

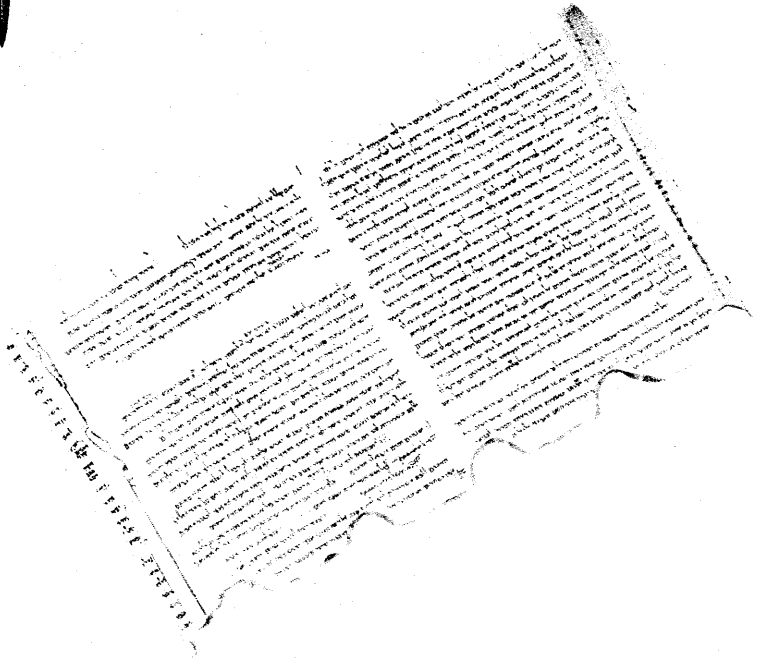
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FOREWORD

We are very pleased to bring you in this issue of the Quarterly the three essays and the two responses to the essays delivered at Bethany's Annual Reformation Lectures, October 27-28, 1977.

1977 marked the Tenth Anniversary of the Reformation Lectures, which are co-sponsored by Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and Bethany Lutheran College.

Prof. Kurt E. Marquardt, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, delivered the lecture series on The Doctrine of Justification. (Prof. Marquardt had been the lecturer at the first Reformation Lectures in 1967, while a pastor in Australia.)

Prof. Arnold J. Koelpin, Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, and Prof. Erling T. Teigen, Bethany Lutheran College, served as reactors.

We commend these essays and responses to you for your earnest study, with the prayer that your faith, and the faith of those who hear you, may be truly edified by them.

T.A.A.

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The 1977 Reformation Lectures

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota
October 27-28, 1977

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

Prof. Kurt E. Marquardt
Concordia Theological Seminary
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Lecture I: Justification Today

A. The Ecumenical Appearance

Warren Quanbeck has written:

1. "The doctrine of justification by faith was the subject of furious controversy in the 16th century. Theologians of both traditions can agree today because of the contribution of biblical and historical studies. . . Today biblically informed theologians in both traditions can agree on the teaching of the New Testament concerning justification by grace through faith, and can agree on theological formulations of the doctrine without denying or betraying their theological heritage. That this agreement is not known or acknowledged by every theologian and churchman in both traditions is not disproof of the statement but only testifies to the time lag between the work of specialists and more popular presentations."¹

2. In other words, there is a Roman Catholic/
Lutheran convergence today on justification.
Out of the total material, we shall select two
books in particular, commenting on certain issues
raised there: (1) Hans Küng, Rechtfertigung
(1957) (2) Vinzenz Phnür, Einig In Der Rechtfertigungslehre? (1970).

3. Küng's famous book seeks to establish a basic
harmony between Karl Barth and the Council of
Trent on Justification. Since Barth consciously
departs from Luther and the Reformation on this
issue, the discussion is not directly relevant.
Yet both Barth and Küng make many very evangelic-
al statements. And the Council of Trent is
given a startlingly "evangelical" interpretation.
Or at least that is the impression. Yet Kueng
approves very much of Cardinal Newman's Lectures
on Justification, which are anti-Lutheran, though
partly based on misunderstanding. Küng, too,
(p. 274 ff) is able to show that Barth is not
alone but represents a general shift of Protes-
tants away from pure juridical imputation to
actual renewal as part of justification. Küng
expresses the doubt, however, whether the Refor-
mation originally really taught the purely impu-
tative view at all. His basic conclusion:

"The Protestants speak of declaring
righteous, and the /Roman/ Catholics
of making righteous. But the Protes-
tants speak of declaring righteous,
which includes making righteous, and
the /Roman/ Catholics of making
righteous, which presupposes the
declaring righteous" (p. 218).

4. Much more exciting, from a Lutheran point of
view, is the painstaking dissertation by
Phnuer, also a Roman Catholic scholar. He limits

his study to the justification controversy immediately surrounding the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, up to the year 1535. The point: both sides were largely fighting straw men. The Lutherans quite legitimately rejected the Pelagianising excrescences of the late, decadent stages of scholasticism, especially in its Scotist and Ockhamist forms, and especially as represented by Gabriel Biel, whose formulations, verbatim, are rejected in the Apology. But, says Pfnuer, by the time of 1530, none of the Roman theologians who opposed the Lutherans held to Biel's views or defended them. (Is not such a quick and dramatic change somewhat of a historical mystery, if true?) However, Eck and company in turn were reacting not to Luther's and Melanchthon's mature formulations--say the Augustana and the Apology themselves, but to very early, unguarded, "extremist" statements, especially by Luther, long since left behind. Pfnuer presents an extremely sympathetic understanding of the Lutheran view, and since, on the Roman side, he is talking not about the Council of Trent but about the view of individual controversialists, he is able to deal with them more objectively and critically than Kueng was able to do in respect of the official, Tridentine definitions.

B. Analysis 1: Trent Revisited

5. What really were the specific points of difference over justification, and what stand did the Council of Trent actually take? My major resource here is the critical, though pro-Roman Catholic history of the Council by Hubert Jedin (Geschichte des Konzils von Trient), (available in English), of which 3 volumes have so far appeared (1951, 1957, 1970). Martin Chemnitz

and Paul Sarpi are of course taken for granted. Jedin's history, however, is based on sources not formerly available.

6. The leaders of the Council were fully aware that, as the papal legates wrote to Rome on June 21, 1546, the article of justification was "the most important item before the Council" (Jedin, II, 144). But how to delineate the issues? Chemnitz saw very clearly that it was on the specific question of "the good works of the reborn" that "the chief controversy between us and the pontifical party" turned.² Are they or are they not wholly or in part the ground of our justification? If we now let Chemnitz speak more fully to this point we shall make the amazing discovery that he sounds as if he were replying quite specifically to the contentions of Newman, Kueng, and other moderns:

7. For all the Tridentine decrees concerning justification are so formulated that they indirectly accuse us as if we taught that the believers have only the forgiveness of sins, but that they are not also renewed by the Holy Spirit; also, that Christ earned for us only the reconciliation and not also at the same time the renewal, as if we excluded the renewal, charity, or new obedience in such a way that it is neither present nor follows in the reconciled. . .

