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The Manifesto of the Reformation — Luther vs. Erasmus on Free Will

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The clash between Martin Luther and Desiderius Erasmus over the issue of free will is 'one of the most famous exchanges in western intellectual history'.[1] In this article, we will examine the background to the quarrel between these two professors, and two of the central themes of Luther's response to Erasmus—the clarity of Scripture and the bondage of the will. In doing so it is critical to be aware that studying these things 'operates as a kind of litmus test for what one is going to become theologically'.[2] Ignoring the contemporary relevance and implications of these crucially important topics will not be possible; whether thinking about our approach to the modern reformation of the church, our evangelism, pastoral care, or interpretation of the Bible there is so much of value and vital importance that it would be a travesty to discuss them without at least a nod in the direction of the twenty-first century church. From Luther's perspective, as Gerhard Forde rightly says, this was not just one more theological debate but 'a desperate call to get the gospel preached'.[3]

This is a fundamentally significant dispute historically since it involved key players in the two major movements of the sixteenth century: Erasmus the great renaissance humanist and Luther the Reformation Hercules.[4] The debate between these two titans reveals not only the reasons behind 'humanism's programmatic repudiation of the Reformation'[5] but also a clear view of the heartbeat of the Reformation itself since, as B. B. Warfield wrote *The Bondage of the Will* is 'the embodiment of Luther's reformation conceptions, the nearest to a systematic statement of them he ever made. It is the first exposition of the fundamental ideas of the Reformation in a comprehensive presentation; it is therefore in a true sense the manifesto of the Reformation'.[6] If modern evangelicals have lost Luther's clarity and faithfulness to Scripture on this issue of free will, we will have lost something very precious and foundational indeed.

The Fly vs. the Elephant

Neither party in this grand debate was particularly keen on getting involved in

a match against the other. Luther's position was precarious enough in 1524-25, so it is not surprising that, as Brecht puts it, he 'really wanted to maintain an attitude of charitableness and good-naturedness in dealing with his enemies'.[7] He was aware, however, that despite their common stance against such things as relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, fasting, monastic vows, and the invocation of saints there remained deep theological differences between them.[8] It was commonly said that with his early calls for reform and his ground-breaking linguistic work on the Greek New Testament, Erasmus laid the egg which Luther hatched.[9] Erasmus himself complained against this saying, 'I laid a hen's egg: Luther hatched a bird of quite different breed.'[10] Luther first became cognisant of Erasmus's theological animosity towards him in May 1522 after reading some of the humanist's published letters.[11] They held an uneasy truce for some time until a combination of factors drove Erasmus to declare hostilities officially open. Luther wrote to him privately in April 1524 thanking him for all he had done in the fields of literature and textual research but counselled him to leave theology to the experts: 'we have chosen to put up with your weakness and thank God for the gifts he has given you…[But] You have neither the aptitude nor the courage to be a Reformer, so please stand aside.'[12]

Such a rebuke stuck in the throat of the older man as the more eminent and respected of the two. With a prickly sense of pride, Erasmus was somewhat conceited, addicted to his own reputation, and over-sensitive to criticism and challenge.[13] His friends and patrons, including Henry VIII, were urging him to write against Luther,[14] so on 1st September 1524 not only did he not stand aside, he entered the lists against Luther by publishing *On the Freedom of the Will*.[15] With a tone of mock humility and possibly a side-swipe at the German's well-known verbose prolixity he asked, 'dare Erasmus attack Luther, like the fly the elephant?'[16]

The trick for Erasmus was to be faithful to his own principles while simultaneously putting some distance between himself and Luther without jeopardising his own calls for reform of the church. Although he disliked his rather unruly manner, Erasmus approved of much that Luther had said and done, and did not wish to split the rather fragile coalition driving reforms. As Kolb says, 'he feared that both Luther's radical ideas and his boisterous advocacy of those ideas would alienate the powers and frustrate true reform, as he understood it'.[17] The ground on which he chose to fight was the issue of free will because it enabled him to address some of his own core concerns

about the improvement of manners, but also precisely because it was the subject on which he was closest to Luther's opponents. He was perhaps not entirely conscious at first of how very close it was to Luther's heart.[18] Erasmus took exception to statements Luther had made about free will in several key documents. For example, in *The Heidelberg Disputation* Luther asserted that 'Free will after the fall exists in name only',[19] and in his response to the Papal Bull excommunicating him, the sarcastic *Assertions of All the Articles Wrongly Condemned in the Roman Bull*, he declares—

> Free choice after [the fall of Adam into] sin is merely a term, and when [such choosing] does what it is able to do [*facit, quod in se est*], it commits moral sin…So it is necessary to retract this article. For I was wrong in saying that free choice before grace is a reality only in name. I should have said simply: free choice is in reality a fiction, or a term without reality. For no one has it in his power to think a good or bad thought, but everything (as Wyclif's article condemned at Constance rightly teaches) happens by absolute necessity.[20]

Erasmus's response was elegantly written in a measured tone which, in typical Erasmian fashion, 'smoothed out the paradoxes, argued for peace over tumult, and pointed toward an ethics-centered religion'.[21] The thrust of his argument is that Scripture is not entirely clear on this issue of free will, but very few theologians have ever 'totally taken away the power of freedom of choice'. He would prefer to stick with the consensus view rather than follow Luther's new and divisive opinions. Besides, if Luther was correct (and there was much in the Bible against him it seemed) then 'what evildoer will take pains to correct his life?'[22]

