

Luther on Classical Lutheran Education

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June 14, 2007

The following treatise is not intended to be a work of independent thought but rather a compilation of quotations from the writings of Dr. Martin Luther concerning schools, Christian education, and classical education. The comments of the present author are intended to guide the reader from quotation to quotation with enough context to enlighten the understanding. The reader is urged, however, to read the texts for himself, if not in the original, then at least in the noted translation.

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The evidence of Luther's own classical education is readily seen in his writings and documented in biographies and histories of the Reformation. Of particular interest for Luther's early examination of the integration of Scriptures and the seven liberal arts is his use of Cassiodorus' Explanation of the Psalms. Cassiodorus' commentary on the Psalms is an argument for the use of the classical tradition, which Luther digested thoroughly at the beginning of his career as a lecturer in 1513-1515, and the work is echoed in Luther's school treatises of the 1520s.

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Luther's first formal treatment of the topic of schools is found in his treatise of 1520, "To the Christian Nobility" (Luther's Works, American Edition (AE), vol. 44, pp. 123-217). This work is one of Luther's most important in the early reformation, and while tearing down the walls behind which papal authority was ensconced, he also proposed a lengthy list of reforms throughout the German states. The proposal on education (pages 200-207) is directed primarily at the universities.

The universities, too, need a good, thorough reformation. I must say that, no matter whom it annoys. Everything the papacy has instituted and ordered serves only to increase sin and error. What else are the universities, unless they are utterly changed from what they have been hitherto, than what the book of Maccabees calls *gymnasia epheborum et graecae gloriae* [i.e. places for the training of youth in the fashions of Greek culture. Cf. II Macc. 4:9]? What are they but places where loose living is practiced, where little is taught of the Holy Scriptures and the Christian faith, and where only the blind, heathen teacher Aristotle rules far more than Christ? In this regard my advice would be that Aristotle's *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Concerning the Soul*, and *Ethics*, which hitherto have been thought to be his best books, should be completely discarded along with all the rest of his books that boast about nature, although nothing can be learned from them either about nature or the Spirit. Moreover, nobody has yet understood him, and many souls have been burdened with fruitless labor and study, at the cost of much precious time. (p. 200)

Luther's objection to these works of Aristotle reveal that his reforms of the educational system at that time were not merely a blind return to ancient things, though he praised the ancient pedagogy in the liberal arts very highly, as will be seen below. His proposals for reform were guided primarily by theological criteria. He illustrated his objection to Aristotle, continuing with this very pointed rejection.

For the same reasons his book on ethics is the worst of all books. It flatly opposes divine grace and all Christian virtues, and yet it is considered one of his best works. Away with such books! Keep them away from

Christians. No one can accuse me of overstating the case, or of condemning what I do not understand. Dear friend, I know what I am talking about. I know my Aristotle as well as you or the likes of you. I have lectured on him [Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics four times a week during his first year, 1508-1509] and been lectured on him, and I understand him better than St. Thomas or Duns Scotus did. I can boast about this without pride and if necessary, I can prove it. It makes no difference to me that so many great minds have devoted their labor to him for so many centuries. Such objections do not disturb me as once they did, for it is plain as day that other errors have remained for even more centuries in the world and in the universities.

I would gladly agree to keeping Aristotle's books, Logic, Rhetoric, and Poetics, or at least keeping and using them in an abridged form, as useful in training young people to speak and to preach properly. But the commentaries and notes must be abolished, and as Cicero's Rhetoric is read without commentaries and notes, so Aristotle's Logic should be read as it is without all these commentaries. (p. 201)

Luther continued with a recommendation of the languages and the whole seven liberal arts.

In addition to all this there are, of course, the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, as well as the mathematical disciplines and history. But all this I commend to the experts. In fact, reform would come of itself if only we gave ourselves seriously to it. Actually a great deal depends on it, for it is here in the universities that the Christian youth and our nobility, with whom the future of Christendom lies, will be educated and trained. Therefore I believe that there is no work more worthy of pope or emperor than a thorough reform of the universities. And on the other hand, nothing could be more devilish or disastrous than unreformed universities. (p. 202)

Luther left the reform of the faculties in medicine to the medical men. He took a direct lead in the areas of law and theology, however, where he utterly rejected the study of canon law, especially the papal decrees. He urged that the theologians lecture primarily on Holy Scriptures, and beyond that, only the best books should be published and read. He stated,

The number of books on theology must be reduced and only the best ones published. It is not many books that make men learned, nor even reading. But it is a good book frequently read, no matter how small it is, that makes a man learned in the Scriptures and godly. Indeed, the writings of all the holy fathers should be read only for a time so that through them we may be led into the Scriptures. As it is, however, we only read them these days to avoid going any further and getting into the Bible. We are like men who read the sign posts and never travel the road they indicate. Our dear fathers wanted to lead us to the Scriptures by their writings, but we use their works to get away from the Scriptures. Nevertheless, the Scripture alone is our vineyard in which we must all labor and toil. (p. 205)

He then continued by urging that the Scriptures be the primary text in the schools at every level.

Above all, the foremost reading for everybody, both in the universities and in the schools, should be Holy Scripture—and for the younger boys, the Gospels. And would to God that every town had a girls' school as well, where the girls would be taught the gospel for an hour every day either in German or in Latin. Schools indeed! Monasteries and nunneries began long ago with that end in view, and it was a praiseworthy and Christian purpose.... Is it not right that every Christian man know the entire holy gospel by the age of nine or ten? Does he not derive his name and his life from the gospel? (pp. 205-206)

He poured out a lament for the failures of the educational system of his day.

Oh, we handle these poor young people who are committed to us for training and instruction in the wrong way! We shall have to render a solemn account of our neglect to set the word of God before them. Their lot is as described by Jeremiah in Lamentations 2 [11-12], "My eyes are grown weary with weeping, my bowels are terrified, my heart is poured out upon the ground because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, for the youth and the children perish in all the streets of the entire city. They said to their mothers, 'Where is bread and wine?' as they fainted like wounded men in the streets of the city and gave up the ghost on their mothers' bosom." We do not see this pitiful evil, how today the young people of Christendom languish and perish miserably in our midst for want of the gospel, in which we ought to be giving them constant instruction and training. (p. 206)

Luther continued by putting forth his view on how enrollment standards should be managed at the universities.

Moreover, even if the universities were diligent in Holy Scripture, we need not send everybody there as we do now, where their only concern is numbers and where everybody wants a doctor's degree. We should send only the most highly qualified students who have been well trained in the lower schools. (p. 206)

Finally, Luther concluded his recommendations for the reform of the universities with this oft-quoted and very important statement.

