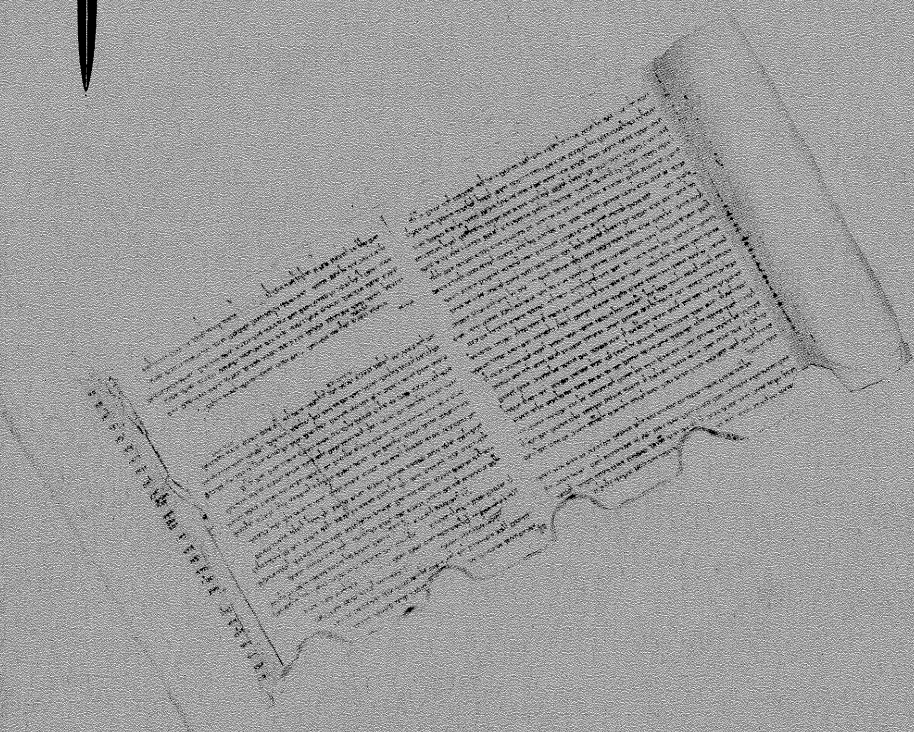


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REFORMATION JUBILEE LECTURES

(Continued)

III. WHAT IS THEOLOGY? Or: IN DEFENCE OF DOGMA

Science and Certainty

Theology is and must be men of God speaking the Word of God to the people of God. Nowadays it has largely become learned gentlemen writing for learned gentlemen about learned gentlemen.

What has happened is that theology has gone "scientific." Not Scripture but the Scientific Method now has the last word. So sacrosanct has this Method in fact become, that modern "theology" can make do without many things--without an inspired Scripture, a divine Christ, a real Redemption, even without a personal God--but not without the Scientific Method!

This is not to deny that scientific methodology has legitimate uses in the Church. Applied to certain subsidiary issues, particularly in the realm of apologetics, it can be very useful. The point is that it must never be allowed to function as an autonomous principle, determining doctrine, but must restrict itself to such chores as may be assigned to it under the command and strict supervision of the written Word of God, which must always remain in control.

The irrelevance of the Scientific Method as a total principle in theology would be much more obvious,

were it not for one persistent illusion. That is the superstitious belief that if allowed to function just a little longer, "scientific" theology will arrive at firm and definite conclusions, which will end the present chaos. Starry-eyed young book-worms at the seminaries, unless otherwise occupied in secular revolutions, wait with bated breath for the latest German research into whatever "theological problem" happens to be "in" that season. The solution seems just around the corner, the "scholarly consensus" just on the point of crystallising. The church politicians encourage this state of mind, because it enables them to excuse any messy status quo as an almost virtuous but at least unavoidable preliminary stage, which will surely usher in the promised "clarification." Until then all judgments must remain suspended--permanently, it turns out.

For unlike the idealistic youngsters, the wily old statesmen know very well that the solutions never arrive, and the consensus never materialises. Instead, somebody drags a new problem across the trail, and the chase begins afresh.

"Problem" seems in fact to be the basic category of modern theology. To paraphrase Albert Nock on democracy: "Every time one of our first-string publicists opens his mouth, a 'problem' falls out; and every time he shuts it, he bites one in two that was trying to get out."

This inability to attain any sort of stable "assured results" is not accidental, but is inherent in the empirical-scientific approach to theology. In the first place, there is the problem of the "data." In physics or chemistry the matter is quite straightforward. But what are the "data" of theology? Scripture, tradition, history, reason, experience? The mutual relation of these aspects depends on a number of basic assumptions which cannot possibly be

provided by the Scientific Method. Mere method, without any substantive principle of authority, cannot possibly produce content, and so becomes "the fleshpot of those who live in metaphysical deserts" (Buckley)¹. The result is that subjectivism reigns supreme. Every theologian programmes the Method with his own assumptions and preferences, and then announces the result as "scientific." If a consensus seems imminent, the threat is soon averted by some enterprising scholar who manages to give the kaleidoscope a slightly different tilt. In classic laissez faire style, there is a constant demand for new fads, and originality is rewarded in terms of academic careers. And so the Hegelian tread-mill grinds on. Luther's dictum about scholastic theology ("the one milks the billy-goat and the other holds the sieve") fits modern theology even better. Since Schleiermacher it has been attempting to spin the gold of truth out of the straw of "the ego of the theologising subject." This means, quite literally, serving the flesh, the "belly" (koilia) of Romans 16:18, in the Hebrew sense of man's interior, the heart, or the seat of mind, will, and feelings. And Original Sin has plenty of "originality," i.e. egoistic inventiveness, Is. 53:6!

Secondly, the moment it is agreed that theology must be scientific, in the modern, empirical-descriptive sense, Gustaf Aulen's terrible corollary necessarily follows: "The object of research is an ideal goal toward which theology can only strive in its endeavour to attain to the truth."² Science, understood as systematised generalisation based on observed fact, rather than in the classical sense of certain knowledge, always moves toward truth, not from it. Theology so conceived, keeps on groping for an ultimate truth which remains always beyond its grasp. No matter what "progress" is made, the horizon, together with the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, keeps on receding. This really

implies that "scientific" theology is a programme for avoiding the truth, rather than one for finding it. For that the truth must always be sought must mean in practice that it dare never be found. If it were ever found, the whole theological enterprise would have to grind to a halt. And so the dreary perpetuum mobile keeps on moving, like a revolving door, without ever getting anywhere; Tantalus forever reaching for the unobtainable fruit, Sisyphus ever putting his shoulder to the rock that keeps on slipping down!

But Christ never founded a discussion club for the eventual discovery of truth; He founded a teaching Church for the proclamation of it, Mat. 28:18f! For empirical science, truth is the terminus ad quem, the point of arrival; for theology it is the terminus a quo, the starting point. Theology must announce and apply the truth for man's salvation. For our human, temporal affairs, probabilities, approximations, and provisional truths are quite adequate. But in matters of salvation, nothing less than certain, absolute, final truth will do. "For good consciences cry for the truth and for right instruction from God's Word, and to them death is not as bitter as doubt in any point" (Apolo-
gy).³ Unlike Satan ("Yea, hath God said. . .?") Gen. 3:1) and Pontius ("What is truth?") Pilate, Christ willed that His people should be certain of His word and truth, John 8:32. And in connection with I Tim. 3:15 Dr. F. Pieper said, in one of his great "Luther Hour" lectures:

The Christian Church as such deals in nothing but certainly. To the extent that an ecclesiastical fellowship teaches uncertainties, presents doubtful things, or gives rise to doubts, to that extent it does not have the divinely willed character of the Christian Church.⁴

The humanistic, worldly-wise problem-theology of our time can only smile uncomprehendingly at such language. Playing "science," it neither wants nor offers certainty. For all its cliches about "commitment," "Angst," etc., it is essentially frivolous and fleshly. It is autonomous man speculating leisurely, all the while complimenting himself on his impenitent rebelliousness, fondly imagining it to be proof of his having "come of age"! This is the very quintessence of all "theology of glory."

Let Luther, that great theologian of the Cross, teach us the meaning of Christian certainty:

Whatever wavers or doubts, that cannot be truth. And what would be the use or need of a Church of God in the world, if she would waver and be uncertain in her words, or propose something new every day, now give this, now take that? . . . Doctrine . . . does not belong into the Our Father, when we pray: Forgive us our debts! For doctrine is not of our doing, but it is God's own Word, who cannot sin nor do wrong. For a preacher must not pray the Our Father, nor seek forgiveness of sins when he has preached (if he is a true preacher), but he must say and boast with Jeremiah, Jer. 17:16: "Lord, Thou knowest, that out of my mouth hath gone forth that which is right and pleasing to Thee," yea he must defiantly say with St. Paul and all Apostles and Prophets: Haec dixit Dominus, This God Himself has said. And again: I have been an Apostle and Prophet of Jesus Christ in this sermon. Here it is not necessary, yea, not good to ask for forgiveness of sin, as if it were taught wrongly; for it is God's and not my word, which God neither should nor can forgive me, but must confirm, praise, crown, and say: You have taught aright, for I have spoken through you and the Word is Mine. He who cannot boast thus of his

sermon, let him leave preaching alone, for he surely lies and blasphemes God. . . Life may well be sin and wrong, yea alas it is only too wrong: but doctrine must be absolutely straight and certain, without all sin. Therefore in the Church nothing but the certain, pure and only Word of God must be preached. When that is lacking, then it is no longer the Church, but the devil's school.⁵

The peace-loving, mediating theology of the great humanist scholar, Erasmus of Rotterdam, struck Luther as intolerably sceptical. Replying to Erasmus' Diatribes, Luther wrote in his Of the Bondage of the Will, which he himself considered his best book:

For it does not befit a Christian heart not to take pleasure in firm assertions, yes it must take pleasure in firm assertions, or else it cannot be Christian. But by "firm assertion" I mean (lest we play with words) steadfastly adhering, affirming, confessing, defending, and invincibly maintaining. . .