Examining his argument in more detail, Erasmus begins by defining free will as 'a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them'.[23] This power of free choice was certainly damaged but not destroyed by the fall.[24] In the body of the book, as he works his way through biblical texts, he asks time and time again, 'What is the point of so many admonitions, so many precepts, so many threats, so many exhortations, so many expostulations, if of ourselves we do nothing, but God in accordance with his immutable will does everything in us, both to will and to perform the same?'[25] The will cannot be powerless, though it is of course 'puny' and requires the assistance of divine grace.[26] Erasmus

expresses his approval for a patristic view which distinguishes three stages in human action—thought, will, and accomplishment—and which assigns no place for free choice in the first or third stages where 'our soul is impelled by grace alone'. In the second stage, however, 'grace and the human will act together, but in such a way that grace is the principal cause, and the secondary cause our will' and 'even the fact that he can consent and co-operate with divine grace is itself the work of God'.[27] The contribution of free choice is, therefore, 'extremely small'[28] or 'exceedingly trivial'[29] but nevertheless real. Luther is right on many things and has good motives, godly sentiments worthy of favour, and writes 'in pious and Christian vein'[30] yet in propagating 'grace alone' he immeasurably exaggerates original sin and ends up saying that even a man who is justified by faith cannot of himself do anything but sin.[31] Thus it is better to follow his (Erasmus's) 'more accommodating view'[32] which takes a mediating position, guarding against things Luther was rightly concerned about but without throwing the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak.

In one sense, the Prince of the Humanists speaks for all learned intellectuals here with his emphasis on balance, mediating positions, and the rejection of extremes. But as Forde rightly complains, 'Erasmus' position reflects at bottom the same dreary moralism touted by everyone from the lowliest neophyte to the most learned professor'.[33] However, by re-asserting free will even in this apparently small way, Erasmus had attacked what Luther called 'the highest and most important issue of our cause'.[34] Nothing less than the Reformation doctrine of salvation by grace alone was at stake.

The Elephant Wades In

Luther's response to Erasmus had to wait for many months. He had more than enough on his plate already as the simmering discontent within Germany boiled over into the Peasant's War in the Spring of 1525. His own bitter attack on the peasants, an inflammatory book called *Against the Murdering, Robbing Hoard of Peasants* came out around the same time as he broke his monk's vow and got married to Katherine von Bora, something of a PR disaster at the height of social unrest. He also remained busy on the intellectual front, continuing to preach, to publish a translation of Ecclesiastes, and to prepare a commentary on Deuteronomy while also falling out with Karlstadt, being occupied with Müntzer's revolutionary form of Christianity, and engaging in the newly initiated eucharistic controversy.[35] His sermons and writings from

the first half of 1525 show that he had begun to wrestle with the issues presented by Erasmus,[36] and he had at least read *On the Freedom of the Will* (rather than using it as toilet paper as he often did with his opponent's attacks!).[37] His political support and protection was undermined and threatened but he lacked motivation and time to engage with Erasmus more fully. It was his wife who finally persuaded him to put pen to paper with *On the Bondage of the Will*, which finally appeared on New Year's Eve 1525 some sixteen months after Erasmus's opening salvo.

The Prince of the Humanists may have presented him as an elephant, but Luther would have been conscious of the fact that in reality, despite his recent fame, next to Erasmus he was merely 'a minor academic from a fairly new faculty in a small town in an obscure part of eastern Germany'.[38] Yet what he lacked in elegance of style and firmness of reputation he made up for in sparkling theological insight and witty repartee. He confessed to being 'an uncultivated fellow who has always moved in uncultivated circles' and yet Erasmus's book struck him as 'so cheap and paltry that I felt profoundly sorry for you, defiling as you were your very elegant and ingenious style with such trash, and quite disgusted at the utterly unworthy matter that was being conveyed in such rich ornaments of eloquence, like refuse or ordure being carried in gold and silver vases'.[39]

This tone was not calculated to win friends and influence people in Erasmus's circle. It has not, however, prevented praise being heaped on the book in the last 150 years.[40] Referring to the extravagantly positive reception it has received, one recent biographer, Richard Marius (whose own religious position seems far removed from Luther's) chooses to dissent saying, 'It is not a judgment I share. The work is insulting, vehement, monstrously unfair, and utterly uncompromising' and it 'burns with rage'.[41] Erasmus himself was bitterly hurt by it: 'You have never written against anyone anything more rabid, and even, what is more detestable, nothing more malicious…What torments me and all honest people is that with your character that is so arrogant, impudent, and rebellious, you plunge the whole world into fatal discord.'[42]

Luther would defend his passionate tone and rather bruising style by contrasting it with Erasmus who '[w]hen it comes to theology…does nothing in earnest'. It is manifest that 'deep-seated emotional differences underlay the

conflict between the two reformers'.[43] Kolb sums up Luther's apocalyptic perspective well: 'Erasmus might be able to delude himself into thinking that a dispassionate, purely academic and reasonable discussion of the bondage or freedom of human choice in relation to God was possible. Luther was certain that their exchange was part of the final combat between God and the devil.'[44] It was the last times and God's truth must be vindicated against the devil's lies by wielding the sword of the Spirit!

Luther may be right that Erasmus's tone of 'bored detachment' towards the subject at hand was 'fundamentally irreligious and in a theologian irresponsible'.[45] Yet too many commentators sympathetic to Luther have failed to censure him for his sometimes excessively contemptuous and colourful language here. It does not appear to me at least that Luther's personal attacks on Erasmus were entirely free of 'vainglory or contempt' and were motivated by 'undisguised pastoral concern' for Erasmus, as Packer suggests.[46] At the time, Melanchthon urged moderation, fearing that Luther had only made things worse, and would have preferred a brief, simple explanation of the differences Luther had with Erasmus, shorn of the ugly insults and polemical rhetoric.[47] Luther himself had written that 'in teaching, simplicity and appropriateness of speech is required, not bombast and persuasive rhetorical images'.[48] Yet he failed to follow his own rule.