I would advise no one to send his child where the Holy Scriptures are not supreme. Every institution that does not unceasingly pursue the study of God's word becomes corrupt.... I greatly fear that the universities, unless they teach the Holy Scriptures diligently and impress them on the young students, are wide gates to hell. (p. 207)

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Luther's initial proposal for education was preliminary at best, and was merely one part of a larger tractate on the reform of the German states. As the Reformation progressed, the competing interests of the church, scholasticism, humanism, and the economic lure of trade were preventing the needs of community, church, and home from being met by a crumbling and ineffective educational system. In fact, Luther himself was being quoted as opposing the theologically corrupt schools, and his translation of Scriptures into the vernacular seemed to de-emphasize the importance of the languages. Genuine theological opposition to education was being urged by the radical reformers, who declared all learning sinful and devilish. This situation prompted Luther's 1524 treatise, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (AE, vol. 45, p. 347-378). The advice that he gave in this work is practical in nature, leaving Melancthon to systematize his suggestions, but they arose out of theology of the Lutheran Reformation and are presented as essential to it.

After a brief introduction which rooted the subsequent admonitions in the Gospel ("until Christ's righteousness goes forth as brightness, and His saving grace is lighted as a lamp," p. 347), Luther turned to the current condition of the schools.

First of all, we are today experiencing in all the German lands how schools are everywhere being left to go to wrack and ruin. The universities are growing weak, and monasteries are declining. . . . For now it is becoming known through God's word how un-Christian these institutions are, and how they are devoted only to men's bellies. . . . No one is any longer willing to have his children get an education. "Why," they say, "should we bother to have them go to school if they are not to become priests, monks, or nuns? 'Twere better they should learn a livelihood to earn." (p. 348)

Luther observed that while the pre-Reformation educational system had served the devil by training people away from God's word and pure Gospel, the Reformation had revealed this deceit; now the complete rejection of education served the devil's evil purposes far better.

Luther then developed the theme of his treatise, the importance of the schools for the welfare of church and home and world. He does not speak of numbers, but of the one single student who can make all the difference.

No one is on the alert, but just goes quietly along. Even though only a single boy could thereby be trained to become a real Christian, we ought properly to give a hundred gulden to this cause for every gulden we would give to fight the Turk, even if he were breathing down our necks. For one real Christian is better and can do more good than all the men on earth. (p. 350)

He urged the councilmen, as the keepers of the public purse, to make the funding of schools a great priority.

For it is a grave and important matter, and one which is of vital concern both to Christ and the world at large, that we take steps to help our youth. . . . My dear sirs, if we have to spend such large sums every year on guns, roads, bridges, dams, and countless similar items to insure the temporal peace and prosperity of a city, why

should not much more be devoted to the poor neglected youth—at least enough to engage one or two competent men to teach? (p. 350)

Luther further reminded them that the Christian has now been relieved of the vast financial burden of the Roman error. The money that had been spent for masses and pilgrimages should go to schools.

Now that he is, by the grace of God, rid of such pillage and compulsory giving, he ought henceforth, out of gratitude to God and for his glory, to contribute a part of that amount toward schools for the training of the poor children. That would be an excellent investment. (p. 351)

Luther warned, however, that the German cities need to seize the opportunity while they still had it.

We have today the finest and most learned group of men, adorned with languages and all the arts, who could also render real service if only we would make use of them as instructors of the young people. Is it not evident that we are now able to prepare a boy in three years, so that at the age of fifteen or eighteen he will know more than all the universities and monasteries have known before? (p. 351).

He then reminded them that the freedom to provide sound Christian schooling was the very freedom of the Gospel itself, which they would not have forever. He sounded a reminder that rings prophetic for European and American Lutherans.

For you should know that God's word and grace is like a passing shower of rain which does not return where it has once been. It has been with the Jews, but when it's gone it's gone, and now they have nothing. Paul brought it to the Greeks; but again when it's gone it's gone, and now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins also had it; but when it's gone, it's gone, and now they have the pope. And you Germans need not think that you will have it forever, for ingratitude and contempt will not make it stay. (pp. 352-3)

Luther then placed his greatest reason for the support of truly Christian schools before the councilmen.

The third consideration is by far the most important of all, namely the command of God, who through Moses urges and enjoins parents so often to instruct their children that Psalm 78 says: How earnestly he commanded our fathers to teach their children and to instruct their children's children [Ps. 78:5-6]. This is also evident in God's fourth commandment, in which the injunction that children shall obey their parents is so stern that he would even have rebellious children sentenced to death [Deut. 21:18-21]. Indeed, for what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young? It is utterly impossible for these foolish young people to instruct and protect themselves. This is why God has entrusted them to us who are older and know from experience what is best for them. And God will hold us strictly accountable for them. (p. 353)

Luther listed three reasons why parents neglect this duty and fail in their responsibility. He writes,

In the first place, there are some who lack the goodness and decency to do it, even if they had the ability. . . . In the second place, the great majority of parents unfortunately are wholly unfitted for this task. . . . In the third place, even if parents had the ability and desire to do it themselves, they have neither the time nor the opportunity for it, what with their duties and the care of the household. (p. 355)

Then he emphasized why this duty fell to the sound Christian councilmen of the cities of Germany to provide Christian schools, and why it was in their best interest to do so.

A city's best and greatest welfare, safety, and strength consist rather in its having many able, learned, wise, honorable, and well-educated citizens. They can then readily gather, protect, and properly use treasure and all manner of property.

So it was done in ancient Rome. There boys were so taught that by the time they reached their fifteenth, eighteenth, or twentieth year they were well versed in Latin, Greek, and all the liberal arts (as they are called), and then immediately entered upon a political or military career. Their system produced intelligent, wise, and competent men, so skilled in every art and rich in experience that if all the bishops, priests, and monks in the whole of Germany today were rolled into one, you would not have the equal of a single Roman soldier. As a

result their country prospered; they had capable and trained men for every position. So at all times throughout the world simple necessity has forced men, even among the heathen, to maintain pedagogues and schoolmasters if their nation was to be brought to a high standard. Hence, the word “schoolmaster” is used by Paul in Galatians 4 as a word taken from the common usage and practice of mankind, where he says, “The law was our schoolmaster. (p. 356)

With these lavish words of praise for the ancient, classical system of educating young men for the service of the nation, Luther then turned to the educational curriculum itself.

“All right,” you say again, “suppose we do have to have schools; what is the use of teaching Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and the other liberal arts? We could just as well use German for teaching the Bible and God’s word, which is enough for our salvation.” I reply: Alas! I am only too well aware that we Germans must always be and remain brutes and stupid beasts . . . Languages and the arts, which can do us no harm, but are actually a greater ornament, profit, glory, and benefit, both for the understanding of Holy Scripture and the conduct of temporal government—these we despise. . . .

