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“To Oblige My Brethren”: The Reformed Funeral Sermons of Johann Brandmüller

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Sixteenth century Lutheran funeral sermons were intended for both clerical and popular audiences and sought to instruct and console the grieving. Unlike the Lutherans, the Reformed rejected most funeral ceremonial, including the preaching of funeral sermons. The collection of funeral sermons by the Reformed pastor Johann Brandmüller is unique in applying the Reformed style of published sermons, intended primarily as a theological resource for pastors, to a distinctively Lutheran genre. Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons* (1572) was a theological compendium devoted to scripture passages deemed appropriate for funerals. The 180 sermons covered topics that could be preached at the funerals of people from all estates and applied to a wide variety of circumstances related to their death. Brandmüller's work was an attempt to teach the skills of pastoral care for the bereaved that had no precise counterpart in either Lutheran or Reformed churches.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION, the preaching of “the pure word of God” occupied a special prominence in the agenda of those agitating for religious change. Reformers demanded that sermons be based on scripture, and they introduced changes to the curriculum to help future pastors develop their preaching skills. Over the course of the sixteenth century several Protestant theologians published homiletics texts to provide additional assistance to pastors hoping to hone their preaching skills. And for those who were unable or unwilling to write their own sermons, Luther and many of his successors churned out an amazing number of *Postillen* or sermon collections on the scripture texts of the lectionary.¹

Most of the published works were the Sunday and feast-day sermons that comprised the bulk of most pastors' preaching responsibilities. There were, however, other events, such as weddings and funerals, at which pastors were regularly expected to preach. These special occasions in turn gave rise to specific sermon genres. Funeral sermons in particular have received much scholarly attention, not so much because of the sermons themselves but because of the biographical details

¹For a brief survey of homiletics texts, see Martin Schian, “Die lutherische Homiletik in der zweiten Hälfte des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts,” *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 72 (1899): 62–94. Hans-Christoph Rublack has published a tentative list of *Postillen* published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as an appendix to his “Lutherische Predigt und gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeiten,” in *Die Lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland*, ed. Hans-Christoph Rublack (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1992), 344–95.

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that were generally included in their printed versions as the genre developed into the seventeenth century.²

Lutheran funerals were rituals intended to console and instruct the living, rather than to assist the soul of the one who had died. Luther believed that the purpose of a funeral—the praise of God and the edification of the audience—was best accomplished through the exegesis of scripture in the sermon. Following the example set by Luther himself at the funerals of Electors Frederick the Wise and John the Constant, the funeral sermon became a standard part of the Lutheran burial rite.³

The audience gathered at a funeral to hear the sermon differed from the usual parish congregation in some important ways. To begin with, it was not limited to the preacher's regular parishioners. The funeral of a prominent individual could attract a large audience from outside the parish boundaries. Moreover, the pastor needed to offer consolation and comfort specifically tailored to the circumstances of death and the emotional state of the bereaved. Last but certainly not least, the finality of a funeral service presented the pastor with a unique opportunity to instruct his hearers in the Christian response to existential questions of suffering and death.

This opportunity for instruction and exhortation would be lost if the pastor was not ready and able to make use of it. But despite the importance of funeral sermons and the emotional challenges that funerals presented, conducting a funeral was not a task for which young pastors were specifically prepared. Church ordinances and liturgical agendas provided them with some guidance regarding the proper procedures to be followed, as well as those to be avoided. Those who attended the new humanist schools were exposed to frequent sermons as part of the school curriculum; at these academies, as well as at the Protestant universities, they received training in rhetoric, which they could use when they wrote their own sermons. Following Luther's lead, Lutheran theologians such as David Chytraeus and Simon Pauli argued that direct personal experience of trials helped prepare a pastor to console others.⁴ Such advice may have been existentially true, but it did

²See in particular the volumes edited by Rudolf Lenz, *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften*, Marburger Personalschriftensymposion 1–3 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1975–84).

³On Luther's view of funerals and the funeral sermons he preached, Eberhard Winkler, *Die Leichenpredigt im deutschen Luthertum bis Spener* (Munich: Kaiser, 1967), 26–41. On the ritual aspects of Protestant funerals, Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 1997), 138–89; and Craig M. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450–1700* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000), 81–114. On the growing biographical component of the Lutheran funeral sermon, see Cornelia Niekus Moore, "Das erzählte Leben in der lutherischen Leichenpredigt: Anfang und Entwicklung im sechzehnten Jahrhundert," *Wolfsbütteler Barocknachrichten* 29 (2002): 3–22; eadem, "The Magdeburg Cathedral Pastor Siegfried Saccus and Development of the Lutheran Funeral Biography," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35 (2004): 83–99.

⁴In the preface to the 1539 Wittenberg edition of his German works, Luther stated that the best rules for the study of theology were prayer, meditation, and temptation (*oratio, meditatio, tentatio*); see *Dr. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–1993), 50:658–61; cf. David Chytraeus, *De studio theologiae recte inchoando* (Wittenberg: Johannes Crato, 1566), fols. 26v–30r on "the cross" or personal suffering as one of the ten rules for the study of theology. Thomas Kaufmann discusses both Chytraeus and Pauli, in *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung: Die Rostocker Theologieprofessoren und ihr Beitrag zur*

not provide much practical help to an inexperienced or poorly trained pastor facing a grieving congregation.

Perhaps in part to remedy this situation, from the mid-sixteenth century several Lutheran pastors began to publish collections of funeral sermons. The first to do so was Johann Spangenberg, whose *Fifteen Funeral Sermons* went through at least nine editions between 1545 and 1568. Several more enlarged and expanded editions appeared under Johann's name and that of his son, Cyriakus, from the 1550s through the 1580s. Johann Mathesius's volume of *Funeral Sermons from I Corinthians 15* also appeared in at least six editions between 1561 and 1587. Other pastors dedicated a section of their sermon collections specifically to those sermons appropriate for funerals. Caspar Huberinus, for example, included fifteen funeral sermons in his larger collection of sermons, *Many Ways of Preaching*, published in 1557.

All of these works, written by younger contemporaries of Luther, were intended as an immediate aid to pastors in the parish who had received little formal training in either preaching or theology. They also appealed to a lay audience, who could read them for both consolation and edification. Only the sermons on 1 Corinthians 15 in part 1 of Mathesius's book were actually funeral sermons. The remainder of the book contained sermons dealing more broadly with issues related to death. The sermons of part 3, for instance, were directed at Mathesius's children on the death of their mother; other sermons were preached during an outbreak of plague. Huberinus's sermons were based on scripture passages dealing with death and resurrection and so were obvious choices for a funeral. Ten of those texts were from the Old Testament and the wisdom literature of the Apocrypha; four of the sermons were based on 1 Corinthians 15, and the last on 1 Thessalonians 4.⁵

Spangenberg's collection was specifically tailored to funerals, and some of the sermons themselves contain passing references to the deceased for whom they had been preached. The collection began with a sermon on "Mitten wir im Leben sind," the standard hymn prescribed for funerals in church ordinances throughout Germany, explaining each verse of the hymn for the listening or reading audience. Spangenberg's remaining sermons were based on texts from the Old Testament. Each took a scripture verse or short passage as a general theme and then expanded on conventional Christian beliefs: the certainty of death, but the uncertainty of its timing; the misery of earthly existence, which encompassed birth, life, and death; plague as punishment for human sin and as a call to repentance and a changed life. In their negative view of existence in this world, these sermons have almost a medicinal flavor. For those pastors who wanted to write their own sermons but were

theologischen Bildung und kirchlichen Gestaltung im Herzogtum Mecklenburg zwischen 1550 und 1675 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 284–85, 288.