Perhaps Luther was right; it could be that the Dutchman was 'the first Christian atheist',[49] an unconverted stranger to grace as Luther rather bluntly suggests. It is true, as Luther says, that 'no man perceives one iota of what is in the Scriptures unless he has the Spirit of God'.[50] Erudition and biblical learning alone make neither a theologian nor a Christian. Steinmetz pointedly draws our attention to the fact that 'When Luther observes that a theologian is made by meditation, *tentatio*, and *oratio* (meditation, temptation, and prayer), he wants to emphasize that theology is not a neutral discipline like geometry, which can be studied dispassionately in abstraction from the self and its concerns'.[51] This, of course, has led some to suggest that Luther allowed his experience to dictate his interpretation of the Bible,[52] and it is true that he is open about how it has affected him.[53] The ability to cite texts, marshal arguments, and muster the troops of tradition is good (Luther himself is very effective in using classical quotations, Patristics, Hebrew, and Greek) but it is far from sufficient. Hägglund also mentions Luther's idea of 'the school of the

Holy Spirit' and how important tribulation is 'for a genuine insight into the Word'.[54] A fatal lack of insight into the gospel and personal experience of saving grace can render the most elegantly written, well-researched and well-received tomes utterly useless. Yet Luther's deliberately cultivated bullish tone and his references to Erasmus's work as 'Madam Diatribe' and use of the feminine pronoun when quoting him,[55] are hardly designed to persuade. Luther was simply poking fun at Erasmus as he wrote—

> when a man does not take this subject seriously and feels no personal interest in it, never has his heart in it and finds it wearisome, chilling, or nauseating, how can he help saying absurd, inept, and contradictory things all the time, since he conducts the case like one drunk or asleep, belching out between his snores.[56]

This, Luther must have known, would entertain his readers (I confess to being amused myself) but it would never win over his adversary. In extolling grace he had, we might say, neglected graciousness: 'Those who oppose him he must *gently* instruct,' said the Apostle[57] and yet Luther was heard to say, 'I vehemently and from the very heart hate Erasmus', while mere mention of his name could send him into a 'paroxysm of loathing'.[58] If it is true to say that 'Erasmus set out to win a debate [but] Luther sought to comfort and rescue the lost'[59] then he failed with at least one significant lost sheep. Indeed, they often misunderstood and argued past each other, failing fully to engage in the other's argument.[60]

Luther, however, was also concerned that others would not be distracted from the gospel or from true reform by Erasmus's sortie into theology. This explains why he was so passionate and bold—Erasmus had touched a raw nerve. Luther 'always assumed that the crux of the Reformation was a struggle for right doctrine; the Reformation was not a silly issue over loose living or superstition, as if Lutherans were holier than Catholics. It was a question of what the Christian religion really is, and that question is so serious that it holds human salvation in the balance'.[61] So the German Hercules was surprisingly indifferent to many of the issues which exercised the Rotterdam Rottweiler, since '[t]o him the corruption of the Papacy lay deeper, in its loss of the Gospel…"We should not, therefore, give our attention to the wicked lives of the Papists so much as to their impious doctrine",' he declared.[62] As always, it is important to remember that even if immorality in the church can be censured or prevented, our doctrine could still be unsound. Luther himself considered

The Bondage of the Will his best work, because it so effectively addresses these issues. Writing in July 1537 to Wolfgang Capito he confesses, 'Regarding [the plan] to collect my writings in volumes, I am quite cool and not at all eager about it because…I acknowledge none of them to be really a book of mine, except perhaps the one *On the Bound Will* and the Catechism'.[63]

We now examine the content of Luther's counterblast, under two headings which summarise his primary concerns as they arise in the course of the book; first the clarity of Scripture, and then the bondage of the will and salvation by grace alone.

The Clarity of Scripture

Instead of launching straight into a rebuttal of Erasmus's exegesis and doctrinal formulation, Luther begins by questioning the humanist's whole frame of mind on the issue. Erasmus claimed to dislike 'assertions' (echoing the title of Luther's response to the Papal Bull which had excommunicated him) and wished he had liberty to be a skeptic and not have to take sides on free will.[65] He preferred 'to compare opinions, look for consensus, put forward an opinion that seemed most probable—that process is actually the technical meaning of the word *Diatribe*'.[64] To this Luther replies with some warmth, 'it is not the mark of a Christian mind to take no delight in assertions…The Holy Spirit is no Skeptic'.[66] God did not reveal his word to us in order for us to take a scholarly and detached view on basic questions, as Erasmus had done.

Luther then proceeds to take Erasmus to task for his assertions (!) about the obscurity of Scripture, and the apparently needless debates which Christians had had for centuries over issues of biblical interpretation.[67] Luther claims any obscurity in the Bible is merely provisional and contingent, having to do with our current ignorance of its vocabulary or grammar. 'Truly it is stupid and impious,' he writes, 'when we know that the subject matter of Scripture has all been placed in the clearest light, to call it obscure on account of a few obscure words….It is true that for many people much remains abstruse: but this is not due to the obscurity of Scripture, but to the blindness or indolence of those who will not take the trouble to look at the very clearest truth.'[68]

Erasmus would rather not have certain doctrines openly discussed before the 'common herd' or 'untutored multitude'.[69] Luther is vehemently opposed to such self-censorship from preachers: 'Truth and doctrine must be preached always,

openly, and constantly, and never accommodated or concealed…If, therefore, God has willed that such things should be openly spoken of and published abroad without regard to the consequences, who are you to forbid it?'[70] God had a saving purpose in revealing the truth about the human will in Scripture: 'It is thus for the sake of the elect that these things are published, in order that being humbled and brought back to nothingness by this means they may be saved.'[71]

Luther sees in Erasmus's attack on the clarity of Scripture a typically Roman ploy. In the kingdom of the Pope, he says 'nothing is more commonly stated or more generally accepted than the idea that the Scriptures are obscure and ambiguous, so that the spirit to interpret them must be sought from the Apostolic See of Rome'. This was a devilish conspiracy to trample down the Bible.[72] In response, Luther set out his understanding of the internal and external clarity of Scripture. By internal clarity he meant an appreciation of Scripture located in the understanding of the heart—

> If you speak of internal clarity, no man perceives one iota of what is in the Scriptures unless he has the Spirit of God. All men have a darkened heart, so that even if they can recite everything in Scripture, and know how to quote it, yet they apprehend and truly understand nothing of it…For the Spirit is required for the understanding of Scripture.[73]

