word. Like Zwingli, it always has in view the next human, practical, earthly goal. For that

reason it puts aside the clear Word of God. Everyone freely has the right to his own opinion.

“Finally, what is wrong with such a little difference in the doctrine of conversion; election; the Lord’s Supper, baptism, and the Word; Christ’s person and work; the Trinity or the Persons of God—if we still agree that Jesus is somehow the salvation of humanity and the most important thing is a moral life and godly mind?” “We all believe in a God; Christian, Jew, Turk, and Hottentots.”—“The important thing is to be better.”—That is the last consequence of the subtleties of reason in God’s Word.

### **The Proper Attitude towards Scripture**

On the other hand, what a priceless attribute it is for a heart to be completely obedient to the Word of God in childlike simplicity and to silence its reason. The gospel in all its absolute truth is an offense to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks—from theology to eschatology. Whoever forfeits one thing that is contrary to their reason must consequently forfeit everything. The only particular, reasonable “religion” is agnosticism, which with Pilate despairs of every knowledge of the unseen. And the only particular, reasonable outlook on life is that of the pessimist, who through the fear of death is condemned to be a servant his whole life, and curses God and the gospel, Christ and the gospel from the bottom of his heart. The natural man simply understands nothing about spiritual things. He cannot recognize them. It requires a spiritual understanding.

Therefore God does not want our arrogant reason as judge over his revealed Word. We should hear, understand, believe, and do it, but not test and pass judgment on his rationality or on the possibility of this or that statement of his. The Lutheran church has determined that the exegetical and dogmatic canon is to be taken from the Word of God itself. Human reason must merely be the ὄργανον ληπτικόν to the Word of God and is never allowed to become the ὄργανον κριτικόν so that every understanding of the gospel should not be confused and ultimately destroyed. Every practical deviation from this rule immediately produces false doctrine and splits the congregation of saints into ever-new groups. Indeed it ultimately leads to sheer unbelief.

Reason can and must be the receiving organ, because God has placed his secrets into human words, into our speech, into its grammar and rhetoric. God speaks about his matters exactly in the same way as we speak about our matters and not one bit differently. Therefore every exegesis is bound with iron chains to the human grammar and rhetoric of Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Matthew, John, Paul, and Peter. We can understand it because it is essentially our own, nor-

mal, human grammar and rhetoric. Every deviation from it is misleading—as Luther says—“God does not wish to deal with us human beings except through his external Word and Sacrament; however, everything that boasts of being from the Spirit apart from such Word and Sacrament is of the devil.”<sup>46</sup> Natural human language is the bridge built by God himself from spirit to nature. Surely then “the art of language” (human language in general, the language of Scripture in particular) has a role in understanding the Scriptures accurately, thoroughly and completely.

However, concerning *what* the Scriptures say, whether it is historical, dogmatic, authoritative, or another type, whether it is true or untrue, right or wrong, possible or impossible, it is not our place to judge. It is the Lord’s, who through the Holy Spirit has told, taught, and commanded us to hear, to believe, and to do these things. If our reason finds in Scripture contradictions, divergences, or inconsistencies between individual passages—look at it once more and a hundred times more; and if you then cannot resolve it, let it be. Write all of them in one long list, add them up, and believe all of them. Beware of the person who harmonizes and divides one passage through another passage, for that is the devil. He wants to make you through your overly-wise reason judge over God and lead you to unbelief. “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening!” (1 Samuel 3:10)

All of this does not mean that we are able to understand the Scriptures and the secret of God by the mere grammar without the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures indeed want to be understood spiritually. However the Holy Spirit teaches, enlightens, converts, and sanctifies only through the grammar. Our spiritual knowledge does not deviate one bit from that grammar. A person’s own experience, history, and all human knowledge, however true it may be, can only confirm it after the fact.

### Summary of Zwingli’s Spirit

Indeed, for a correct understanding of the gospel, above all one must have a humble, childlike simple, sanctified heart; a heart like Samuel’s and Mary’s heart that comes to rest in grace. That was Luther’s great gift, which was sorely missing from the unfortunate Zwingli and also the greater Calvin. Zwingli was a strong, vain, ambitious, conceited, stubborn, and thus an unprepared, changing, restless and vehement character. He started much, but he finished little. He wanted to learn nothing from Luther. He wanted to independently understand the gospel, which was nevertheless negated by his own

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<sup>46</sup>SA III, 8, 10 and also MA 8, cf. Trig p. 497, KW p. 323. My own translation of the German.