⁵Johann Mathesius, *Leychpredigten auß dem Fünfftzehenden Capitel der I. Epistel S. Pauli zum Corinthiern...* (Nuremberg: Johan vom Berg, 1561); Caspar Huberinus, *Mancherley Form zu predigen, von den fürnembsen Stücken, so in der Christlichen Kirchen teglich gelert vnd getrieben sollen werden: Allen Kirchendienern vnd guthertzigen Christen zu dienst* (Nuremberg: Johann vom Berg & Ulrich Newber, 1557), fols. 150v–205r.

unsure of what text to use, Spangenberg included a list of sixty “themata,” or verses from the Old Testament that he felt were suitable for funerals.⁶

A striking contrast to these funeral sermon collections published at midcentury were the 180 sermons first published in 1572 by the Basel pastor Johann Brandmüller. Brandmüller’s *Funeral Sermons* merits detailed analysis, for it is the only volume of funeral sermons to be written by a Reformed rather than a Lutheran pastor. Brandmüller applied the goals and priorities of printed sermon collections in the Reformed tradition to a genre that was distinctly Lutheran, thereby producing a book of sermons with no counterpart in either confession. Brandmüller was neither an influential theologian nor a particularly gifted preacher, but he was concerned with helping his fellow pastors carry out their most important task, that of proclaiming the word of God, to an audience most in need of Christian consolation. For this very reason, his sermon collection can provide some useful insights into Reformed preaching.

In comparison to the work done on Lutheran preaching, the study of Reformed preaching is still in its infancy. The critical edition of Calvin’s manuscript sermons has resulted in several detailed studies of the Genevan reformer’s preaching, while the publication of the consistory records from Geneva makes it possible to learn more about the impact of that preaching. There are, however, few comparable studies of Reformed preaching in German-speaking areas. Only the sermons of Heinrich Bullinger have received any scholarly attention, and there is virtually nothing that compares Lutheran with Reformed preaching.⁷

⁶Johann Spangenberg, *Funfftzehen Leichpredigt So man bey dem Begrebnis der Verstorbenen in Christlicher gemeine thun mag...* (Wittenberg: Rhaw, 1545); sermon 8, for instance, refers to “brother N,” who loved Christ and hearing the word of God. In 1555, Cyriacus Spangenberg published his father’s fifteen funeral sermons along with twenty-eight sermons based on New Testament texts. Although these latter sermons were called “funeral sermons,” they did not deal with the themes of death, grief, and consolation as directly as the Old Testament sermons did. There are at least twenty editions of Spangenberg’s work, either in the original form of Old Testament sermons or with some or all of Cyriacus’s New Testament sermons. For a more detailed analysis of both Mathesius’s and Spangenberg’s sermons, see Winkler, *Die Leichenpredigt*, 50–72.

⁷On Calvin’s preaching, see Thomas H. L. Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), and Wilhelmus H. Th. Moehn, “*God Calls Us to His Service*”: *The Relation between God and His Audience in Calvin’s Sermons on Acts* (Geneva: Droz, 2001). Thomas Lambert examines the practice of preaching in Geneva, “Lampe du fidèle ou fables des prédicateurs: Les Genevois assistent au sermon au XVI^e siècle,” *Revue du Vieux Genève* (1995): 19–27; see also idem, “Preaching, Praying and Policing the Reform in Sixteenth-Century Geneva” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1998), 280–393. On Bullinger, see Walter Hollweg, *Heinrich Bullingers Hausbuch: Eine Untersuchung über die Anfänge der reformierten Predigtliteratur* (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1956), as well as Fritz Büsser, “Bullingers Festtagspredigten (1558): Die Zürcher Reformation zwischen Tradition und Erneuerung,” in *Oratio: Das Gebet in patristischer und reformatorischer Sicht: Festschrift Alfred Schindler*, ed. Emidio Campi et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 175–83; and idem, “H. Bullingers 100 Predigten über die Apokalypse,” *Zwingliana* 27 (2000): 117–31. The small number of published sermons by Zwingli has made it difficult for scholars to say much about Zwingli’s preaching. James Thomas Ford limits his discussion to Calvin, Zwingli, Bullinger, and William Perkins, and draws largely on studies of preaching in Zurich, Geneva, and England, “Preaching in the Reformed Tradition,” in *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 65–88.

One possible reason for the lack of interest in the preaching of the German-speaking Reformed church is the misperception that the Swiss and south German reformers did not publish their sermons.⁸ The number of published Reformed sermons from the sixteenth century is relatively small when compared to the tremendous volume of published Lutheran sermons. This does not mean, however, that such sermons do not exist. In fact, by the later sixteenth century, Reformed theologians were regularly publishing sermons, although often in a format very different from that preferred by Lutherans. Rather than publish vernacular sermons based on theological loci for the use of both clergy and laity, Reformed pastors published their sermons as Latin homilies that functioned as commentaries on the text of scripture and were intended primarily for professional use by the clergy. The Reformed preference for the homily reflects the tradition of *lectio continua* initiated by Huldrych Zwingli when he began preaching in Zurich's Grossmünster in January 1519, and imitated by his friend Johann Oecolampadius in Basel. Oecolampadius's commentary on 1 John, for instance, originated as a series of sermons preached during Advent of 1523. In Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger published sermon-commentaries on several Old Testament prophets and the book of Revelation. His younger colleague and successor Rudolf Gualther also published several volumes of homilies on books of both the Old and New Testament.⁹

Perhaps a more important model for Brandmüller was Bullinger's *Decades*. The five volumes that comprised the *Decades* were published between 1549 and 1551 and may have originated as advanced catechetical sermons preached for Zurich's clergy. The book served as both a theological compendium and an aid for pastors in preparing their own sermons. Similarly, Bullinger's *Festival Sermons* were closer to topical sermons than to exegetical homilies and were intended as models to be followed by Bullinger's fellow pastors.¹⁰

Although his book differs in format, Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons* reflects the same priorities and target audience. Like Bullinger's sermon collections, the *Funeral Sermons* was published in Latin, and the sermons themselves contained no references

⁸Hollweg, *Heinrich Bullingers Hausbuch*, 1–6, surveys the printed sermons published by the first generation of Reformed pastors; his figures are repeated by Lee Palmer Wandel, "Switzerland," in *Preachers and People*, 221–47.