As for external clarity, this concerns a judgment to be made by the public ministry of the word and is the chief concern of leaders and preachers. He proves that Scripture has the ability to act as a clear guide for the church from those places in Scripture itself where it is appealed to, for example, as an arbiter of disputes (Deut. 17:8), a light for the eyes and the path (Psalm 19:9; 119:105), and a shining lamp in the darkness (2 Peter 1:19).[74] 'The apostles,' he avers, 'like Christ himself, point us to the Scriptures as the very clearest witnesses to what they themselves say…In short, if Scripture is obscure or ambiguous, what point was there in God's giving it to us? Are we not obscure and ambiguous enough without having our obscurity, ambiguity, and darkness augmented for us from heaven?'[75]

Erasmus had claimed he willingly submitted to 'the inviolable authority of the Holy Scriptures and…the decrees of the Church'.[76] Luther on the other hand would not permit the Church to have such authority on its own account. Far from requiring the Pope's authoritative interpretation of Scripture, then, each

congregation had the power to ensure it had correct teaching from the word. This was the conclusion he had reached in 1523 when writing (at their request) to the villagers of Leisnig in electoral Saxony—

> wherever there is a Christian congregation in possession of the gospel, it not only has the right and power but also the duty—on pain of losing the salvation of its souls and in accordance with the promise made to Christ in baptism—to avoid, to flee, to depose, and to withdraw from the authority that our bishops…and the like are now exercising. For it is clearly evident that they teach and rule contrary to God and his word…it is a divine right and a necessity for the salvation of souls to depose or to avoid such bishops…and whatever is of their government.[77]

Luther's hero Augustine had also said something similar, writing, 'We should not obey those bishops who have been duly elected, if they commit errors, or teach or ordain any thing contrary to the divine Scripture', a quotation which appears in the Augsburg Confession.[78]

This is a pertinent word for today in so-called 'mixed denominations', where the tyranny of the centre can act as a barrier to the rule of God's word. Luther's most powerful point on the clarity of Scripture is that if the Bible is not clear then he may as well return to Rome and to the safety of the Pope's 'infallible' interpretations. If Erasmus was permitted to call into question the Bible's clarity on important doctrinal matters then this would ultimately be the death knell for the Reformation project. This is why great care must be taken in a supposedly 'post-modern' context when handling discussions of hermeneutics, which can so easily undermine the authority of the word and leave people baffled and confused. In such a climate the clearer but less biblical notes being sounded by Rome (or indeed, Mecca) will be far more attractive to those seeking truth and guidance. If Scripture is ambiguous then it makes perfect sense for Rome to anathematize those who do not agree with 'holy mother Church, whose duty it is to judge regarding the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures'.[79] This is part of the reason ultimately why Erasmus considered the Roman Church to be, so to speak, the best boat from which to fish.

Is the Bible clear today? For Erasmus it was certain issues of doctrine which were unclear, but biblical morality remained 'most plainly evident'.[80] Not so today. Christians can be discouraged by modern trends in confusing

interpretations which appear to make the Bible say things at odds with its plain meaning, especially in the field of ethics. As Mark Thompson explains—

> An argument that the meaning of Scripture is unclear, or irrelevant because of its location amidst the historical particularities and thought world of antiquity, has featured in debates over gender relationships (especially over how these are reflected in church life), human sexuality (especially over the acceptability or otherwise of homosexual behaviour) and the sanctity of yet unborn human life.[81]

While I was writing this article, U.S. Presidential hopeful Barak Obama basing his endorsement of homosexual civil unions on The Sermon on the Mount, rejected other biblical injunctions which spoke against it because they occurred in 'an obscure passage in Romans'.[82] As one blogger commented, 'Our public discussion of Scripture has become so degraded that someone like Obama can say that Romans is "obscure", and the overall reaction is not a horse laugh, but rather a shrug accompanied with a non-committal "that's a point of view, certainly". The central problem with this is that Scripture is the inspired Word of God, given to us in order to serve as a light in a dark place.'[83] This seems to me to be an excellent modern expression and application of Luther's sentiment.

The Bondage of the Will and Salvation by Grace Alone

We move on from Luther's prolegomena on the subject of Scripture to discuss the heart of his contention with Erasmus. The book was called not *The Clarity of Scripture*, after all, but *The Bondage of the Will*. The Latin title *De Servo Arbitrio* was taken (not coincidentally) from a saying of St. Augustine in a classic anti-Pelagian treatise.[84] So it was clearly Luther's intention to defend the Augustinian doctrine of sin, nicely summed up by a phrase Luther used previously at Heidelberg: 'Free will without grace has the power to do nothing but sin.'[85] This one sentence summary is oft quoted in *The Bondage of the Will*[86] and was the essential starting point for the affirmation that salvation must, therefore, be entirely the work of God's grace alone, and the source of Luther's confidence that 'Augustine…is entirely with me'.[87]

Some historians have seen the key to Reformation, and to Protestant theology in general, as being justification by faith. This was indeed spoken of by the Reformers in glowing terms, most famously when Luther himself declared that if the article of justification stands, the church stands but that if it falls, the

church falls,[88] while John Calvin called justification 'the main hinge on which religion turns'.[89] Yet this exalted language of central importance can also be heard in *The Bondage of the Will* concerning free will, sin, and grace. 'What I am after in this dispute,' he stated boldly, 'is to me something serious, necessary, and indeed eternal, something of such a kind and such importance that it ought to be asserted and defended to the death, even if the whole world had not only to be thrown into strife and confusion, but actually to return to total chaos and reduced to nothingness.'[90] Near the end of the book, Luther praises Erasmus not only for his 'eloquence bordering on the miraculous' but most of all for his insight—

> I praise and commend you highly for this also, that unlike all the rest you alone have attacked the real issue, the essence of the matter in dispute, and have not wearied me with irrelevancies about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles (for trifles they are rather than basic issues), with which almost everyone hitherto has gone hunting for me without success. You and you alone have seen the question on which everything hinges, and have aimed at the vital spot.[91]

