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MARTIN LUTHER

Theodor Dieter

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a Christian theologian through and through. For Luther, this meant focusing all theological work on God's revelation in Jesus Christ: "in the crucified Christ there is true theology and knowledge of God" (WA 1: 362,18–19; LW 31: 53).¹ Thus one cannot expect to find in his work a philosophy of religion in a narrow sense, a general theory of God or a concept of religious consciousness that does not explicitly refer to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. However, one will encounter in Luther's thought a highly elaborate and sophisticated self-interpretation of Christian faith that demonstrates a number of both creative and conflictive interactions between theology and philosophy. This study will focus primarily on this interface.

According to Luther's understanding, the essence of theology is interpretation of the Bible. In Luther's time, this book was viewed as the singular authoritative horizon for the construction of human self-understanding. Thus Luther's fresh interpretation of crucial aspects of Holy Scripture deeply changed the self-interpretation of many of his contemporaries, and, what is more, made world history. The Lutheran reformation originated in the university, and therefore Luther's theology developed through critical engagement with a variety of traditions: scholastic (especially Ockhamist), mystical, humanist and Augustinian. The university was the institutional setting within which theology, understood as a rational account of the Christian faith, interacted with the findings and claims of philosophy. Nevertheless, Luther had become convinced that the comprehensive reception of philosophical thoughts in theology during the Middle Ages made it difficult for Christian theologians adequately to present the truth expressed in the biblical texts. Aristotle was the main target of his criticism, but in his critical comments on 'Aristotle' or 'reason,'

1. The following abbreviations are used for Luther's works: WA, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Luther 1883–2005), cited by volume, page and line numbers; LW, *Luther's Works*, American Edition (Luther 1955–86), cited by volume and page numbers.

Luther had a number of different things in mind: (i) philosophical propositions and concepts that one can find in Aristotle's writings; (ii) medieval interpretations of Aristotelian texts; (iii) theological doctrines that assimilated Aristotelian propositions and concepts; and (iv) institutional 'Aristotelianism' – the organization of academic education and learning in late medieval times. These four meanings of 'Aristotle' must be carefully distinguished (Dieter 2001). This chapter intends to show, first, some aspects of Luther's approach to the doctrines of God and humanity and to the complex cluster of problems associated with God's relation to human beings, and, secondly, Luther's evaluation of the conflicts between theology and philosophy and his theological deployment of philosophical insights and methods in theology (White 1994).

A COMMON CONCEPT OF GOD

According to Luther, all human beings have knowledge of the existence and nature of God. This is evident, he argues, in the normal human response to situations of emergency: namely, the turning to God for help. This shows that, in common human experience, God is considered to be a being from whom persons can expect help or from whom they might hope to receive good things. Nevertheless, people are quite uncertain *who* this being is and *how* they can gain access to him. In his *Large Catechism*, Luther states: "A 'god' is the term for that to which we are to look for all good and in which we are to find refuge in all need. Therefore, to have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe in that one with your whole heart ... For these two belong together, faith and God" (Kolb & Wengert 2000: 386).

This understanding has far-reaching consequences. According to Luther, the basic religious relation to God is trusting, rather than thinking or willing (acting), though trusting of course involves cognition and leads to willing and acting. Thus Luther is not very interested in arguments for the existence of God. This also means that Luther does not deal only with *God in himself*, but rather always considers the *relation* both of God to human beings and of human beings to God:

Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God. (*Ibid.*)

It is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust are right, then your God is the true one. Conversely, where your trust is false and wrong, there you do not have the true God. (*Ibid.*)

Whether a trust is right or false depends on whether the 'object' of this trust is the true God. But the fact that an object can be called 'God' is always related to a person, and, more precisely, to that person's trust.

Thus Luther's theology must be called 'existential' in so far as he focuses not only on the truth of propositions but also on the truth of the persons who hold true propositions. He is concerned with the fact that, and the manner in which, persons relate their lives both to those true propositions and to that to which those propositions refer. The 'I' of thinking is always present in a reflective way in Luther's considerations of theological matters. What God is *in himself* he should also become *for me (pro me)*. The question of the identity of God is therefore the question of who or what ultimately defines basic human self-understanding and basic trust.

