

Catechisms in the Kessler Collection

Armin Siedlecki

Luther and many of his fellow reformers strongly emphasized proper theological instruction of the laity. As a result, the sixteenth century witnessed a proliferation of catechetical literature. The invention of printing a few decades earlier had enabled the publication of theological summaries of the liturgy of the mass, lists of the books of the Bible, and notes on biblical teachings, common hymns, or similar material. The Kessler Collection holds one such example of what could be classified as an early, pre-Reformation catechism, compiled by Petrus Pontanus (*Petri Po[n]tani ceci bruce[n]sis Apologie . . .*, Paris, 1516).

However, prior to the Reformation, religious instruction perhaps most commonly was conveyed in sermons. Luther's own catechetical teachings have their origins in sermons on the common prayers or creeds. In 1518 Luther published a short tract that is both homiletic and didactic in nature: *A Brief Discussion of the Ten Commandments, the [Apostles'] Creed, and the Lord's Prayer (Eine kurze Form der zehn Gebote, der Glaubens und des Vaterunsers)*, which is often regarded as an early prototype of his *Small Catechism* (1529). The Kessler Collection holds two printings of this tract (1520 and 1521), as well as a 1520 printing of the first part (the Ten Commandments). Also in the Kessler Collection is Luther's

Little Prayer Book (Eyn Bett Buchlin . . ., Wittenberg, 1522), which assembles catechetical materials and which Luther encouraged others to consult as they wrote catechisms.

The publication of Luther's *Large Catechism* and *Small Catechism*—both in 1529—was prompted directly by the reformer's visit to the churches of Saxony

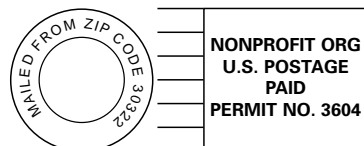
Much of the influence of Lutheranism around the world can be traced to the success of this catechism in expressing the profound truths of the faith in a language that all can understand.—Mark A. Noll

and his surprise at the ignorance of both laity and clergy with regard to basic Christian teachings. The Kessler Collection holds two 1529 printings of the *Large Catechism*, including a first printing of the work, as well as a 1531 printing and a 1536 Latin translation of the German text. The earliest edition of Luther's *Small Catechism* in the Kessler Collection is a 1545 printing by the Leipzig printer Valentin Bapst, bound together with three other works on prayer and devotion produced by the

same printer, all of which have characteristic metal-engraved borders on every page. Other holdings of the *Small Catechism* include a 1551 bilingual Latin-German printing as well as two bilingual Greek-Latin translations of the work from 1558 and 1567.

Supplementing Luther's catechisms, the Kessler Collection also holds three Catholic catechisms and thirteen other Protestant catechisms, including a 1530 printing of Melanchthon's small handbook for children (*Handtbuchlein wie man die Kinder zu der Geschriefft vnd Lere halten soll*), a 1548 printing of a collection of catechetical sermons by Andreas Osiander (*[Catechis]mus, oder, Kinder Predig*), all of which conclude with reference to Luther's *Small Catechism*, as well as a catechism by Hans Gerhardt (*Schöne Frag vnd Antwort, Was ain warhafftiger Christen der recht Glaub, vnd seyn Frucht sey*, 1525). Also noteworthy is the 1557 publication of a satirical anti-Catholic catechism by Hermann Hamsing, *The Papists' Handbook, to Memorize Diligently and to Read Secretly (Der Papisten Handbüchlein fleissig zu mercken vnnnd heymlich zu lesen)*. Though the work is polemical rather than instructive in nature, it attests to the popularity of the catechism genre in the sixteenth century.

Armin Siedlecki is Catalog Librarian for the Kessler Reformation Collection.



REFORMATION NOTES

News for Partners of the Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection
Summer 2004, Number 25

2004 Reformation Day at Emory

M. Patrick Graham

The Richard C. Kessler Reformation Collection is a repository of rare and valuable documents produced in connection with the Protestant Reformation. The collection now contains more than 2,800 pieces written by Martin Luther, his colleagues, and opponents, and printed during their lifetimes.