earlier confession to Luther. He always again looked for his success as much as possible through big, public disputations, meetings, and demonstrations. He was known as an unbeatable master of debate. When his presentation did not work, he grabbed on to political resources. With unshakable stubbornness and against all opposition, he forced his legalistic church laws on the cantons that were conquered with much difficulty. Throughout his polemical writings against Luther (partly printed in Volume XX of the St. Louis edition of Luther's works [p. 440-1609]) he assumes the tone of the superior master. In contrast to Oecolampadius, this side of Zwingli could not be hidden even at Marburg. Without any basis Zwingli attacked Luther's doctrine without restraint. Whereas it was with actual cause that Luther with crass words ascribed Zwingli's errors and activities to the devil. (That was not the mindset which completely gives room to the Holy Spirit.)

### Summary of Luther's Spirit

What a contrast is the spirit of Luther compared to this spirit of Zwingli! Having been thoroughly pulverized by God in his own mindset; submitting himself with a humble, simple childlike spirit to the clear words of Scripture, he honored the Word of God as he demanded his opponents at Marburg to do. The Word was enough for him. It gave him a restful conscience towards God and the peace which is higher than all reason. It also gave him in the fight against the pope and enthusiasts that clarity, staunchness, and spiritual strength by which he victoriously defeated everything that was raised against his gospel. Therefore he became the true reformer of the church, the one great herald of the pure gospel for the end times of the world (Matthew 11:25; 18:3).

Only a person with such knowledge of the gospel and with such a fullness of the spirit like Luther's can write the words which he wrote in *To the Accusation in the King of England's Slandorous Writings*, where the king had implied that Luther had retracted his doctrine. To answer the king, Luther threw the king's writing in his teeth:<sup>47</sup>

For as surely as God lives, whatever king or prince would think that Luther would submit himself to the king's claim that Luther regrets his doctrine and seeks pardon has incorrectly learned it; that king is very much deceived and makes for himself a golden dream, where he will find nothing but dirt as soon as he awakes. For me, no one is as great as half of that doctrine. I consider him a water blister and still less, because nothing else will come out. . . .

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<sup>47</sup>"Throw in the teeth" is an idiom meaning to reproach someone for an action, e.g., history will throw his blunder in his teeth.

My doctrine is the most important part. I trust in it not only against princes and kings but also against all devils. I truly have nothing else which sustains, strengthens, and makes my heart joyous and comforted ever longer, ever more. That other part, my life and personal existence, I certainly know that it is sinful and of no comfort. I am a poor sinner and let my enemies be conceited saints and angels. Good for them if they can maintain it. I do not want to be a saint or angel in the eyes of the world and non-Christians, but in the eyes of God and his dear Christians. Before the world, I also want to be godly, and be it so very much so that they would not be worthy to untie my shoelace, they should not teach (demonstrate) to me the truth, because before the world, I live or act better than nearly anyone as I certainly want to teach them. . . .

The scorn and rage of my enemies are my joy and delight; the stubborn opposition which they aim at me or turn against me! . . . Indeed, if my doctrine would have no other enemies, then long ago I would have wanted to suggest a Lord's Prayer for the king of England, Duke George, the Pope and their associates—poor water blisters— . . . However, first and foremost the fanatics and enthusiasts are the ones to whom I owe the most, my tender children, my little brothers, my golden little friends . . . who ransack me, a poor, agonized man from behind and attack me more atrociously than the Catholics do . . . Up to now, I have seen almost all kinds of attacks and have endured, but my Absalom, my dear child, has not yet driven out and dishonored his father, David; my Judas, who chased away the disciples of Christ and betrayed his Lord, he has not yet done the same to me. That is also now in progress. God be praised and may he show mercy. . . .

Well then, since you are together and belong together in one heap—devils, papists, and enthusiasts—you vigorously are all together against Luther, you Catholics from the front, you enthusiasts from behind, you devils from all around! You pursue, hunt, and chase the comforted, you have the right wild animals before you. When Luther lies down, then you will recover and would have won. I still see clearly that everything is lost: no scolding, no teaching, no warning, no threatening, no promising, no urging, no pleading, no patience, no humility, no pretending, no enticing helps. However I tried, no matter what I changed, whichever way I turned, it had no effect on them.