⁹Hughes O. Old, "The Homiletics of John Oecolampadius and the Sermons of the Greek Fathers," in *Communio sanctorum: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Jacques von Allmen*, ed. Yves Congar et al. (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1982), 239–50; on Oecolampadius's preaching more generally, see Ernst Staehelin, *Das theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads* (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1939), 220–41, 411–28. For a discussion of Bullinger's sermon-commentaries, see Hollweg, *Heinrich Bullingers Hausbuch*, 6–23.

¹⁰Hollweg, *Heinrich Bullingers Hausbuch*, 24–60; Büsser, "Bullingers Festtagspredigten." Against Hollweg, Peter Opitz doubts that the sermons of the *Decades* were actually preached, "Bullinger's Decades: Instruction in Faith and Conduct," in *Architect of Reformation: An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 101–16. In a preface to a collection of Calvin's sermons printed in 1558, Conrad Badius criticized the practice of preaching on theological topics, or loci, which was advocated by Melancthon and became standard practice among Lutherans, in contrast to Calvin's more expository style of preaching; see Olivier Millet, "Sermon sur la resurrection: Quelques remarques sur l'homilétique de Calvin," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 134 (1988): 683–92.

either to the deceased or to the occasion on which they were preached. Each of the funeral sermons was based on a scripture text, but almost all of them were topical sermons instead of exegetical homilies. Most importantly, Brandmüller's book was intended as a scholarly tool to assist ministers entrusted with the pastoral care of the bereaved. In this respect, Brandmüller's work, like Bullinger's, found a ready market. Although it was never translated into the vernacular languages as the *Decades* was, Brandmüller's work was republished six times over the next thirty-six years, either alone or together with a collection of Brandmüller's wedding sermons. The sermons transcended geographic and even confessional boundaries: although most editions of the book were produced in Basel, printers in Reformed Hanau and Lutheran Stockholm also published the work.¹¹

In publishing his sermon collection, Brandmüller was thus following a path already established by the leaders of the Swiss Reformed Church. This makes it all the more striking, then, that he published models for a sermon genre that the Reformed church had largely rejected. None of the Reformed churches in other Swiss or neighboring French territories allowed funeral services that included a sermon. Funerals were eliminated from Bern's church in the wake of the Reformation. In Zurich, mourners would gather at the church for prayer following the burial, but no funeral sermon was preached. Calvin conceded that the pastors could deliver a brief exhortation (*hortatiunculam*) for the consolation of mourners at the graveside, but he opposed any more elaborate ceremonies that might encourage Catholic "superstition." Burials in Geneva were performed with a minimum of ceremony. In France, pastors did not participate in Huguenot burials by virtue of their office but attended them only as private individuals. The Scottish and the Dutch Reformed churches also condemned funeral sermons, as did some early English reformers.¹² At the time that Brandmüller published his sermon collection, the Palatinate was the only Reformed territory outside Basel where pastors were expected to give funeral sermons, and the practice there could be seen as a holdover

¹¹Johann Brandmüller, *Conciones funebres centum ex vetere, et octoginta ex novo Testamento* (Basel: Perna, 1572). Perna issued reprints in 1576 and 1579; his successor, Conrad Waldkirch, published two editions in 1596 and 1608. The Stockholm edition was published in 1584 and the Hanau edition in 1603.

¹²On Bern, see Kurt Guggisberg, *Bernische Kirchengeschichte* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1958), 163–64. On Zurich's burial customs, see Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 274–75. Max Engammare describes Genevan funerals and contrasts them with Jan a Lasco's church ordinance, which did provide for funeral sermons; see Engammare, "L'Inhumation de Calvin et des pasteurs genevois de 1540 à 1620," in *Les Funérailles à la Renaissance, XIIe colloque international de la Société Française d'Etude du Seizième Siècle Bar-le-Duc, 2–5 décembre 1999*, ed. Jean Balsamo (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 271–93. Bernard Roussel discusses Huguenot burial practices in "'Ensevelir honnestement les corps': Funeral Corteges and Huguenot Culture," in *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559–1685*, ed. Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 192–208, while Andrew Spicer compares funeral practices in Scotland, the Netherlands, and France, "'Rest of Their Bones': Fear of Death and Reformed Burial Practices," in *Fear in Early Modern Society*, ed. William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 167–83. On opposition to English funeral sermons, see Frederick B. Tromly, "'According to Sounde Religion': The Elizabethan Controversy over the Funeral Sermon," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983): 293–312.

from the Palatinate's more Lutheran past. By the later sixteenth century, Reformed funeral practices were one more indication of confessional difference: Lutheran pastors took note of and criticized both Calvinists and Catholics for their rejection of funeral sermons.¹³

Despite its Reformed identity, Basel followed its own path with regard to the preaching of funeral sermons, as it did in other doctrinal and ceremonial practices. By the time Brandmüller published his collection, sermons were a well-established part of funeral observances in the city. The custom was no doubt influenced by the popularity of funeral sermons in neighboring Lutheran territories, and it has been attributed to the "Lutheranizing" influence of Basel's church leaders during the third quarter of the sixteenth century. But in fact the preaching of funeral sermons grew out of a native tradition dating back to the death of Johann Oecolampadius, the city's first reformer, in 1531. Oecolampadius was buried in the cloister walk of the cathedral before the regular morning service was held. This provided the cathedral preacher, Telemonius Limperger, with an opportunity to eulogize the deceased reformer in his sermon for the day. Five years later Oswald Myconius, Oecolampadius's successor, preached at the funeral of Erasmus. Myconius also delivered a funeral sermon for the renowned humanist and Greek professor Simon Grynaeus, who died during the plague of 1541. When Myconius died in 1552, his funeral sermon was delivered by Simon Sulzer, who was shortly afterwards chosen to succeed him. There was, however, no tradition of publishing funeral sermons before the 1570s. Brandmüller was therefore the first Basel pastor to make his funeral sermons available to a wider audience.¹⁴

¹³The Palatinate's church ordinance of 1563 not only prescribed the holding of funeral sermons, but also specified the scripture texts to be used and listed the doctrines which should be taught in the sermons, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 14: *Kurpfalz*, ed. Emil Sehling (Tübingen: Mohr, 1969), 406–8. Bernard Vogler describes funeral practices in the Palatinate, *Vie religieuse en pays rhénan dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle (1556–1619)*, 3 vols. (Lille: Service de reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille, 1974), 2:846–61. On Lutheran criticism of the Reformed rejection of funeral sermons, Ernst Heinrich Rehermann, "Volkscundliche Aspekte in Leichenpredigten protestantischer Prediger Mittel- und Norddeutschlands im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," in *Leichenpredigten als Quelle historischer Wissenschaften*, ed. Rudolf Lenz (Cologne: Böhlau, 1975), 277–94. Although provincial synods of the Catholic Church condemned the preaching of funeral sermons, the genre was not completely ignored by Catholics; see the essays collected in Birgit Boge and Ralf Georg Bogner, eds., *Oratio funebris: Die katholische Leichenpredigt der frühen Neuzeit: Zwölf Studien, mit einem Katalog deutschsprachiger katholischer Leichenpredigten in Einzeldrucken 1576–1799 aus den Beständen der Stiftsbibliothek Klosterneuburg und der Universitätsbibliothek Eichstätt* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999). The Swiss Reformed Church eventually became less hostile to funeral sermons, and there were some funeral sermons printed in both Zurich and Bern from the later seventeenth century, but outside of Basel they never attained the important place they held for the Lutherans.