TWO TYPES OF THEOLOGY: THEOLOGY OF GLORY AND THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

In his *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), the young Luther distinguishes two types of theology: the theology of glory and the theology of the cross (WA 1: 361,31–363,37; LW 31: 52–5). As the first two of the twelve philosophical theses of this disputation (WA 59: 409,1–410,12) reveal, Luther insists that philosophy must be treated in the same way as the theology of glory. Without the theology of the cross, Luther says, the human being uses even the best goods in the worst way (WA 1: 363,25–6; LW 31: 55). This indicates that the two contrasting theologies do not merely have different contents and methods, but rather represent different ways of existing altogether.

A widespread conviction among scholastic theologians was that the human being who loves the higher good more than the lesser good is able also to love the highest good – God – most and above all. They thus conceived of an ascent from the good to the better and finally to the *summum bonum*. The one who loves his native country more than his life, for example, will be able to transcend self-love in order to arrive at a love of God for God's sake. Many scholastics accordingly interpreted the apostle Paul's assertion that the invisible God is known to all human beings (Romans 1:19–20) in the following way. In creation we perceive God as *our good*, but from what is created we come to a knowledge of the goodness of God *in himself*. But what is true for cognition is also true for love, and, therefore, whereas human beings often love God *for their own sake*, they are able to follow the way of cognition, overcome their self-love and love God *for God's sake*. Luther, however, observed that Paul in fact states that human beings, while knowing of God's divinity, have not acknowledged God as God. Luther therefore asserts: "By nature, a human being is not able to will that God is God, rather he or she wills that he or she is God and God is not God" (WA 1: 225,1–2; LW 31: 10). That God is the final goal of one's life is both a religious and a metaphysical requirement. A human being who does not love God as his or her final goal will see himself or herself as the final goal and thus seek his or her own interest in everything. This is to be understood in a *transmoral* sense, not as the moral accusation of egoism. For human beings can and do seek their own interests even through good moral

agency, for example by applauding themselves for their moral accomplishments. In addition to biblical argumentation, Luther offers numerous other examples from human life to demonstrate that this is true. This cluster of issues leads to one basic definition of sin offered by Luther: sin is seeking one's interest in everything. When people seek their own interest in everything they will also use God, the highest good, for their own sake.

But, Luther insists, God refuses to be used by human beings in this way, and instead reveals himself to them in the crucified Christ: the *summum bonum* at the cross! This is the crisis for all who wish to appropriate God for their own sake. God hides himself, but not simply so. While human beings attribute strength, wisdom and all other perfections to God, God is in fact present in the weakness, foolishness and so on that human beings experience. Just so, God hides himself in his opposite (*sub contrario*). Thus, either a human being turns away from such a God, or his or her striving and willing will be changed. Such a change cannot be a matter of human decision, since human striving and willing is determined by self-seeking in everything. Thus the transformation of a human being can happen only in suffering and passivity.

Luther applies this argument to both theologians and philosophers. For him, the Aristotelian concept of happiness as the final goal of human beings (*see* Vol. 1, Ch. 5, "Aristotle") conceptualizes the self-seeking character of human beings. Philosophical activity is a good, and this activity becomes better the higher the value of its object(s). Again, when God is viewed as the highest object of cognition, this activity becomes the most valuable human enterprise. God, as the highest object of love and the highest object of knowledge, appears to be the highest realization of human self-love. But there is the inner contradiction in this line of thought in so far as the metaphysical concept of the highest good requires that God is loved for his own sake and not for the sake of human self-realization. Luther's theology of the cross, following the understanding of the apostle Paul, recognizes this inner contradiction and offers an alternative.

In his lecture of the Summer Semester 1921 ("Augustine and Neoplatonism"), Martin Heidegger, referring to the above-mentioned passage from Romans 1:20, offered the following analysis:

For the early Fathers [of the Church], this text provided a Pauline confirmation for a graded Platonic ascent in thought from the sensory to the supersensory world. But this is a basic misunderstanding. The young Luther was the first to see what the text really means in its own context (Romans 1:20–23), and so opened up the possibility for a renewed understanding of primitive Christianity and a return to the original Christian life. The theses of his Heidelberg Disputation (1518) likewise provide crucial insights into the long-standing historical relationship over the centuries between Christianity and culture.