Such was the vital and absolutely fundamental significance of teaching the enslaved will. Luther had been formulating and defending his thoughts on it since at least his *Disputation on Scholastic Theology* in 1517.[92] It was a critical defining issue, distinguishing him and his reformation movement from the humanism of Erasmus, the Catholicism of Rome, and the radical reformation of the Anabaptists. Concerning the latter, German/Moravian Anabaptist leader Balthasar Hubmaier wrote two pamphlets against Luther's theological anthropology in 1527 precisely because, explains Steinmetz, he saw very clearly 'that the doctrine of the bondage of the will undercut the Anabaptist understanding of conversion, baptism, the nature of the Church, and Christian morality'.[93] More importantly, this Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace was likewise held with equal fervency by Zwingli, Bucer, Calvin and others. Warfield rightly states—

> the material principle of the Reformation…was not at first known by the name of justification by faith alone, but it was from the first passionately embraced as renunciation of all human works and dependence on the grace of God alone for salvation...There are two foci around which this gospel revolves: the absolute helplessness of man in sin; the sole efficiency of grace in salvation…All else that Protestantism stood for, in comparison with this, must be relegated to the second rank.[94]

Erasmus, on the other hand, recoiled from such a pessimistic anthropology and the insistence on grace alone as capable of saving and transforming human beings. As we have seen, he insisted that the warnings, exhortations, and commands of Scripture must imply an ability in human beings, however puny and feeble, to comply. Since Erasmus banged this drum so many times, Luther (whose book is essentially a point by point refutation of what Erasmus had written) comes back with tedious frequency to the same counter-argument: such passages of Scripture 'show not what men can do but what they ought to do'.[95] Indeed, 'it is Satan's work to prevent men from recognizing their plight and to keep them presuming that they can do everything they are told'.[96]

Luther makes his case from the Scriptures, refuting Erasmus's exegesis point by point and showing that he often makes the text prove too much; where he wanted to prove only such free choice as can do nothing good without grace, he ends up 'proving' by his inferences a freedom and ability to keep *everything* God commands.[97] Logically, Luther also insists that if God is omnipotent and has unerring foreknowledge then there cannot be such a thing as free will.[98] This is the first point in his summary conclusion—

> if we believe it to be true that God foreknows and predestines all things, that he can neither be mistaken in his foreknowledge nor hindered in his predestination, and that nothing takes place but as he wills it (as reason itself is forced to admit), then on the testimony of reason itself there cannot be any free choice in man or angel or any creature.[99]

It should be recognised, however, that Luther does leave room for a certain kind of human freedom. 'Free choice,' he admits, 'is allowed to man only with respect to what is beneath him and not what is above him…On the other hand in relation to God, or in matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice, but is a captive, subject and slave either of the will of God or the will of Satan.'[100] This is an often repeated distinction in his *Table Talk*: 'we are not able to do anything that is good *in divine matters*;'[101] 'he that will maintain that man's free-will is able to do or work anything in spiritual cases, be they never so small, denies Christ...[yet] I confess that mankind has a free-will, but it is to milk kine, to build houses, &c., and no further.'[102] Marius is sarcastically critical at this point and considers the idea of 'freedom in what is beneath us' to be ultimately nonsensical because seemingly mundane choices can lead to much greater effects: 'we may assume we have free choice in

spreading jam or marmalade on our toast in the morning....We may also choose freely whether to be a lawyer or a monk, since our vocations seem to be a part of the freedom Luther grants to things below. Yet if we become a monk who rebels against monasticism and becomes a great prophet of God, our free choice in the beginning might seem to be part of God's providence.'[103] Ultimately, Luther would recognise, even this free agency must submit to the over-arching providential rule which ensures that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's say so (Matt. 10:29).

The main thrust of Luther's rebuttal of Erasmus, however, is simple. As R. C. Sproul has it, 'Luther is driving Erasmus where Erasmus does not want to go, straight into the arms of Pelagius'.[104] Marius, again taking a controversial and provocative line, says, 'I suspect that Erasmus would have found himself in substantial agreement with Pelagius had the two been able to transcend time and the demands of orthodoxy to sit down over a good cask of wine to have a long talk about God, humankind, and morals.'[105] Erasmus was firmly anchored in semi-Pelagian patterns of thought and religious practice, but Luther would not recognise the legitimacy of a middle way between Augustine and Pelagius, since to give an inch to free will was to take everything from God's glory and to lose the best of both systems (if indeed there can be anything good about Pelagius). The question of the freedom or bondage of the will, therefore, 'was in no way irreverent, inquisitive, or superfluous; instead, it had to do with the central issue of the Christian faith: what does God do in salvation, and what does man do?'[106] Luther's answer was straightforward: we are by nature children of wrath, slaves to sin and to Satan, so that if we are to be saved it must be by grace alone. It is possible to please God only once he has freed us. In that sense, the 'answering echo to *The Bondage of the Will* is *The Freedom of the Christian*'.[107]

On the major ecclesiological and ethical issues of the century, Reformers and humanists shared much common ground, just as today evangelicals often share common concerns with other Christians on headline issues such as sexuality, gender, and the family. We may find common cause with old theological enemies and conservative secularists alike, but it would be a mistake to see this as building a platform for the gospel. Antipathy to the gospel of grace alone continues beneath the pragmatic expedience of contemporary ecclesiastical alliances. Co-belligerence has its uses, but it also has its limitations. Luther's

run-in with Erasmus on the issue of the will should make us aware of that. We must be wary, then, of confusing 'the big issue' of the day with the gospel.[108] Erasmus and Luther both stood against abuses in the church, but for fundamentally different reasons and in a way that eventually saw them poles apart theologically. We must be alert to the danger that we may be losing our grip on the gospel if the name 'orthodox' becomes the label we use merely for those who happen to agree with us on, say, issues of human sexuality while issues of human salvation are sidelined or neglected.