Let the sceptics and academics be far from us Christians, but let there be in our midst firm assertors, men twice as inflexible as the very Stoics. . . Nothing is more familiar and usual among Christians than firm assertion. Take away firm assertions, and you have taken away Christianity. . . The Holy Spirit is no Sceptic, and has written into our hearts not doubts or mere opinions, but firm assertions, firmer and more certain than life and sense itself.⁶

So obnoxious was Erasmus' uncertain and compromising theology to Luther's certainty of the Gospel, that the latter was even willing to record in his testament, before witnesses, that he regarded Erasmus "as the greatest enemy of Christ" in a thousand years.⁷

His basic idea, said Luther, was "that there is no God, therefore he plays so securely in great, serious things, and does not assert, but plays with doubletalk."⁸

Elsewhere Luther teaches: "Our theology is certain, because it causes us not to look to ourselves, but to that which is outside of us, viz., the promise and truth of God."⁹ "Into theology and prayer no doubt and uncertainty may fall."¹⁰ "In theology there is neither exception nor exemption, there one must be absolutely certain."¹¹

Now, what honest person will dare to maintain that this spirit animates the nominally "Lutheran" theology of our time? Luther's dogmatic certainty, so crucial to the Reformation Faith, is the very thing most bitterly detested and attacked by the Martyrs and the Pelikans, the Quanbecks and the Sittlers. These devotees of the Zeitgeist tend to portray the Reformation as a perpetual revolution against all established dogmatic positions, with actual sixteenth-century doctrine as a non-essential, time-bound accident, when the Reformation held precisely the opposite view of itself, namely as representing a permanent doctrinal position, accidentally in conflict with temporary ecclesiastical conditions. The misrepresentation is serious. That its perpetrators can be accepted as authentic spokesmen for Luther's theology merely illustrates the maxim that the world wants to be deceived and is rarely disappointed!

Dogma

The great battle for Christian certainty is basically the battle for dogma, doctrine, revealed truth. The whole idea is foreign and repulsive to neology. Modern theology cannot begin until dogma, God-given

teaching, has been abolished. Christian theology on the other hand cannot begin without dogma and the Scripture-principle which sustains it.

The neological corrosion has eaten so deeply into our theological mentality, that dogmatics is in very ill repute almost everywhere. It is thought to be a dreary inspection tour through the man-made maze of scholastic subtleties invented by "the dogmaticians," from which the student emerges with a chilled liver and badly in need of a hot cup of "Biblical Theology." Dogmatics is thought to convey mere human tradition and teaching, while Exegesis has a monopoly on Biblical substance, or rather Biblical witness, motifs, concepts, interpretations, insights, stances, and encounters. (There is no dogma!)

This class-warfare interpretation of the relation between dogmatics and exegesis is totally misconceived. Of course a particular dogmatics may conflict with a particular exegesis. But dogmatics and exegesis as such are simply different aspects of the same thing and cannot possibly be in conflict. Dogmatics is essentially content, and exegesis is essentially method. A proper understanding and interpretation of the Bible (exegesis) establishes correct Biblical doctrine (dogmatics). A person who teaches false, human ideas in the name of God's Word is not simply a bad exegete, but above all a bad dogmatician. He must be corrected by a better dogmatician, not simply by an exegete. In fact, the moment the exegete corrects the dogmatician he is to that extent himself functioning as dogmatician. Our age of specialisation has led to the superstition that "exegetes" are one set of people and "dogmaticians" another, when in actual fact exegesis and dogmatics are but different functions of the same persons. A dogmatician who cannot establish his doctrine Biblically is a bad dogma-

tician, and an exegete who cannot define Biblical doctrine is a bad exegete. Good exegesis and good dogmatics are indivisible.

Dogma, doctrina divina, God's own teaching, is the one integrating factor which holds the four areas of theology, dogmatic, exegetical, historical, and practical, together.

dogma is the unifying core of the various theological disciplines. The dogma, the Scriptural doctrine, is the essential element in every discipline, which integrates all branches of sacred theology. The dogmatician must also be an exegete, historian, and practical theologian; and likewise the exegete, the historian, and the practical theologian must also be a good dogmatician. Each must be well acquainted with the Scripture doctrine in all its parts.--In spite of the demand for an "undogmatic" Christianity, we declare: "Only dogmatics is edifying," namely, dogmatics as doctrina divina, revealed in Scripture, the only doctrine which may be taught in Christ's Church. In the Christian Church, doctrine is the all-important thing.¹²

Scoffing at dogma and dogmatics may make sense in the Church of the Thirty-Nine Articles or in that of Wesley's Sermons, but never in that Church whose modern historical form was conceived in Theses, born of a Confession, and weaned on a Formula!

This raises the whole matter of creeds and confessions. Can Biblical truth be restated? Do confessional documents purvey divine truth itself, or merely human approximations, interpretations, etc.? What makes confessional statements binding?

A well from which one cannot draw, and a mine which yields nothing, are useless. So is Scripture as the

source of doctrine, if it does not actually yield doctrine, but only human approximations and attempts. The whole point of the Reformation's Scripture principle is that clear, certain divine truth is directly available for teaching and faith. Luther simply equates "doctrine" with "God's Word." Concrete teaching taken from Scripture, however formulated, is God's own Word, truth, and doctrine. The Lutheran Church in her official Confessions takes the same stand. They claim to represent not aspects, interpretations, views, emphases, etc., but "the pure unalloyed, and unadulterated light of his holy Gospel," the "pure doctrine of God's Word," the "right course of divine truth," the "divine truth that our pious forebears and we have acknowledged and confessed."¹³ Subscription to the Confessions in any other sense is contrary to their original intention and therefore fraudulent.

The modern habit of speaking of the Confessions as "response" to God's revelation is very misleading. It changes God-given doctrine into a human construct and suggests the Platonic scheme of earthly, concrete formulations trying their best to express correctly the absolute truth (the transcendent Ideas!), but necessarily failing to do so. Scripture does not share that Platonic superstition, Rom. 10:6ff.! Actually, of course, the moderns regard even Scripture itself as being not divine revelation itself, but merely a human "response" or "witness" to it. On the other hand, they are being strangely inconsistent when they insist (1) against "Fundamentalism" that not only Scripture but also Biblical preaching is the Word of God, (2) with "Fundamentalist" anti-creedalism that doctrinal formulations cannot be the Word of God!

But the quicksand of a false conservatism is even more deadly than the honest abyss of modernist denial. I refer to that attitude which thinks it can

safely compromise Biblical authority and inerrancy, and then use the Confessions as antidote to keep the corrosive poison within bounds. But this is like rescuing the sun by means of the moon, or building the foundation on the house, rather than the other way round. The Confessions presuppose the Scriptures as unshakable foundations. Remove these, and the superstructure must collapse as well.

When the Reformation's Scripture principle is surrendered, a Romanising view of the Church and of tradition must be resorted to, to prop up the tottering Confessions. Consider Elert's statement that the doctrine of the Trinity is "a dogma which presupposes beside the Scripture also the ancient Church as source."¹⁴ If this means anything at all, it means that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be established from the Scriptures alone, but that the Nicene Creed, etc., must come to the rescue. This would mean, however, that the Trinity is a non-Biblical, and therefore non-Christian doctrine, a mere human invention, and a piece of ecclesiastical traditionalism. Yet Nicaea accepted the Creed not on its own authority, but only because it was convinced that the Creed's doctrinal content was "according to the Scriptures."

This plays into the matter of "Open Questions." Some people imagine that only what is explicitly settled in the Confessions can be regarded as binding doctrine. Everything else is an "open question." Consider this blatant formulation from Australian Lutheran history:

Truths contained or indicated in Scripture, concerning which we as Lutherans who take their stand upon Scripture and Confessions have not as yet attained a unanimous understanding, which, moreover, are not considered justifying severance of church-fellowship . . . we denote as "Open Questions."¹⁵

This implies (1) that anything on which nominally Lutheran theologians begin to disagree thereby becomes an "open question," and (2) that not Scripture, but the Church, through her Confessions, makes doctrines. Logically this would mean that the Real Presence, for example, was not a doctrine prior to its definition by the Augsburg Confession in 1530, then was one until Luther's death, when "Lutherans who /claimed to/ take their stand upon Scripture and Confessions" disagreed about it, again became a doctrine through Article VII of the Formula of Concord, but today is no longer a doctrine because many "Lutherans" who pay lip-service to the Confessions, reject the Real Presence and fraternise with the Calvinistic churches. I do not say that this was intended by the above formulation, but this is what it clearly allows. (The anomaly was corrected, by the way, in our Theses of Agreement, which clearly state that "all doctrines of Holy Writ are equally binding" (I/4) and that no differences, even in Bible interpretation, may be tolerated if they in any way impair the teaching of Scripture and Confession)

I know of no better formulation of the correct principle here than Dr. F. Pieper's, written on behalf of the entire Synodical Conference of North America:

all doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture are to be accepted and believed, for the very reason that they are propounded in Holy Scripture, no matter whether "decided" in the Symbolical Books and agreed upon by the theologians or not. To declare doctrines revealed in the Bible to be "open" or "free" for the reason that they are not yet "symbolically fixed" in the Confessions of the orthodox Church, or not yet accepted by all orthodox theologians, would, in fact, be the same as to put the Church, her Confessions and theologians, in the place of Holy Scripture,

and to ascribe to the Church and her theologians the authority of establishing articles of faith.¹⁶

This is precisely the official position of the Lutheran Church in her Confessions: "the Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel."¹⁷ Luther writes: "Let them scream themselves into a frenzy, crying 'Church, Church!'--without God's Word it is nothing!"¹⁸ And in the very first of his thirty-eight theses on the authority of the Church (1530), he says: "The Christian Church has no power to establish any article of faith, has never established one, and will nevermore do so."¹⁹ Neither, says Luther, does the Church "confirm" articles of faith, as with a higher or adjudicatory power (the papistic notion), but is itself confirmed by God's Word and doctrine. The only sense in which the Church attests or confirms Scripture and the articles of faith, is "as a subject, that is, she recognises and confesses them, as a slave the seal of his Master" (Thesis 7).