(Heidegger 1995: 281–2; trans. in Kiesel 1993: 206)

JUSTIFICATION AND FREEDOM

Luther is known as the theologian who developed a doctrine of justification that is radically oriented to God's grace and its correspondence in human faith. He claimed that this doctrine of justification is the true centre of theology. This created serious conflicts with other, more traditional theologians. In addition, Luther regarded this doctrine as being in conflict with philosophy, in particular concerning the understanding of and relation between the person and his or her acts. It is not very easy to understand this aspect of Luther's criticism primarily because he perceives philosophy from a theological point of view and thus expects philosophy to make theological claims. For the most part philosophy does not do this. However, in Luther's time many elements of moral philosophy were integrated into theological systems, and Luther's criticism makes sense, particularly in regard to these philosophical–theological systems.

Moreover, when Luther uses the term 'reason' he often has in mind the everyday self-understanding of human beings and not a particular faculty of the soul or a philosophical concept. According to Luther, these beings are in need of 'justifying' their own existence. They must relate to themselves, either by accepting or by denying themselves. They respond, so to speak, to the question: why *am* I, rather than *not* at all? Luther distinguishes between three different contexts or forums before which human beings practise this justification: the forum before oneself (*coram seipso*); the forum before other human beings (*coram hominibus*); and the forum before God (*coram Deo*). With reference to these forums, judgements are made about what persons are and what they desire, will and do. The criteria for making, and the structures of, judgements in these forums are quite different. Acts that seem to be good in the eyes of others may appear quite differently in one's conscience; acts that seem to be morally good according to the judgement of one's conscience may be bad or sinful in a theological perspective. Offering such distinctions is quite typical of Luther, for he wishes to take seriously the complexity of reality and to clarify and safeguard the distinctive character of theology.

This structural motif of Luther's theology is quite important for understanding his doctrine of justification. We consider a human judge to be just when he or she punishes the evildoer and rewards the doer of good (*iustitia distributiva*). It is Luther's decisive theological insight that God's 'justice' or 'righteousness' is quite different from that of a human judge. The righteousness of God is a *communicative* divine attribute: God is righteous in that he conveys his righteousness to human persons so that they themselves, in receiving this righteousness, also become righteous. In his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, Luther examines mystical traditions in order to describe justification. He expresses the relation between the soul and Christ with the image of a marriage between the two, with faith being the wedding ring. According to marriage laws, the possessions of the bridegroom become the possessions of the bride, and vice versa. In the case of justification, the possession of the bridegroom is righteousness, while the possessions of the bride are her sins. In this

marriage, the soul receives the bridegroom's righteousness and loses her sins. Thus freedom is established, since there is no obligation to work in order to realize justification. Righteousness is not the result of one or many appropriate acts, as Luther is convinced that philosophers hold; rather, it is a gift that the person can only receive. "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none" (WA 7: 49,22–3; LW 31: 344). Being liberated from the need to justify oneself, the person spontaneously acts for the sake of the good alone or for the sake of one's neighbour's needs. Thus, for Luther, love and the 'servitude' of love correspond to the freedom of faith.

This mystical image illustrates a conceptual structure commonly found in Luther's thought. He conceives of unities between two entities (e.g. Christ and soul) that can also be seen in and for themselves, but, in the context of unity, mutually determine each other so that a communication of their respective properties takes place. The unity does not therefore consist of an addition or an aggregation of separate entities, but is rather a real unity realized in the exchange of properties. It is precisely this perceiving of the human person in relation to Christ that shapes Luther's theological approach to anthropology. This relation is not something additional to human being but is rather constitutive for human being (even if the individual negates this relation). 'Freedom' here signifies something different from freedom as the property of will and choice that is the subject of philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In the disputation *De homine* (On humankind), Luther defines the relation between theology and philosophy with regard to anthropology as follows. Philosophy places the human being as *animal rationale* in the horizon of all animals from which the human being differs by possessing reason. Thus the topic of philosophy is the *mortal* human being or the human being of *this* life. Accordingly, it is reason that receives Luther's highest praise as something quasi-divine, concerning the relation of human beings to the world. He understands reason as the "inventor and guide (*inventrix et gubernatrix*) of all arts, medicine, law, and whatever in this life of wisdom, power, virtue and glory is possessed by human beings" (WA 39I: 175,11–13). This perception of the achievements of reason corresponds to the biblical creation account that describes the human being as a ruler over the non-human animals. Nevertheless, what philosophy does not recognize are – and here Luther uses the model of the four causes – the effective cause (the creator) and the final cause, since it sees as the goal of human beings only 'the peace of this life.' That philosophers are far from a consensus in knowing the human soul indicates that they understand the formal cause in an insufficient way, since only by looking into the source (God) can human beings recognize what they are, namely, images of God (WA 39I: 175,24–176,4).