Reform of the church today needs to aim, as Luther aimed, at a recovery of the gospel and nothing less. Our interest ought not to be just in sweeping away abuses, or placing of power in evangelical hands, or returning to an apparently golden age when all was supposedly well (whether 2000, 500, or 50 years ago). Surely if Luther's insistence on grace alone even against a potentially powerful ally like Erasmus shows us anything, it is that reform is not simply about getting the right men onto the right committees, or changing the ethos of a denomination, but recovering and preaching the gospel.

Moreover, if there is to be a new reformation, it must recognise that our view of sin is not a secondary issue but an essential evangelical tenet. To retain the power of Luther's gospel we must be defined not just by our attachment to 'Bible, cross, and mission', but by a view of human nature which sees its only hope as the utterly unmerited favour of God who must work in us to will and to work for his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). In a context where much of modern evangelicalism still (as J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston wrote in 1957) has semi-Pelagianism in its blood,[109] and is tempted to gloss over doctrinal differences for the sake of a united front against secularism, to be heirs of the Reformation will mean upholding this unpopular and much-maligned truth, against all-comers. If we still prize the name Protestant and wish to be known as Reformational churches we cannot ignore this core Reformation doctrine or its implications for our evangelism, social action, and ecclesiological engagement.

Conclusion

Space prohibits a consideration of other important aspects of Luther's thought as expressed in *The Bondage of the Will*, such as his controversial assertions regarding the hidden and revealed God,[110] and his hermeneutics. Enough has been said to make it clear that an engagement with this ancient debate between

Erasmus and Luther is of vital and dynamic interest to the modern church. Yet we should not forget the historical and personal situation which brought such powerful ideas to the fore. Sadly for Luther, the publication of the book we have been examining came at a very difficult time. He faced, recounts Bainton, 'the pope implacable, Henry VIII railing, Duke George raging, Erasmus refuting, Staupitz dead'.[111] Many in the Wittenberg circle would not hold on to his pioneering formulations in *The Bondage of the Will* for very long.[112] The later debate between Bellarmine and Whitaker may be seen as a 'significant extension of the Luther–Erasmus debate'[113] and the issues would continue to be fought over for at least another century after Luther's death.

Perhaps the subject is handled better by Calvin, the great systematiser of the second generation. In *Institutes* (Bk. 2, chs. 2–5) he proves to be a more assiduous interpreter of the patristic evidence, a more persuasive exegete, and a more judicious systematic theologian than his great German hero. But he was also immensely conscious that he was standing on the back of giants, not least Martin Luther. Luther's treatment in *De Servo Arbitrio* was somewhat rough, given its occasional and polemical nature and the pressures the author was under at the time. We might also say that he was at the vanguard of experimenting with appropriate ways of articulating the biblical message. As Kolb so gracefully puts it, 'Luther was constructing a new theological paradigm, and that effort inevitably drew him into trying out new vocabulary. He learned from such experiments even when they failed to produce satisfactory results'.[114] He may not be as clipped and precise as Chapter 1, section 7 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in his definition of the clarity of Scripture, but there is nothing to beat his raw energy, power, and wit on every subject he touches. One does not often come away from reading a section of Calvin's *Institutes* with a smile, a giggle, or a belly-laugh. Yet Luther manages somehow to entertain as well as edify, even when (as we have said above) his manners are not always worthy of emulation.

Erasmus attempted to make Luther's insistence on the bondage of the will appear unbalanced and somewhat cranky. Luther in turn exposed the fatal flaws in the Erasmian 'middle way'. Sometimes truth is not a blend of two components, like grace and free will, but is to be found in an unadulterated purity. A mere drop of poison is sufficient to ruin a perfectly good drink; as the old rhyme says, 'Johnny was a Humanist's son, But Johnny is no more. What

Johnny thought was H_2O, was H_2SO_4.' So, as Luther suggests, 'We must therefore go all out and completely deny free choice, referring everything to God; then there will be no contradictions in Scripture, and the difficulties, if not cured, can be endured.'[115]

So as he prayed, 'may the Lord, whose cause this is, enlighten us and make us vessels for his honour and glory. Amen'.[116]

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ENDNOTES

1. Attributed to John W. O'Malley in R. Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005), p. 7.
2. Steven Paulson in G. O. Forde, *The Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005), p. xi.
3. *The Captivation of the Will*, p. xvii.
4. The title "Hercules Germanicus" is given to Luther in a cartoon of 1522 which is most uncomplimentary to the Pope, the Inquisition, and the scholastic theologians. See R. H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978 [1950]), pp. 93-94.
5. H. A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 216.
6. B. B. Warfield, "The Theology of the Reformation" in *Studies in Theology: The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield,* vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003 [1932]), p. 471.
7. M. Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 219.
8. As Bard Thompson says, Erasmus's impatience with the externals and formalities of religion made him even more radical than Luther in some respects. B. Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers: A History of the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996), p. 345.
9. See e.g. J. A. Nestingen, *Captivation of the Will*, p. 2 and J. I. Packer, "Luther Against Erasmus" in *Collected Shorter Writings of J. I. Packer vol. 4: Honouring the People of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), p. 103. See also the 1521 woodcut depicting Erasmus milling the flour of God's word from which Luther then makes bread in Brecht, *Martin Luther*, p. 214.