8. But someone may say: If matters stand thus, then what is it about which you contend so sharply concerning the article of justification, so that you throw almost the whole world into turmoil? Certainly, as you do not deny the renewal nor simply reject charity, so the papalists do not deny the remission of sins, but confess it.

And if there is agreement about the matters themselves, there will then be only contentions about words or a war about grammar. For the papalists understand the word "justify" according to the manner of the Latin composition as meaning "to make righteous" through a donated or infused quality of inherent righteousness, from which works of righteousness proceed. The Lutherans, however, accept the word "justify" in the Hebrew manner of speaking; therefore they define justification as the absolution from sins, or the remission of sins, through imputation of the righteousness of Christ, through adoption and inheritance of eternal life, and that only for the sake of Christ, who is apprehended by faith. And yet they teach at the same time that renewal follows, that love and good works must be begun. Therefore there will be no contention about the matter itself, but only about the word "justification," which arises from this, that each understands and interprets that word differently. It is certainly not fitting in the church to cause disturbances about words when the matters themselves are safe. . . I Tim. 6:4

9. I have reported this objection in order that it might be possible to explain and show more readily and plainly what is the krinomenon ("point of difference"), or what is the true issue, of this controversy concerning the article of justification. . . We are by no means such troublemakers that we are so opposed to a true, solid, and salutary concord and so greedy for contentions. . .

10. For this is the chief question, this is the issue, the point of controversy, the krinomenon; namely, what that is on account of which God receives sinful man into grace; what must and can be set over against the judgment of God, that we may not be condemned according to the strict sentence of the Law; what faith must apprehend and bring forward, on what it must rely when it wants to deal with God, that it may receive the remission of sins; what intervenes, on account of which God is rendered appeased and propitious to the sinner who has merited wrath and eternal damnation; what the conscience should set up as the thing on account of which the adoption may be bestowed upon us, on what confidence can safely be reposed that we shall be accepted to life eternal, etc.; whether it is the satisfaction, obedience, and merit of the Son of God, the Mediator, or indeed, the renewal which has been begun in us, the love, and other virtues in us. Here is the point at issue in the controversy, which is so studiously and deceitfully concealed in the Tridentine decrees. This I wanted for once to explain simply yet more fully that the reader may see that what has been placed into controversy in this topic is not a strife about words but a very serious matter and uniquely necessary for consciences. And when all disputations about this topic are brought under this scope, then all things are plainer.³

11. There is no dispute about whether natural man, without grace, can be justified before God by his works, or through the Law: this Pelagian

view is rejected by Trent in the first three canons on Justification.⁴ (cf. Council of Orange, 529, canons on grace, Denzinger, 176 ff.).

12. The Tridentine scheme of justification may be summed up like this: the sinner, his will freely co-operating with the promptings of divine grace, prepares himself turning to God. God then, normally through baptism, gives the free gift of justification. At this initial stage justification consists of the forgiveness of sins plus interior renewal, so that the person is not merely called righteous, by imputation, but actually is such, internally. This phase occurs without human merit, gratis, although free will is held to co-operate (synergism), and it is specifically denied "that all works that are done before justification, in whatever manner they have been done, are truly sins or deserving of the hatred of God" (D, 817). But now there commences a second phase or stage of justification. The justified person, by virtue of Christ with His grace living in him, advances in holiness, good works, keeping the commandments, which have the effect of producing "the increase of justification" and "truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life" (D, 803.842).

13. This amounts to the idea that Christ did not simply earn our salvation, but that he earned for us the chance to earn it--an assertion which distorts the Gospel beyond recognition. Of course it is denied in that scheme that salvation is obtained through faith alone. Paul's language to this effect is interpreted to mean simply that faith is "the foundation and root of all justification, 'without which it is impossible to please God' (Heb. 11:6)" (D, 801)--the very notion explicitly rejected in Apology IV, 71. For the "faith" envisioned at Trent is of itself purely

intellectual and requires "love" to be effective or "formed". Hence: "If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone by which we are justified: let him be anathema" (D, 822). Tridentine "faith" is not lost even when one falls from grace and justification, so that among those excluded from the kingdom of God are "also the faithful (!) who are 'fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, liars with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, railers, extortioners' (I Cor. 6:9 ff)" (D. 808).

14. The whole scheme, and many of its particulars, are so inept and incongruous, that they give the impression of carelessness or unfamiliarity with the subject-matter. Kueng deplors Barth's opinion that "the concern of the Reformers didn't seem to make the slightest impression" on Trent (Rechtf., p. 110). Kueng replies that the document on justification took "seven months of intensive labour" to prepare, and that even the Lutheran, Rueckert, admits that the Council was concerned, in the matter of justification, exclusively with the problem of facing up to Luther. If so, the result is all the worse, although it represents undoubtedly a piece of church-diplomatic ingenuity.

15. In other words, the unevangelical merit-scheme of Trent was the result of a deliberate decision, not of oversight or misunderstanding. The most characteristic event here was perhaps the unambiguous rejection of the notion of a two-fold righteousness, one imputed and one inherent.

16. Luther (LW, 31, 297 ff) and the Formula of Concord (III) speak of the perfect imputed righteousness of Christ by which we are saved,

and the imperfect, inchoate righteousness in believers which necessarily flows from faith, but must not be regarded as meriting justification or eternal life. This two-fold righteousness was also agreed on, briefly, at the Regensburg Colloquy in 1541, in what must be regarded as a stunning coup on the part of the evangelically minded Cardinal Contarini.

17. At Trent it was Seripando, the General of the Augustinians, who led the fight for the recognition of a "double righteousness," though more in an Augustinian than a Lutheran sense. On October 15, 1546, the papal legates submitted to the Council theologians two questions, the first of which read: "Has the justified person, who has, in the state of grace and with the help of divine grace, both of which come from the merit of Jesus Christ, done good works and thus preserved the inherent righteousness, satisfied the justice of God to the extent that he, placed before the judgment seat of Christ, receives eternal life on account of his merit--or does he need, besides the inherent righteousness, also the mercy and righteousness of Christ, that is the merit of his suffering, to supplement the defects of his own righteousness, though in such a way that this righteousness is communicated to him according to the measure of his faith and his love?" (J, II, 209-210) This was resolved into two sub-questions: "Does the possession of sanctifying grace satisfy the justice of God sufficiently to acquire merit and eternal life: Or does the person received into grace need beyond this still a divine act of grace which supplements, from the merit of Christ, the defects of the inherent righteousness?" (p. 213). Of the advisory theological experts, thirty definitely affirmed the first question and denied the second. Six gave

the opposite answer, and one affirmed both sub-questions! The Council voted accordingly. Seripando thought that "nearly all sought to exclude the righteousness of Christ from the hearts of men" (p. 219). When the justifying function of faith was limited to its preparatory role, Seripando wrote in the margin: "What do I hear? Everything written in Holy Scripture about justification by faith is to be understood of preparation?" (p. 239).