Unlike philosophy, claims Luther, theology defines the "whole and perfect human being" (WA 39I: 176,5–6). The horizon of this definition is God, and the

human being is understood as a counterpart of God. Thus a traditional definition using *genus proximum* and *differentia specifica* is not possible for theology. Rather, the human being is defined by an event between God and the human being, that is, by his or her justification by God.

The human being is defined as the being that is in need of being justified. This implies that the human being is a sinner, a being that lives in contradiction to his or her original purpose (not trusting God and thus seeking his or her own interest in everything) and unable to achieve this purpose by his or her own means. Thus justification cannot depend on any conditions on the part of human beings. It requires an action from God's side that has the structure of creation. Human receptivity corresponds to this creative action. Both this action and its reception are communicative, mediated through human words. Since human words must be understood, the human reception of God's action involves the activity of understanding. And since these words aim to create trust in the human being, this reception is *understanding trust*.

What Luther says about the basic relational structure of the human being is also crucial for his theological understanding of eternal life. For him, immortality is based not on the quality of the soul – its simplicity or indivisibility – but rather on God's relation to human beings: "Where and with whomever God speaks, whether in anger or in grace, that person is surely immortal. The Person of God, who speaks, and the Word point out that we are the kind of creatures with whom God would want to speak eternally and in an immortal manner" (WA 43: 481,32–5; LW 5: 76). Since the 'speaking' of God has its origin in the eternity of God, this communication will never end. Therefore those who have been addressed – all human beings – will not come to an end (not even in death) since God's talking is creative and life-giving.

DOES LUTHER HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF THE DOUBLE TRUTH? LUTHER'S CONCEPT OF DIFFERENT REALMS

In the disputation "The Word Was Made Flesh" (1539), Luther criticizes the Sorbonne: "The Sorbonne, the mother of errors, very badly laid down [*defnivit*] that the same thing is true in philosophy and theology" (39II: 3,7–8; trans. in White 1994: 125). This thesis has been taken by some as an indication that Luther holds the so-called 'doctrine of the double truth' (Frank 2003: 44–51). The concept of the double truth is mentioned in the Prologue of the Bishop of Paris, Stephan Tempier, to the text of his condemnation of 219 theses in 1277: some members of the faculty of arts talk errors, claiming "that they are true according to philosophy, but not according to the Catholic faith, as if two contrary truths existed and as if a truth in the writings of some damned pagan people stood against the truth of Holy Scripture" (quoted in Flasch 1989: 89). In accord with this very condemnation, Luther's philosophy teacher at Erfurt, Arnoldi von Usingen, stated in his

Exercitium Physicorum (Exercises in physics; 1507) that, “the principles of natural reason and light do not contradict the theological principles and truths. Therefore what is true in theology is also true in philosophy” (quoted in Frank 2003: 47 n.85). While some of the philosophers in Paris toward whom the bishop directed his critique tried to claim autonomy for philosophy over against theology, Luther appears to be making a claim for the autonomy of theology (*ibid.*: 49).

But Luther does not have the doctrine of the double truth in mind. He emphasizes that every truth agrees with every truth: that is, every true proposition agrees with every true proposition (WA 39II: 3,1–2). Nevertheless, there are different areas of truth, such that a proposition that is true in one area does not necessarily make sense in another. Luther offers many examples (WA 39II: 5,13–36). ‘Humidity moistens’ is true in the area of air, but not in the area of fire. One may hang a weight from a material point: this is true, but if we are referring to a mathematical point or line then this would not be true (WA 39II: 5,29–30, 15–16). One may consider different arts and their respective works and see that the same proposition is never true in all of them. This is even more the case with the relation of philosophical and theological propositions. Luther thus argues that the realm of objects of philosophy differs in character from the realm of objects of theology. “Thus we would do better if we leave dialectic or philosophy in their realm and learn to talk in new tongues in the reign of faith outside of the sphere of those disciplines” (39II: 5,35–6; corrections according to Schwarz 1966: 338 n.164).