All this is acutely relevant to the current discussions in various parts of the world about the status of confessional documents of more recent times.

When the Missouri Synod's 1962 Convention in Cleveland repealed as unconstitutional the previous Convention's (San Francisco, 1959) "Resolution 9," which had demanded that the public teachers of the Church teach in harmony with its official doctrinal pronouncements, including the Brief Statement, the St. Louis Lutheran explained, with evident approval:

declaration of the resolution as unconstitutional did not alter the Missouri Synod's doctrinal stand but removed its binding force.²⁰

But a "doctrinal stand" without "binding force" is

neither Biblical, nor Confessional, nor even honest. It is the play-doctrine of frivolous people playing church! Serious confession speaks another language. The Preface to the Book of Concord says:

These /false and seductive doctrines and their stiff-necked proponents and blasphemers/ we do not by any means intend to tolerate in our lands, churches, and schools, inasmuch as such teachings are contrary to the expressed Word of God and cannot coexist with it. . . . our disposition and intention has always been directed toward the goal that no other doctrine be treated and taught in our lands, territories, schools, and churches than that alone which is based on the Holy Scriptures of God and is embodied in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology, correctly understood, and that no doctrine be permitted entrance which is contrary to these. . . . We likewise purpose to cooperate with one another in the future in the implementation of this effort at concord in our lands . . . through diligent visitation of churches and schools, the supervision of printers, and other salutary means.²¹

Luther writes on I Peter 4:11:

If anyone speak, that he speak it as God's Word: that is a very necessary doctrine in the Church . . .

For in Christendom things are not done as in worldly government and affairs. . . for there is here a spiritual government of consciences before God, and what is here spoken, taught, commanded, or done, must happen in such manner that one knows that it is valid and stands before God, yes that it comes and flows from Him, so that one can say: This God Himself has said or done . . . For it is not to be tolerated that doctrine

is treated as it pleases everyone, or seems good and fine to him, or that it is to be arranged to fit human reason and understanding, or that people play and juggle with Scripture and God's Word, so that it would have to let itself be interpreted, steered, stretched, and mended for the sake of people or of peace and unity; for then there would be no certain nor firm foundation, on which consciences could rely.²²

To proclaim one thing as true and another thing as binding is legalistic church politics. Evangelical theology confesses nothing without being convinced that it is Biblical; but whatever is confessed to be Biblical is thereby self-evidently declared to be binding.

Very startling was the argumentation which convinced the Cleveland Convention to repeal San Francisco "Resolution 9". What was denied was not the merit of any particular doctrinal statement, but the Synod's right to adopt any binding doctrinal statements, since this in effect amended the unalterable doctrinal paragraph of the Synod's constitution which lists only the documents comprising the Book of Concord!

Poor Dr. C.F.W. Walther! Little did he realise that he was violating the constitution of the Synod he had founded when in 1881 he caused the "Thirteen Theses" to be adopted (as binding of course), thus settling the Predestination Controversy! Not even his opponents at that time, however, were so incompetent theologically as to deny the Church's right to formulate Biblical truth afresh, in response to current controversies.

Behind the mask of the new piety toward "the Scriptures and the Confessions," which purports to defend the latter against sacrilegious innovations, there

lurk rank formalism, legalism, and scepticism. Bible and Confessions are seen formalistically as magic word-patterns, rather than as doctrinal content, meaning, substance, which can and must be restated. This "cows' eye" view is both too strict and too loose: Too strict because it forbids the Church to confess, in case of conflicting interpretations, what it means by its doctrinal formulations, and too loose because it allows anybody and everybody without let or hindrance to connect their own sense or nonsense with the words of the Confessions, thereby defeating their purpose. Henceforth the Confessions are no longer regarded as actual doctrine, which can be ascertained, defined, applied, etc., but only as a "doctrinal basis," which anyone may twist this way or that as he pleases, like a waxen nose!

In other words, any heretic could teach whatever he pleased, Calvinism, Romanism, or Liberalism, so long as he would claim that he was merely "interpreting" the Scriptures and the Confessions--which is, of course, exactly what these gentry always claim to be doing! And the Synod would be helpless, for the moment it would try to insist on any particular interpretation of Scripture and/or Confession, no matter how obvious, this would be "unconstitutional"! This view of the Scriptures and the Confessions not as doctrinal substance, which a Synod can and must define, defend, and restate as circumstances require, but rather as empty, and very elastic verbal bags which anyone may stuff with whatever content he wishes, is, of course, the very heart, soul, and essence of unionism.²³

The best refutation of the "cow's eyes," which see new documents and think they see new doctrines, is the Formula of Concord itself. Although it certainly spells out its doctrinal content in much more detail

than does the Augsburg Confession, the Formula vehemently denies that it is expanding the doctrinal scope of the Confession in the slightest. It insists on being nothing more--nor less!--than the correct understanding of the Augsburg Confession over against various false interpretations. Moreover, the entire Book of Concord as such claims to be not a complete dogmatics, but only a series of doctrinal decisions--Biblical in content, ecclesiastical in form--on controverted articles.²⁴ Although the Catechisms cover the "chief parts" of the Christian religion, and although the Augsburg Confession and, for instance, Art. XI of the Formula of Concord, deal briefly also with uncontroverted articles, the great bulk of the Concordia is controversial in origin.

Moreover, in the current chaotic state of world "Lutheranism" it is important to remember that practically the entire Formula of Concord was directed not against Rome or Geneva as such, but against false Lutherans, who claimed to be loyal to the Augsburg Confession! Far from accepting the lip-service and declaring the differences intramural, the Formula is determined "to insure that familiar terminology may not hide and conceal something,"²⁵ and insists that

these controversies are not, as some may think, mere misunderstandings or contentions about words, with one party talking past the other, so that the strife reflects a mere semantic problem of little or no consequence. On the contrary, these controversies deal with weighty and important matters, and they are of such a nature that the opinions of the erring party cannot be tolerated in the church of God, much less be excused and defended.²⁶

Nor does the Book of Concord see itself as a closed

canon. The last sentence of the Preface says: "If the current controversies about our Christian religion should continue or new ones arise, we shall see to it that they are settled and composed in timely fashion before they become dangerously widespread in order that all kinds of scandal might be obviated."²⁷

Well, "new ones" have arisen in the last four hundred years, as was to be expected. Is the Church now to be gagged because not everything could be anticipated by the Confessions? Here a false conservatism is radical Liberalism's most effective front!

Today's differences about Scripture and the Church, to name the two focal points of the controversy, move on a vastly grander scale than anything settled by the Formula of Concord. Moreover, they have been "dangerously widespread" for a long time, and there has been plenty of "all kinds of scandal". At the same time the debate seems to have reached the repetitious stage, with nothing really new being said by either side, so that, all attempts at making gold and clay hang together having failed, clear-cut alternatives have crystallised. The time seems ripe for great Confessional decisions. The specifics of whether and when and how are of course known to God alone. We can at least, however, identify an obstacle that stands in the way: that blind faith in visible institutions, seminaries, etc., which is a species of what Luther called the "collier's faith"²⁸ ("I believe what the Church believes! What's that? What I believe!"). If we wait for the agreement of all formerly orthodox quarters, we shall wait till doomsday and never confess anything. And if we make the goat the gardener, we shall never harvest anything. Or, as Luther says in another place:

Perhaps they will palm off on you before the simple people and other undiscerning persons the claim that they have not yet been recognised by the Church as wolves and false teachers, but are considered true Christians. Yes, indeed, that is wisely and well spoken: if the sheep were not to flee from the wolves until the wolves through their Christian Council and public verdict commanded the sheep to flee, then the sheepfold would soon be empty, and the Shepherd would within one day find neither milk, cheese, butter, wool, flesh, nor even a hoof!²⁹

Nor will it do to borrow the architectural "split-level" concept, and to construct doctrinal statements like terraced hanging gardens, with descending degrees of certainty and authority. What is needed is a clear and binding confession of revealed divine truth in our time and circumstances, "for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (I Cor. 14:8)

Before leaving the area of dogmatic or systematic theology, we must examine, however briefly, an ingeniously camouflaged assault-route into the very heart of Christian doctrine. To all appearance the whole thing is but an abstruse discussion of fine philosophical points. When the average Christian hears that what is being rejected is merely something "metaphysical" or "ontological," he isn't worried at all. He may even mutter: "good riddance," since such terms seem to have nothing to do with the Gospel, and even conjure up negative associations like "philosophy and vain deceit," and "science falsely so called". But when the philosophical cover is thoroughly "defoliated," a very different picture emerges.

"We need a new Christianity based on entirely new concepts and terms". . .

Numerous theologians, including Lutheran Jaroslav Pelikan and Roman Catholic layman Leslie Dewart, have argued that Christianity must find substitutes for the Greek ideas that have been its philosophical foundation since St. Paul and the Gospel of John.³⁰

These sentiments, incidentally, are alleged to be those not of some Playboy Freudologist, but of (of all people!) the Greek Orthodox Primate of North and South America, Archbishop Iakovos! Note that the "philosophical foundation" being attacked is explicitly blamed on St. Paul and St. John, not on any sort of medieval scholasticism!

Joseph Sittler has argued, in "A Christology of Function" ("dynamic functions" are "in," "static essences," "out"!), that the classic Christology of the Creeds is based on philosophical ideas which are not relevant to our times, and should be replaced with more modern notions. For example, the idea that Christ existed as a Person from all eternity, prior to the Incarnation, is alleged to be such a dated philosophical notion. The same goes for the whole idea of "two natures" being united in Christ. All this is to be replaced with the more congenial "concept," alleged to be "Hebrew," that Christ never existed as a Person until He was born, except in the sense that God foreknew this single-natured human being from all eternity!

