

Editor's Introduction

It is a privilege and a joy to assist in making available another groundbreaking work of Professor Tuomo Mannermaa to an English-reading global audience. Both chronologically and thematically, this translation follows the English edition of Mannermaa's work, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, also by Fortress Press (2005), just as the Finnish originals did. Both Finnish books were quickly adopted as textbooks in Finnish theological education and discourse and have remained as pillars in Luther scholarship in Finland. Since their translation into German and through presentations in academic gatherings and the ensuing multilingual publications by a new generation of Finnish Luther scholars following in his footsteps, Mannermaa's vision and approach to Luther has become recognized internationally in its own right as unique—and controversial.

It is quite appropriate to talk about the "Mannermaa school." This is so because of the influence he has had in the formation of a group of scholars who continue to develop and test a particular methodological approach and line of argument, because of his stated challenge of earlier schools of thought in the interpretation of Luther (mostly German based), and, most importantly, because of the central arguments he has formulated about what is at the heart of Luther's theology and the identification of a key to understanding Luther's theology to its fullest.

While his thesis has been vividly discussed around the globe, and increasingly also so in North America, having his own voice through his original work available in English is long overdue. Not only of interest for scholars, Mannermaa's work has, as it were, removed a veil from Luther and his world of faith and thus made

Luther the spiritual teacher more approachable for contemporary seekers beyond denominational divides. Luther the teacher of faith has emerged in a new light and with a powerful perspective on the human-God relationship and on the foundations of Christian life that a contemporary person with spiritual concerns will find relevant, and this in an ecumenical context. (One example of this potential is the work of another Finn, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, from Fuller Theological Seminary, who is successfully applying the paradigm shifts evoked by the Finnish perspectives in current ecumenical discussions.)

Mannermaa's earlier book, *Christ Present in Faith*, provoked a good deal of excitement, and it will be interesting to observe the conversation that this volume will generate. The volume at hand gets further at the heart of the underappreciated yet central concept in Luther's faith system and theology, namely, love. Luther's theology or spirituality cannot be fully understood without delving into his understanding of love. Luther, in Mannermaa's treatment here, emerges as a unique theologian of love. His most central theological paradigms, such as the theology of the cross, justification by faith and salvation by grace, and *deus absconditus*, can only be understood wholly and to their fullest when set in the framework of the theology of love. Love, not "faith alone," is the actual key to understanding Luther's entire theology; faith without love remains an abstract principle in Luther's thinking. This is clearly a radical departure from the traditional Lutheran dialectic, with its distinctively different emphasis from that of the medieval theologians' prioritizing of love in relation to faith.

Mannermaa draws his arguments from Luther's own work, tracking his developing ideas from the earliest days of the reformer's career. Already in his Heidelberg Disputation (1518) Luther defined true theology as the theology of the cross, which, in his treatment, is ultimately the theology of love. In contrast to the vain and fallacious theology of glory—theology that looks for God in all the wrong places without recognizing that the appearance of God in God's full glory would be inconceivable and unbearable to human beings who can only expect to see the backside of God—the theology of the cross appreciates the unfathomable, that God surprises

us in God's radical and incomprehensible love for us feeble-in-ourselves unlovable creatures, who continuously fail to see or respond to God's creative life-giving love with the right kind of love. Divine life needs to be given, and is given, to those whom God first loves. Luther concludes that God loves us sinners not because we deserve it or are lovable but in order to make us lovable, which is God's utmost desire. God's love creates, redeems, and sustains, without ceasing. In that "radiation therapy," we receive godly love—because of Christ's love, which we can believe with the faith that saves, the faith that also comes from God in Christ. Christ coming to us in grace, in all fullness, means a transformation and a new force that fills our beings and thus enables us to enter a relationship of love with our creator and fellow creatures, just as God has designed. Christ is the subject of that love, God's Love. In that love, we can experience oneness with God. Justification by faith—understood by Luther as our being made right with God and filled with God, becoming forgiven and fortified because of Christ, becoming full of God and transformed by God's love—can thus be most fully understood from the perspective of love. Being loved and becoming beloved and loving is at the heart of justification.

Understanding Luther as a theologian of love is a fresh approach to the old reformer. Mannermaa has broadened the profile of Luther already for decades and has pointed out obvious gaps in scholarship in this regard. When setting Luther's understanding of God's Love and Human Love in the late medieval context and in comparing his approach to the teaching of the leading medieval theologian, Thomas Aquinas, Mannermaa found a way to reexamine what exactly divided the reformer and his conversation partners. Where exactly did Luther's theology of the grace-filled and grace-based God-human relationship differ from his medieval counterparts and the tradition he was imbedded in? What in the medieval teaching of love did Luther actually criticize and what did he propose instead? These questions have value not only in deepening our understanding of Luther but also in promoting ecumenical work between Lutheran and Roman Catholic conversation partners. This exercise also brings Luther into conversation with some of the influential (yet overlooked in Lutheran tradition) teachers in Christian

history, the mystics, in whose works the experience and idea of love had been central. In Mannermaa's treatment of Luther as a theologian of love, the reformer begins to look a lot like the mystics from whom Lutheran theologians traditionally have tried to disassociate themselves and "their" Luther.