Supported by the vision and resources of Lutheran laypeople Richard and Martha Kessler and partners throughout the Southeast, the collection is housed in the Pitts Theology Library of Candler School of Theology. It provides a rich resource for scholars of the Reformation and for clergy and laity who seek to understand the history of the Christian faith.

For more information about the collection, contact:
Dr. M. Patrick Graham
Pitts Theology Library
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia 30322
404.727.4165
libmpg@emory.edu

The seventeenth Reformation Day at Emory will celebrate the 475th anniversary of the publication of Martin Luther's catechisms. Luther had visited the churches in Saxony in 1528–1529 and returned to Wittenberg disappointed at the ignorance and apathy among clergy and laity alike. Thus, in April 1529

he issued the *Large Catechism* and in May the *Small Catechism*, offering them especially for pastors and urging that they be consulted—in the case of the *Large Catechism*, daily—as faithful summaries of Scripture.

Emory University Organist and Professor of Music Timothy Albrecht will open the day's program with an organ lecture recital, and this event will be followed by viewing an exhibit of rare, sixteenth-century catechisms. At the morning chapel service, the sermon will be delivered by the Rev. Ann M. Svennungsen, former pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church (Moorhead, Minnesota) and now president of the Fund for Theological Education.

During the noon hour, Bishop Ronald B. Warren of the Southeastern Synod and Neva Warren, church administrator at Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church (Peachtree City, Georgia), will discuss the

role of the catechism in contemporary religious instruction and spirituality. Afterward, Candler faculty members Jonathan Strom and Patrick Graham will deliver an illustrated lecture on the use of woodcuts in sixteenth-century catechisms. Their talk will be followed by William R. Russell's lecture on Luther's

reform of parish education and Peter L. Benson's presentation on the capacity of congregations to shape the lives of their youth. Russell is associate minister at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (Atlanta, Georgia) and an adjunct member of the Candler faculty; Benson is president of Search Institute (Minneapolis, Minnesota), a national, nonprofit research organization dedicated to promoting the well-being of children and adolescents.

This year's evening concert will focus on the musical compositions

that Johann Sebastian Bach wrote on three Luther chorales associated with three parts of Luther's catechisms: Ten Commandments, Apostle's Creed, and Baptism. Albrecht will perform Bach's organ pieces large and small (two versions of each chorale, reflecting the two different sizes of Luther's *Large and Small*



"BAPTISM OF JESUS" FROM LUTHER'S ENCHIRIDION: DER KLEINE CATECHISMUS . . . (1545)

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Kessler Collection Update

M. Patrick Graham

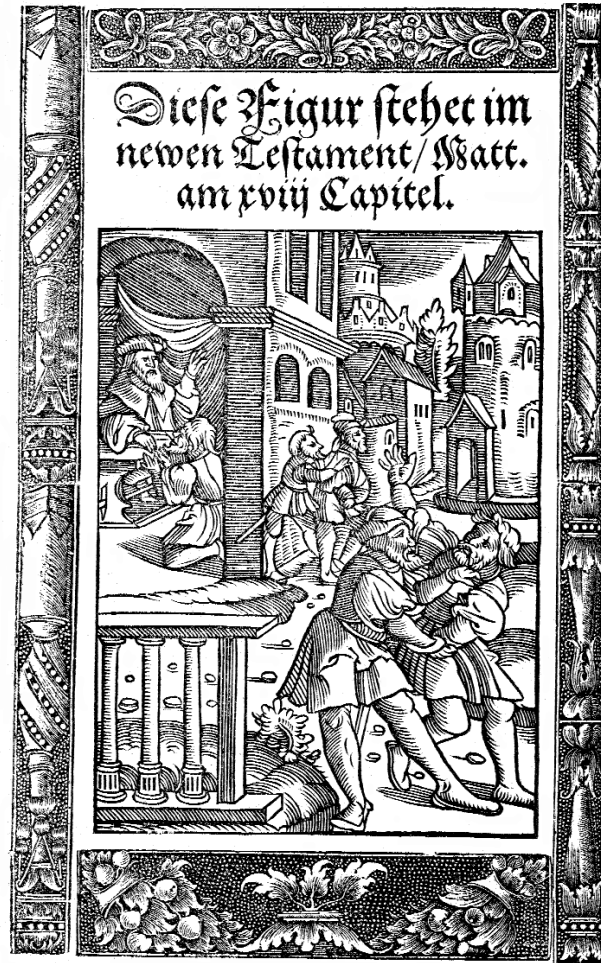
Seventy-six books and pamphlets have been added to the Kessler Reformation Collection during the last twelve months, with significant additions of materials by Luther, Melancthon, Karlstadt, and Urbanus Rhegius. The total collection size is now 2,841. Recognition of its growth and of the importance of its holdings recently was indicated by the decision of the editor of *VD 16 (Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts)* to add the Pitts Library to its roster of institutions. A project of the Bavarian State Library, *VD 16* now encompasses twenty-five large volumes and continues to grow. It aspires to list every book or pamphlet published in German-speaking lands in