What Malcolm Muggeridge observes about the concept of God holds true of modern theology generally:

Nietzsche, no Liberal, announced that God was dead; the same Deity's Liberal ministrants today seek to confute Nietzsche by stuffing an empty skin with Freudian entrails.³¹

Similarly all the great Christian terms and doctrines

are being emptied of their original meaning and content, under the pretext of removing antiquated philosophy or "mythology". The Resurrection of Christ was not an actual event, but simply the "meaning" of the Crucifixion! The Virgin Birth is mere legendary embellishment, though it "means" something or other. The Incarnation is but an accomodation to ancient Middle-Eastern "thought-forms". In other words, Christian theology is left holding empty verbal bags, all content and meaning having been thrown out as "philosophy". Whenever modern theology begins to huff and puff about anything "metaphysical" or "ontological," it is nearly always an infallible sign that a Christian doctrine is being robbed of its reality, and replaced by some flat, painted "interpretation"!

Let a final example illustrate the point. The official Report of the Department of Theology, submitted to the Helsinki (1963) Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, contained these statements:

The main concern of the ancient confessions is not metaphysics but soteriology. The statements about the pre-existence of Christ and the Trinity are nothing more than interpretations of the basic soteriological statement "God was in Christ for our salvation".³²

Being interpreted, in the light of current theological usage, the meaning of these assertions in plain English is about this: The main concern of the ancient confessions was not any particular view of the relation between Christ and God, but salvation. The statements about the pre-existence of Christ and the Trinity are not doctrines in their own right, but merely attempts to explain, in terms of the ideas of those times, some aspects of the basic statement "God was in Christ for our salvation." Today this statement may have to be interpreted

quite differently, perhaps by saying that God is not a personal Being at all, but the Ground of Being, and that Jesus Christ "saves" us by showing us the meaning of authentic humanity or existence--without any sort of life beyond the grave of course!

When orthodox quarters resist this process of evisceration, they are generally accused of "rationalism". Suddenly the opponents of Scripture truth are playing the part of loyal defenders of "Biblical thought-forms," while the orthodox are cast in the invidious role of Procrustean humbugs, forcing Scripture to fit into their pre-conceived schemes! The farce is abetted by a certain unhelpfully naive "exegetical" approach which is content to be allowed to play with word-studies and "imagery," but shies away from serious questions of substance and definition. This know-nothing pseudo-Biblicism accepts unexamined and at face value any package wrapped in "Biblical language," and is insulted if anyone suggests an actual inspection of the contents.

Since the neologists treat Biblical statements as impressionistic word-sketches, they naturally object to any suggestion that these statements convey precise logical content and can sustain rigorous argumentation. This would be "Aristotelian logic," and that is Original Sin! Yet Christ Himself teaches us to treat Scripture with the utmost logical respect and rigor, St. Mat. 22:31-32.41-45.

With reference to logical forms our Lord used analogy, Luke xi.13; reductio ad absurdum, Matt. xii.26; excluded middle, Matt. xii.30; a fortiori, Matt. xii.1-8; implication, Matt. xii.28; and law of non-contradiction, Luke vi. 39.³³

The fact of the matter is of course that Holy Scripture, precisely because it is given in human lan-

guage (this stress on the Bible's humanity ought to endear the argument to the neologists!) necessarily pre-supposes those logical principles, like the law of non-contradiction, without which no meaningful human discourse is possible. For example, "The Word was made flesh" is a meaningless statement unless we assume, on the basis of the law of non-contradiction, that it means to rule out as false its opposite, viz., "The Word was not made flesh". Again, there is no Scripture-text which says: "'This is My Body' is a logical proposition and therefore rules out its opposite." But unless this is assumed, the Lord's words are senseless. The Bible clearly intends to make sense, and therefore shares the general logical assumptions underlying all human speech. Deny the law of non-contradiction, and every statement means the same as its opposite. But when its meaning has been assassinated, the Bible is fit only to be thrown away.

All this, incidentally, has nothing whatever to do with paradoxes, of which Scripture and the Christian Faith are full. To say, for example, that whoever will lose his life will save it, and vice versa, is not a contradiction, but a paradox. The "losing" and the "saving" are clearly meant in different senses or respects. As a contradiction the statement would be nonsensical and pointless; as a paradox it is a striking formulation of a profound truth.

And speaking of paradox, is it not ironic that the very people who use human reason with a vengeance, magisterially, to judge, correct, and otherwise bully Scripture, complain bitterly of "rationalism," when others wish merely to use logic ministerially, instrumentally, to apprehend what Scripture is saying? It is like the wolf accusing the lamb downstream of muddying the waters! As intelligible communication Scripture is addressed to man through his mind, and is apprehended either intellectually

or not at all (I Cor. 14:6 ff.)! And the essentials of logic are not arbitrary conventions, but are inherent features of our Logos-created and Logos-centred universe (St. John 1:1 ff.). Aristotle invented logic no more than Linnaeus invented the plants he classified!

Nor did Luther reject "Aristotelian logic," as is often asserted. What he rejected was Aristotle's positive philosophy, "since the miserable man teaches in his best book, de anima, that the soul is mortal together with the body."³⁴ (On this point modern theology is solidly Aristotelian!) But Luther specifically approved of Aristotle's "Logica, Rhetorica, Poetica."³⁵ At Worms Luther was willing to be convinced "by the testimony of Scripture or . . . by manifest reasoning."³⁶ See also Bengt Haeggglund's illuminating discussion of truth, reason, Aristotelianism, etc.³⁷ The much-advertised contrast between Luther and Lutheran Orthodoxy on this point is parallel to the alleged conflict between the New Testament and the Christology of the ancient creeds: equally plausible, and equally false!

While philosophy, no longer the handmaid of theology, has become "the charwoman of science" (Copleston), theology has become mystical and anti-intellectual. Precision and definitions go against its grain. Demands for doctrinal definitions are scorned as attempts to "prove," "demonstrate" or "explain" divine mysteries rationally. As if stating a mystery were the same as solving it! And how could something be known to be a mystery, unless it could first be stated? Faith may not understand the how of the great mysteries, like the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Real Presence, Inspiration, and so on, but it must be able to state clearly the that of these articles to believe them at all. What I cannot define, I cannot believe

either. If to the question "What is the Real Presence?" I can only reply "I do not know," then I cannot honestly claim to believe that doctrine. No matter how mysterious the "how," the "what" or "that" must be clear if faith is not to be "collier's faith" and superstition! This means that orthodox, Biblical theology can afford to speak clearly, calmly, and rationally about great, supernatural mysteries, while modern theology, for all its contrived, tricky, and mystifying language, purveys cold, rationalistic dead weight!

As the religious satrapy of modern anti-intellectual Liberalism, current theology descends upon the mind with the obfuscating effect of a huge, slimy cobweb. Though its anti-logical bias makes this stultifying obscurantism as difficult to oppose as the plot of Cymbeline, of which Dr. Johnson observed that it was impossible to criticise unresisting imbecility, it must be resolutely fought off with a "confident intellectualism expressive of robust faith in God, Whose Word is truth."³⁸ Or, as Dr. Nagel once put it, referring to the late Msgr. Ronald Knox:

In the smoke-filled contemporary dialectic and abstruse humbug a keen gust of Knoxian clarity is most bracing. "Orthodox theology is not easily intelligible, for on the face of it it passes man's understanding. But however difficult it may be to fathom, it can be stated on a half-sheet of note-paper."³⁹

Modern theology has with much fanfare rehabilitated the body (just in time for the New Morality, thank you!). Will it ever dare to do the same for the mind?

Exegetical, Historical, and Practical Theology

"Exegesis" which does not subserve faith and teaching is a barren fig-tree and will wither away (St. Matt. 21:19). Of this nature is the approach which wants to abandon historic Christian doctrines, but has nothing definite to put in their place. To show merely what the Bible may possibly mean, is not enough, as Luther often reminds us. Faith needs not uncertain speculations, but a firm text, with a clear meaning, for its foundation. Against Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and their followers, Luther writes, in his great Confession of the Supper of Christ:

If now there were a true spirit with them, he would not only take away the false understanding, but give and prove another, certain, and truthful one in its stead. If St. Paul had in the most powerful way removed the righteousness of the Law or of works, he would of course not have accomplished anything, unless he had also taught and made certain another righteousness in its place. God did not abolish the Old Covenant until He instituted the New Covenant and made it much more certain than the Old.

It is not a fine spirit which teaches and says: This is a lie, and still does not give any certain truth in its place. It won't do to accuse something of being a lie, and not to know nor want to show against it her who brings the accusation, the truth. He who wants to smash lies mightily, must in their stead place public, certain, and firm truth; for the lie neither fears nor flees until the bright, firm truth comes. . . Who can criticise injustice if he does not prove what justice is? It is always the light that must refute the darkness: one darkness does not refute another; so also Beelzebub drives out no devils. This the

fanatical spirit feels very well, therefore it stalks about like the cat around the hot porridge, makes a terrible noise about our text and understanding not being right, but shies and flees like the devil before the Word of God, that he won't have to prove that his text and understanding are right; for he feels very well that he can't do it.

Therefore he thinks one should leave it at that, that he abolishes the text of the Lord's Supper according to our understanding, and places no other certain /text and understanding/ in its place; no that won't do. If you want to break down, then also build up. If you want to warn of error, then also teach the certain truth in its place, or else leave mastering and teaching alone. For thereby you admit your own defeat, that you are a false, lying spirit, because you scold as false that the opposite of which you cannot and will not make true and certain. But the Holy Spirit knows very well how to prove and make certain the contrary, when He refutes lies or error.⁴⁰

As regards historical theology, it dare not be a non-judgmental, "objective" chronicle of views and events, but it must be, as Luther called it, an account of how the dear Gospel has fared in the world. The historical theologian must take a stand, approving some positions, and condemning others. When Christ asked His disciples about the various "schools of thought" in respect of Himself, He was not satisfied with a mere enumeration of "some say this and some say that." He wanted not discussion, but confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" (St. Matt. 16)

Dr. A. Hoenecke, in his magnificent historical review of Lutheran theology, calls attention to the

fact that to the "so-called historicising dogmatists. . . some dogmatic materials appeared no longer as a received heirloom to be energetically maintained, but more as the object of historical reporting."⁴¹ Classic Lutheran theology rejoiced confidently "in the greatness of the gift of God given in theology, as well as in the infallibility of the source producing it (Scripture as principle of theology). . . Everything is in the tone of certainty. Already in the prolegomena Lutheran theology shows itself to be resting securely on Scripture, in faith. There is no arguing, discussing, disputing, and speculating, viz., about epistemology, etc., in order thus to reach certain results, standpoints, and principles."⁴² Later things are very different:

The way which was not taken in the first period, viz., the attempt for instance to obtain the standpoint of Reformation dogmatics by means of a criticism of scholastic dogmatics, was just the way taken in the second period. And that is also the way of the newer theology, i.e. to obtain the right starting point and necessary standpoint of one's own theology by means of the criticism of the preceding theology, and through the appropriation of the so-called aspects of truth contained in it.⁴³

This sort of application of the objective Gospel as standard and criterion to the history of the Church is historical theology at its best.