¹⁴Basel also differed from other Reformed areas in requiring its rural pastors to preach on the traditional pericopes for Sundays and church festivals; Amy Nelson Burnett, "Basel's Rural Pastors as Mediators of Confessional and Social Discipline," *Central European History* 33 (2000): 67–85. On Oecolampadius's funeral, see Ernst Staehelin, ed., *Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oekolampads* (Leipzig: Heinsius, 1934), 2:714–15. Similarly, when Bürgermeister Jacob Meyer died in 1541, the theology professor Wolfgang Wissenburg preached a sermon following his burial. The funeral was described "for the sake of future remembrance" in the protocol of Basel's senate; *Basler Chroniken*, vol. 4, ed. August Bernoulli (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1890), 103–5. On Erasmus's funeral, see Beat Rudolf Jenny, "Tod, Begräbnis und Grabmal des Erasmus von Rotterdam," *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 86, no.

Born in Biberach (Swabia) in 1533, Brandmüller studied in Tübingen and Strasbourg. In 1551 he matriculated at the University of Basel and shortly thereafter was awarded his bachelor's degree. Two years later he completed his master's degree and matriculated in Basel's theology faculty. From 1554 to 1556 he supported himself in a variety of ways, serving as the provost successively at the two residential colleges affiliated with the university, providing pastoral services at two Reformed villages technically subject to the bishop of Basel, and teaching rhetoric at the university. In 1556 he finally received a regular appointment as deacon or assistant pastor at the parish church of St. Theodore in Kleinbasel, the part of the city on the right bank of the Rhine. Upon the death of St. Theodore's senior pastor in 1564, Brandmüller was promoted to this position, which he held until his own death in 1596. During his later years at St. Theodore, Brandmüller also renewed his association with the university. In 1581 he became the professor of Hebrew. Three years later he received his doctorate in theology, and in 1586 he was appointed to the chair of Old Testament.¹⁵

Despite his loyalty to his adopted home in Switzerland, Brandmüller maintained his ties to Germany. While still a deacon at St. Theodore, Brandmüller also served as pastor in Grenzach in the margraviate of Baden, the German territory surrounding Kleinbasel, after the Reformation was introduced there in the mid-1550s. His brother-in-law, Jakob Dachtler, was also a pastor in Baden, and Brandmüller preached in Dachtler's parish at his brother-in-law's invitation. Brandmüller's familiarity with the progress of the Reformation in Baden led him to dedicate his book of funeral sermons to two of the Markgraf's officials, Johann Conrad von Ulm and Caspar Herwagen.

2 (1986): 61–104. Jenny describes the development of Basel's funeral practices in appendix 1, 74–82. The earliest mention of Basel funeral sermons he finds is a letter from Thomas Grynaeus to the pastor Severin Erzberger, which he dates between 1547 and 1556, but there is an earlier letter to Myconius from Jacob Bedrot in Strasbourg asking Myconius to publish the sermon preached at Simon Grynaeus's funeral, 20 September 1541; Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Strasbourg, Thesaurus Baumianus 13 (MS 672), fol. 84. Sulzer's funeral sermon for Myconius, as well as those for several other Baslers from the 1550s and 1560s, is preserved in the Basel Universitätsbibliothek (hereafter BUB), MsKiAr 23a, fols. 270–76. The later Basel theology professor and Antistes Johann Jakob Grynaeus preached several funeral sermons while serving as pastor and superintendent of the church in Baden between 1565 and 1575; BUB, MsKiAr 34, no. 6. Rolf Hartmann attributes Basel's practice of holding funeral sermons to Lutheran influence, *Das Autobiographische in der Basler Leichenrede* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1963), 15–17, but the earliest sermon he discussed dates from 1586, and he was unaware of the earlier manuscript sermons. Because he is interested in the autobiographical information in the sermons, Hartmann does not consider Brandmüller's *Conciones funebres*.

¹⁵Biographical information on Johann Brandmüller was gathered from Hans Georg Wackernagel, ed., *Die Matrikel der Universität Basel*, vol. 2, 1532/33–1600/01 (Basel: Universitätsbibliothek, 1956); Johann Werner Herzog, *Athenae Rauricae sive Catalogus Professorum Academiae Basiliensis ab A. MCCCCCLX. ad A. MDCCCLXXVIII. cum brevi singulorum biographia* (Basel, 1778); Karl Gauss, *Basilea Reformata: Die Gemeinden der Kirche Basel Stadt und Land und Ihre Pfarrer seit der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Basel: Historische und Antiquarische Gesellschaft, 1930); and the prefaces to Johann Brandmüller, *Zwölf Dialogi vnd freuntliche Colloquia oder Gespräche zweyer Bruoder* (Frankfurt: Peter Schmid, 1566).

In his dedicatory epistle, Brandmüller described his reasons for publishing a collection of funeral sermons.¹⁶ The Last Days were approaching, he argued, as was clear from the predominance of sin and the lack of shame and repentance. This being so, it seemed both necessary and appropriate to consider those things normally treated in funeral sermons, since they pertain to the end of the world just as much as to the preparation for death.¹⁷ He had written the sermons for his own use but had been persuaded by many of his fellow pastors to share them: “and so I wished to oblige my brethren, and to publish these little sermons . . . according to their request.” He acknowledged that the sermons were not “learned, ornate, or artfully composed,” and that they contained nothing that had not been “said first by others or written by the most learned and approved doctors of the church.” Still, they provided examples of how scripture could and should be explicated in funeral sermons—in other words, they served as models for clergy in carrying out this particular pastoral function.

Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons* was clearly intended for a narrower audience than were the earlier Lutheran funeral sermon collections. As mentioned, the sermons were in Latin, which made them inaccessible to most of the laity. They were written for pastors, but Brandmüller's assumptions about the pastors who would use them differed significantly from those of Mathesius and Spangenberg. The intended audience was comprised of contemporaries and younger colleagues, men who had been born after the institutionalization of the Reformation, and in particular after the changes to schools, academies, and universities promoted by humanists and reformers were beginning to produce better-educated candidates for the pastorate. To benefit from the sermons, the pastors had to be comfortable reading Latin (although, as Brandmüller had admitted, a fairly simple Latin without too much rhetorical complexity) and able to take ideas presented in one language and incorporate them into sermons preached in another. In other words, these sermons could not simply be read to the congregation.¹⁸

Brandmüller also expected his readers to know some Greek, since he occasionally included Greek passages in his sermons.¹⁹ There is no Hebrew in any of the sermons, but Brandmüller did address a few problems of translation from the Hebrew, and he obviously expected his readers to understand the importance of word meaning in the original languages of scripture.²⁰ The sermons contain other

¹⁶I have used the Stockholm (1584) edition of Brandmüller's *Conciones Funebres CLXXX, nunc postremo diligenter recognitae, multisque in locis illustratae*. Instead of page numbers, which vary between editions, sermon number and scripture text are cited when referring to the book.

¹⁷Spangenberg had expressed the same general sentiment as justification for publishing his funeral sermons in the dedicatory epistle to his work.

¹⁸Hollweg, *Heinrich Bullingers Hausbuch*, 33–57, makes the same point about the sermons in Heinrich Bullinger's *Decades* (or *Hausbuch*, as the German translation was called).

¹⁹As, for example, in sermon 12 (Deut. 14:1ff.) and sermon 72 (Ecclus. 4:28), his cross-references to Ecclus. 12 and Wisd. of Sol. 7 in sermon 2 (Gen. 3:19), and his quotation from St. Basil in sermon 36 (Ps. 39:5–9).

²⁰See, for instance, his explanation of the Hebrew term “gathered to his fathers” in sermon 10 on Num. 20:22–29, which is also discussed in sermon 98 on 1 Macc. 2:49–70.

indications that reflected Brandmüller's humanist sensitivity to context, ranging from brief asides, such as his explanation that Siloam was a bath in Jerusalem, to a broader summary of the entire book of Ecclesiastes, so that the verses used as the sermon text could be understood in their proper setting.²¹ In sum, there is a scholarly tone to Brandmüller's sermons that is lacking in those of his predecessors, as well as an expectation that the pastors reading—and using—the sermons would understand and appreciate this scholarly approach.

From the point of view of a pastor faced with preparing a sermon for an upcoming funeral, perhaps the most practical part of the book was the index. Here the sermons were categorized according to the status or occupation of the deceased. There were, for instance, eight sermons appropriate for the funerals of the elderly, and seven for the young. Other sermons were listed as fitting for the rich, or the poor; for nobles, merchants, artisans, and peasants; parents and children; widows and women dying in childbirth; for those who died after a long illness and for those who died suddenly; for suicides and for murder victims; for the "righteous and pious," as well as for the "sinful and reprobate," and, finally, several sermons that could be used at the funeral of anyone.

The sermons themselves proceed through all of scripture, from God's prohibition against eating from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2) through the invitation to the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19). One hundred of the sermons deal with Old Testament passages, with the wisdom literature providing the most frequent texts. Almost a quarter of the Old Testament sermons are based on the deuterocanonical book of Ecclesiasticus, with Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the Wisdom of Jesus Ben-Sirach providing another fifteen sermon texts. Brandmüller's use of the Apocrypha suggests that the Basel church was not yet seriously concerned about the issue of canonicity. This would soon change, as the new bishop of Basel began to implement the reforms of the Council of Trent in his territory. A generation later, one of Brandmüller's colleagues would be censured by church authorities for delivering a set of wedding sermons on the book of Tobias.²²

The Psalms are another fruitful basis for Brandmüller's sermons. Most of the twenty-two sermons on the Psalms dealt with individual Psalms, but Psalm 90 is the basis for four different sermons. The remaining sermons are divided fairly evenly

²¹The reference to Siloam in sermon 118 (Luke 13:1–9); to Ecclesiastes in sermon 60 (Eccles. 4:1–3).

²²The reprimand was aimed at the Liestal pastor, Jakob Christoph Ryter; Kirchenratsprotokolle, Basel Staatsarchiv, Kirchen Archiv D 1.2, entry for 26 Feb. 1607. Ryter apparently ignored the reprimand, for a copy of his wedding sermons on Tobias, preached between 1607 and his death in 1610, is preserved in BUB, Mscr. A III 43. There is a steady increase in the number of polemical anti-Catholic disputations held at Basel's university between 1576 and 1610. The earliest published disputation to address the issue of canonicity was held in 1581, and from 1589 the topic was addressed frequently. There are fifteen disputations concerned with canonicity from the decade of the 1590s alone. On the disputations generally, see Amy Nelson Burnett, "Preparing the Pastors: Pastoral Training and Theological Education in Sixteenth-Century Basel," in *History Has Many Voices: Festschrift for Robert M. Kingdon*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2003), 31–51. On the reforming efforts of Bishop Jacob Christoph Blarer von Wartensee, including the establishment of a Jesuit college in his residence of Porrentruy in 1591, see André Chèvre, "Après le Concile de Trente l'Evêque de Bâle réforme son clergé," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 44 (1950): 17–36, 111–37.

between Genesis (with the focus on the stories of the patriarchs), the historical books, and the book of Job.²³ The Pentateuch (apart from Genesis) and, more surprisingly, the Prophets receive little coverage, with five and three sermons respectively.

The remaining eighty sermons deal with the New Testament. The Gospels receive the lion's share of attention, with thirty-eight sermons; sixteen of these are devoted to the Gospel of John. The epistles are the subject of a further twenty-five sermons, with Romans making up the largest portion. Revelation provides the text for eleven sermons, most of them devoted to the letters to the seven churches in the opening chapters of the book: apocalyptic speculation apparently had little place in funeral sermons. For those pastors who might want to try their hand at writing funeral sermons themselves, Brandmüller provides at the end of his book a list of twenty New Testament passages that are appropriate for sermons. Again, the Gospels dominate the list (thirteen texts), with the remainder coming from Acts and the Epistles. Brandmüller explains his inclusion of these "themata" in his preface by stating, "it is sometimes as difficult to look for and find a text appropriate to present circumstances as it is to arrange and explain it." Nevertheless, one cannot help but wonder whether he had originally intended to provide as many sermons on the New Testament as he had on the Old, but had simply "run out of steam" by the time he reached sermon 180.