Truly, if there were no other benefit connected with the languages, this should be enough to delight and inspire us, namely, that they are so fine and noble a gift of God, with which he is now so richly visiting and blessing us Germans above all other lands. We do not see many instances where the devil has allowed them to flourish by means of the universities and monasteries; indeed, these have always raged against languages and are even now raging. For the devil smelled a rat, and perceived that if the languages were revived a hole would be knocked in his kingdom which he could not easily stop up again. Since he found he could not prevent their revival, he now aims to keep them on such slender rations that they will of themselves decline and pass away. (pp. 357-8)

Luther further reflected upon the importance of the humanist, Renaissance revival of the classical languages for the Reformation:

Although the gospel came and still comes to us through the Holy Spirit alone, we cannot deny that it came through the medium of languages, was spread abroad by that means, and must be preserved by the same means. For just when God wanted to spread the gospel throughout the world by means of the apostles he gave the tongues for that purpose. Even before that, by means of the Roman Empire he had spread Latin and Greek languages widely in every land in order that his gospel might the more speedily bear fruit far and wide. He has done the same thing now as well. Formerly no one knew why God had the languages revived, but now for the first time we see that it was done for the sake of the gospel, which he intended to bring to light and use in exposing and destroying the kingdom of Antichrist. . . . In proportion then as we value the gospel, let us zealously hold to the languages. (pp. 358-9)

Luther followed with praise for the Hebrew and Greek languages, because God chose them to be the languages in which His holy Word was given. He became eloquent in urging the teaching and learning of the sacred languages:

And let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit [Eph. 6:17] is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out [Matt. 14:20], they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. (p. 360)

Luther had written something similar to the Bohemian Brethren at the end of his tract, “The Adoration of the Sacrament” (1523, AE, vol. 38, p. 304), urging them to train some of their talented boys in the Greek and Hebrew language.

Following a lengthy discussion of the importance of the languages especially for preachers of the Gospel, Luther then turned to the needs of the secular kingdom which must be supplied by good schools.

To this point we have been speaking about the necessity and value of languages and Christian schools for the spiritual realm and the salvation of souls. Now let us consider also the body. Let us suppose that there were

no soul, no heaven or hell, and that we were to consider solely the temporal government from the standpoint of its worldly functions. Does it not need good schools and educated persons even more than the spiritual realm? Hitherto, the sophists have shown no concern whatever for the temporal government, and have designed their schools so exclusively for the spiritual estate that it has become almost a disgrace for an educated man to marry. . . . (vol. 45, pp. 366-7)

Christian schools cannot be focused solely upon the spiritual realm, but must provide an education that serves the world. Here Luther again turned to the classical education of the ancient world.

It is not necessary to repeat here that the temporal government is a divinely ordained estate The question is rather: How are we to get good and capable men into it? Here we are excelled and put to shame by the pagans of old, especially the Romans and Greeks. Although they had no idea of whether this estate were pleasing to God or not, they were so earnest and diligent in educating and training their young boys and girls to fit them for the task, that when I call it to mind I am forced to blush for us Christians, and especially for us Germans. Yet we know, or at least we ought to know, how essential and beneficial it is—and pleasing to God—that a prince, lord, councilman, or other person in a position of authority be educated and qualified to perform the functions of his office as a Christian should.

Now if (as we have assumed) there were no souls, and there were no need at all of schools and languages for the sake of the Scriptures and of God, this one consideration alone would be sufficient to justify the establishment everywhere of the very best schools for both boys and girls, namely, that in order to maintain its temporal estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women, men able to rule well over land and people, women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright. Now such men must come from our boys, and such women from our girls. Therefore, it is a matter of properly educating and training our boys and girls to that end. (pp. 367-8)

This is the point where Luther then laid out his vision for a classical education in his day, rooted firmly in the pedagogical tradition that had been received through a thousand years of Christian adaptation from the Greeks and Romans.

But if children were instructed and trained in schools, or wherever learned and well-trained schoolmasters and schoolmistresses were available to teach the languages, the other arts, and history, they would then hear of the doings and sayings of the entire world, and how things went with various cities, kingdoms, princes, men, and women. Thus, they could in a short time set before themselves as in a mirror the character, life, counsels, and purposes – successful and unsuccessful – of the whole world from the beginning; on the basis of which they could then draw the proper inferences and in the fear of God take their own place in the stream of human events. In addition, they could gain from history the knowledge and understanding of what to seek and what to avoid in this outward life, and be able to advise and direct others accordingly. . . .

For my part, if I had children and could manage it, I would have them study not only languages and history, but also singing and music together with the whole of mathematics [i.e. the quadrivium: arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy]. For what is all this but mere child's play? The ancient Greeks trained their children in these disciplines; yet they grew up to be people of wondrous ability, subsequently fit for everything. How I regret now that I did not read more poets and historians, and that no one taught me them! (pp. 368-370)

Luther understood the need for the children of that day to be home, do chores, and learn a trade, and consequently proposed that “study and work will go hand-in-hand while the boys are young and able to do both” (p. 370), and suggested likewise for the girls. He added, however,

The exceptional pupils, who give promise of becoming skilled teachers, preachers, or holders of other ecclesiastical positions, should be allowed to continue in school longer, or even be dedicated to a life of study. (p. 371)

Again he urged that action be taken quickly before it was too late.

The last section of this treatise took up the topic of books. Luther urged the collecting of libraries. Yet his prioritization also reveals the considerations that must go into the formation of a curriculum. He began with the importance of good books.

Finally, one thing more merits serious consideration by all those who earnestly desire to have such schools and languages established and maintained in Germany. It is this: no effort or expense should be spared to provide good libraries or book repositories, especially in the larger cities which can well afford it. For if the gospel and all the arts are to be preserved, they must be set down and held fast in books and writings. . . This is essential, not only that those who are to be our spiritual and temporal leaders may have books to read and study, but also that the good books may be preserved and not lost, together with the arts and languages which we now have by the grace of God. (p. 373)

Luther cited the example of Moses and the prophets. He also noted the failures of the monastic and university libraries, lamenting that “they taught us nothing good.” He stated the indictment, “That is the reward of our ingratitude, that men failed to found libraries but let the good books perish and kept the poor ones” (p. 375).

Luther then gave a prioritized book list, a kind of curriculum, just as Cassiodorus had done 1000 years before him, as a suggested source for the program of education he envisioned.

First of all, there would be the Holy Scriptures, in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and German, and any other language in which they might be found. Next, the best commentaries, and, if I could find them, the most ancient, in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Then, books that would be helpful in learning the languages, such as the poets and orators, regardless of whether they were pagan or Christian, Greek or Latin, for it is from such books that one must learn grammar. After that would come books on the liberal arts, and all the other arts. Finally, there would be books of law and medicine; there too there should be careful choices among commentaries.