It is in practical theology that the whole discipline comes to fruition and achieves its aims. This is theology par excellence. Divine truth was given not for idle speculation, but for salutary application, for the creation and edification of the Church, for the transmission of divine Life for the salvation of men (Eph. 4).

Imagine a hospital without standards. Anyone may practise "medicine" in this hospital as he sees fit. Genuine physicians, quacks, mystics, Christian Scientists, abortionists, and just plain cranks, all serve on equal terms. All points of view may be expressed and practised, but none may be enforced. Among those in very responsible positions, even teaching in the local medical school, are some who have written books denying the existence of (1) germs, (2) disease, (3) people. The widest variety of cures is available, depending on who happens to be on duty at the time. One treats pneumonia with X-rays, another mends broken bones with meditation, a third advocates amputation of the head for asthma. Anyone complaining of any form of treatment is reminded of the complete freedom of the hospital and its staff to prescribe any treatment whatsoever, so long as the practitioner in question is sincere. Some doctors do not even make a pretence of curing, but use patients purely as guinea-pigs for scientific experiments. Others spend their time herding patients onto the streets to demonstrate for various social and political causes.

Such a madhouse is of course unthinkable in any civilised country. But change the medical milieu to the theological, and the nightmare becomes instant reality. For in much of what passes for the Church nowadays, the right of the "theologian" to freedom of belief, expression, research, and what not, and the bureaucrat's right to be a bureaucrat take precedence, as a matter of course, over the ordinary person's right to be told the truth of God's Word and to be spiritually helped.

The medical profession's code and discipline no doubt are among the strictest in all human enterprises, and this despite the fact that medical science is not a revealed absolute, but an imperfect,

growing body of knowledge with room for honest disagreements. The theoretical basis for this strictness is the fundamental assumption that the patient's right to be healed must come before all other considerations. It is this, and not mere professional pride or vested interests (which in any case must justify themselves in terms of the prior principles) which will prevent a doctor from co-operating or "taking turns" with medically unrecognised quacks and their organisations. Now, if the world can show such respect for the mere biological life of man, and can enforce tentative, imperfect medical science with such rigour, should one not expect the Church to stand in even greater awe of man's supernatural life, which is infinitely more precious, and to fight with incomparably greater zeal for the exclusive sway of that absolute, unchanging, revealed divine truth with which she has been entrusted and equipped? But alas, such attitudes are rare. The modern "Church" and modern "theology" are absurdly loose and permissive even from a secular, not to speak of a spiritual point of view. What Malcolm Muggeridge says of the British situation is only too typical:

"the true Doctrine of the Church of England agreeable to God's Word", . . . which few of the bishops and clergy . . . any longer even pretend to believe, though all have solemnly assented to them to become ordained.

A ribald scene indeed. Who would ever suppose that a secular enterprise so conducted could possibly thrive or, for that matter, be permissible? Current professional and even business standards would preclude acceptance of a salaried post on the strength of a consciously fraudulent declaration.⁴⁴

Unlike doctors, modern clergy and "theologians"

fraternise with anyone and anything. There is no horror of heresy or spiritual quackery, and no ostracism of its representatives, because there is grave doubt whether anyone can really know the truth. There is therefore no way of distinguishing truth from fantasy! Theology and ecclesiology have become Deistic: God is not supposed to care about those details. What Dr. C.F.W. Walther wrote in the last century is still applicable today, only more so:

It has always been not so much the pure doctrine per se, which has aroused hostility against its representatives, much less is that the case in our indifferentistic age; but taking it seriously, the exclusive adherence to it, the rejection and condemnation of the opposite doctrine, and above all the practical implementation of this doctrinal position, that it was which at all times provoked hostility. . . So also the Cardinal of Salzburg said that Luther's doctrine "he would tolerate, but to allow oneself to be reformed out of a corner, that was not to be tolerated." So it still is today. What doctrine isn't one prepared to tolerate nowadays, if only it will stand peacefully beside the other doctrine! And just those who want to be orthodox accomplish the most incredible feats in this tolerance. Only observe the harmonious relation, which shows itself in the academic colleges, the peaceable sitting together in pastoral conferences, the tone in the reviews!"⁴⁵

Let Bishop St. Fulgentius teach us the true honour of our theological calling. He was much-persecuted and banished for his loyalty to the Nicene Creed, and had been betrayed by an Arian priest to the Numidians, who had tortured him savagely, plucked out his hair and beard, and left him wounded and bleeding. Ashamed of such brutality, the Arian

bishop offered to punish his priest, if Fulgentius would prosecute. Did our Confessor agree? Or did he perhaps found an Ecumenical Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Clergymen (co-operation in externals!)? No! With a magnificent sense of the dignity of his Christian faith, calling, and office, he replied: "A Christian must not seek revenge in this world. God knows how to right His servants' wrongs. . . AND IT WOULD BE A SCANDAL TO MANY LITTLE ONES THAT A CATHOLIC, HOWEVER UNWORTHY HE BE, SHOULD SEEK REDRESS FROM AN ARIAN BISHOP!"

And at Augsburg in 1530, when the Elector of Saxony was intimidated with the loss of his lands and people, if he continued to adhere to the Augsburg Confession, he replied that he would rather let go of lands and people than of God's Word. If only we theologians, of whom more is required, had half the interior contempt for careers, official favour, tenure, etc., which that Christian prince had for temporal possessions!

Theology is the Spirit-given ability to apply Law and Gospel, Word and Sacrament, to human beings for their salvation. This sacred art is supremely practical, hence all true theology must push, with an irresistible interior urgency, toward application and implementation in actual Church life. It is not enough to exchange esoteric academic memoranda, even if their content happens to be orthodox. True theology must be realised in ecclesiastical action, or else it is a fraud. The greater the difficulties, the less we may rely on human wisdom and schemes (St. Matt. 15:9; 16:23), but must cling alone to the Word and promise of Him "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament" (2 Cor. 3:6). And our Ascended Lord, Who shares with us the spoils and victory of His Resurrection, will invincibly sustain His cause through that divine Defender Who has never lost a case, and who will "reprove

the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (St. John 16:8)!

Footnotes

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IV. SOME ASPECTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE

Sometimes a caricature can, by its very distortion, emphasise a neglected aspect of the truth. Now, Satan, being as Luther said "God's ape," distorts and caricatures God's works. A look at the devil's chapel may therefore on occasion serve to remind us of forgotten aspects of the Church of God. Indeed heresies are often but distortions and exaggerations of valid but neglected truths.

As the Papacy is the most baffling religious imitation of the Church, so Communism seems to me to be its most ambitious secular counterfeit. Lenin decided long ago that the Party could not afford dandies and armchair revolutionaries, who sympathised with the cause from a safe distance, but were afraid to soil their hands or reputations with a bit of violence. He insisted that all members must submit absolutely to the discipline of the Party. This was carried by the majority in 1903, hence the name "Bolshevik"--Russian for a member of the majority.

This parallels, in a distorted way of course, the total claims of Christ and His Church. Christ indeed establishes no human dictatorship, no chain of command, but on the contrary, forbids this (Matt. 20:25 ff.), because He creates new hearts, which, drawn by love and not driven by force, find much greater burdens light and pleasurable (Matt. 11:30).

But He claims total commitment, total discipleship, total service (Luke 14:25 ff.). Christianity is not for spectators and theorists, but only for participants and practitioners, all of whom without exception and distinction are consecrated in Baptism as full-time priests of the Triune God (Rom. 12:1 ff., I Pet. 2:9).

Now of course the Church was never perfect. But how rich, and full, and strong was her life in those early centuries, compared with our own time! What fervent devotion, what confessional courage, what missionary zeal, what capacity for suffering, what holiness of life, what mutual love and fellowship, grace the annals of the ancient Church! Apart from the Book of Acts itself, think of the Church life that surrounded and supported, and was in turn deepened by men like Athanasius, Ambrose, and Augustine!

How different the picture is today! Discipline hardly exists. It is less trouble today to belong to the average church than to the average civic or sporting body; at least the latter demand something! One can join a church without instruction, then stay away from it all one's life, or use it merely as an aesthetic setting to legalise fornication between divorce courts, and at the end be the object of a touching eulogy--self-composed and tape-recorded if desired! And not only the relatives, but the whole civilised community would be shocked and angry at the mere thought of a church refusing such a "Christian" funeral!

Nor are conditions ideal in the orthodox Church. There are smugness, self-satisfaction, satiety, and security--all elements of a carnal conservatism. Zeal for the purity of doctrine is not always accompanied by a corresponding thirst for the living God, for true holiness, for full discipleship in terms

of mission outreach and concern to build up the brethren in faith and love. Fellowship is often a theory rather than a practice, and real human needs remain unmet. Callous unconcern and a frigid fear of becoming involved find refuge behind the mask of churchly respectability. Worldliness is rampant, and youth are drifting away. Many a gifted young mind in the Missouri Synod, for instance, would hardly have followed the siren voice of modern theology, had not local experience created a subconscious association between orthodoxy and a dull and deadly sterility in practice!