the sixteenth-century. Each year about half of the items acquired for the Kessler Collection do not appear to be held by any other library in North America, and it now appears that some may not even be held in major European collections.

Most of the woodcuts in the Kessler Collection have been digitized and incorporated into the Digital Image Archive (accessible by clicking on the Luther Rose at www.pitts.emory.edu), which now includes more than 9,000 images. The library now regularly receives requests from publishers

for permission to use these images to illustrate the text and covers of books and journals. In addition, visitors to the Digital Image Archive now approach five hundred each day. All of these factors are strong indications of the site's value to the church and the academy.

Finally, it should be noted that Candler School of Theology is making good progress toward a \$48M building program that will provide for the renovation of two of Candler's current structures as well as the construction of a new library. These improvements will enhance the library's ability to care for the Kessler Collection and the other 100,000 volumes of rare books in Pitts special collections. In addition to traditional library spaces, the plans call for a grand exhibit and lecture hall,

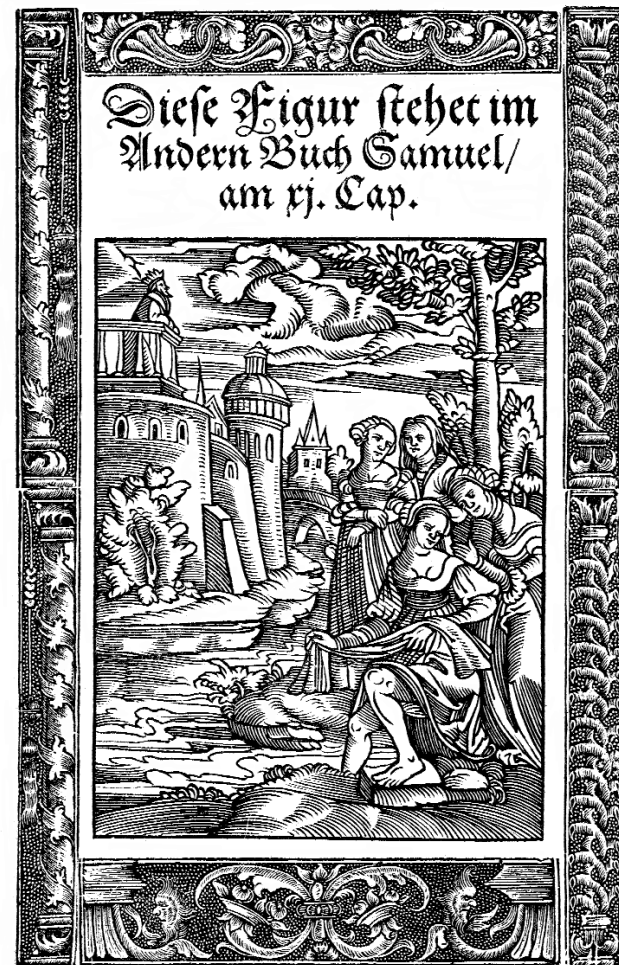


"PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT" FROM *ENCHIRIDION: DER KLEINE CATECHISMUS . . . (1545)*

a rare-book reading room, a scanning lab for the digitization of library materials, a computer lab that supports collaborative learning and group projects, and a climate-controlled facility for shelving rare materials. The latter will improve the library's ability to safeguard such valuable collections and make them available to students, researchers, and other visitors.