The sermons themselves vary in length and exegetical detail. Each begins with the scripture text, followed by the sermon itself, which could be from one to eight pages long, with three to four pages being the average, and with the sermons on the New Testament tending to be a little longer than those on the Old Testament. Each is clearly divided into three, and sometimes four, points. In line with his scholarly popularizing, and in addition to his frequent cross-referencing to other scripture passages, Brandmüller generally quotes one or two nonscriptural sources in each sermon. For the sake of his readers, Brandmüller regularly gives the source of his citations, and sometimes the name of the work cited, in the margins of his book. His name-dropping reflects a wide range of reading: Augustine and Chrysostom are without question the most frequently quoted, but other Greek and Latin fathers appear often as well. Medieval theologians such as Thomas Aquinas and Aegidius Romanus are cited in passing, while Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux make more frequent appearances. Brandmüller also relies on a number of contemporaries, with little confessional bias. He cites Luther and Zwingli, Brenz and Bullinger, Reformed theologian Wolfgang Musculus and Lutheran sermon writer Johann Spangenberg, and his fellow Baslers Johann Oecolampadius, Sebastian Münster, and Sebastian Castellio. Brandmüller also cites Cicero, Plato, and other classical writers, as well as Greek, Roman, and early Christian historians and historical examples. Nor is Brandmüller above a bit of self-promotion: after criticizing in one of his sermons the hypocrites and "pseudo-Christians" who do not reflect

²³There are eight sermons on Genesis, ten on the histories (including 1 and 2 Maccabees), and eight on Job.

their Christian faith in their actions, he recommends his own book of twelve dialogues “on the fruits and signs of faith.”²⁴

The structure of the sermons implies that they were to be mined for content rather than simply translated and read aloud, for they present only the torso of a proper sermon as prescribed in contemporary rhetoric and homiletics texts.²⁵ These works also advise young preachers not to write out and memorize the entire sermon word for word, but instead to prepare a “concept” stating the thesis of the sermon, noting the two or three (and never more than four) parts into which the discussion of that theme was to be divided, and listing the citations from scripture and other sources that would be used to explain and support the points made in the sermon.²⁶

Following this advice, Brandmüller wrote only the body of the sermon—the elucidation and application of scripture text and the explanation of doctrine—for his readers, providing neither an introduction, statement of theme or division of topic, confutation, or conclusion. Although Brandmüller’s first point occasionally functions as an introduction, it more usually goes straight to an idea in the text. Nor do the sermons contain any model prayers to be read aloud by the preacher, either before or after the sermon proper. Likewise, aside from an occasional benediction or brief prayer at the end of the last point, there are no formal conclusions to the sermons. The introduction and conclusion would be the elements most easily and appropriately tailored to the specific circumstances of the funeral, and it might therefore be expected that a preacher could add them himself, along with any biographical information about the deceased that he deemed appropriate. As Brandmüller says in his preface, “the sermons are short, or rather, to speak more accurately, they are epitomes of sermons, which can nonetheless easily be drawn out as the occasion allows by expounding more copiously on them.”

Brandmüller devotes his fair share of sermons to the same topics treated by the earlier funeral sermon authors: the miseries and uncertainties of life in this world, the certainty of death and the need to be prepared for it at all times, and the blessedness of eternal rest in heaven. Several of his sermons are based on the same scripture texts used by Spangenberg and Huberinus.²⁷ This does not mean, however, that he draws the same lesson from a passage. Although all of the preachers

²⁴Sermon 175 (Rev. 3:1–6); Brandmüller, *Zwölf Dialogi*.

²⁵The parts of an oration according to classical rhetoric were the exordium, narratio, confirmatio, confutatio, and peroratio. In bk. 1, chap. 6, of his popular homiletics text, *De formandis concionibus sacris, seu de interpretatione Scripturarum populari Libri II* (first published in Marburg in 1553, with three later editions published in Basel), Andreas Hyperius defined the parts of the sermon as the reading of the text, prayer, introduction, theme and its division, confirmation, confutation, and conclusion. Andreas Pancratius simplified this structure into the exordium, doctrina (which included the propositio, confirmatio, and confutatio), applicatio, and peroratio or conclusion; see Pancratius, *Methodus Concionandi, monstrans verum et necessarium artis Rhetoricae in Ecclesia usum...* (Wittenberg: Schleich & Schön, 1574), 16–30.

²⁶See, for instance, Jacob Andreae, *Methodus Concionandi...*, ed. Polycarp Lyser (Wittenberg: Gronenberg, 1595), 72–76. Andreae’s homiletics text was based on lectures given by him in Tübingen twenty years earlier.

²⁷Brandmüller included sermons on seven of the fourteen scripture texts used by Spangenberg and eight of the fifteen texts used for funeral sermons in Huberinus’s sermon collection.

share many of the same beliefs about both life and death, their sermons on the same passage can vary considerably. In his sermon on Job 14:1 (“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble”), for instance, Spangenberg discusses in turn the three phases of human existence—born into sin, subject to trials and temptations during life, and fated to die—and then shows how God consoles Christians at each phase, through the rebirth of baptism, the preaching of Law and Gospel during life, and the promise of heaven at death. Huberinus also emphasizes the stain of original sin and the sins committed during one’s lifetime, but he points to the particular guilt of women as Eve’s daughters, Christ’s punishment for human sin, and God’s providence in fixing the time of each person’s death. Brandmüller chooses to focus not on sin but rather on the fragility of human life on earth, which should cause us to seek eternal life and should motivate us to lead lives of humility and repentance.²⁸

The large number of sermons in his collection also gives Brandmüller the opportunity to discuss specific topics not addressed by his predecessors. The Old Testament texts were particularly useful for descriptions of how to face death or how to react to the death of a loved one in imitation of a biblical model: the patriarch Isaac, whose sons patiently awaited their aged father’s death; Jacob’s wife Rachel, who died in childbirth; Moses’ brother Aaron, who died assured that his sons would succeed him; and King Hezekiah, whose prayer for healing was heard and whose death was postponed—but still inevitable.²⁹ The book of Job, as well as the Psalms and the wisdom literature were ideally suited for exhortations on the fragility of life, the purpose of suffering, and the importance of preparing for death by living a life of repentance, humility, and patient endurance.

The New Testament, on the other hand, was more useful for doctrinal issues related to death. Here Brandmüller often repeats the comparison of death to sleep made, for instance, at Christ’s raising of the synagogue leader’s daughter and the martyrdom of Stephen.³⁰ Child of the later sixteenth century that he was, Brandmüller cannot refrain from presenting the “correct” (i.e., Reformed) understanding of the Lord’s Supper in his sermon on John 6 (“I am the bread of life”), but he maintains a fairly dispassionate tone without polemics or explicit criticism of opposing views.³¹

Perhaps the most interesting sermons are those tailored specifically to the psychological state of his audience. Several times Brandmüller directly addresses the fear of death, in one sermon listing twelve consolations in the face of death, in another reminding his audience that they should not judge others who were afraid of death but should instead consider Christ, who shared all human weaknesses

²⁸Spangenberg, *Leychpredigten*, sermon 3; Huberinus, *Mancherley Form*, sermon 3, fols.157r–61v; Brandmüller, sermon 26. This is the only verse that had sermons by all three preachers.

²⁹Sermon 6 on Isaac (Gen. 27:1–4), sermon 7 on Rachel (Gen. 35:16–20), sermon 10 on Aaron (Num. 20:22–29), and sermon 18 on Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1–7).

³⁰Sermon 104 (Matt. 9:23–25); sermon 140 (Acts 7:59–60).