18. Lest there be any misunderstanding to the effect "that the righteousness of Christ is the formal cause or joint cause of justification, in place of or besides the inherent righteousness" (p. 238), formulations were brought forward which finally resulted in the present wording according to which "the unique formal cause" of justification is the inherent righteousness (D, 799). Canon 10 condemns those who say that the justified are "formally just" by Christ's "righteousness itself" (D, 820).

19. Such was "the answer of the ecclesiastical teaching office to Luther's and the Augsburg Confession's doctrine of grace and of justification" (J, II, 260)! And despite self-contradictory attempts to adapt Luther's "saint-and-sinner" concept, Kueng exclaims with Trent:

God pronounces the verdict, 'You are just.' And the sinner is just, really and truly, outwardly and inwardly, wholly and completely (Justif. p. 213).

It is to be presupposed that the justified man is truly just--inwardly in his heart. . . . Justification is not merely an externally pasted-on 'as if'. Man is not only called just but he is just . . . not just partly but totally . . . (p. 236).

C. Analysis 2: Justification in Apology IV and FC III

20. The much-debated paragraph 72 of Apology IV explicitly distinguishes two senses of what it means to "be justified": (1) "to be made righteous out of unrighteous /persons/ or to be regenerated"; (2) "to be pronounced or considered righteous /persons/". Nor is the Apology saying that one sense is right and the other wrong, or one proper and the other improper; on the contrary, the article itself adds: "Scripture speaks both ways."

21. The problem is that this appears at first sight to concede that Scripture sometimes uses the word "justification" to include also that inner renewal which we now call "sanctification". This would amount to a wider sense of the term to include not only justification itself, but also its effects, i.e., the new obedience. In any case, however, the Apology makes it crystal clear in many places that these effects, viz., the interior renovation, new obedience, good works, love, or sanctification, are in no sense the basis, ground or cause of acceptance before God, i.e., justification properly speaking.

22. According to this commonly held view, then, the Apology represents a broader understanding of justification, which was later, in the Formula of Concord (III) narrowed and flattened into the strictly forensic notion of imputation pure and simple. From this perspective, too, the Formula's explanation of the Apology's use of words like "regeneration" and "vivification" for "justification" (SD III, 18-20) must seem lame and laboured, if not downright mistaken.

23. The solution to this entire problem, however, lies, I am convinced, in a different direction. The simple fact is that by "regeneration" or "the

unrighteous being made righteous" the Apology in this context does not mean any effect or consequences of justification at all (such as love, good works, etc.). Rather, the Apology means simply the divine bestowal of faith itself, which alone makes alive because it alone can and does receive justification! The inner logic is: faith alone justifies, and faith itself is totally a Spirit-wrought gift. Since there can be no justification (subjectively!) without justifying faith, the gift or bestowal of that justifying faith must itself be a part of an aspect of justification. In other words, regeneration is equivalent to justification only because and to the extent that regeneration is the bestowal of justifying faith. Renewal in the sense of love and good works is not the meaning of regeneration here. Thus par. 72 concludes with the clearest possible equation: ". . . that faith alone turns the unrighteous into the righteous man, that is, (hoc est), accepts the remission of sins." Parallel formulations like par. 76-78 confirm this understanding. Here the love and good works which follow from faith are clearly distinguished and excluded from justification, which happens sola fide (by faith alone) and means "to be made out of an unrighteous man a righteous one, or to be regenerated."⁵

24. The Formula of Concord is quite right therefore in saying that the Apology often uses the terms regeneration and vivification as equivalents of justification. But does not the Formula equate justification itself solely and alone with the forensic imputation, to the exclusion of all other aspects--hence also of the bestowal of faith? Not quite. Everything leading up to justifying faith (viz., contrition), and everything flowing from justifying faith (viz., love, good works) is

excluded, but not faith itself (cf. SD III, 24-53). And while conversion and justification are distinguished, the Formula is careful to say not that conversion as such does not belong into the article of justification, but only that "not everything that belongs to conversion, belongs simultaneously also into the article of justification" (par. 25). The Formula's very defence of the Apology's use of "regeneration" and "vivification" for justification implies that the bestowal of faith itself is rightly regarded as part and parcel of justification. FC III specifically states: "For since man is justified through faith (which only the Holy Spirit works), this is truly transferred from death to life, as it is written: 'when we were dead in sins He has made us alive with Christ,' Eph. 2. Again: 'The righteous shall live by his faith,' Rom. 1" (par. 20).

25. It seems to me therefore that a statement like the following one by Pöhlmann is wrong on two counts: "Whilst for the early confessions justification is a declaring righteous and a making righteous at once, in the Formula of Concord it is understood purely forensically-imputatively, and sanctification is excised from justification and placed after it (nachgeordnet)."⁶ In the first place, the Apology excludes sanctification from justification just as firmly as does the Formula. But secondly, neither the Apology nor the Formula are so "purely forensic" as to exclude the regenerating gift of justifying faith itself from justification. And the Formula insists just as strongly as does the Apology that sanctification (in the sense of love and good works) necessarily accompanies justification as its fruit and result.

26. Poehlmann's formulation, "Justification is acquittal and sanctification at once"⁷ misrepresents the biblical teaching of the Confessions. Also, it is difficult to see the logic of it. If Poehlmann dislikes the idea of a "purely forensic" imputation, his own formulation is nevertheless compelled to recognize this element; only he no longer calls it "justification," but substitutes the word "acquittal" (Gerechtsprechung). What is gained by this terminological juggling? One gathers that Poehlmann means to ward off the horrendous notion that justification is simply a sterile legal fiction, which leaves sinners as dead in trespasses and sins as they were before. This frightful caricature, however, was never the meaning and intent of the conscious stress on the forensic nature of justification, as it is found not only in the Formula and in Melancthon, but above all in Luther himself. Poehlmann's re-formulation, on the other hand, with its ambiguity about cause and effect, lends itself to an evasion of the central issue between Trent and the Reformation on justification, viz., whether sanctification (love, good works) gains or helps to gain God's acceptance, or whether it results from that acceptance.

27. Poehlmann, moreover, is not alone. The trend to mingle and confound faith and works, justification and sanctification, Law and Gospel, has become widespread and endemic in Protestantism.⁸

D. The Secular Reality

28. In a sense inter-church discussions of justification are--however horrible this may sound in Lutheran ears--an anachronism today. So many basic foundation-stones of Christian

substance have crumbled for the reigning, historical-critical theology, that arguments about "justification" in that context are hollow formalities--rather like obligatory verbiage about "freedom, democracy, and human rights" in the mouths of Brezhnev and Idi Amin.