*Well then, the comfort in God's name still has value!* He who desists from something is sorry for it; he who flees is afraid.<sup>48</sup> My

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<sup>48</sup>(Pieper's footnote) These words explain the following situation: Henry VIII had read Luther's book *The Babylonian Captivity* with a Catholic mindset and allowed an opposing book filled with personal attacks be written and put his name to it. Therefore Luther published his masterful, but king-mocking and very crass book *Answer to the Book from the King of England*. Henry VIII, who had received the title "Defender of the Faith" from the Pope on account of his book, became angry. Especially among the courts

Sustainer is strong and certainly sufficient for me, that I know. Even though the entire world hung onto me and then again fell off, that is just the same to me. I think, 'It did not previously hang onto me, when I was alone.' He who doesn't want to stay, let him go. He who does not remain, let him be gone. "Who holds to whom here?"—the rust said to the neck-irons.<sup>49</sup> I can so much more joyously live and die, because I live and die with such a conscience that I have indeed diligently served the world to the best of my ability and have revealed the Holy Scriptures and God's Word also as it has not been seen in a thousand years. I have done my own deed. May your blood be on your own head and not in my hands!—Moreover I ask for God's sake for one particular goal: If it is possible for you, then do not be disturbed by Luther. It is truly not Luther whom you hunt. You should and must and will let Luther's doctrine remain and endure, even if there would be ten worlds one after the other for you. My life is soon wiped out, but my doctrine will wipe you out and devour you up. . . . May God strengthen and guard us in his grace! Amen.<sup>50</sup>

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of Germany, he made such an uproar about Luther's book, in which his royal reputation had beaten into the ground, so that the Elector saw it necessary for Luther to apologize to the king on account of the slurs in Luther's *Answer*. Luther did that in a very humble, open letter. As much as possible, Henry VIII circulated Luther's apology together with a open letter. In the letter, in his tirades against Luther, he insinuated and indirectly suggested that Luther had recanted his doctrine. Luther's enemies in Meissen published Henry's answer under another title, which implied Luther retracted his doctrine. At this time, all of the enemies rejoiced, not only the Catholics, but also the Sacramentarians, and the princes and nobles who remained Catholic. The princes who had become Lutheran, the Elector himself and many important followers of Luther, even the theologians (even Melanchthon and the other Wittenberg theologians) were ashamed of him and secretly said that Luther's crassness and recklessness threatened to ruin his entire work. Some were ready to repudiate him. Others were full of anxiety and fear. Therefore Luther wrote his reply *To the Accusation in the King of England's Slandorous Writing*, from which we here quote. All these writings are in Volume XIX of the St. Louis edition of Luther's works.

<sup>49</sup>German: *Wer hält hier den andern?*—*sprach Rost am Halseisen*. Rost may be "rust," or a "fire grate." It is unclear what Luther is referring to here, but it appears to be a German proverb of which Luther is quoting only a part. It is as if an English speaker said, "A stitch in time," and expected the hearers to know the rest. The only other reference for this which we found is Mathesius, Sarepta, 130a: "*wer helt hier einander,*" *sagt rost am halszeisen*. In the context, Luther is saying to the world, Henry, or anybody, if they leave him, let them leave. It's as insignificant as rust falling off iron. That's why Luther says "Who holds whom here?" Does the rust hold the neck-irons or the other way around? Does the world hold Luther? Does Henry restrain Luther? No! Though Henry was a great king called "Defender of the Faith" by the pope and Luther was a poor monk standing on God's Word, it would soon enough be clear who was rust and who was iron.

<sup>50</sup>For a summary of the controversy between Henry VIII and Luther, cf. LW St. Louis Vol XIX introduction p.1-9. For all the actual publications, cf. St. L. Vol 19:5-423. For the work cited here, cf. St. L. 19:413-423 and WA 23:28-37

### Conclusion

That the Lutheran church of our old homeland has allowed this spirit of their founder to depart and has fallen into the materialistic, rationalistic, and unionistic spirit of the Reformed, that has become their downfall. Now in the same spirit, they seek their well-being with people of the same spirit in foreign countries. That means their destruction. The same fate is threatening us in America when we do not guard this spirit of Luther with fear and trembling. The beginnings of compromise are there. Resist the beginnings!<sup>51</sup> Return to Luther! Into his writings, you young preachers and professors! Return and remain in the house of the German Bible, in the Hebrew and Greek original text! Remain constantly in God's Word! "Lazy hands must have a bad year."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Latin: *Principiis obsta!* This Latin proverb is originally found in Ovid's poem *Remedia Amoris*.

<sup>52</sup>German: *Faule Hände müssen ein böses Jahr haben.*