³¹Sermon 130.

except our ignorance and sinfulness.³² He refers to the five temptations that according to the late medieval *Ars moriendi* were used by demons in their last-ditch efforts to prevent a “good death,” but he reminds his audience that if they resisted successfully through the moment of death, the devil would have no more power over them.³³

Brandmüller also reminds his audience that one cannot judge the state of the deceased’s soul on the basis of how he died. A long and painful death could actually be a sign of God’s favor, since God chastens those whom he loves; it was entirely possible “that someone drawn and quartered for inciting sedition could go to dwell with the angels, while another who died dressed in a Franciscan habit and religiously buried could descend into hell.”³⁴ An unexpected death could be a warning to survivors that we should repent, but it could also be a means of removing the righteous from an unworthy world.³⁵

Suicide posed a particularly difficult problem: how could the pastor console mourners when suicide was condemned as a self-murder? Brandmüller uses as his text an incident in 2 Maccabees, where Razis, a leader of the Jews, committed suicide rather than be humiliated, tortured, and killed by the Gentiles. Scripture here praised the martyrdom, not the manner of death, according to Brandmüller. Nevertheless, suicide could not be justified as an escape from temporal troubles—and at least Razis had called upon God at the moment of his death.³⁶

Brandmüller also speaks directly to his audience about how to mourn. Most importantly, he stresses, Christians should not grieve “as the heathens (Gentiles) do,” with immoderate sorrow and display, since Christians have the hope of resurrection and eternal life. He presents this idea most fully in a sermon devoted to the Deuteronomic prohibition of shaving the head as a sign of mourning, but he repeats it in other sermons as well.³⁷ Brandmüller’s concern with restraint in the display of grief echoes the opinion of Pierre Viret expressed in a dialogue on death and burial practices, published a generation earlier. It also parallels the emphasis on emotional restraint within marriage expressed by writers of sixteenth-century wedding sermons (including Spangenberg, Mathesius, and Brandmüller himself).³⁸

³²Sermons 151 (Rom. 7:24–25) and 112 (Mark 14:34) respectively; see also sermon 153 (Rom. 14:7–10) and sermon 129 (John 6:47–50). Brandmüller took his list of ten similarities and two differences between Christ and all humankind from Peter Lombard, who had himself taken it from St. Augustine.

³³Sermons 113 (Mark 14:38) and 168 ((1 Pet. 5:6–9). The five temptations were doubts about faith, about God’s mercy, impatience with affliction, complacency, and preoccupation with worldly things; for a brief summary of the *Ars moriendi*, see Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 52–55.

³⁴Sermon 68 on Wisd. 3:2–5.

³⁵Sermons 118 (Luke 13:1–9) and 139 (Acts 5:1–6); sermon 52 (Prov. 4:10–13).

³⁶Sermon 100 (2 Macc. 14: 37–46).

³⁷Sermon 12 (Deut. 14:1–2); cf. sermon 61 (Eccles. 7:1b), sermon 68 (Wisd. 3:2–5), sermon 84 (Eccles. 22:11–12), sermon 104 (Matt. 9:23–25); sermon 178 (Rev. 14:13).

³⁸Viret’s dialogue is described by Bernard Roussel, “Ensevelir honestement.” On the restraint of passion within marriage during this period, see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, “Fragrant Wedding Roses’: Lutheran Wedding Sermons and Gender Definition in Early Modern Germany,” *German History* 17

Although he does not explicitly mention criticisms of Protestant burial practices, Brandmüller is sensitive to the Catholic charge that the Reformed did not treat the bodies of the deceased in a reverential manner. In fact, he distances himself from Reformed practice and allies himself with the Lutherans with regard to the degree of ceremony surrounding burial. Implicitly criticizing the burial practices of both Zurich and Geneva, he asserts that the body of the deceased must be shown honor and treated with respect through a public funeral and proper burial, both of which testify to Christian belief in the resurrection. As he points out, “we do not commit a dead ass or cow [to the grave] nor bury it honorably, because it will not rise again.”³⁹

Brandmüller’s last several sermons on Revelation deserve special comment. Seven of these eleven sermons are devoted to the letters to the seven churches from the first three chapters of Revelation. Although they follow the same three-point pattern of the previous sermons, they are written more like commentaries on scripture than as sermons in a narrative style. Brandmüller provides background and historical information on each of the seven churches, describes the general content of the letter to each church, and then moves to a phrase-by-phrase exegesis of the text.

Brandmüller’s change in style indicates that the expository method of preaching, based on the *lectio continua* or running exegesis of the scripture text, had not been entirely abandoned in Basel. It also provides further support for the argument that the sermons were intended as sources to be used by pastors preparing their own sermons rather than as ready-made presentations to be read aloud. In fact, although Brandmüller nowhere acknowledges it, these sermons are little more than popularizations of the Apocalypse commentary of Brandmüller’s associate in the Basel ministry, the theology professor Martin Borrhaus.⁴⁰ Brandmüller at times quotes Borrhaus directly, and he relies on Borrhaus’s exegesis to explain the imagery of the

(1999): 25–40. Lutheran funeral sermons could also caution against the immoderate display of grief; Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, 185.

³⁹Sermon 98 (1 Macc. 2:49–70); cf. also sermon 7 (Gen. 35:16–20). This sentiment was also expressed in Lutheran church ordinances. Only the excommunicated were to be buried without ceremony; Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual*, 185. Reformed burial practices were criticized particularly by Catholics for their extreme simplicity. One Catholic description of Genevan burials charged that the Reformed “throw the body in the grave without saying anything or performing any ceremonies any more than they would for a dog or horse”; cited by Engammare, “L’inhumation de Calvin,” 271–93. Bernard Roussel quotes another Catholic observer of Reformed burials: the deceased was “placed in a coffin and carried out by servants without pomp, ceremony, or prayer; and in the case of ordinary people, the body is carried by carcass haulers from the local slaughterhouse to some field or profane spot that the authorities have designated for the burial of those of his religion”; see Roussel, “Ensevelir honnestement.”

⁴⁰*Apocalypsim Ioannis, Fidelem prophetarum interpretem, Explicatio*, which was printed in 1561 together with Borrhaus’s commentary on Isaiah by Oporinus. Brandmüller’s failure to acknowledge Borrhaus here is all the more striking when compared to the practice throughout the book of printing in the margins the names of those he cites. There are, by contrast, very few similarities between Brandmüller’s sermons and Heinrich Bullinger’s *In Apocalypsim Iesu Christi... Conciones centum*, which had been published in Basel by Oporinus in 1557.

letters.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Brandmüller does not copy Borrrhaus slavishly, but remains true to his pastoral goal of consoling his hearers. In his commentary on the letter to Thyatira, for instance, Borrrhaus discusses at length the typology used and the punishment of the unrepentant. Brandmüller, on the other hand, emphasizes the consolation and admonition of those who have not been deceived by Satan and the prize given to those who persevere and resist temptation.⁴²

This description of the sermons on Revelation brings us full circle to the questions of the intended audience and use of Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons*. As an aid to pastors, Brandmüller's book was clearly superior to the older works of Mathesius and Spangenberg in the sheer number of sermons, as well as in the variety of themes treated, the adroit combination of scholarly knowledge with practical and popular presentation, the tailoring to funerals of various kinds, and the general tone that could be used at any funeral. Moreover, because it was written in Latin, Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons* could be used outside of German-speaking lands. This helps explain its publication in Stockholm a decade after it was first published in Basel.