There is a correspondence between this difference in the realms of philosophy and theology and the need for theology to practise a new language. To be sure, theology employs words of ordinary language and even words also used in philosophy, but these words receive a new meaning in theology. Luther develops this idea in his reflections on the proposition that ‘Jesus Christ is a human being.’ The being for which the name ‘Jesus Christ’ supposits in this proposition is a true human being. Thus the term ‘human being’ in the proposition contains elements of meaning that allow one to identify the being to which it refers as a human being. At the same time, the term ‘human being’ in this proposition contains elements of meaning that do not apply when the same term is used, for example, in the proposition ‘Socrates is a human being.’ When ‘human being’ refers to individuals like Socrates, one is able to make the inference that ‘they are beings which are not God but are separated from God.’ Such an inference is not allowed when ‘Jesus Christ’ is part of the proposition. Rather, ‘human being’ here refers to a being that is intimately connected with God. Thus, according to Luther all words that refer to Jesus Christ gain new meaning when compared to the meaning they have when used in philosophy (White 1994: 299–348).

Along the same lines, Luther takes up and further develops an old tradition of predication about Jesus Christ: *communicatio idiomatum* (communication of the properties of Christ’s divine and human natures). This concept encapsulates the notion that a predicate that belongs to the human nature of Jesus Christ is also true about God (e.g. ‘suffering’ – ‘This God [Jesus Christ] suffered and died’), or,

vice versa, that a predicate that belongs to God is also true about the human being (e.g. ‘creating’ – ‘This human being created the world’). This is an interpretation of the Creed of the Council of Nicaea, according to which Jesus Christ is true God and true human being. Luther insisted on the difference between the realm of theology and the realm of philosophy precisely because the special character of Jesus Christ would otherwise be downplayed or negated.

Another area of conflict between theology and reason – another indication for the need to distinguish the realms of theology and philosophy – is the doctrine of the Trinity. The basic proposition of this doctrine is the thesis that “God is one and triune, the one creator of all things outside of him” (39II: 287,13–14), or “One indistinct thing is three distinct things” (39II: 254,5–6). All of this is to say that the one God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In God there are three distinct persons, but one essence, and each of the three persons is the whole God. Luther emphasizes that it is impossible for reason to understand this, since the area to which reason is related and where it is developed is the realm of creatures. In this realm one does not find the structure ‘three things are one thing’. In that sense, speaking about the Trinity appears to be improper speech. Trinitarian language, however, is established not by empirical realities but by the revelation to which Holy Scripture bears witness. Recognizing that the Trinity is seldom delineated explicitly in Scripture, Luther nevertheless claims to follow its implications with his Trinitarian doctrine.

But even though reason is not able to grasp the doctrine of the Trinity, there is a need to distinguish between false and correct propositions in the doctrine. In order to do so, one must give particular reasons for or against this or that proposition. Offering reasons for this purpose, Luther demonstrates a particular way of using reason in theology. What reason is has to be adjusted to the state of affairs with which it deals. This is precisely what Luther does in the academic disputations on this doctrine. On the one hand, he is rejecting a use of reason that he regards as misleading for theology because it would impose a way of thinking in terms of creaturely structures on theological matters. On the other hand, this very criticism of reason aims at establishing an appropriate use of reason in the realm of theology.

The standard tool for making and analysing arguments is logic. But in Trinitarian doctrine, logic, especially syllogistic logic, creates problems. For example, there is the so-called *sylogismus expositivus*: “The divine Father generates [the Son] [1]. The Father is the divine essence [2]. Therefore the conclusion: ‘The divine essence generates’, is valid [3]” (39II: 4,24–5). Theology, however, must not conclude that the one divine essence generates, for in this case there would be two Gods. In the above proposition, both of the two premises are true and the conclusion is *formally* correct, but it is incorrect in terms of *content*. This was a shocking experience for medieval logicians. Since they did not doubt the truth of the propositions, they had to doubt the formality or universality of logic. Thus they tried to refine and sharpen the conditions for syllogisms, so that syllogisms

like the one mentioned could no longer be regarded as formally correct (Dieter 2001: 380–90).