29. The Eastern Orthodox writer Konstantinos

E. Papapetrou rightly sees the whole prevailing theological climate as a relentless secularisation of Christian thought: "Today all of Christendom is being gradually, slowly but surely secularised. Even the Second Vatican Council seems in a certain respect to be the great Council of the secularisation of the Roman Catholic Church. . ."⁹ Neither Rome nor Lutheranism have remained untouched by the dead and deadening hand of the historical-critical devastation.

30. Consider the dramatic opening statements

in a significant article by the Los Angeles Times religion writer John Dart (5 Sept. 1977):

True or false?

--Jesus did not regard himself as God made flesh and probably did not call himself the Messiah.

--Jesus did not rise bodily from the dead.

If you said "false", you are in step with popular understanding of the New Testament but out of step with the prevailing views of most prominent biblical scholars.

31. For Bultmann--whose heirs, disciples, and sympathisers infest all major Western church-bodies--doctrines like the Trinity, the

Divinity of Christ, Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection, and Ascension, were just so much myth and legend. Yet he continued to speak of justification, Law and Gospel, faith, and the like! But what can "justification" or even "faith" possibly mean without the divine-human Christ, His atonement and resurrection?

32. The plain fact is that at the official "ecumenical" level the supernatural substance of Christianity has virtually been replaced with various secular schemes of political and economic salvation! This social gospel dominates the Lutheran World Federation (Evian!) no less than the World Council of Churches. Where the Gospel is thought to include "world development," there "justification" can amount to little more than a thin veneer of bread-colouring on the lifeless stones of worldly, political obsessions. Three random samples will have to suffice here. Poehlmann, who was cited above, states rather provocatively:

The social-revolutionary movements of Reformation times, Anabaptism and Pietism were, with their stress on the deed-character of faith, a necessary critical corrective to the Reformation. This holds similarly for the political theology of the present (p. 207).

33. Michael Rogness' chapter on "Secular Ecumenism" in the volume, The Gospel and Unity, issued in 1971 by the Lutheran World Federation's Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, accepted the new secularity quite uncritically:

If the world were by nature a worthless, fallen vale of wickedness, and if God revealed his grace and imparted his Spirit

exclusively through the ecclesiastical sacraments, and if the church were the group of redeemed whose task it was solely to convert worldly sinners into its circumference, then our old ways of thinking would still be appropriate--and like it or not, these are the presuppositions behind much of the church's traditional mentality. If, however, we acknowledge that God is "in the world," then the relationship between church and world is altered radically and fundamentally from our usual pattern of thinking that only the church "brings God, Christ, and the Spirit" into the secular orders. If God is already present not only as the law-giving preserver of the social order . . . but is also working redemptively and graciously among men, then we shall have to do some serious reexamination (pp. 174-175).

34. Finally, the volume The Church Emerging: A U.S. Lutheran Case Study (Fortress, 1977) must be seen to be believed. Edited by John Reumann, the book contains four major essays by ALC and LCA theologians, written in connexion with the Lutheran World Federation's global study of the nature and mission of the church. The secularist corrosion here is nearly total: one author sees ecology as the major challenge, to be met by the adoption of process philosophy. Another considers liberation from "sexism" (a perfectly silly word which if it is to have any sensible meaning at all should refer to the absurdly exaggerated status of sex in our culture). The third author advocates, in addition to the Bible, also "a certain authority in modern thought per se," i.e., a "dual authority of doctrine and modern thinking" (p. 150). The fourth writer thinks that the "so-called Third

World realities are helping us define both the content and meaning of God's good news" (p. 187). This "good news" includes the crassest Marxist fantasies, e.g. that the Communist conquest of Vietnam was liberation (p. 232), and that Red China is an admirable model (pp. 220.247) while "Christians ought not be surprised by the radical analysis of the oppressive nature of the Western economic order in the world" (p. 216)!

35. Of course, one must continue to talk about "Christ," "the Word," "justification," etc. But how? Two concluding quotations will illustrate the technique:

To be sure that word is always becoming en fleshed in the concreteness of personal and communal history . . . It is neither culturally limited to Bethlehem nor historically limited to Good Friday. It is an eschatological word for all places and all seasons. And the idolatries that absolutize past expressions of the reception of that word must give way . . .

. . .

Nor is the church the exclusive agency of redemption in the world. That is amply demonstrated by the wider history of human communities which shows the capability of "secular" movements to effect liberation . . . (pp. 126-127).

We are to overcome our depoliticised, privatised, and at most heretical captivity to justification wrongly understood, and become engaged as evangelical partners in a mission of liberation. . . (p. 235).

36. Editor John Reumann, it is true, seems none too happy about some of this material and expresses several forthright criticisms. But the very fact that such horrendous crudities constitute nowadays acceptable theological discourse speaks for itself.

37. In the 16th century battle about justification and Trinitarian and Christological foundations confessed in the great Ecumenical Creeds could be and were taken for granted as indisputable. Since the 18th century Enlightenment this is increasingly no longer the case. Theological discussion today cannot get beyond meaningless formalities unless it is clear from the outset whether the ABC's of Christianity are to be acknowledged unabridged, in their full biblical realism, or whether they may be reduced to infinitely flexible word-games. Can there be any doubt about these things where the teachings of the Book of Concord are seriously believed and confessed?

Footnotes:

1. Vilmos Vajta, ed., The Gospel and Unity (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1971), pp. 135-136.
2. Ed. Preuss, ed., Examen Concilii Tridentini per Martinum Chemnicium (Berlin, 1861), p. 153.
3. Fred Kramer, tr., Examination of the Council of Trent by Martin Chemnitz, Part I (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971, pp. 465.467-468.
4. Denzinger, The Sources of Catholic Dogma (St. Louis and London: Herder, 1957), 811-813.

5. Friedrich Loofs, who began the modern discussion of this question in 1884, shows that Melancthon's Apology simply follows Luther in stressing regeneration as the bestowal of justifying faith and hence of justification itself. See F. Loofs, Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte (Halle, 1906), pp. 825-826, n. 16.
6. Horst Georg Poehlmann, Abriss der Dogmatik (Guetersloh, 1973), pp. 192-193.
7. Ibid., p. 211.
8. Henry P. Hamann, Justification by Faith In Modern Theology, Graduate Study Number II. St. Louis: School for Graduate Studies, Concordia Seminary, 1957. Also, H. P. Hamann, "Sanctification--A Symbolical, Exegetical, Dogmatical, and Homiletical Study," Lutheran Theological Journal, vol. 10, no. 3 (December, 1976), pp. 85-96.
9. Konstantinos E. Papapetrou, "Ueber die anthropologischen Grenzen der Kirche," in W. Maurer, Karl H. Rengstorf, E. Sommerlath, and W. Zimmermann, eds., Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums (Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1972) p. 133.

LECTURE II

WHO AND WHAT IS "EVANGELICAL"?