The broader range of thematic concerns is evident as well in the volumes of funeral sermons by Lutheran preachers such as Heinrich Salmuth, Andreas Pancratius, and Nikolaus Selnecker that were published after the first edition of Brandmüller's work. Like Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons*, these collections were much larger than those of the previous generation: Salmuth's volume contained one hundred sermons; Pancratius's 377 sermons were published in four volumes. As was the case with Brandmüller, the Lutheran preachers addressed a number of specific issues related to death. Pancratius, for instance, also preached sermons on whether suicides could be saved and on the difference between pagan and Christian funerals; Salmuth's collection included sermons on the death of children and on death in childbirth. And also like Brandmüller, all three of the Lutheran preachers made the structure of their sermons clear, either by dividing them into points or by adding marginal notes that identified the rhetorical structure. Selnecker also incorporated scholarly elements, such as the definition of terms, into his sermons. The similarities between Brandmüller's funeral sermons and those of his Lutheran contemporaries alert us to the fact that generational and biographical factors could be as important as confessional ones in shaping the form and content of those sermons.⁴³

⁴¹Compare, for instance, Brandmüller's sermon 170 (Rev. 1:17–20), with Borrrhaus's *Apocalypsim*, 650–51; sermon 172 (Rev. 2:8–11) with Borrrhaus's *Apocalypsim*, 653–55.

⁴²Sermon 174 (Rev. 2:18–29); cf. Borrrhaus, *Apocalypsim*, 657–58.

⁴³Heinrich Salmuth d. Ä., *Leichenpredigten, darin viele schöne, tröstliche Sprüche aus dem Alten vnd Neuen Testament erklärt werden, so bei den Begräbnissen etlicher Personen ... Zu Leipzig gehalten worden sind* (Leipzig: Johan Beyer/Henning Gross, 1580); Andreas Pancratius, *Christliche Leichenpredigten: Darin die fürnehmsten Sprüche ... nach rhetorischer Disposition ... erklärt werden...*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt: 1587–97); Nikolaus Selnecker, *Christliche Leychenpredigten So vom Jar 1576 bis fast an das 1590 Jar zu Leipzig aufgezeychet worden sind...* (Magdeburg: Kirchner, 1591). Both Salmuth's and Pancratius's funeral sermon collections were published posthumously. Winkler notes that Pancratius's sermons avoid issues disputed among the Lutherans and contain very little anti-Calvinist polemic, but that Selnecker's sermons are strongly anti-Calvinist—as one might expect from one of the authors of the Formula of Concord. For an analysis of the sermons of the two men, see Winkler, *Die Leichenpredigt*, 73–103.

Despite the similarities between these later Lutheran funeral sermon collections and Brandmüller's volume, however, there remained one significant difference. Whereas Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons* was a book of schematized sermon models or concepts that could be adapted for any sermon, the Lutheran works were collections of funeral sermons that had been preached for specific individuals. Reflecting a trend that would only become stronger over time, the Lutheran sermons contained references to the deceased, which could limit their general applicability. As such, they communicated directly to the reader or hearer and were more immediately useful and appropriate for private consolation and edification than they were as preaching aids to pastors. Both the semischolarly tone and the impersonal nature of Brandmüller's sermons may have given his work a competitive edge over those of his Lutheran contemporaries, for these later Lutheran sermon collections did not go through the multiple editions that Brandmüller's did.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, Brandmüller's work could not achieve the success of the first generation of funeral sermon collections. The seven editions of Brandmüller's work are comparable to the six editions of Mathesius's more limited and specific funeral sermon collection, and they do not begin to challenge the overwhelming popularity of Spangenberg's collection, with its twenty editions. Even in the Palatinate, where one might assume Brandmüller's *Funeral Sermons* would appeal to the Reformed clergy, pastors apparently preferred Spangenberg's work. In his analysis of the books in pastors' libraries in the Palatinate, Bernard Vogler has found that Spangenberg's funeral sermons were owned by more pastors (fourteen in 1580–85 and ten in 1609) than were Brandmüller's sermons (six pastors in 1609).⁴⁵

Perhaps one reason for this was that Brandmüller's sermons were more demanding than those of his predecessors. They could not simply be read aloud without further adaptation, but required some education and some effort on the part of the pastor to transform them into full-fledged sermons. Brandmüller's fellow pastors in Basel could certainly have used his book with profit, since they met the educational standards that Brandmüller presupposed for his audience. The same may not have been true, however, for parish pastors in the larger territories of Germany, where it took another generation before the average pastor had at least enough education to matriculate in a university.⁴⁶ And the variety and number of

⁴⁴Salmuth's collection was reprinted twice, Pancratius's sermon collection was reprinted once in the early seventeenth century, and Selnecker's volume was never reissued. Siegfried Saccus's funeral sermons took the Lutheran emphasis on biography to the extreme, for he structured some of them entirely around the deceased's biography; Moore, "The Magdeburg Cathedral Pastor."

⁴⁵Bernard Vogler, *Le clergé protestant rhénan au siècle de la réforme (1555–1619)* (Paris: Ophrys, 1976), 330–31.

⁴⁶On theological education in Basel, see Burnett, "Preparing the Pastors"; on the gradually improving level of clerical education, see Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit in der Frühneuzeit: Deren Anteil an der Entfaltung frühmoderner Staatlichkeit und Gesellschaft: Dargestellt am Beispiel des Fürstentums Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, der Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel und der Stadt Braunschweig* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 84–91, 159–98; and on the clergy of Rostock and Mecklenburg, see Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 336–40. Vogler, *Le clergé protestant rhénan*, 46–78, describes the slowly rising level of education among the clergy of the Palatinate.

sermons in the collection may not have been as important as ease of use, especially for pastors of small villages where only a few funeral sermons would be preached each year. Moreover, Brandmüller did not have the name recognition—nor a dedicated publicist like Johann's son Cyriakus—which may have increased Spangenberg's popularity in Germany.

Nevertheless, Brandmüller's book of funeral sermons attests to the desire of at least one Reformed theologian to assist parish ministers in an important component of pastoral care. To oblige his fellow pastors, Brandmüller made his sermons available as models that they could use when publicly instructing and consoling the bereaved. In a very practical way, his *Funeral Sermons* taught pastors how to apply the truths of scripture to those facing the death of a loved one. His work demonstrates that there is still much to learn about preaching in the Reformed tradition.