10. B. A Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 162.
11. Brecht, *Martin Luther*, p. 215.
12. B. Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers*, p. 343.
13. See Oberman, *Luther,* p. 216 and Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 13.
14. He told Cardinal Campeggio in Feb., 1524 that he was thinking of publishing something on free will against Luther, at the urging of Henry VIII. See Brecht, *Martin Luther*, pp. 218, 223. It is for these reasons that Packer (following Rupp) refers to Erasmus's book as his 'greatest act of appeasement' in "Luther Against Erasmus," p. 103.
15. In 1533 he perhaps had something of a change of heart when he wrote in a book on Church unity that 'The freedom of the will is a thorny question which it profits little to debate; let us leave it to professed theologians'. See J. I. Packer & O. R. Johnston, *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will: A new translation of De Servo Arbitrio (1525) Martin Luther's Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam* (London: James Clarke & Co, 1957), pp. 39-40.
16. E. G. Rupp & P. S. Watson, *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation LCC 17* (Phila: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 36. All citations of *On the Freedom of the Will* and Luther's *On the Bondage of the Will* in this article are taken from this edition.
17. Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 13. Cf. R. Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (London: Belknap Press, 2000), p. 447 who says, 'If only Luther had not turned so vehement and so radical, Erasmus could have seen in him a comrade.' See also Bainton, *Here I Stand*, p. 195 for Erasmus's positive evaluation of Luther at this point.
18. See B. Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* trans. R. A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), p. 161 and Brecht, *Martin Luther*, p. 235.
19. See Theses 13-15 in T. F. Lull (ed.), *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), pp. 39-40.
20. Article 36 of the Assertion as quoted in Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 11. In Lull, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, p. 39 thesis 13 at Heidelberg mentions 'mortal sin' whereas Kolb here has 'moral sin', and on p. 294 his footnote (no. 1) incorrectly identifies the Heidelberg thesis being paraphrased in the Assertion as no. 14 (it is surely no. 13). The second part of this article from the Assertion is also quoted by Erasmus, *On the Freedom of the Will*, p. 64.
21. B. Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers*, p. 344.
22. Erasmus, *On the Freedom of the Will*, p. 41-43.

23. *Ibid*., p. 47. Brecht, Martin Luther, p. 221 accuses Erasmus's definition itself of being obscure since 'it did not differentiate between natural freedom and freedom granted by the grace of God. To be sure, Erasmus later constantly emphasized the support of grace, but this showed the inconsistency of his position'.
24. *Ibid*., p. 51.
25. *Ibid*., p. 87, but see also the similar point on pp. 57, 58, 59, 60, 63.
26. *Ibid*., p. 79.
27. *Ibid*., p. 80.
28. *Ibid*., p. 89.
29. *Ibid*., p. 90.
30. *Ibid*., p. 86, 97.
31. *Ibid*., p. 91-94.
32. *Ibid*., p. 90.
33. Forde, *Captivation*, p. 31.
34. '*Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X*' in WA 7.148.16 as quoted in Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 53.
35. See Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, pp. 162-3.
36. Brecht, *Martin Luther*, pp. 224-5.
37. *Ibid*., p. 224 which cites WA, TR 2, number 2086 for this entirely believable tale.
38. Nestingen in Forde, *Captivation*, p. 2.
39. *On the Freedom of the Will*, p. 102. A not unusual scatological reference after Luther developed severe constipation while confined at the Wartburg for his own safety in 1521-22; Brecht, *Martin Luther*, p. 2; Bainton, *Here I Stand*, pp. 151-2.
40. Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 9 makes a striking case that though it was a popular book at first, very quickly it 'utterly disappeared from the market…[and] remained in comparative obscurity for a quarter-millennium'. It was not until the nineteenth century that interest in *The Bondage of the Will* recovered.
41. Marius, *Martin Luther*, pp. 456,465. Marius certainly does not share Luther's view when he expresses his own opinion that the New Testament is 'inconsistent and contradictory' and complains of the 'Hebrew Bible's propensity to make of God a somewhat petulant and changeable personality' (p. 451). See also Bard Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers*, p. 410 who is more positive but still describes Luther's book as 'hard-hitting, sometimes offensive', and blunt.
42. Marius, *Martin Luther*, p. 467. On the next page, Marius emotively adds that to many in the twenty-first century who have seen the effects of war and the results of zealots taking up guns, 'Luther's uncompromising rhetoric reeks of sadness and futility and of

bloodshed to come in rivers of anguish throughout Europe and the Americas.'

43. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason*, p. 164.
44. Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 18.
45. Packer, *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will*, p. 45.
46. Packer, "Luther Against Erasmus," p. 107.
47. See Brecht, *Martin Luther*, pp. 237-8 and Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 14 (on Melanchthon's continued moderation in 1526-1527).
48. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 170.
49. Oberman, *Luther*, p. 213.
50. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 112.
51. D. C. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* (Bloomington: Indiana Uni. Press, 1986), p. 26.
52. See Oberman, *Luther*, p. 212 who suggests 'the suspicion that personal experiences dictate scriptural interpretation may be a modern prejudice'; Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 21 who affirms that Luther found the bound will in both the Bible and his experience.
53. E.g. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 329. Also Brecht, *Martin Luther*, p. 233.
54. B. Hägglund, *History of Theology* trans. G. J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), p. 223.
55. A prominent feature of Luther's rhetoric from around p. 180 onwards of *Bondage of the Will*. "Madam Diatribe" occurs first on p. 191.
56. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 179.
57. Roger Nicole has written helpfully about such disagreements between Christians. He cites the 'Golden Rule' of Matthew 7:12 as a key principle to remember in such circumstances and, quoting 2 Timothy 2:24-26 as I have done above (and which Luther does for another reason on p. 140!), reminds us that 'A Christian in carrying on discussions with those who differ should not be subject to the psychology of the boxing ring where the contestants are bent upon demolishing one another'. See <http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.1172255/apps/s/content.asp?ct=1245839> (accessed 15th March 2008).
58. See Marius, *Martin Luther*, p. 442 who cites TR 1, number 818.
59. Forde, *Captivation*, p. 25.
60. See Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, p. 163 and Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 28. Kolb also shows, for example, on pp. 24-25 how different definitions of 'will' were at work in the debate, while Packer, "Luther Against Erasmus", p. 111 discusses the inadequacies of sixteenth century concepts of 'will' generally.
61. B. Thompson, *Humanists and Reformers*, p. 409. See also Packer, "Luther Against Erasmus", p. 118-19 who claims this debate, 'established once and for all that the Reformation conflict was not primarily about obscurantist superstitions and ecclesiastical abuses, matters over which humanists like Erasmus and theologians

like Luther might under certain circumstances have made common cause; but that it was essentially concerned with the substance of the Gospel'.

62. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason*, p. 165. See also Bainton, *Here I Stand*, p. 191 who writes, 'All along he had declared that the contest was over the faith and not over the life, and that if the morals were amended the teaching would still be unsound.'
63. LW 50:172-173.
64. Erasmus, *The Freedom of the Will*, p. 37.
65. D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 151 referring to a Greek word in the full Latin title of Erasmus's work *De libero arbitrio diatribï sive collatio*. See also Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, p. 161 and Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 24 on diatribe as a genre.
66. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 105, 109. See also Oberman, *Luther*, p. 215.
67. Erasmus, *The Freedom of the Will*, pp. 39-40.
68. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, pp. 110-111.
69. Erasmus, *The Freedom of the Will*, p. 40.
70. *Ibid*., pp. 132, 135. See P. Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* trans. R. C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 285 on Luther's view of appropriate timing when it comes to drinking the strong drink of teaching on predestination.
71. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 137.
72. *Ibid*., p. 158-159.
73. *Ibid*., p. 112.
74. *Ibid*., p. 159-161.
75. *Ibid*., p. 162.
76. Erasmus, *The Freedom of the Will*, p. 37.
77. 'That a Christian Assembly or congregation has the right and power to judge all teaching and to call, appoint, and dismiss teachers, established and proven by Scripture' in LW 39, pp. 308-9.
78. Augustine, *Ad Catholicos Fratres Liber Unos*, chapter 28, CSEL 52:264. I am grateful to Peter Sanlon for the correct source of this quotation, which is wrongly attributed in the Augsburg Confession Article 28 to Augustine's epistle against Petilian.
79. *Decretum de editione et usu sacrorum librorum*, Council of Trent, Session IV, 8 April 1546 as cited in M. D. Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word: The Clarity of Scripture* NSBT 21 (Nottingham: Apollos, 2006), p. 150, fn. 28.
80. Erasmus, *The Freedom of the Will*, p. 40.
81. M. D. Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word*, p. 161.
82. (http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=57975> (accessed 8th March 2008).

83. <http://dougwils.com/index.asp?Action=Anchor&CategoryID=1&BlogID=5185> (accessed 8th March 2008).
84. Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, p. 163: 'By using this title Luther intended to make clear that he understood himself as defender of the Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace against Pelagians old and new.' See Augustine's *Contra Julianum* 2.8.23.
85. Augustine, *The Spirit and the Letter 3.5 as quoted in Lull's text of "The Heidelberg Disputation"* (Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings, p. 40), but translated as "A man's free-will, indeed, avails for nothing except to sin, if he knows not the way of truth" in P. Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 5, *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings* trans. P. Holmes, R. E. Wallis, and B. B. Warfield (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1999), pp. 84-85.
86. E.g. on p. 265 as 'free choice avails for nothing but sinning'.
87. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 145.
88. WA 40 III. 352.3 '*quia isto articulo stante stat Ecclesia, ruente ruit Ecclesia*'.
89. J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), III.xi.1, p. 726.
90. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 128.
91. *Ibid*., p. 333.
92. Article 5 of the Disputation for example states, 'It is false to state that man's inclination is free to choose between either of two opposites. Indeed, the inclination is not free, but captive. This is said in opposition to common opinion'. Lull, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, p. 13.
93. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, p. 59.
94. Warfield, "The Theology of the Reformation", pp. 465, 473, and 476. MacCulloch, *Reformation*, p. 151, from a different theological angle to Warfield, similarly writes that Luther's view 'that human beings could expect nothing but condemnation, and had nothing to offer God that would merit salvation [was] the very heart of the Reformation's reassertion of the darkest side of Augustine'.
95. Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, p. 188. See also pp. 189, 190, 195, 196, 205 and others. Luther himself claimed, with a glint in his eye no doubt, that 'Diatribe' wanted him 'to die of unrelieved boredom while she keeps on discoursing' (p. 290).
96. *Ibid*., p. 193.
97. E.g. *ibid*., p. 202.
98. The force of the section covering, pp. 239-46.
99. *Ibid*., p. 332.
100. *Ibid*., p. 143.
101. Kepler, *The Table Talk*, p. 91 (number 226).

102. *Ibid*., pp. 93-94 (number 229).
103. Marius, *Martin Luther*, p. 462. Cf. Forde, *Captivation*, pp. 49-50 and H. J. McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong? An Ecumenical-Theological Study of Luther's Major Work*, 'The Bondage of the Will' (NY: Newman Press, 1969), pp. 143-59.
104. R. C. Sproul, *Willing To Believe: The Controversy Over Free Will* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), p. 100.
105. Marius, *Martin Luther*, p. 454.
106. Brecht, *Martin Luther*, p. 227.
107. T. George, *The Theology of the Reformers* (Leicester: Apollos, 1988), p. 77.
108. See Carl Trueman's insightful and amusingly titled editorial in *Themelios 29.2*, "Why You Shouldn't Buy 'The Big Issue'."
109. J. I. Packer & O. R. Johnston, *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will* (1957), p. 58. The conclusion of the translators' introduction to this edition remains a perceptive and sober challenge to the modern church after more than 50 years.
110. On which, I have found it stimulating to compare the treatments of R. C. Doyle, *Eschatology and the Shape of Christian Belief* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), pp. 175-181 and Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 20-24; 274-86.
111. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, p. 198.
112. See Kolb, *Bound Choice*, pp. 271-90 and Nestingen in Forde, *Captivation*, p. 19.
113. M. Thompson, *A Clear and Present Word*, p. 150.
114. See Kolb, *Bound Choice*, p. 27. See also pp. 2, 10, and 26-27.
115. Luther, *Bondage of the Will*, p. 291.
116. *Ibid*., p. 334 alluding to Romans 9:19-24.