Luther asserted that the syllogistic form of argumentation is not valid in propositions concerning God. It is interesting that he also offered an explanation for this: “The ‘thing’ itself is equivocal” (39II: 316,24). This is reflected in the fact that the word ‘essence’ can be employed in two different ways: ‘substantially’ or ‘personally’ (i.e. ‘essentially’ or ‘relatively’). Used in the first way, ‘essence’ refers to the divine essence; understood in the second way, it refers to the respective persons of the Trinity. The syllogism mentioned above is a paralogism because its propositions mix up the different ways in which the word ‘essence’ can be used. In consequence, Luther proposes, as he often does, to first analyse the semantics of propositions before applying logic to them. The truth-value of propositions varies depending on the reference of the words used in them.

Luther gives a list of true propositions that apply to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is not a complete list. Rather, he offers examples in support of his overall argument, and in doing so employs the tools of logical and semantic analysis. Two examples may be given. Luther often discusses the question as to whether or not the proposition that ‘The (divine) essence generates the (divine) essence’ is true. This refers to a famous conflict in the Middle Ages between Peter Lombard and Joachim of Fiore about how to correctly speak about the essence of God. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 declared that the essence of God does not generate. But Luther argues that the Council of Nicaea confessed the Christian faith with reference to Jesus Christ by saying that he is “God from God, light from light, true God from true God”. This is, as he insists, only true if ‘God’ and ‘light’ are understood personally and not essentially, again taking up the distinction just mentioned of two ways of using the term ‘essence’. Thus, Luther argues, ‘essentia’ can also be understood personally when used with reference to the person of the Father and the person of the Son: the Father – the essence – generates the Son – the essence. “If we take [God] personally, then it is true that ‘God generates God’; but, if it is taken essentially, then God neither generates himself nor another God. The essence does not generate, but a person does” (39II: 370,8–14; trans. in White 1994: 191).

We now turn to a second example. Luther describes the relation of essence and persons in God by employing two propositions: (i) “Any of these (divine) persons is the whole God”, and (ii) “Nevertheless it cannot be said that any of these persons exclusively is God” (39II: 253,4–6). Again, Luther uses an element of medieval semantic theory, the so-called ‘exponibles’ (*exponibilia*): syncategorematic terms that determine how subject or predicate terms in a given proposition supposit for things (‘every’, ‘whole’, ‘except’ are such exponibles). By applying this analytical instrument, Luther is able to more precisely determine the relation between persons and essence in God (Helmer 1999: 113–18). Luther’s attentiveness to the semantic and logical analysis of propositions and his concern for the evaluation of propositional truth indicate that he follows some basic lines of late medieval Ockhamism (White 1994).

A third indication for the need to distinguish different realms of theology and philosophy are the problems that the words of institution in the Eucharist ('This is my body', said by the priest on behalf of Jesus Christ) create for all theologians. Luther describes these problems as follows.² The priest points to the bread in his hands, saying 'This is my body.' Now, the truth-condition for propositions, according to Ockham, is that the subject term and the predicate term supposit for the same thing. Obviously, this is not the case here, for 'this' supposits for the bread while 'my body' supposits for the body of Christ, which is believed to be present in the sacrament. Thus there are two different beings – bread and the body of Christ – but not one, identical thing. Thus the truth-condition of the so-called identical predication (*praedicatio identica*) is not fulfilled. Luther acknowledges this objection and explicitly states that both reason and Holy Scripture do not allow any exception. Two different things cannot be one identical thing. There appear to be only two ways out of this dilemma. In order to guarantee the truth of the proposition 'This is my body', one can either assume that bread is not present in the Eucharist (at least not the substance of the bread), or that the body of Christ is not present (the bread is a sign for the body of Christ, which is not present). The first way is the one taken by the scholastics, who presuppose a transubstantiation of the bread so that only the accidents of bread – that is, the properties but not the substance – remain at the altar. The second way is the one taken by Wyclif, and also Luther's contemporary and opponent Zwingli. For Luther, it is clear that one cannot achieve one, identical entity if one starts with two entities that are identical in themselves. As such, only an aggregate of entities is possible.

Luther proposes to consider the grammar and rhetoric of the sentence 'This is my body', and other sentences that are comparable, before any logical analysis is applied. While logic takes 'bread' and 'body' as a reference to different entities identical in and for themselves, Luther understands the grammar of the sentence to be 'speaking together' (*zusammensprechen*) two entities as one, such that the unity of the sentence constitutes and expresses the unity of the object. Accordingly, both 'this' and 'my body' refer to the one unity 'body-bread'. One could speak of a grammar and, following the grammatical analysis, also of a logic of communion where the bread and Christ's body mutually communicate their respective properties to each other: they determine themselves mutually and thus constitute a new unity. It is therefore still possible to say 'This is bread' and 'This is the body of Christ'. At the same time, bread and body are perceived as one entity.