38. Cardinal Newman, in his famous Lectures on Justification, repeatedly links the Lutheran doctrine of justification, which he caricatures and combats, with a low estimate of the Sacraments in general and of Holy Baptism in particular.¹ This false impression has prevailed today in the Anglo-Saxon world, so that a "low" view of the means of grace is generally thought to go hand in hand with an "evangelical" insistence on Justification by grace alone, whilst a "high," sacramental understanding of the alone-saving Gospel is felt to correspond to a Romanising doctrine of justification. This is quite topsyturvy. How ironic, how sad, that a full, rich, and worthy regard for the God-given reality of the evangel should now be decried as "unevangelical"! (In actual fact, as Dr. Tom Hardt has pointed out again, Luther's doctrine of the means of grace was actually stronger, more realistic, than the subtly spiritualising theory of Thomas Aquinas!²)

1. "Chief Article" versus Systematic Strait-Jacket

39. It is necessary at the outset to clarify in principle the place of the article of justification in the total Christian scheme of things. Many today imagine that justification is a kind of self-contained, self-sufficient principle which gives rise to all other articles of faith,

so that everything is in principle reducible to justification; and that this is the distinctively "Lutheran" understanding of the Gospel. In the case of the means of grace this would mean that everything important about God's Word and Sacraments could be known already from the very nature of justification by grace, and that, conversely, particular points about the means of grace which do not necessarily follow from justification, should be regarded as matters of "interpretation" which should not disturb the unity of the church. This fallacy, based as it is on careless half-truths, is far more destructive than may appear on the surface. It implies in fact the total dissolution of biblical Christianity into a few bloodless abstractions or into what one observer has called "a nightmare of Swedenborgian correspondences"!

40. Although justification is the very chief article of the Christian faith, and is so understood in the Lutheran Confessions, this cardinal doctrine is not a speculative principle, from which other articles may then be derived by deduction or inference. Everything indeed is deeply connected and related to justification, as Luther points out in his Galatians commentary; but justification is not a reductionist minimum, for the sake of which other biblical doctrines may be sacrificed or compromised. Hardt has strongly and convincingly characterised Luther's attitude:

In Zwingli's view this major point, faith's eating, about which the parties agree, makes bodily eating of the sacramental Body unnecessary: "When we now have the spiritual eating, what is the use of bodily eating?" Again and again Luther's opponents emphasised the fact

that the Real Presence lacks systematic support in the doctrine of justification. However, Luther makes no attempt to produce any such "pious" explanation. Instead he summarises his view in a monumental sentence . . . : "EVERY ARTICLE OF FAITH IS IN ITSELF ITS OWN PRINCIPLE AND REQUIRES NO PROOF BY MEANS OF ANOTHER ONE."³

41. Werner Elert makes the same point about St. Paul himself: Those who claim that St. Paul invented the Sacrament, adapting a simple Jewish meal to the requirements of the Oriental mysteries, are refuted by the fact that Paul does not attempt to derive the Sacrament from any of his great themes, especially justification. If anything, an external Sacrament is, on the fact of it, inconvenient in the context of Paul's vehement argumentation against justification by external performances! Yet for Paul the Sacrament is a great "given", something he has received from the Lord Himself (I Cor. 11:23). It is a monolith which is simply "there" by divine fiat, and requires no systematic derivations or excuses.

42. The end-product of the reductionist corrosion may be seen in Bultmann, who insisted on "Law and Gospel" and "justification through faith alone"---but regarded the relevant historical facts and miracles as legends, and the dogmas (Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, Sacraments) as so much ancient mythology! No wonder Sasse lamented "the transformation of the sola fide and the theologia crucis into a lifeless speculation in Lutheran circles"⁴ Actually our church's Apology long ago repudiated the reductionist understanding of "faith alone" as a kind of "Occam's razor": "We do not exclude the Word

or the Sacraments, as the adversaries slanderously claim. For we have said above that faith is conceived from the Word, and we very much exalt the ministry of the Word" (IV, 74).

43. But as, on the one hand, justification is presented as an all-powerful principle whose self-unfolding sets up the various points of Christian doctrine, so on the other hand it is commonly denied that Luther's view of the centrality of justification is really the position of the New Testament. The Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Theology submitted to the 1963 Assembly at Helsinki a document, On Justification, which stated in part:

The Reformers believed that Justification is the theme that dominates the entire New Testament. We now recognize that Justification is indeed an image present in the earliest Christian tradition, but as one image among the many used to set forth the significance of God's deed in Jesus Christ

Can we continue to assert that the article on Justification is the articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae, when even in the earliest period of the church's life it was possible to proclaim the Gospel without reference to it? Is it possible that insistence upon the centrality of Justification is an example of the way controversy shapes and perhaps warps theological thinking? (pp. 8-9).

44. No wonder the same booklet holds:

"Justification by faith remains a difficult and obscure doctrine" (p. 7)!

45. Another example is provided by Paul Althaus' comparison between Paul and Luther. Althaus, by the way, who alleges certain conflicts between Paul and Luther, feels free to side now with Paul, now with Luther! For example, he holds that Paul did not teach Luther's idea of the need for daily repentance and forgiveness. On this score we "find only in Luther the full expression of the truth." On the other hand Althaus thinks that Paul was not talking about his Christian existence in Romans 7, but about his pre-Christian past. Luther's contrary conviction is rejected.⁵

46. H. G. Poehlmann, too, accuses the Reformation of assigning "to the doctrine of justification a cardinal rank which of course it does not have in the New Testament, and hardly even in Paul."⁶

47. Hans Kueng naturally echoes such sentiments, attempting to portray the Reformation doctrine as an exaggeration. (He notes in passing that for Calvin justification was not absolutely the centre.⁷). Of Paul, Kueng says: "In the captivity and pastoral letters justification certainly has not been forgotten, but who would maintain that it here still belonged to the keenly perceived central themes, and who would on that account blame Paul!"⁸ But Luther too did not speak much about justification, say, at Marburg, 1529; nor did he use the word in his classic explanations of the Second and Third Articles! Was it therefore for him no longer a "central theme"?!

48. A basic misunderstanding is revealed in this bold formulation of Kueng's: "The doctrine of justification is not the central dogma of Christendom--this has always been catholic doctrine, and Barth there continues, against

Luther, the best catholic tradition--the central dogma of Christendom is the Christ-mystery . . .⁹" But of course Luther never meant that justification was the centre, to the exclusion of Christ. He insisted that all texts about good works must be understood "for Christ," not "against Christ". In other words, the notion of human merit, of earning eternal life, etc., violates precisely the central Christ-mystery, and not some abstract, isolated notion of "justification". Moreover, the New Testament everywhere stresses precisely the salvific, soteriological "point" of the Christ-mystery--not its bare ontology: St. John 1:14.17; Acts 4:12; I Cor. 2:2; Eph. 1:3-12; 3:1-21; Phil. 2:5-11; etc. Indeed, Kueng's own very fine stress on justification as first of all the objective acquittal of mankind in and by the death and resurrection of Jesus,¹⁰ should have suggested to him the centrality at least of this objective justification in the New Testament. As for Luther, had he regarded a narrow, abstract justification, rather than the mystery of salvation in Jesus, as the real centre of the Faith, he would have had to treat the Third Article as central and crucial. In fact, he assigns that preeminence to the Second Article, i.e. precisely to the "Christ-mystery" (Large Catechism, Second Article, par. 33)! And John Gerhard, whom Pieper quotes (Dogmatics, II, 57) calls "the mystery of Christ" the "metropolis of the heavenly doctrine."