Some excuse the widespread looseness as an unavoidable result of the times. This assumes, however, that Christianity is a tender plant which cannot survive in an unfriendly climate without external protection. Yet what could have been more hostile to the Faith, than the corrupt, degenerate Roman Empire? Those young congregations in Rome, Ephesus, and Corinth grew without benefit of Victorian manners or other social shelters. The "such were some of you" of I Cor. 6:11 refers to a list of vices that covers as wide a range as the most vulgar of modern big city tabloids! But did the Church in any way give in to the depraved standards of the times? Nothing of the kind! She challenged men uncompromisingly to come out of darkness into the Light. Although a guilty paganism professed to scorn the Christians as "haters of mankind," it secretly envied the holy joy and strength which they so evidently radiated. Pleasure-ridden, sin-sick, and desperately unhappy, multitudes flocked for healing to the regenerating waters dispensed by the Divine Physician through His Church--and found there not comfortable excuses and easy "acceptance," but the challenge, inspiration, and power for supernatural moral heroism.

In our lax, permissive, rotting culture the Church

must be the salt (Matt. 5:13) of radical non-conformity (Rom. 12:2), not a savourless pulp of "adjustment"! The more she seeks to save her life by fawning upon the reigning idolatries, the more she will lose it! But in losing her life in obedient discipleship, she finds it an hundredfold! Youth in particular are not attracted and held by a servile catering to their whims. They yearn for the discipline of high ideals, but despise the cant of their flatterers. Nothing is more repulsive and ineffective than the circus of middle-aged ecclesiastics absurdly aping the animalistic sounds and manners of juvenile savages! Converts from street-gangs are won not by this bankrupt lot, but by hearty Pentecostalists who call sin sin, however defective their theology may be otherwise!

Behind the Iron Curtain the line between Church and world is fairly clearly drawn, and the terrible discipline of persecution effectively curbs looseness and smugness. In the West, where the world still largely accords "the Church" the Trojan horse of its approval, we Christians must practise the even more difficult art of self-discipline, according to the infallible rule of the revealed divine will.

The Remedy of Activism

In the last century Mid-Western American Lutheranism made a point of rejecting as unchurchly the "new methods" (e.g., revivalism) of Calvinistic-Puritanic sectarianism, with which the older, Eastern Lutheranism had increasingly compromised. Confessionally conscious Lutherans wanted to build and centre their church life on, in, and around the Means of Grace.

In the last few decades many synods of conservative background, now completely Americanised, have been

losing their confessional consciousness, and have been freely borrowing "successful" methods from here and there. The aims were often laudable enough. A certain reticence, even lethargy, had to be disturbed and overcome; the vast spiritual resources and energies of the priesthood of believers had to be stimulated, tapped, and put to work. But despite some valid results, the over-all effect needs to be seriously questioned. Is the high-pressure activism of elaborate, almost commercially calculated "Stewardship" and "Evangelism" programmes really the same thing as the vitality of the New Testament Church? All the humming and clatter suggest an organisational machine rather than the mysterious organism of the True Vine, Whose fruit matures unhurriedly in the life-giving breeze of that Spirit Who, whether He rustles gently or roars like a rushing mighty wind, always works in sovereign independence, "when and where He pleases, in those who hear the Gospel" (Augsburg Confession, V. 2, see also John 3:8)!

Church practice must be, to borrow Major C. H. Douglas' phrase, "the policy of a philosophy," that is, it must be a correct application and embodiment of principle. To dress Methodist principles in the garb of Roman Catholic practices is self-defeating. Neither does the theory sustain the practice, nor does the practice illustrate the theory. Similarly, Biblical, Lutheran theology cannot simply be combined with approaches and practices which have been found "effective" or "successful" in Baptist or Presbyterian settings! The attempt results in a sickly hybrid without powers of reproduction.

Several aspects of the popular activism are clearly traceable not to a natural development of the Lutheran rose, but to an artificial and superficial gilding applied from without. In the first place activism is allergic to doctrine. While paying lip-service to established positions, it is anxious to

get on with the job, and shows irritation and impatience in the presence of precision, definition, and controversy. Penetrating into Scripture as deeply as the water-spider into the water (as Luther observed about Eck), activism tends to think of doctrine in terms of slogans and platitudes, and to evaluate it pragmatically, as it promotes or retards the empirical, statistical growth of the organisation. Faced with a choice, "Evangelism" will tend to choose the numerical, and "Stewardship" the financial aggrandizement of the organisation, over purity or correctness of doctrine. This is of course diametrically opposed to the genuine Lutheran principle, which cannot sufficiently emphasise the prior and crucial importance of the purity of the Gospel as the absolute basis and centre of all Church-life (Augsburg Confession, VII). Biblical doctrine must indeed judge the validity of statistical "success" and outward "effectiveness;" but to turn this relationship around is, in essence, to yield precisely to the most insolent demands of the Tempter (Matt. 4:1 ff.)!

Another issue is the very appropriateness of the concept of "stewardship," as popularly used. Dr. H. P. Hamann warns against the dangers of legalism in this connection, and concludes

that there is very little justification, if any at all, for describing the Christian life as a life of stewardship, and that the cause of the Gospel would be well served if the term in its popular connection were forgotten. . .

No one who took up the New Testament in a search for a word to describe in an all-inclusive way the Christian life could possibly pick on stewardship as that word.¹

"Stewardship," as a dominant idea, fits much better

into Calvinistic covenant-theology, than into a genuinely evangelical approach. And in reading actual "stewardship" literature, one is often haunted by the distinct impression that a financial pinch was felt first, and the concern for "raising the spiritual level, etc." came second, and that the growth in spiritual life is desired not for its own sake but, to put it bluntly, for its cash-value! Of course this is all explained in terms of the needs of "immortal souls," but then so were Indulgences! Needless to say, what is at issue is not the Church's right to ask for love offerings and sacrifices in Christ's Name, but the way of doing this, and its proper place in the total Christian scheme of things.

No intelligent person would deny the need for order and organisation in the Church. But modern organisationalism tends to exalt soulless techniques, with the result that Church work is quantified, depersonalised, and dehumanised. It is a terrible travesty on Christianity, when spiritual life is measured mainly in terms of man-hours, meetings, committees and budgets, and only secondarily (if at all!) in terms of the quality of fatherhood, motherhood, humility, purity, devotional depth, doctrinal maturity, compassion, faithfulness in one's calling, and the like. Our modern organisational externalism is really of a piece with the pre-Reformation preoccupation with "childish and needless works, such as particular holy days, prescribed fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, services in honour of saints, rosaries, monasticism, and the like" (Augsburg Confession, Art. XX). Instead, we need "publications on the Ten Commandments and others of like import," that we may be "taught to good purpose about all stations and duties of life, indicating what manners of life and what kinds of work are pleasing to God in the several callings." And the Confession adds: "Concerning such things preachers used to teach little." Modern "Stewardship Depart-

ments" do not seem to do much better.

For all its busyness, modern activism seems to foster a deadly monotony and sameness which quench the Spirit by forcing all the rich varieties of His gifts and graces (I Cor. 12; Eph. 4; I Peter 4:10 ff.) into the same stereotyped mould. The belief in the efficacy of even minor details of suggested form letters in "E.M.V." manuals, for example, is sometimes nothing short of superstitious, and this in circles which are not very particular about the wording of doctrinal statements. The idea is that certain approaches and methods have been "proved successful" in some "pilot project," and ought therefore to be accepted by all. It is assumed that the glib "public relations" of some central headquarters presents the only valid "image" of the Church, and must by no means be contradicted locally. Gifts of the Spirit either fall in line with the "programme," or else they are a nuisance. Activism tends to forget that the Galilean Who conquered the Roman Empire was set "for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2:34), and that He conquered through a Church which was "everywhere. . . spoken against" (Acts 28:22). Had the Apostles been intent, in the modern manner, upon gaining everybody's "good will" by means of a "positive public image," rather than upon faithfulness to their Lord's commission regardless of consequences, it is doubtful whether our century would even have heard of them! Godly polemics and apologetics have always been part of the church's missionary panoply.

The systematic mass approach through committee-directed surveys, follow-up work, etc., no doubt has a place in Church life, particularly in our day. But to emphasise this as the only or even the main avenue of "home mission" work seems to me one-eyed and dangerous. The phenomenal growth of the Church in antiquity happened in another way. Not

officially organised "programmes," but the spontaneous spiritual fervour of the individual Christians and of their congregations made them magnets that attracted the spiritually famished multitudes! In other words, not methods and techniques, but the self-authenticating substance and content of Christianity won the day. If this content no longer fires Christians and their congregations with missionary zeal, then this illness cannot be cured with some methodological bag of tricks. "Vigorous organisms talk not about their processes, but about their aims," observed G. K. Chesterton astutely.²

If a congregation's spiritual substance does not sell itself with supernatural naturalness (which of course includes arduous missionary labours), the solution does not lie in high-pressure publicity and salesmanship techniques. This merely compounds bankruptcy with dishonesty. And short-term successes gained in this way turn into long-term failures. The poorly instructed "converts" paraded ceremoniously through the front door, drift away quietly through the back door when the spell of the advertisement has worn off, or when its glib promises fail to materialise in actual Church life. Politics may rely upon the image instead of the reality, and commerce may depend on advertising rather than on the excellence of the product; but the Church dare not strive for meretricious "appeal" at the expense of truthfulness and faithfulness (I Cor. 4:2).

Perhaps the greatest danger of activism is its tendency to "unchurch" the local congregation by making it an increasingly dependent agent of a centralised bureaucracy of experts and planners of "programmes." At the same time the Office of the Ministry is secularised into a mainly administrative function. In comparison with the glitter and glamour of regional and national conventions of all

kinds and of all sorts of ambitious "projects," the local congregation seems drab and uninteresting. The glory departs from the local altar, and the impression begins to prevail that the "real" work of the Church is happening somewhere else. The main task of congregations is to provide the funds for this "real" work elsewhere!

It is my firm conviction that this terrible atrophy of the meaning and function of the local congregation is one of the most basic ills of the contemporary Church, that ways and means must be found to restore congregational life to its rightful position as the normal centre of gravity in the practice of Christianity, and that the activist approach is a short-sighted and misconceived effort which not only makes matters worse but hides the problem behind impressively elaborate scaffoldings. I am equally convinced that Biblical, Lutheran theology, and it alone, contains the correct solution.