Luther offers some examples both from everyday life and from Holy Scripture in order to show that the logic of the communication of properties applies to numerous binary pairings. One example is red-hot iron as the unity of fire and iron. Luther thus claims to overcome the alternative between transubstantiation

2. In fact, the situation is more complicated (Hilgenfeld 1971: 13–182, 387–426), but what follows may suffice in order to understand Luther's option.

(the substance of the bread disappears, only the accidents remain) and signification (the bread that is on the altar only signifies the body of Christ). Both the bread and the body of Christ are on the altar, but in a newly constituted unity of mutually communicated properties.

CONCLUSION

From its beginning, Christian theology has been engaged in an intense dialogue with philosophy. In part, both theology and philosophy deal with the 'same' topics by approaching them from different perspectives, and both claim to proceed in a rational way. Since Christian theology focuses on revelation, and revelation is seen to have culminated in the person of Jesus Christ, some particular areas of conflict between theology and philosophy have emerged. There are theological propositions such as 'God is human being', 'God is one and triune' and 'This is my body' (the priest pointing to the bread in Eucharist) that are difficult to understand from a philosophical point of view. These objections are not alien to Christians, since they too share in human rationality. But they are convinced that in Jesus Christ they are confronted with an exceptional reality that cannot be understood by employing a rationality that is related only to the field of philosophical enquiry. Nevertheless, theology claims that from this exceptional reality a new light is thrown on all reality. Conflicts over domination between theology and philosophy have their origin in this state of affairs, so that from time to time both theology and philosophy have felt alienated by being too strongly influenced by the other discipline.

Even though Aristotelian philosophy was received in medieval times in a critical and highly constructive way by Christian theology so that not only theology but also philosophy was further developed, Luther was very critical of such a reception. He argued: what help can theology expect from a philosophy that holds that the world is eternal and denies that there is a creator, from a philosophy that sees the human soul as mortal and denies that human beings have to live their lives in the horizon of being accountable to God, from a philosophy whose concept of happiness is related only to life on earth? These were traditional arguments, but Luther took them up in order to criticize fundamentally the syntheses of 'Aristotelian' philosophy and Christian thought (Dieter 2001: 431–631).

In Luther's view, human sinfulness affects cognition in two ways. First, he sees the *act* of cognition as compromised by the self-seeking orientation of human beings: sinful self-interest affects human acts of perception. Secondly, according to this sinful self-interest, the human perception of God, of human beings and of the relationship between them is misleading with regard to its *content* and does not bring human beings into the right relationship to God and to others. The alternative that Luther offers is his 'theology of the cross'. Nevertheless, Luther not only criticizes reason and philosophy, but also argues for the distinction of different

realms of theology, philosophy, arts and sciences. By doing so he attempts to develop a rationality specific to theology. This takes place mainly in the university disputations: “There is no clearer way to show how Luther regards the positive role of reason in investigating the theological subject matter than by studying his use of the *disputatio*” (Helmer 1999: 42). Thus both rejection and reception of philosophical thoughts and methods belong together in Luther, both sharp criticism of philosophical claims and creative adaptation: for the goal is a theology that is a faithful *and* rational account of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.

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On THE EUCHARIST see also Vol. 2, Ch. 15. On LOGIC see also Ch. 3; Vol. 2, Chs 2, 4, 17; Vol. 4, Ch. 19. On THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION see also Ch. 4. On SCRIPTURE see also Chs 4, 15; Vol. 1, Chs 9, 13, 17; Vol. 2, Ch. 19; Vol. 4, Ch. 3; Vol. 5, Ch. 12. On THE TRINITY see also Chs 9, 17; Vol. 1, Chs 14, 17, 20; Vol. 2, Chs 2, 8, 15; Vol. 4, Ch. 4; Vol. 5, Chs 12, 23. On TRUTH see also Chs 8, 13; Vol. 1, Ch. 13; Vol. 2, Ch. 17; Vol. 4, Chs 8, 18; Vol. 5, Ch. 4.

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