49. Salvation in Christ alone, then, is the divinely given centre, which illuminates--but does not eliminate!--all the manifold aspects of the full-orbed divine truth of Scripture; and all parts of biblical teaching cohere indissolubly with this central, "crucial" mystery.

2. An "Evangelical" Analysis of the New Pentecostalism In Relation to Justification.

50. For several years now a remarkable magazine, Present Truth, has been receiving wide circulation. The publication originated in Australia and is "dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation." The publishers further describe themselves as a "group of Christian scholars and businessmen without denominational sponsorship who have united to uphold the objective gospel amid the present deluge of religious subjectivism." Against "the barren wilderness of groveling internalism, "i.e. "The popular and frantic effort to find satisfaction in some sort of religious experience," Present Truth wishes to maintain "those great principles upon which the Reformation was founded--namely: 1. Sola gratia. . . 2. Solo Christo. . . 3. Solo fide. . . 4. Sola Scriptura. . ." (vol. 3, no. 1. Feb., 1974).

51. Most remarkable is the fact that this magazine concentrates almost exclusively on a vigorous defence of the Reformation's doctrine of justification. Although the editors are not Lutherans, their zeal on behalf of this central doctrine easily exceeds that of the Lutheran World Federation, as does their forthrightness. One is amazed at the many quotations not only from Luther, but also from Melancthon, Chemnitz, and the like, and even from the Formula of Concord! A great deal of attention is devoted to a running critique of the New Pentecostalism, or the "Charismatic Movement". A Special Issue (September--October, 1972) was devoted entirely to "justification By Faith and The Charismatic Movement." One article states very pointedly:

The central thesis of the Pentecostal movement is that the baptism, or infilling, of the Spirit is a definite second blessing which comes at a time subsequent to conversion. This Pentecostal thesis is a complete negation of the truth of justification by faith. . . .

1. The Pentecostal idea of a post-conversion baptism of the Spirit implies that God's act of justification is not sufficient to bring the infilling of the Spirit. . . .

2. The Pentecostal teaching implies (and sometimes states explicitly) that the experience of being baptized in the Spirit is something greater and beyond the justification which comes by faith. . . .

3. Pentecostalism presents an unfortunate dichotomy of receiving Christ and receiving the Holy Ghost. . . .

4. Pentecostalism makes two different events of the baptism into Christ and into the Spirit.

52. Another illuminating piece, "Protestant Revivalism, Pentecostalism, and the Drift Back to Rome," shows the deep historical roots and connections of this baffling movement. Apart from the Anabaptists, Osiander, and the Pietists, the story really begins with John Wesley and the tremendous spiritual revolution he spearheaded, which likely saved Britain from the bloodbath of a political revolution like the French. A problem in Wesley's theology was the notion of a sudden "second blessing," after ordinary justification and sanctification. This "second blessing"

allegedly removed from the believer the last vestiges of sin, so that he was now perfect, or "entirely sanctified." Wesley himself, it seems, was too great and humble a man to claim attainment of this "second blessing" for himself. But his followers, some of them, put the idea into practice to the point of fanaticism.

53. These ideas, combined with frontier-style revivalism, led to an even greater stress on religious experience, and on emotional crisis as proof of genuineness. The fanatical "second blessing" perfectionism caused such upheaval in the Methodist Church, that the "holiness movement" was forced out of the Methodist Church into a score of separate denominations by the end of the 19th century. Meanwhile, the idea of a "baptism of fire" had become popular among holiness people. (A "Fire-Baptised Holiness Church" was founded in Iowa in 1895). This "fire" was alleged to be a kind of "third blessing," after entire sanctification. It took the form of shouting, screaming, falling in trances, or speaking in "tongues". The publication, Live Coals of Fire, founded in 1899, spoke of "the blood that cleans us, the Holy Ghost that fills up, the fire that burns up, and the dynamite that blows up." Thus the way was paved for Pentecostalism, which was not long in coming. A perfectly logical outgrowth of these trends, the movement began with Charles Parham at Topeka, Kansas, in 1900. Pentecostalism was an off-shoot of the Holiness Movement, which in turn had grown out of Methodist revivalism. About 1960 this movement began a spectacular phase of infiltration and penetration into virtually all "main-line" denominations. The crucial idea, that of "Spirit Baptism" as an experience distinct from mere "water baptism," looks remarkably like a direct descendant of Wesley's "second blessing"!

54. This analysis seems on the whole quite sound, and the contrast between a church-life based on the objective fact of justification (Christ for us) and one built on alleged experiences of the Spirit in us, could not be greater.

55. It is interesting that even the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal Newsletter cheerfully admits the historical roots and connexions: The New Pentecostal ("Charismatic") and the old Pentecostal movements "are clearly differentiated, but no longer do the charismatic seem slightly embarrassed by the fact that much of their outlook. . . comes from the 'holy rollers' of a few decades ago. Rather, instead we find a refreshing search in Wesleyan, Holiness and Pentecostal sources for the appearance of today's renewal in mainline bodies" (June, 1976).

56. The question that needs to be asked now is this: Does the Present Truth analysis go far enough? I submit that it does not, for reasons which, I hope, shall become clear shortly.

3. The Full Gospel versus The "Evangelical" Truncation

57. Despite the frequent references to Luther and even the Lutheran Confessions, the basic orientation of Present Truth is unmistakably of the conservative "Reformed" variety, which represents a rather solid, traditionalist version of "evangelicalism." But does that really make a difference when confronting a common foe like Pentecostalism in its various forms? Cannot Calvinist and Lutheran conservatives form a pretty solid "united front" on this issue? Some, perhaps many, Lutherans seem to think so. One U.S. Lutheran pastor wrote the editor of Present Truth:

"I have received every issue of Present Truth and rejoice in this publication more than in any other periodical I have ever received. God bless your continued efforts to speak His truth in a clear and denominationally unbiased way."

58. Let us begin by noting just two items, both from the Special Issue we have been considering. First, there is an article entitled, "By blood and by water," in which the "water" does not refer to Baptism. Secondly, and more seriously, one of three crucial questions, designed to separate Romanising and Reformation concepts of justification, asks: "Do you believe that Christ as a divine Person can dwell in your heart?" The "Answer Key" explains: "Rome says 'Yes' and the Reformation says 'No'. Note: Christ as a Person dwells in heaven at the right hand of God. While we are home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (see 2 Cor. 5:6; Eccl. 5:2). He is present in His Word and by His Spirit, and this is how He dwells in our hearts by faith. . ."