The Means of Grace

The kind of steadfast continuing "in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42), which the New Testament envisions, can really happen only on the local level, where it is possible for people to keep coming together regularly around Christ's Word and Sacrament. On a regional or national basis this can happen only occasionally, intermittently (quarterly, annually, etc.), representatively, and therefore derivatively. The local "steadfast continuing" is primary and constitutive. It is of the esse of the Church. Organised groupings above the congregational, or local, level are of the bene esse or the plene esse of the Church.

But if the local congregation is to fulfill its

crucial, cardinal role, as the Church in its place, its members must have a much clearer and more compelling rationale of what happens on Sunday mornings than has generally been the case in recent decades, if not centuries. Where the main congregational action is understood as an amorphous agglomeration of arbitrary conventions surrounding a sermon, it will be difficult to convince people of the importance of this vague activity. But where the elliptical shape of the thing stands out clearly, in terms of two clearly understood foci, the Word and the Sacrament, participation will be far more than dutiful compliance.

As far as the Word is concerned, the Lutheran Church has never forgotten Luther's insistence on the absolute primacy of God's Word, doctrine, and preaching. Actual Bible study must be energetically fostered today. Indeed, the need for full-time Christian schools has never been greater than it is now. The sum of Christian doctrine has set long ago for most of our contemporaries, but our civilisation has still been enjoying a kind of ethical afterglow of Christianity. Now even that is vanishing, and the world is sinking into the night of a "scientific" barbarism. Secular educational systems increasingly reflect the evolutionistic-materialistic-agnostic temper of the times. In these circumstances, only full-time Christian schools can supply an adequate Christian education.

Less obvious is the status of the Sacrament. Here many observers believe that the Real Presence, while strenuously defended in dogmatics, has in recent times not played the central practical role in Church life which it had in Apostolic, ancient, and Reformation times. This means, however, that the corrective is not something new to be obtained from the modern Liturgical Movement, but something old already given in Biblical, Lutheran theology.

Despite valid insights, the Liturgical Movement is dangerous because of its Romanising sacramentalism, sacerdotalism, and just plain externalistic ritualism. The view of the Sacrament as something essentially sacrificial, something that we do toward God, rather than vice versa, is fundamentally wrong (Heb. 10). The Office of the Ministry is thought of as some kind of new Levitical priesthood, into which men are admitted not by the Call of the Congregation, but by the laying on of hands in Ordination. This leads to a theory of "Apostolic Succession" in one form or another, since the Ministry in this view can be conferred only by one who is already a member of this self-perpetuating order. It is surprising that Romanising Lutherans can ardently embrace such ideas, when they are rejected in the dearest possible terms in the Treatise of the Power and Primacy of the Pope, especially paragraphs 60-72! To deny the conflict is sophistry. One then has to resort to devices like the assertion that the Confessions contradict themselves, are in need of completion, etc. Wilhelm Loehe distinguished between the Confessions and Luther's own individual view. He admitted that Dr. C.F.W. Walther had Luther on his side, but regarding the Confessions he wrote:

Both sides have appealed to the Symbolical Books. Now even though there exists at least one passage which is written in Walther's (individually Luther-an) sense, the plain sense of particularly some places of the Augsburg Confession yields no necessity to explain them according to one or two passages. The Symbolical Books seem incomplete to me /nicht fertig/. Were they complete, then I would not understand how both sides could have appealed to them, which is not the case since yesterday.³

In the same letter Loehe writes that he conceded to Dr. Walther

nothing except theological competence and the intellectual consistency of the Lutheran system, but there as now claimed that the Scripture proof was lacking, --which he did not regard as important, because he was well able to maintain his exegetical authorities over against me /worauf er kein Gewicht legte, weil er seine exegetischen Autoritaeten mir gegenueber mit Recht gefuehrt halten konnte/ . . .

Still, it is possible that a one-sided exploitation of Dr. Walther's justified polemics against Grabau's hierarchical aspirations has in practice led to an inadequate "Missourian" view of the Ministry. It is perfectly correct to say that a pastor has no right to lord it over his congregation and to demand conscientious obedience in adiaphora--things neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. But charity, which must rule in such matters, is a two-way street. It is therefore equally true that congregations may not order their pastors about in adiaphora either. The conception of the pastor as an errand-boy following orders comes from secular democratism, and violates I Cor. 4:1 ff, and Heb. 13:7, and in the Confessions, Augsburg Confession XXVIII, and Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, X, 10. The "stewards" of I Cor. 4:1 are really "managers." The New Testament bishops were not advisory figure-heads, like modern ceremonial heads of state, but the real executive officers, or presidents of their congregations. A demoralised, browbeaten leadership that dare not lead, does not make for healthy and vigorous congregations. And unless pastors themselves have the proper respect for their office, they will inevitably degenerate into secularised lackeys of some activistic establishment!

The excesses of the ritualistic tendency have done a great deal of damage, not only in fostering Romanising ideas and practices, but also in giving

a bad name to all liturgical interests. Precisely those who have given up the doctrinal substance of Christianity are often most zealous on behalf of liturgical details of all kinds. There is something spiritually pathetic and pathological about an attitude which freely and indiscriminately mixes up St. Paul, Barth, Augustine, Tillich, Luther, Aulen, etc., but then becomes very conscientious about the requirement that candles must contain at least 51 per cent pure beeswax! The devil take their beeswax if they won't leave us Christ's teaching intact!

Yet the ritualistic excesses of our time remind me of a child clawing at walls and eating dirt: there is obviously something missing in his diet! While we have remembered the truth that "ceremonies or church usages . . . are in and for themselves no divine worship or even part of it,"⁴ we have not always remembered the corresponding truth of the Augsburg Confession "that nothing contributes so much to the maintenance of dignity in public worship and the cultivation of reverence and devotion among the people as the proper observance of ceremonies in the churches."⁵

The core issue raised by the Liturgical Movement, however, has to do not with ceremonial detail, but with the place of the Lord's Supper in the life of the Church. In view of the Movement's aberrations, it can serve us mainly by stimulating us to look to the rock whence we were hewn--the theology of the Scriptures and the Confessions. Here we will find all that is valid in the Liturgical Movement, plus the proper dogmatic foundation, and minus the exaggerations and distortions.

The Lutheran Church has always understood the Liturgy, the main service of the Church, consisting of preaching and the Sacrament, not as a purely historical-traditional development, but as something

deriving from the very teaching and practice of the New Testament itself.

The Apology, while strongly rejecting the sacrilegious notion that Christ's body and blood are sacrificed anew in the Lord's Supper, admits that the entire action, including the sermon, etc., may be regarded as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (not as a propitiatory sacrifice). In this connection it becomes clear that the Apology's concept of the Liturgy is deeply rooted in the theology of the Bible:

We are perfectly willing for the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided this means the whole Mass, the ceremony and also the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving. Taken together, these are the daily sacrifice of the New Testament; the ceremony was instituted because of them and ought not be separated from them. Therefore Paul says (I Cor. 11:26), "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death."⁶

Dr. C.F.W. Walther's great edition of Baier's Compendium, approvingly quotes John Gerhard as listing among the "less principal purposes" of the Sacrament:

4. That we might preserve the public assemblies of the Christians the strength and bond of which is the celebration of the Lord's Supper, I Cor. 11,20.⁷

Elsewhere Gerhard spells out New Testament practice even more fully:

Because therefore it has been accepted as a practice in the Christian Church, that in the

public assemblies of the Church after the preaching and hearing of the Word, this Sacrament is celebrated, therefore this custom must not be departed from without urgent necessity . . . it is . . . clear from Acts 20:7, I Cor. 11:20,33, that when the Christians did gather at one place, they were accustomed to celebrate the Eucharist.⁸

And Dr. Walther's colleague, Friedrich Lochner, wrote in his classic Hauptgottesdienst:

On the basis of Acts 2:42 and I Cor. 11 and according to the example of the ancient Church, the Lutheran Church regards the Communion Service as the most glorious and important of all public services. . . She therefore distinguishes between the Main Service and Minor Services. A divine Service becomes the Main Service not by virtue of the significance of the Sunday or the holy Day, nor because of the season of the year, nor through liturgical elaboration, but, as given by the Scriptural relation of Word and Sacrament, by virtue of the fact that the action of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ immediately follows upon the proclamation of the Word of the Gospel, and thus represents the seal of the Word, the aim and conclusion of the Service. All other services, in which the action of the Sacrament is not intended from the outset, become Minor Services, no matter how rich their liturgical appointments.⁹

Dr. Walther said in a Maundy Thursday sermon:

The first Christians celebrated it almost daily; especially in times of persecution, in order to be daily ready for death. . . The Holy Supper was regarded as the most glorious divine Armoury, in which one receives the most invinc-

ible weapons for the spiritual battle. . . The holy Supper with the body and blood of Jesus Christ is the new Tree of Life, which stood in Paradise, which Christ has now again planted in His Kingdom of Grace.

O adorable, comforting mystery! The holy flesh of God, which the angels adore and the archangels reverence, becomes a Food for sinners! Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, but still more the believing soul, which enjoys such great gifts!¹⁰

And the great Lutheran historical theologian of our time, Dr. H. Sasse, says of Christian antiquity:

This close connection between the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacrament of the Altar explains the fact that at all times the Eucharist has been the centre of the Church's worship and life. . . Thus this sacrament ~~was~~ is in every respect the life of the Church. It was never to be separated from the Gospel. The Church of the first centuries was the Church of the Eucharist. A Sunday, a Lord's Day, was unthinkable without the Lord's Supper. But if ever the Church was a preaching Church, the Church of the Apostles and the Church Fathers was. The same is true of all great periods of the Church. The sacrament and the sermon belong together, and it is always a sign of the decay of the Church if one is emphasised at the expense of the other.¹¹

Certainly the Reformation was one of the very "great periods of the Church." Its genuine spokesman, the Augsburg Confession, says:

Our churches are falsely accused of abolishing the Mass. Actually, the Mass is retained among

us and is celebrated with the greatest reverence.

And the Apology elaborates:

We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public Liturgy is more decent than in theirs . . . Every Lord's Day many in our circles use the Lord's Supper, but only after they have been instructed, examined, and absolved.¹³

To begin with, we must repeat the prefatory statement that we do not abolish the Mass but religiously keep and defend it. In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals, when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved. . .