Among the foremost would be the chronicles and histories, in whatever languages they are to be had. For they are a wonderful help in understanding and guiding the course of events, and especially for observing the marvelous works of God. How many fine tales and sayings we should have today of things that took place and were current in German lands, not one of which is known to us, simply because there was no one to write them down, and no one to preserve the books had they been written. (p. 376)

He concluded,

Now that God has today so graciously bestowed upon us an abundance of arts, scholars, and books, it is time to reap and gather in the best as well as we can, and lay up treasure in order to preserve for the future something from these years of jubilee, and not lose this bountiful harvest. (p. 377)

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One of the very significant events of the reformation was the first official visitation of the churches and schools of Electoral Saxony. The actual visitation began early in 1527. In the year that followed, Philip Melancthon began to draw up a guide as the doctrinal foundation for the visitation. Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony (1528, AE vol. 40, pp. 269-324) was prepared under Luther's observations and guidance, expressed his theology and ideas, and bore his preface. He personally revised later editions of the work. Finally, Instructions was fully endorsed by Luther. For these reasons the text is generally included in the works of Luther. It is included here to give the reader a fuller picture of the Lutheran reform of the classical, liberal arts education of the parish schools.

The final section of instructions for the visitor pertains to schools (pp. 314-324) and is quoted here at length. The opening words express the direct ideas of Luther as noted from other works of his concerning schools.

The preachers are to exhort the people to send their children to school so that persons are educated for competent service both in church and state. For some suppose it is sufficient if the preacher can read German, but this is a dangerous delusion. For whoever would teach another must have long practice and

special ability which are achieved only after long study from youth on. As St. Paul says in 1 Tim. 3 [:2]: A bishop must be capable to instruct and teach others. Thereby he shows that preachers must be better qualified than laymen. He praises Timothy in 1 Tim. 4 [:6] because he has been instructed from his youth, nourished on the words of the faith and of good doctrine. For it is not an insignificant art to teach others clearly and correctly, and it is not within the power of such folk as have no learning.

Able people of this kind are needed not only in the churches but God also desires them in secular government.

Because it is God's will, then, parents should send their children to school, and prepare them for the Lord God so that he may use them for the service of others. (p. 314)

Here the Instructions remind the visitors and parish pastors that the children are not sent to school for the sake of earning an income, but to prepare them for service. God "will provide for them as he has promised" (p. 315), they are reminded. They then turn to the course of instruction.

At present many faults exist in the schools. We have set up the following syllabus of study so that the youth may be rightly instructed.

In the first place the schoolmasters are to be concerned about teaching the children Latin only, not German or Greek or Hebrew as some have done hitherto and troubled the poor children with so many languages. This is not only useless but even injurious. . . .

Secondly, they are also not to burden the children with a great many books, but avoid multiplicity in every way possible.

Thirdly, it is necessary to divide the children into groups. (p. 315)

What follows are the three divisions recommended for the parish schools and the curriculum which was to be used.

The First Division

The first division consists of children who are beginning to read. Here this order should be followed.

They shall first learn to read the primer in which are found the alphabet, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and other prayers.

When they have learned this they shall be given Donatus [350 B.C., Roman grammarian and teacher of rhetoric; his *Ars grammatica* was a popular textbook of medieval schools] and Cato [100 B.C., Roman poet and teacher of grammar; grammar was largely the study of parts of speech, and was intended to enable the student to read Latin], to read Donatus and to expound Cato. The schoolmaster is to expound one or two verses at a time, and the children are to repeat these at a later time, so that they thereby build up a vocabulary of Latin words and get a supply of words for speaking.

They shall practice this until they can read well. We would consider it not unfruitful if the weaker children who do not have especially quick minds, went through Cato and Donatus not only once but also a second time.

The children are to be taught to write and be obliged to show their lessons daily to the schoolmaster.

In order that they may learn a greater number of Latin words, the children may be assigned a few words for memorization each evening, as wise teachers formerly have done in the schools.

These children shall also be taught music and shall sing with the others, as we hope by God's help to show later. (pp. 315-316)

The Instructions then turn to the second stage of the parish schools and the formal beginning of the grammar stage of education.

The Second Division

The second division consists of those children who can read and should now learn grammar. With these we should proceed in the following manner.

All the children, large and small, should practice music daily, the first hour in the afternoon.

Then the schoolmaster shall first expound the fables of Aesop [about 600 B.C.; these stories have a moral and were often used in the Middle Ages as texts in the school] to the second division.

After vespers the Paedagogia of Mosselanus [1493-1524, humanist scholar and professor at Leipzig; his grammar, Paedagogia] should be explained and, these books learned, selections should be made from the Colloquies of Erasmus [1466-1536; a leader of the Renaissance revival; Colloquies were a collection of dialogues in which he caricatured superstitious practices], such as are useful and edifying for children.

This may be repeated on the following evening.

When the children go home in the evening a sentence from a poet or other writer may be prescribed which is to be repeated the next morning, such as *Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur*: A friend in need is a friend in deed. Or, *Fortuna quem nimium fovet, stultum facit*: Of him on whom fortune smiles too much it makes a fool. Also Ovid [43 B.C.-A.D.17, last of the great Roman poets; *Ars amatoria* and *Metamorphoses*]: *Vulgus amicitias utilitate probat*: The crowd praises friendship for its usefulness.

In the morning the children shall again explain Aesop.

The preceptor shall decline a number of nouns and [conjugate] verbs, many or few, easy or hard, according to the ability of the pupils, and have them give the rule or explanation of these forms.

When children have learned the rules of syntax they should be required in this period to identify parts of speech or to construe, as it is called, which is a very useful practice, though it is used by few.

When now the children have learned Aesop in this way, they are to be given Terence [ca. 190–ca. 159 B.C., Roman comic poet] to be learned by heart. For they have now matured and can carry more work. But the schoolmaster shall exercise care so that the children are not overtaxed.

After Terence the children shall be given some of the fables of Plautus [d. 184 B.C., Roman comic dramatist who adapted Greek plays to the Roman stage], such as are not objectionable: *Aulularia*, *Trinummus*, *Pseudolus*, and the like.

The hours before noon shall always and everywhere be so ordered that only grammar be taught. First, etymology. Then, syntax. Next, prosody. When this is finished, the teacher should start over again from the beginning, giving the children a good training in grammar. For if this is not done all learning is lost labor and fruitless.

The children are to recite these grammatical rules from memory, so that they are compelled and driven to learn grammar well.

Where the schoolmaster shuns this kind of work, as is often the case, he should be dismissed and another teacher found for the children, who will take on this work of holding the children to grammar. For no greater harm can be done to all the arts than where the children are not well trained in grammar.

This is to be done all through the week, and the children are not to be assigned a new book every day.

But one day, for instance Saturday or Wednesday, shall be appointed on which the children are given Christian instruction.

For some are taught nothing out of holy Scripture. Some teach their children nothing but holy Scripture. We should yield to neither of these practices.