Looking at the idea of love in Luther's theology, and appraising his teaching of the oneness in Christ in justification from that angle, we can indeed encounter the mystical heart of Luther. This recognition suggests significant continuities in the concerns and ultimate goals of the mystics and the reformer who was, after all, heavily influenced by late medieval mysticism, such as *devotio moderna* and the *German Theology* (the work he himself edited and translated). This reestablished connection is most exciting and one of the inspiring areas for new research bubbling among Luther scholars with respect to academic discourse as well as to new appraisals of Lutheran spirituality. Mannermaa's contribution here is palpable.

With Mannermaa's interpretation, we are beginning to view Luther from a new angle. Have we finally found the "real" Luther and what made him tick? Is Mannermaa correct in proposing that the "real Luther" is a theologian of love?

Mannermaa has made the weighty point that Luther has been much misunderstood in the past, that we have interpreted him too one-sidedly, for instance, when by-passing too quickly his theology of love as simply the criticism of the medieval concept of love and the model of salvation in which love played a central role in the greater "order" of things. While criticizing the view of salvation according to which a human being was to be shaped and reformed by love and grace with expectation of progressing in that relationship, Luther did not discard the concept of love entirely. Quite the contrary: he transformed it.

Mannermaa's thesis proves that we have left in the shadows the image of Luther as a teacher of faith, a teacher with a voice beyond denominational divides. The passion for Christians through the centuries has been the search to know God and for a personal relationship with God. Intimacy and unity with God are themes that Christian writers have explored consistently through centuries, with different visions for what we can expect from God in this life

and the life to come, and what our options are in this regard. Luther shared these concerns and offered a vision much more radical than that of the dominant confessional Lutheran teachings. He boldly envisioned magnificent things to be in store for those loved by God and loving God. Oneness with Christ, the full presence of the Holy Spirit, godly life, and with that, the call to love as Christ loved, thus transforming the world with God's love. (The latter leads us to the area typically referred to as sanctification, a concept that Lutheran theology has had some difficulty with, even if it has definitely its own place in Luther's vision for the life of the justified.)

The underlying problem, Mannermaa claims, is the distorted history of interpretation. As already noted in *Christ Present in Faith*, Lutheran theology has been dominated by the different emphasis of the sixteenth-century confessional texts and their distinctively German interpretive tradition, which has shaped the conversations on the most central Lutheran doctrine, that of justification. Regardless of the stated primary authority of Luther concerning the doctrine of justification (as stated in the Formula of Concord), the confessional Lutheran teaching after Luther came to favor the "forensic" side of justification and its "declarative nature." Disagreeing with that emphasis, Mannermaa lifts up the place of the "effective" dimension of justification in Luther's own articulation. He thereby opens a new vista on justification as real oneness with God, with a radical Christ-centered holiness beyond human achievement or effort. Trying to explain this through the concept of faith alone is difficult, if not unsatisfactory; taking the concept of love as the basis, the "effective" side of justification opens up with more ease and leads to a more holistic perspective on the God-human relationship and the Christian life. This, and much more, Mannermaa invites us to ponder with this focused reflection on the basics of Luther's theology of love and its place in his doctrine of justification, and vice versa.

Concerning the work of translating and editing: With Mannermaa's approval, I have tried to make the translation as clear and accessible as possible for English-speaking readers in particular. Other individuals have participated in this process in its earliest stages, and many have contributed in conversation and encouragement. It has been a joy and a delight to translate the often mysterious

Finnish expressions into English. For any strangeness in the translation, I bear full responsibility, while asking for the readers' kind consideration of the fact that the author did not write or think in English. Especially with the translation of the more philosophical terms, where the nuances are weighty and the translation choices riskier than in straightforward narratives, the primary concern has been clarity and original intention, rather than the convention of any "school" or tradition about the use of particular terms. Throughout the work, the goal was to preserve Mannermaa's own voice and style of articulating, preserving as much as possible the idiosyncratic expressions of the original language of the work, without compromising clarity. Some of the concepts have been difficult to translate satisfactorily into English, for example, the terms "essence" and "being," and the expressions "what is" and "what is not." Decisions regarding these terms have been explained in the notes. Moreover, to better emphasize Mannermaa's main argument about the distinction between God's love and human beings' love, the Finnish terms "Jumalan rakkaus" and "Ihmisen rakkaus" have been translated and capitalized as "God's Love" and "Human Love," even if that is not strictly following the grammar in the original Luther texts or in Mannermaa's text.