There is nothing contrary to the church catholic in our having only the public or common Mass.¹⁴

Luther himself, in an opinion dated August 15, 1528, recommended:

that one or two masses be held in the two parish churches on Sundays or holy days, depending on whether there are many or few communicants. . .

during the week, let mass be held on whatever days it would be necessary, that is, if several communicants were there, and would ask and desire it. Thereby no one would be forced to the Sacrament, and yet everyone would be sufficiently served therein.¹⁵

Luther never contemplated any other main, standard Sunday service than one with both preaching and the Sacrament. Both his Latin Mass of 1523 and his German Mass of 1526 include the Sacrament as a matter of course. In fact in the former work Luther

strongly disapproves the Roman custom of omitting the Consecration on Good Friday, which is "to mock and ridicule Christ with half of a mass and the one part of the sacrament."¹⁶ Three paragraphs later he says: "For properly speaking, the mass consists in using the Gospel and communing at the table of the Lord."

This was standard Lutheran practice for about two centuries. Indeed, some Church orders of the sixteenth century (for example, Pomerania, 1563, Liegnitz, 1594, Wittenberg, 1559 and 1565, and Muehlenberg, 1540 and 1552) prescribed public admonitions "to frequent reception of the most venerable Sacrament" in case the Supper could not be celebrated for lack of communicants.¹⁷

The "Old Missouri" Real Lexikon by E. Eckhardt, which describes "the Lutheran Order of Service" as "a whole with a fine arrangement of its parts" (ein Ganzes in feiner Gliederung)¹⁸ and says that "it is just in the celebration of the Lord's Supper that the Main Service reaches its climax,"¹⁹ laconically asserts that the Liturgy was corrupted

1. by the Thirty Years War
2. by those of Spener's persuasion /pietists/ . . .
3. by rationalism.²⁰

This blight must be overcome in large part by a radical re-appropriation of the practical meaning of the Real Presence. I therefore conclude with three great testimonies to the Sacrament:

Christian Scriver:

we in no way detract from the other means of grace, Holy Baptism, the Word, and faith; we do not want to sunder what God hath joined together; God also has other foods, beside bread,

which, eaten by man, strengthens and preserves his body, yet bread is the noblest. What is begun in Holy Baptism, and through the Word, that is confirmed and as it were completed in the venerable Supper; the highest degree which a baptised and believing Christian can reach in the mystery of fellowship with Christ, is without a doubt the one which is granted him in this holy Meal of Love. And I know nothing that would be more powerful in strengthening and preserving faith, and bringing it to full joy and highest pleasure, than just this Sacrament.²¹

C. F. W. Walther:

Woe to us, therefore, if we wanted to yield and give in here! Thereby we would be surrendering nothing less than the Holy of Holies of the Christian Church, the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat of the New Covenant. . . . It is true, my beloved, in the Holy Supper there is given to us no other grace than that which is given to us already in Baptism, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the comforting Absolution. . . . Accordingly it might well seem as if every person is thereby sufficiently supplied with the treasure of the forgiveness of sins and that it therefore matters little, if the Holy Supper with its forgiveness of sins is mutilated or taken from him entirely.

But this is by no means so. Rather, the Holy Supper is the real crown of all the means of grace which Christ has given to His dear Christendom. . . . O, who can express what a glorious, comforting, heavenly sweet Meal the Holy Supper is? Here the forgiveness of sins is not only preached, proclaimed, promised, assured, and sealed to us, as in the other means of grace,

but here Christ at the same time gives His Body and His Blood to His Christians, as the guarantee of it. . . . No, a more precious, incontrovertible divine guarantee there cannot be. . . . Let us not be ashamed of this doctrine, but joyfully confess it, and publicly praise it as the most precious treasure entrusted to us.²²

Charles Porterfield Krauth:

The Sacramental Presence is the necessary sequel, the crowning glory of the Incarnation and Atonement. . . .

All theology without exception has had views of the atonement which were lower or higher, as its views of the Lord's Supper were low or high. Men have talked and written as if the doctrine of our Church, on this point, were a stupid blunder, forced upon it by the self-will and obstinacy of one man. The truth is, that this doctrine, clearly revealed in the New Testament, clearly confessed by the early Church, lies at the very heart of the Evangelical system--Christ is the centre of the system, and in the Supper is the centre of Christ's revelation of Himself. The glory and mystery of the Incarnation combine there as they combine nowhere else. Communion with Christ is that by which we live, and the Supper is "the Communion." Had Luther abandoned this vital doctrine, the Evangelical Protestant Church would have abandoned him. He did not make this doctrine--next in its immeasurable importance to that of justification by faith, with which it indissolubly coheres--the doctrine made him. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper is the most vital and practical in the whole range of the profoundest Christian life--the doctrine which, beyond all others, conditions and vitalises that life, for in it the character of faith is determined, invigorated, and

purified as it is nowhere else. It is not only a fundamental doctrine, but is among the most fundamental of fundamentals. We know what we have written. We know that to take our Saviour at His Word here, to receive the teachings of the New Testament in their obvious intent, is to incur with the current religionism a reproach little less bitter than if we had taken up arms against the holiest truths of our faith. We are willing to endure it. . . The Lutheran Church has suffered more for her adherence to this doctrine than from all other causes, but the doctrine itself repays her for all her suffering. To her it is a very small thing that she should be judged of man's judgement. . .²³

The Church of the pure Word and Sacrament dare not underrate the power and the genuinely religious appeal of the modern "Ecumenical" maelstrom. These forces cannot be met with mere defensiveness. We must have something stronger, better, and more convincing to offer our searching youth. The recovery of the full richness of our Biblical-Confessional heritage, and not in an academic, antiquarian way, but as living practice, is therefore a matter of top priority. And we must not allow ourselves to become side-tracked by misunderstandings, as if, for instance, it were a question of the "frequency" of Communion celebrations. Beneath all practical details we must appreciate anew the basic principle that in the New Testament the Holy Supper is not something occasional, additional, or extraordinary, but a normal, regular, usual, and integral part of congregational worship. It is, in fact, the New Testament in action. On this basis a solid, compelling, and convincing local church life can be built. And when local congregations are inspired by a coherent and confident view of their function and dignity, instead of being patronised by centralised ecclesiastical super-corporations and confused

by painful uncertainties and anxious experimentings with ever new techniques, the "youth problem" is largely solved, and a firm, integrating principle exists for effective mission outreach.

Awake, Thou Spirit, Who didst fire
The watchmen of the Church's youth,
Who faced the foe's envenomed ire,
Who witnessed day and night Thy truth,
Whose voices loud are ringing still,
And bringing hosts to know Thy will.

O haste to help, ere we are lost!
Send preachers forth, in spirit strong,
Armed with Thy Word, a dauntless host,
Bold to attack the rule of wrong:
Let them the earth for Thee reclaim,
Thy heritage, to know Thy name.

The Church's desert paths restore:
Let stumbling-blocks that in them lie
Hinder Thy Word henceforth no more,
Error destroy, and heresy.
And let Thy Church, from hirelings free,
Bloom as a garden fair to Thee.²⁴

Footnotes

1. H. P. Hamann, "Stewardship and the Gospel," Australasian Theological Review, Vol. XXXVII, Nos. 2 & 3 (April-September, 1966), p. 57.
2. G. K. Chesterton, Heretics (London: Bodley Head, 1960), p. 9.
3. Wilhelm Loehe to Grossmann, letter of July 1, 1853, "Correspondence and Other Papers of the

Rev. Wilhelm Loehe, Item 15," in the files of the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A.

4. Formula of Concord, Epitome, X, 3, in T. Tappert, ed., The Book of Concord (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), p. 493.
5. Ibid., p. 49.
6. Ibid., p. 256.
7. C.F.W. Walther, ed., Joh. Guilielmi Baieri Compendium Theologiae Positivae (St. Louis: Concordia, 1879), Vol. III, p. 529.
8. Martin Chemnitz, Polycarp Lyser, John Gerhard, Harmoniae Quatuor Evangelistarum (Frankfurt & Hamburg, 1652), Vol. II, p. 1085.
9. F. Lochner, Der Hauptgottesdienst der Evangelisch Lutherischen Kirche (St. Louis: Concordia,), p. 6
10. C.F.W. Walther, Gnadenjahr (St. Louis: Concordia, 1890), pp. 209 ff.
11. H. Sasse, This Is My Body (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959), p. 2.
12. T. Tappert, ed., op. cit., p. 56.
13. Ibid., p. 220
14. Ibid., pp. 249. 250.
15. Martin Luther, Saemmtliche Schriften (St. Louis Edition), X, 2256-2258.
16. Luther's Works (American Edition), vol. 53, p. 24.
17. F. Lochner, op. cit., p. 7.
18. E. Eckhardt, Homiletisches Reallexikon (Blair, Nebraska, 1909), under "Gottesdienst," p. 436.

19. Ibid., under "Abendmahl," p. 43.
20. Ibid., under "Gottesdienst," p. 436.
21. Christian Scriver, Seelen-Schatz (Berlin: Evangelischer Buecher-Verein, 1864), vol. I, p. 756.
22. C.F.W. Walther, Amerikanisch-Lutherische Evangelien Postille (St. Louis: Concordia, 1875), p. 147.
23. Charles Porterfield Krauth, The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), pp. 650. 655. 656.
24. Australian Lutheran Hymn Book (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House), Hymn 240, vv. 1, 3, 6.

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Corrections in Winter 1967-68 Issue

In the first lecture, TRUTH AND/OR CONSEQUENCES, p. 56, the four Greek terms that should accompany the diagram are, in descending order:

ἄσυχύτως
 ἄτρεπώς
 ἀδιαρέτως
 ἀχωρίστως

Also the following corrections are to be made in the footnote numbering in the text--beginning p. 24:

Change 43 to 44, 44 to 45, 45 to 46, 46 to 47, 47 to 48, 48 to 48a "Sibyllen," in J. J. Herzog, G. L. Plitt, A. Hauck, Real-Encyklopaedie fuer Protestantische Theologie und Kirche (Leipzig, 1884), vol. 14, p. 181.