It is essential that the children learn the beginning of a Christian and blessed life. But there are many reasons why also other books beside Scripture should be given the children from which they may learn to speak.

This order should be followed: The schoolmaster shall have the whole division come up for recitation, asking each pupil in turn to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments.

If the group is too large one part may come up for recitation one week, another following.

In one period the schoolmaster should explain simply and correctly the meaning of the Lord's Prayer, at another time, the Creed, at another, the Ten Commandments. He should emphasize what is necessary for living a good life, namely, the fear of God, faith, good works. He should not touch on points of dissension. He also should not accustom the children to lampoon monks or others, as many incompetent teachers do.

Furthermore the teachers should ask the pupils to memorize a number of easy Psalms that contain in themselves a summary of the Christian life and speak about the fear of God, faith, and good works. (pp. 317-318)

Here the Instructions give psalms 112, 34, 128, 125, 127, and 133 as examples. It continues:

On these days, too, St Matthew is to be expounded grammatically. When one has completed it, one should begin again from the beginning.

Or, if the boys are a little older, one may expound the two epistles of Paul to Timothy, or the first epistle of John, or the Book of Proverbs.

The schoolmaster should not undertake to read other books than these. For it is fruitless to burden the youth with hard and deep books. It is for their own reputation that some have assayed to read Isaiah, the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, the Gospel of St. John, and the like.

The Third Division

When now the children have been well drilled in grammar the more excellent ones may be chosen for a third group.

Along with the others these shall rehearse music the hour after noon.

Then one should expound Virgil [70-19 B.C., best known of the Roman poets; Eclogues, Georgics, and the Aeneid] to them, and when this is finished one may read Ovid's Metamorphoses with them.

In the evening: Cicero's Officia or Familiar Letters [106-43 B.C., Roman orator, politician, and philosopher].

In the morning: Virgil is to be repeated, and in grammar the pupils are to be required to explain, decline, and indicate the various forms of discourse.

One should keep to grammar the hours before noon, so that the pupils may be well drilled in this.

When they have mastered etymology and syntax the pupils shall go on to prosody, wherein they become accustomed to composing verses. For this practice is very useful in learning to understand other writings. Also it gives the pupils a rich vocabulary and makes them apt in many ways.

When they have sufficiently studied grammar they may use these hours for dialectic and rhetoric.

Of the second and third divisions should be required each week a written exercise such as a letter or a poem.

The pupils shall also be required to speak Latin. The schoolmaster himself, as far as possible, should speak only Latin with the pupils so that they become accustomed to and are encouraged in this practice. (pp. 319-320)

Appearing at about the same time as the Visitation Articles was Luther's 1528 Confession Concerning Christ's Supper (AE, vol. 37, pp. 161-372). In the first two parts of his Great Confession Luther responded to the fanatics on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and examined in detail the four biblical texts of the Lord's Supper. In the third and final section, however, Luther set out to confess all the articles of the faith in a final and comprehensive way. This section became one of the foundation documents for the Schwabach articles of 1529, and in turn, of the Augsburg Confession.

In affirming the three "holy orders and true institutions established by God" (p. 364), namely, the office of priest or ministry of the Word, the estate of marriage, and the civil government, Luther rejected and condemned the monastic orders. However, he observed a continuing good use for these foundations, thus defining the central purposes of the schools.

It would be a good thing if monasteries and religious foundations were kept for the purpose of teaching young people God's Word, the Scriptures, and Christian morals, so that we might train and prepare fine, capable men to become bishops, pastors, and other servants of the church, as well as competent, learned people for civil government, and fine, respectable, learned women capable of keeping house and rearing children in a Christian way. But as a way of seeking salvation, these institutions are all the devil's doctrine and creed, 1 Timothy 4 [1], etc. (p. 364)

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The matter of the monasteries surfaced again in a letter from Margrave George of Brandenburg to Luther, reporting the reform of the churches throughout Brandenburg and asking his advice on the best way to correct the continuing abuses in the monasteries. Luther replied in a letter dated July 18, 1529 (Luther: Letters of Spiritual Council, ed. and trans. by Theodore, G. Tappert, Westminster: John Knox Press, 1955),

In the first place, we think it well that the monasteries and foundations should be left as they are until they die out, for so long as the old inmates still live, and they are forced either to introduce or put up with innovations, there is little hope that there will be any peace. Moreover, such worship, established on the foundation of the old manner of worship, will in time become an unprofitable thing, as has occurred before. Whatever of the old, good order of worship it is desired to reintroduce is best put into the schools and parish churches, where the common man too can be present and be touched by it, etc. as we do here in Wittenberg and in other towns.

In the second place, it would be good if in Your Grace's principality Your Grace would establish one or two universities, where not only the Holy Scriptures but also law and all the sciences would be taught. From these schools learned men could be got as preachers, pastors, secretaries, councilors, etc. for the whole principality. To this purpose the income of the monasteries and foundations could be applied so that good scholars could be maintained in the schools at proper salaries: two theologians, two jurists, one professor of medicine, one mathematician, and four or five men for grammar, logic, rhetoric, etc. If studying is to be encouraged, you must have, not empty cloisters and deserted monasteries and endowed churches, but a city in which many people come together, work together, and incite and stimulate one another. Solitary studies do not accomplish this, but common studies do, for where many are together one gives another incentive and example.

In the third place, it is well that in all towns and villages good primary schools be established. From these could be picked and chosen those who are fit for the universities, and men can then be taken from the universities who are to serve your land and people. If the towns or their citizens cannot do this, it would be well to establish new stipends for the support of a few bright fellows in the deserted monasteries, and so every town might have one or two students. In the course of time, when the common people see that their sons can become pastors and preachers and incumbents of other offices, many of those who now think that a scholar cannot get a living will again keep their sons in school.

If some of the scholars who are trained in these schools take service and hold office in the dominions of other princes, and the objection is made that you are training people for other lords, it must be remembered that this does no harm, for beyond a doubt these men will promote the founding and endowment of schools in the lands of other princes and peoples, etc. (pp. 326-327)

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In a letter to Elector John of Saxony, written the next year (May 20, 1530), Luther gave strong encouragement to his lord to hold fast to the true confession and doctrine at the Diet of Augsburg (Luther: Letters of Spiritual Council). He pointed to Christian schools and well-instructed and pious children as the first and brightest evidence of the blessing of the pure Gospel being given full protection and support. He wrote,

The merciful God is also giving a sign of his graciousness by making his Word so powerful and fruitful in Your Grace's land. For surely Your Grace's land has more excellent pastors and preachers than any other land in the whole world, and their faithful, pure teaching helps to preserve peace. As a consequence the tender youth, both boys and girls, are so well instructed in the Catechism and the Scriptures that I am deeply moved when I see that young boys and girls can pray, believe, and speak more of God and Christ than they ever could in the monasteries, foundations, and schools of bygone days, or even of our day.