Translations of Luther's Latin and German texts that were not available in Luther's Works, American Edition, at the time of writing the book are from the author and the translator, while the translation in Luther's Works has been incorporated whenever possible (even if at times with occasional revisions, as indicated in the respective notes). A graduate student from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Matthew Finney, assisted in the end by checking the English quotations (sponsored by the Institute for Luther Studies at that seminary). The notes with the text references have been preserved in their original form as much as possible, with some stylistic changes for consistency's sake and to be in line with the other works from Fortress Press. As requested by the publisher, quotations from the Bible, except for those from Luther's Works, are from the *New Revised Standard Version*. Here and there an editorial note is offered to explain a word choice or to offer a further clarification as needed.

The issue of inclusive language has been dealt with here as follows: While the author of this work and its translator and editor both embrace the principles of inclusive language (and naturally so as the Finnish native tongue does not distinguish between “he” and “she” in generic contexts, even if plagued with male-centered imagery for God, just as in other languages), it would have been cumbersome to make appropriate changes into all the quoted already existing Luther translations used in this work. Besides, Luther’s own German or Latin often includes a certain amount of masculine language. In most cases, I have let the translations used reflect that reality, hoping that the reader can read these quotations with an enlightened mind and realize that the text is speaking of and to both sexes, while being confined within the conventions of the time and its language. The same applies to the citations from Luther’s Works and their use of masculine words with respect to God, even when the original does not always warrant that. Occasionally, when I considered the exclusive and unnecessary use of “he” or “He” as simply too distracting, I have taken liberties to mildly revise the existing translation (always flagged in the respective note). The issue of inclusive language is too large to try to remedy in this single work where the attention is elsewhere and which comes from a context where the battles for inclusive language are quite different.

The afterword for this book comes from Dr. Juhani Forsberg, who is a long-term friend and colleague of Dr. Mannermaa and one of the pillars in Luther scholarship in Finland and in the training of new theologians. Continuously involved in scholarship and ecumenical work in particular, he has been a principal interpreter of the Finnish Luther school’s efforts in Europe. In 2005 he published an article in the *Luther-Jahrbuch*, offering a substantial review of the most significant works on Luther produced by Finnish scholars from the time of the early stages of Mannermaa’s work and that stem from the original stimulus from Mannermaa in one way or the other. The article makes known several foundational works on Luther that are not yet known to the international audience due to their language, Finnish or German. Here the article is offered in a much abbreviated and edited translation. For the full text, the readers can consult

the German original “Die finnische Lutherforschung seit 1979” in *Luther-Jahrbuch* (2005), 147–82.

Finally, for further reading on Mannermaa’s own reflection on how and where he places his most important findings ecumenically and philosophically, a short but very significant presentation from Mannermaa is available at www.fortresspress.com/mannermaa. “The Study of the Fundamentals of Martin Luther’s Theology in the Light of Ecumenism” is especially important because of its attention to hermeneutical issues and in its explicit critical assessment of other schools of interpretation in light of which Mannermaa’s thesis has been received.

On a personal note, it was in the 1980s when I had the delight to participate in the Luther seminar for systematic and ecumenical theology, a thesis seminar led by Dr. Mannermaa and Dr. Forsberg. The buzz around campus was that something extraordinary and special was taking place in that discipline of study. Many a budding scholar gravitated toward the study of ecumenics and ecumenical theology during those years—amid all the fascinating theological disciplines—because of the fresh perspectives explored with an “old” beloved topic, Martin Luther. Thirty years later, looking at the evidence in the ensuing works and broadened perspectives and introduction of new paradigms and renewed interest in wrestling with Luther the man of faith, we can attest that, yes, indeed, an entire new wave in Luther studies was taking wind then, and that wave continues to move forward with an increasing power, now across the continents, with this publication as a compass.

An important partner in supporting the publication of this work has been my home institution, the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, with its A. R. Wentz library, and in particular the Institute for Luther Studies, which has now for four decades promoted original Luther scholarship in the form of public lectures and publications. While not published officially in the “Encounters with Luther” (the publication of the annual Luther Colloquy lectures, now via Seminary Ridge Review), Mannermaa’s book continues the venerable mission of fostering encounters with Luther across the continents and over language barriers. In many ways, Dr. Mannermaa and his interpretation have been an important part of

the scholarly conversations on our campus and beyond and in the theological education of Lutheran seminarians, who will here gain yet another thought-provoking textbook.

Many thanks to the kind and wise people at Fortress Press. To Susan Johnson and Michael West, for their efforts to make available spirited works for their appreciative audience, and to Marshall Johnson for copyediting this work so beautifully. Heartfelt thanks to my family, especially my spouse and colleague, Brooks Schramm, for indulging me with windows of opportunity to participate in such an important and meaningful work as this.

Thank you, Juhani, for all you have done over the years and especially with this project, and for providing the review of the Finnish works on Luther. Thank you for trusting me to “knead” your words into English. This would be a good opportunity to say what is well known by many: your labors go beyond what can be mentioned in a brief thank you. Inkeri, Mrs. Mannermaa, let us express to you our warmest thanks for delivering messages over the years and all the things you do behind the scenes.

Thank you, Tuomo, for trusting me with your words. I hope I have done you justice. Let my labors for the rebirthing of this work be my sincere “thank you” for teaching me.