Library staff give an average of one group presentation each week, for a total of more than a thousand people annually. These audiences represent church and civic groups, as well as college, seminary, and university students. The Kessler Collection plays an important role in these presentations, and so we are all looking forward to a new facility in 2007.

M. Patrick Graham is Librarian and Margaret A. Pitts Professor of Theological Bibliography.



"DAVID AND BATHSHEBA" FROM *ENCHIRIDION: DER KLEINE CATECHISMUS . . . (1545)*

REFORMATION DAY AT EMORY UNIVERSITY

October 26, 2004

- 9:00–9:30 a.m.** **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**
Brooks Commons, Cannon Chapel
- 9:30–10:30 a.m.** **"BACH PRAYS THE CATECHISM,"** TIMOTHY ALBRECHT
Sanctuary, Cannon Chapel
- 10:30–11:00 a.m.** **BREAK AND OPPORTUNITY TO VIEW EXHIBIT OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CATECHISMS**
Durham Reading Room, Pitts Theology Library
- 11:00–11:50 a.m.** **CHAPEL SERVICE, THE REV. ANN M. SVENNUNGSSEN**
PRESIDENT OF THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION,
PREACHER
Sanctuary, Cannon Chapel
- Noon–1:00 p.m.** **"THE CATECHISM IN CONTEMPORARY INSTRUCTION AND SPIRITUALITY"**
BISHOP RONALD B. WARREN AND NEVA WARREN
(includes box lunch; RSVP at 404.727.6352 or klester@emory.edu)
311 Bishops Hall
- 1:15–2:15 p.m.** **"USES OF IMAGES IN CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION"**
M. PATRICK GRAHAM AND JONATHAN STROM
Durham Reading Room, Pitts Theology Library
- 2:30–4:30 p.m.** **"PRAYING AS A CHRISTIAN: LUTHER'S REFORMATION OF PARISH EDUCATION"**
WILLIAM R. RUSSELL

"GROWING THRIVING AND FAITHFUL YOUTH: THE POWER OF ENGAGED CONGREGATIONS"
PETER L. BENSON
Sanctuary, Cannon Chapel
- 4:30–6:00 p.m.** **BREAK OR TOUR OF CARLOS MUSEUM**
- 8:00–9:00 p.m.** **KESSLER REFORMATION CONCERT**
TIMOTHY ALBRECHT, ERIC NELSON, AND THE EMORY UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR
Sanctuary, Cannon Chapel

Continuing Education Credit

To receive Continuing Education Credit (.5 CEU is available), persons must attend all Reformation Day at Emory events and submit their name, address, and \$10 payment (checks made payable to Emory University) to the Office of Church Ministries Education, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia 30322. A certificate of attendance will be mailed following the event.

2004 Reformation Day at Emory— *continued from page 1*

Catechisms) based on Martin Luther's hymn, "These Are the Holy Ten Commands," and his chorale on the Apostles' Creed, "We All Believe in One True God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost." Then Eric Nelson, Emory College associate professor of music, will lead the Emory University Concert Choir and instrumentalists in the performance of Bach's seven-movement sacred choral cantata based on Martin Luther's baptismal hymn, "Christ Our Lord Came for Baptism to the Jordan."

The Kessler Reformation Concert and all other events on Tuesday, October 26, are free and open to the public.

M. Patrick Graham is Librarian and Margaret A. Pitts Professor of Theological Bibliography.

THE WOODCUTS IN THIS ISSUE OF REFORMATION NOTES AND MORE THAN 9,000 OTHERS ARE ACCESSIBLE BY CLICKING ON THE LUTHER ROSE AT WWW.PITTS.EMORY.EDU.



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