Truly Your Grace's land is a beautiful paradise for such young people. There is no other place like it in all the world. God has erected this paradise in Your Grace's land as a special token of his grace and favor. (pp. 142-143)

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Luther again addressed the issue of education in the two catechisms of the Lutheran Church. In the preface to *The Small Catechism* (Preface.19-20, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2000), Luther wrote,

In particular, at this point also urge governing authorities and parents to rule well and to send their children to school. Point out how they are obliged to do so and what a damnable sin they commit if they do not, for thereby, as the worst enemies of God and humanity, they overthrow and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. Explain very clearly what kind of horrible damage they do when they do not help to train children as pastors, preachers, civil servants, etc., and tell them that God will punish them dreadfully for this. For in our day and age it is necessary to preach about these things. The extent to which parents and governing authorities are now sinning in these matters defies description. The devil, too, intends to do something horrible in all this. (p. 350)

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His instruction related to education is found in the Fourth Commandment of *The Large Catechism* (141 and 167-178, *Ibid.*, pp. 405-410). Schools are included in the command and promise of the Fourth Commandment, in that teachers exercise a delegated authority. So Luther observed,

Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him; if he dies, he confers and delegates his responsibility and authority to others appointed for the purpose. (141)

Luther turned to the duties of parents included under the Fourth Commandment. Here he laid out the vision of what must be done with children, how the parents should understand and approach their duty, and what the parents should hope to accomplish in their homes. Luther's teaching lays the foundation for the parents' attitude and use of the schools.

In addition, it would also be well to preach to parents on the nature of their responsibility, how they should treat those whom they have been appointed to rule. Although their responsibility is not explicitly presented in the Ten Commandments, it is certainly treated in detail in many other passages of Scripture. God even intends it to be included precisely in this commandment in which he speaks of father and mother. For he does not want scoundrels or tyrants in this office or authority; nor does he assign them this honor (that is, power and right to govern) so that they may receive homage. Instead, they should keep in mind that they owe obedience to God, and that, above all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge the duties of their office, not only to provide for the material support of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but especially to bring them to the praise and honor of God. Therefore do not imagine that the parental office is a matter of your pleasure and whim. It is a strict commandment and injunction of God, who holds you accountable for it.

But once again, the real trouble is that no one perceives or pays attention to this. Everyone acts as if God gave us children for our pleasure and amusement, gave us servants merely to put them to work like cows or donkeys, and gave us subjects to treat as we please, as if it were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live. No one is willing to see that this is the command of the divine Majesty, who will solemnly call us to account and punish us for its neglect. Nor is it recognized how very necessary it is to devote serious attention to the young. For if we want capable and qualified people for both the civil and the spiritual realms, we really must spare no effort, time, and expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and the world. We must not think only of amassing money and property for them. God can provide for them and make them rich without our help, as indeed he does daily. But he has given us children and entrusted them to us precisely so that we may raise and govern them according to his will; otherwise, God would have no need of fathers and mothers. Therefore let all people know that it is their chief duty—at the risk of losing divine grace—first to bring up their children in the fear and knowledge of God, and, then, if they are so gifted, also to have them engage in formal study and learn so that they may be of service wherever they are needed.

If this were done, God would also bless us richly and give us grace so that the people might be trained who would be a credit to the nation and its people. We would also have good, capable citizens, virtuous women who, as good managers of the household [Titus 2:5], would faithfully raise upright children and servants. Think what deadly harm you do when you are negligent and fail to bring up your children to be useful and godly. You bring upon yourself sin and wrath, thus earning hell by the way you have reared your own children, no matter how holy and upright you may be otherwise. Because this commandment is neglected, God also terribly punishes the world; hence there is no longer any discipline, government, or peace. We all complain about this situation, but we fail to see that it is our own fault. We have unruly and disobedient subjects because of how we train them. This is enough to serve as a warning; a more extensive explanation will have to await another time. (167-178, pp. 409-410)

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The “another time” came in the next year, 1530. Six years after “To the Noblemen”, while the Diet at Augsburg was in session, Luther used his enforced idleness at the Coburg to address the problem of parents taking their students out of school in favor of “trade and commerce”. The tract, entitled “A Sermon on Keeping Children in School” (AE vol. 46, pp. 213-258), includes a fine description and encomium of the pastoral office and its great importance for both church and state. Luther especially condemned the materialism that led parents to focus only on the economic success of their children instead of providing for the needs of church and state. In praising the city of Nurnberg in the opening pages, Luther noted,

There may, of course, be an occasional idolater, a servant of Mammon [Matt. 6:24], who will take his son out of school and say, “If my son can read and do arithmetic, that is enough; we now have books in German, etc.” Such a person sets a bad example for all the other good citizens. (p. 215)

Luther then urged the pastors and preachers especially to take a leadership role in exhorting parents to keep their children in school, lest the devil “have his own way with our offspring,” and “the Scriptures and learning disappear” (p. 217). He indicated the shape of this education in condemning their reluctance to pay for the right teachers.

Because they are not now willing to support and keep the honest, upright, virtuous schoolmasters and teachers offered them by God to raise their children in the fear of God, and in virtue, knowledge, learning, and honor by dint of hard work, diligence and industry, and at small cost and expense, they will get in their place incompetent substitutes, ignorant louts such as they have had before, who at great cost and expense will teach the children nothing but how to be utter asses. (p. 218)

Luther’s declaration of the law was unyielding as he condemned the educational priority of getting the child a good, well-paying job:

He has not given you your children and the means to support them simply so that you may do with them as you please, or train them just to get ahead in the world. You have been earnestly commanded to raise them

for God's service, or be completely rooted out—you, your children, and everything else, in which case everything you have done for them is condemned. (p. 222)

The first portion of Luther's exhortation placed the highest priority on providing pastors for the church, along with sacristans and schoolmasters. Church offices need well educated men.

Boys of such ability ought to be kept at their studies, especially sons of the poor, for all the endowments and revenues of the foundations and monasteries are earmarked for this purpose. In addition, though, other boys as well ought to study, even those of lesser ability. They ought at least to read, write, and understand Latin, for we need not only highly learned doctors and masters of Holy Scripture but also ordinary pastors who will teach the gospel and the catechism to the young and ignorant, and baptize and administer the sacrament. . . .

Even though a boy who has studied Latin should afterward learn a trade and become a craftsman, he still stands as a ready reserve in case he should be needed as a pastor or in some other service of the word. Neither will such knowledge hurt his capacity to earn a living. On the contrary, he can rule his house the better because of it (p. 231)

Following a lengthy section on the spiritual office of preaching, Luther turned to providing for temporal or worldly government, which is also an ordinance and gift of God (p. 237). He defined this government and observed that it is ruled most effectively by wisdom, not by force (p. 238). As he had praised the good done by the preaching office, so he also praised the good that the pious jurist, legal scholar, or clerk can do (p. 240). "All these great works your son can do. He can become such a useful person if you will hold him to it and see him educated" (p. 241). He compared the two offices:

Indeed, there is need in this office for abler people than are needed in the office of preaching, so it is necessary to get the best boys for this work; for in the preaching office Christ does the whole thing, by his Spirit, but in the worldly kingdom men must act on the basis of reason—wherein the laws also have their origin—for God has subjected temporal rule and all of physical life to reason (Genesis 2 [:15]). (p. 242)

Here Luther also inserted a brief comment on the singular pleasure that education provides:

I shall say nothing here about the pure pleasure a man gets from having studied, even though he never holds an office of any kind, how at home by himself he can read all kinds of things, talk and associate with educated people, and travel and do business in foreign lands; for there are perhaps very few people who are moved by this pleasure. (p. 243)

In this section of his sermon Luther especially praised the laws of the land and those whose work is the making and upholding of lawful rule. He also praised the work of soldiers, and then made a statement that reinforced the important point that education should not make the distinctions of elite and despised classes of people or vocations, but should enable men to recognize the value of each vocation.

Every occupation has its own honor before God, as well as its own requirements and duties. . . . All the estates and works of God are to be praised as highly as they can be, and not despised in favor of another. For it is written, "Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus," "What God does is fine and beautiful", and again in Psalm 104[:31], "God rejoices in his works." These ideas ought to be impressed particularly by the preachers on the people from their youth up, by schoolmasters on their boys, and by parents on their children, so that they may learn well what estates and offices are God's, ordained by God, so that once they know this they will not despise or ridicule or speak evil of any one of them but hold them all in high regard. That will both please God and serve the cause of peace and unity, for God is a great lord and has many kinds of servants. (p. 246)

Luther observed further that these estates and offices will have wicked people in them, but that the offices themselves continue to be God's institution, and should not be despised just because wicked people do not use them with honor. Furthermore he warned against comparing the difficulty of one vocation against another. In this context he reflected on his own office as a writer, a vocation directly taught and developed in school.

But in writing, the best part of the body (which is the head) and the noblest of the members (which is the tongue) and the highest faculty (which is speech) must lay hold and work as never before. . . . They say of writing that “it only takes three fingers to do it”; but the whole body and soul work at it too. (p. 249)

He even indulged in personal reflections on how his education at Eisenach and Erfurt brought him to where he was. He noted,

I have come so far by means of the writer’s pen—as this psalm [113:5-8] says—that I would not now change places with the Turkish sultan, giving up my knowledge for all his wealth. Indeed, I would not exchange what I know for all the wealth in the world multiplied many times over. Without any doubt, I should not have come to this if I had not gone to school and become a writer. (p. 251)

To this point Luther focused generally upon vocations related to preaching and government. He then pointed out also the other fields that require education.

At this point I should also mention how many educated men are needed in the fields of medicine and the other liberal arts. Of these two needs one could write a huge book and preach for half a year. Where are the preachers, jurists, and physicians to come from, if grammar and other rhetorical arts are not taught? For such teaching is the spring from which they all must flow. To speak of this here in detail would be too big a task. I will simply say briefly that a diligent and upright schoolmaster or teacher, or anyone who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never be adequately rewarded or repaid with any amount of money, as even the heathen Aristotle says. . . . I know that next to that of preaching, this is the best, greatest, and most useful office there is. (pp. 252-3)

Luther’s closing words brought the heart of the sermon to its conclusion. In the context of close interdependence of church and state, Luther gave this pronouncement:

But I hold that it is the duty of the temporal authority to compel its subjects to keep their children in school, especially the promising ones we mentioned above. For it is truly the duty of government to maintain the offices and estates that have been mentioned, so that there will always be preachers, jurists, pastors, writers, physicians, schoolmasters, and the like, for we cannot do without them. (p. 256)

Again, he emphasized the gravity of the need for sound education:

For here there is a worse war on, a war with the very devil, who is out to secretly sap the strength of the cities and principalities, emptying them of their able persons until he has bored out the pith and left only an empty shell of useless people whom he can manipulate and toy with as he will. That is, indeed, to starve out a city or a land and destroy it without a battle, before anyone is even aware of what is going on. (p. 257)

Finally, he urged that just as the able boys are to be sent to school, so the wealth of both the church and the church members be used to bring about this education.

Therefore let everyone be on his guard who can. Let the government see to it that when it discovers a promising boy he is kept in school. If the father is poor, the resources of the church should be used to assist. Let the rich make their wills with this work in view, as some have done who have established scholarship funds. This is the right way to bequeath your money to the church, for this way you do not release departed souls from purgatory but, by maintaining God’s offices, you do help the living and those to come who are yet unborn, so that they do not get into purgatory, indeed, so that they are redeemed from hell and go to heaven; and you help the living to enjoy peace and happiness. That would be a praiseworthy Christian testament. God would have delight and pleasure in it, and would bless and honor you in return by giving you pleasure and joy in him. (p. 257)

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Another brief snapshot of Luther’s continuing advocacy in the transition from monastery schools to genuinely Lutheran schools (1537) may be seen in the Smalcald Articles (II.iii.1, Kolb and Wingert, p. 306).

That foundations and monasteries, established in former times with good intentions for the education of learned people and decent women, should be returned to such use so that we may have pastors, preachers, and other servants of the church, as well as other people necessary for earthly government in cities and states, and also well-trained young women to head households and manage them.

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In the final years of his life (1541) Luther wrote “On the Councils and the Church” (AE, vol 41, pp. 9-178), one of his most important writings, a work that deserves more reading and study than it often receives. In it, Luther resisted the overblown claims of church councils, and observed how councils must relate to the local congregation and its school. He wrote:

Do you think then that the offices of the pastor and the schoolteacher are so low that they cannot be compared with the councils? How could one assemble a council if there were no pastors or bishops? How could we get pastors if there were no schools? I am speaking of those schoolteachers who instruct the children and the youth not only in the arts, but also train them in Christian doctrine and faithfully impress it upon them; I also speak in the same manner of pastors who teach God’s word in faithfulness and purity. (p. 132)

Luther went on to compare church councils with the supreme court of an empire, with the ancient law of this empire being the Holy Scriptures. He noted, “Not only the council, but every pastor and schoolteacher is also the servant or judge of this law and empire” (p. 133). He observed that in the empire of the world the laws change with the changing times. But not so in the church:

But in this empire of the church the rule is, “The word of our God will stand for ever” [Isa. 40:8]. One has to live according to it and refrain from creating new or different words of God and from establishing new and different articles of faith. That is why pastors and schoolteachers are the lowly, but daily, permanent, eternal judges who anathematize without interruption, that is, fend off the devil and his raging. A council, being a great judge, must make old, great rascals pious or kill them, but it cannot produce any others. A pastor and a schoolteacher deal with small, young rascals and constantly train new people to become bishops and councils, whenever it is necessary. A council prunes the large limbs from the tree or extirpates evil trees. But a pastor and a schoolteacher plant and cultivate young trees and useful shrubs in the garden. Oh, they have a precious office and task, and they are the church’s richest jewels; they preserve the church. Therefore all the lords should do their part to preserve pastors and schools. For if indeed we cannot have councils, the parishes and schools, small though they are, are eternal and useful councils. (pp. 134-135)

He observed that education had originally been the primary task of the monasteries.

One can see quite well how earnestly the ancient emperors regarded parishes and schools [see the educational reforms of Charlemagne], since they endowed the monasteries so richly. That they were primarily schools is evidenced by these names: provost, dean, scholasticus, cantor, canonici, vicars, custodians, etc. But what has become of these? O Lord God! If they were at least willing to do something, remain what they were, keep what they had, were princes and lords, and again introduced hours of study and compelled the canons, vicars, and choir pupils to listen to a daily lesson from Holy Scripture so that they would again, in some sense, look like a school, and so that one could have pastors and bishops and thus help to rule the church. (p. 135)

There were other tasks that Luther envisioned being taken up by the schools, especially in the matter of ceremonies.

Ceremonies ought to be completely disregarded by the councils and should be left at home in the parishes, indeed, in the schools so that the schoolmaster, along with the pastor, would be “master of ceremonies” [Magister Ceremonium]. All others will learn these from the students, without any effort or difficulty. For instance, the common people will learn from the pupils what, when, and how to sing or pray in church; they will also learn what to sing by the bier or at the grave. When the pupils kneel and fold their hands as the schoolmaster beats time with his baton during the singing of “And was made man,” the common people will imitate them. When they doff their little hats or bend their knees whenever the name of Jesus Christ is

mentioned, or other Christian discipline and gestures they may exercise, the common people will do afterward without instruction, moved by the living example. (pp. 136-137)

At the end of the second part of this treatise, Luther concluded that the church must do without a true council, and proposed what must be done instead.

Well then, if we must despair of a council let us commend the matter to the true judge, our merciful God. Meanwhile we shall promote the small and the young councils, that is, parishes and schools, and propagate St Peter's article [Acts 15:10-11] in every way possible, preserving it against all the accursed new articles of the faith and of the new good works with which the pope has flooded the world. (p. 142)

As Luther came to the end of the third and final section of his treatise "On Councils and the Church," in which he took up the doctrine of the church and its marks, he addressed also the place of schools in the church.

Above and elsewhere I have written much about the schools, urging firmness and diligence in caring for them. Although they may be viewed as something external and pagan, in as much as they instruct boys in languages and the arts, they are nevertheless extremely necessary. For if we fail to train pupils we will not have pastors and preachers very long—as we are finding out. The school must supply the church with persons who can be made apostles, evangelists, and prophets, that is, preachers, pastors, and rulers, in addition to other people needed throughout the world, such as chancellors, councilors, secretaries, and the like, men who can also lend a hand with the temporal government. In addition, if the schoolteacher is a godly man and teaches the boys to understand, to sing, and to practice God's word and the true faith and holds them to Christian discipline, then, as we said earlier, the schools are truly young and eternal councils, which perhaps do more good than many other great councils. Therefore the former emperors, kings, and princes did well when they showed such diligence in building many schools, high and low, monastic schools and convents, to provide the church with a rich and ample supply of people; but their successors shamefully perverted their use. Thus today princes and lords should do the same, and use the possessions of the cloisters for the maintenance of schools and provide many persons with the means for study. If our descendants misuse these, we at least have done our duty in our day.

In summary, the schools must be second in importance only to the church, for in them young preachers and pastors are trained, and from them emerge those who replace the ones who die. Next, then, to the school comes the burgher's house, for it supplies the pupils; then the city hall and the castle, which must protect the schools so that they may train children to become pastors, and so that these, in turn, may create churches and children of God (whether they be burghers, princes, or emperors). (p. 176)

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There is one final glimpse at Luther's thought on schooling, one that is of a personal nature. In 1542 Luther sent his son John, age 16, to the highly respected Torgau Latin School, where he was to stay with the headmaster, Marcus Crodel. Some details of the arrangement are unclear, for John had already received a bachelor's degree. Perhaps his father believed his education to be insufficient. Luther wrote (AE, vol. 50, pp. 231-232, Letter 296),

Grace and peace! As you and I have agreed, my Marcus, I am sending my son John to you so that you may add him to the boys who are to be drilled in grammar and music. Also, keep an eye on his conduct and correct it, for in the Lord I have great confidence in you. I shall liberally pay for your expenses, and you will please inform me how much he has progressed in [a certain] time, and how much one might expect of him. I have added the boy Florian [son of Katherine's brother, who died in 1542], especially since I see that these boys need the example set by a crowd of many boys; this seems to me to accomplish more than individual, private education. But be very strict with this one, and if you can place him with a citizen, do it; otherwise send him back. May God prosper what has been begun.

If I see success with this son, then soon, if I live, you will also have my other two sons [Martin, 10, and Paul, 9]. For I think that after you there will be no teachers as diligent as you, especially in grammar and in strictness so far as conduct is concerned. Therefore "make use of the moment, for time races with a swift

foot” [Ovid, *De arte amandi* iii.65], and diligent teachers disappear even faster. Thereafter the boys will return here for higher studies for which they will then be better equipped.

Farewell in the Lord, and tell John Walther [well-known Kantor of Torgau] that I pray for his well-being, and that I commend my son to him for learning music. For I, of course, produce theologians, but I also would like to produce grammarians and musicians.

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The need to produce theologians, grammarians, musicians, and the competent incumbents of all kinds of vocations is as great today for church, city, and home as it has ever been. The quotations and works of Luther cited above have application in the entire field of education from bottom to top. They certainly give excellent guidance for the formation of genuinely Lutheran, parish schools, schools that may well be called “classical” in the sense of the ancient and medieval liberal arts. Luther’s words here, however, do not give all the answers to many of the details of this education, nor indeed to the manner of its application in a world which has changed greatly since his day. The true foundation for the training of Christian children and youth will be found not in Luther’s writing on education, but in the doctrine which he and we both confess. For there alone, in the doctrine of Holy Scriptures, can we decisively perceive that children have not changed from that day to this, nor the nature of knowledge or learning or understanding, nor the orders and institutions of God among men, nor the basic abilities of those who are needed for these orders and institutions. The same sins of children, parents, society and church institutions plague us. The same forgiveness and Gospel gifts must be the remedy to our ills. And thus, in our schools, as in our churches and homes, the Holy Scriptures must continue to reign supreme in all its truth and purity.