59. With this hyper-Calvinist denial of New Testament Christology it is impossible to make common cause, much as one must appreciate many other fine statements and insights. This startling cleavage over basic Christology must surely remind both parties that the difference is over the nature of the Gospel itself. Do we face in God's Word and Sacraments realism or symbolism, incarnational solidity or spiritualising? Indeed, if Word and Sacraments are taken merely as outward signs of inner gifts given directly by the Spirit, without means, then what defense in principle is there against Pentecostalism? Is Pentecostalism simply an advanced stage of Calvinism, a predictable decay-product?

60. At its deepest level, it seems to me, Pentecostalism is a quest for religious assurance. The unbelievable theological bankruptcy of modern Christendom has created a great void, which is driving people into a private religiosity of direct and immediate religious satisfactions and validations. What could be more reassuring than one's own personal experience, a direct pipe-line to God? Hence the attraction of "tongues," healings, miracles, transcendental meditation, and the plain old occult.

61. It is very instructive in this connexion to see what the real religious function of the "tongues" or "Spirit-Baptism" experience is conceived to be. "Lutheran" charismatic Larry Christenson, in his book, The Charismatic Renewal Among Lutherans, cites a number of typical "testimonies": A pastor had come to the end of his tether. Kneeling in desperation before the altar on a Saturday morning, he challenged God: "Either you are going to be real, or I am going to quit. You can have the whole thing back--this church, my ministry, and me. I'm just going through the motions. . ." Suddenly a clear voice said: "The Gift is already yours; just reach out and take it." Now comes the crucial paragraph:

Obediently I stretched my hands toward the altar, palms up. I opened my mouth, and strange babbling sounds rushed forth. Had I done it? Or was it the Spirit? Before I had time to wonder, all sorts of strange things began to happen. God came out of the shadows. 'He is real!' I thought. 'He is here! He loves me!'

For the first time in my life I really felt loved by God . . . 'God, where have

you been all this time? . . . Give us this key, so that we can unlock you for the whole world (pp. 17-18).

62. A young married school teacher reports: "In the last few years God has become more real and personal to me than He ever was before. . . This relationship has come in a number of ways: the gifts of the Spirit, however, were undoubtedly the impetus" (p. 19). A pastor's wife writes: "At Bible camp, when I was sixteen, Jesus Christ became a real person to me . . . The first time I ever heard anyone speak in tongues I knew immediately that this was the same Spirit which I had experienced fifteen years before . . . My reaction after that evening was mainly fear, fear of the thing itself--that God could be that real--but mostly fear of people. . . . Perhaps God knows that we need a sign again to give us power against the distractions and temptations of the world, and to keep us single-minded" (pp. 21-22).

63. A "life-long Lutheran" was, as a teenager, "filled with the Holy Spirit. I'm sure of it because I had the evidence of the gift of tongues" (p. 24). Finally, here is the story of a Lutheran housewife in the hospital: "I have been a Lutheran all my life and considered myself a Christian, although my faith at times was at a low ebb. When I look back on those years, I certainly realise what a poor Christian I have been. . . One day in my hospital room I realised that I was praying in a new language. . . I felt a closeness to God that I had never before experienced. . . . The Bible became more meaningful to me. It was like a light had been turned on to give me better insight and understanding. God had, through the Holy Spirit, become a new reality to me" (pp. 24-25).

64. It seems obvious that searching, struggling Christians (Romans 7!), even afflicted pastors deeply conscious of their weakness and unworthiness, will find in these spiritual success stories a dazzling temptation to obtain the experience of "tongues" as the great remedy and solution to all their problems. For the message is clear: people were baptised, absolved, confirmed, heard sermons, read the Bible, prayed, received the Sacrament---and not much happened. Then they spoke in "tongues", and everything began to happen. "Tongues" here has the nature and dignity of a super-sacrament which suddenly "makes God real to me." There is not the slightest hint in the New Testament that "tongues" are supposed to "make God real," or make one "feel forgiven." All this is part of a tragic, sometimes frenzied, quest for religious assurance in a Protestant religiosity which has been robbed of objective means of grace.

65. Another "Lutheran" charismatic, Rodney Lensch, puts the whole thing even more crassly:

I believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in addition to the Word and Sacraments, are to empower and equip the church for her ministry of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

To be perfectly frank, I didn't feel loved of God although intellectually I could say, "Yes, but God's Word says you are even if you don't feel it." But when the Holy Spirit flooded my soul with love, I felt it. There was no need to keep quoting Bible passages. The Holy Spirit was now ministering that love from within my heart and not just through my intellect.¹¹

66. Indeed, Christenson says elsewhere: "Jesus links us to himself by this chain of three links: repentance and faith, water baptism, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit. These three links form a perfect unity, and the believer's relationship with Christ is incomplete until all three links have been forged on the anvil of personal experience"!12

67. Where then must we look for the theological source of this remarkable exaltation of emotional experience? Where lies the problem which the appeal to emotion seeks to answer? The tracks for the present situation were set four hundred years ago. One of Luther's very central concerns had been to overcome the monstrous spiritual uncertainty (monstrum incertitudinis) of medieval, scholastic theology. Luther once again grounded and centred spiritual life in the utterly dependable, objective Gift of God in Jesus, that is, in the Cross and Resurrection. And how and where do we now, centuries later, find this Gift? In the utterly objective Gospel and Sacraments of Christ, which are not mere information (though they are that too) but powerful, Spirit-filled, life-creating means of grace. Here forgiveness, assurance, life and salvation, indeed the whole treasury of heaven is effectively given and distributed to us by God, the Holy Trinity.

68. John Calvin, however, radically undercut this evangelical scheme. He taught the unbiblical notion of "double predestination": God does not seriously wish the salvation of all, but has from eternity predestined some to salvation and others to damnation. With rigid logic Calvin pursues the philosophical notion that whatever God wills must of necessity happen.¹³ Hence damnation must be seen as being

due not to the fault of man but to the decision of God!¹⁴ So inexorable is this logic that God's will not only "barred the door of life" to the non-elect but even "predestined the fall into sin".¹⁵

69. This position is a disaster the magnitude of which can hardly be over-estimated. For as soon as the universality of God's serious, saving will in Christ is denied, no objective, reliable grounds remain for any assurance of salvation. It is said that Luther was once asked whether John 3:16 would not read even better if it said "God so loved Martin Luther. . ." instead of "the world." "Heaven forbid," Luther shot back, "then I would always have to wonder whether there was another Martin Luther in the world!" It is precisely the universality of grace, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world which is the absolutely indispensable basis of certainty. Calvin himself realised that in his scheme the Gospel itself could no longer in and of itself be the ground of faith: "because such preaching is shared also with the wicked, it cannot of itself be a full proof of election."¹⁶ Actually this is quite an understatement. If Christ redeemed only part of mankind, and if forgiveness and salvation are offered by God only to some men, but not to others, then the Gospel and Sacraments become totally ambiguous and useless as ground of faith, for in some cases God means it when He says "shed for you for the remission of sins," while in other cases He simply does not mean it, even though the very same words are used! Here is an uncertainty more monstrous than any medieval scholasticism! The real stress now cannot be on the objective Gospel and Sacraments, which have been demoted to neutral, non-committal "signs," but falls on that inner "illumination"

by the Spirit which can alone supply spiritual life and power, but which works in sovereign predestinational independence of the outward Word.¹⁷ Despite Calvin's bravado about the continued importance of the outward Word, it is clear that this Word is really nothing, and the inner Spirit-action everything:

Therefore I make such a division between Spirit and Sacraments that the power to act rests with the former, and the ministry alone is left to the latter--a ministry empty and trifling, apart from the action of the Spirit, but charged with great effect when the Spirit works within and manifests his power.¹⁸

Yet since we see that not all indiscriminately embrace that communion with Christ which is offered through the gospel, reason itself teaches us to climb higher /! ! !/ and to examine into the secret energy of the Spirit, by which we come to enjoy Christ and all his benefits.¹⁹

70. But if the decisive thing is not the Gospel itself but an inner Spirit-action alongside it, then, in practical terms, this inner action can be identified and gauged only in the form of feelings, that is, emotional experience. It matters terribly that the elect "feel the working of the gospel,"²⁰ for the necessary confidence "cannot happen without our truly feeling its sweetness and experiencing it in ourselves."²¹ To assign to feelings so central and decisive a role is to invite the direct mischief. The rise of something like Pentecostalism becomes then virtually inevitable, given favourable historical circumstances. For if the prize goes to inner experiences, then "tongues" are more

dramatic and more tangible emotional indicators than vaguer, more ambiguous feelings. Moreover, once the "charismatic" spirit has gained a foothold, it will hardly be exorcised with paler, weaker forms of direct Spirit-experience!

71. Theoretically therefore it would seem that Calvinism as such cannot provide any really firm defences against Pentecostalism. Where it seems to do so, it is involved in a fundamental inconsistency. The Present Truth group for example have provided absolutely magnificent materials which counter Pentecostal subjectivism as a religious basis with the utterly objective fact and gift of the Christ for us. But can this position really be maintained in practice without an equally objective doctrine of Christ's Gospel and Sacraments as means of grace? Is not an objective Gospel simply the expression of the objective Christ for us HERE AND NOW? If Christ is objective only then and there--two thousand years ago--but is here and now available only in inner Spirit-experience, has subjectivism really been challenged at all?

72. One notices the same dilemma in Francis Schaeffer's book True Spirituality. For all of Schaeffer's absolutely magnificent crusading against modern subjectivism and religious and philosophical experientialism, the book on spirituality seems utterly unable to point out objective elements strong enough to serve as bases and sources of spiritual life. Although one or two baptismal texts from the New Testament are cited repeatedly, there is no discussion of Baptism, of Holy Communion, or even of the effective spiritual power of the Gospel itself! How is it possible to write about true spirituality, in the context of the rabid modern experience-cult, without at all discussing the

only possible remedy? Instead there is much talk about "moment-by-moment" consciousness or awareness of "the supernatural" (why such horribly vague, theosophical-sounding language?)-- in other words of basically mental activities. Christ did His work then and there, so that what is left to us is to think, remember, and meditate thereon by way of present inspiration and motivation. What is missing is the actual, live encounter, here and now, with the Person and Work of the Saviour, not simply through the Spirit as "agent" for the (absent?) Trinity, but through objective Gospel-means throbbing with supernatural life and blessing from the ever-present Holy Trinity. Reminders, remembrances, and mental meditations are poor substitutes for the blessed reality. The church then becomes mainly a moral obligation, rather than a salvatory necessity and celebration.

73. What is merely tragic in Calvinism is inexcusable in Lutheranism. Yet the fact of the matter is that many of our people, while Lutheran in theory, are Calvinists in practice. That is, they view the means of grace and the church through the "spiritualising" spectacles of the myriad Reformed paperbacks they have absorbed. How else can we explain the fact that the Living Bible has become immensely popular even among Lutherans, who do not seem to be bothered at all by horrid mutilations like these "translations" of Col. 2:12 and I Cor. 10:16:

For in baptism you see how your old, evil died with him and was buried. . .

When we ask the Lord's blessing upon our drinking from the cup of wine at the Lord's Table, this means, doesn't it, that all who drink it are sharing

together the blessing of Christ's blood?
And when we break off pieces of the bread
from the loaf to eat there together, this
shows that we are sharing together in the
benefits of his body.

74. The reductionist, corrosive mood of our
religious environment demands that we
reappropriate and maintain without compromise
the New Testament fulness of the alone-justifying
Christ for us--not only "then and there" but also
"here and now" in the blessed means of grace.
The effective ground and evidence of our confi-
dence in Christ's justification must be the divine
dynamic of the Gospel itself, not our own inner
musings (cf. Rom. 1:16; 10:17; I Cor. 4:15; 15:2;
Luke 8:11; Jn. 6:63). This salvatory dynamic,
moreover, includes also the Gospel-actions,
Baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:26-27;
Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; I Peter 3:21, etc.) and the
actual "participation in the holy things" of
Christ's body and blood, I Cor. 10:16 ff.

75. Where the full New Testament glory of the
alone-saving Christ-mystery is thus wor-
shipped in humble, childlike faith, there and
there alone can the monstrous uncertainties of
all subjective will-o-the-wisps be effectively
resisted. Here is the objective and self-
communicating Ground of our justification and
salvation. Whoever has grasped this Pearl of
great price will not hanker after glass trinkets!

Footnotes

1. John Henry Newman, Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification (Westminster, Md: Christian Classics, 1966), pp. 4. 361.
2. Tom G. A. Hardt, On the Sacrament of the Altar. Typed manuscript in the possession of the Concordia Theological Seminary Library, Ft. Wayne, pp. 17-21.
3. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
4. H. Sasse, "The Crisis of the Christian Ministry", Lutheran Theological Journal, vol. 2, no. 1 (May, 1968), p. 44.
5. Paul Althaus, Paulus und Luther (Guetersloh, 1958), pp. 55, 77, 95.
6. Poehlmann, op. cit., p. 192.
7. Hans Kueng, Rechtfertigung (1957), p. 25.
8. Ibid., p. 213.
9. Ibid., p. 128.
10. Ibid., pp. 218 ff.
11. Rodney Lensch, My Personal Pentecost (Kirkwood, Mo.: Impact Books, 1972), pp. 42, 11.
12. Larry Christenson, Speaking in Tongues, p. 51.
13. John T. McNeill, ed., The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXI. Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967), Book III, ch. XXIII 2,8 (pp. 949.956-7).

14. Ibid., pp. 946-947. 956-957
15. Ibid., pp. 931. 955.
16. Ibid., p. 965.
17. Ibid., pp. 538. 985. 1284-1294.
18. Ibid., p. 1284.
19. Ibid., p. 537.
20. Ibid., p. 985.
21. Ibid., p. 561.

LECTURE III

JUSTIFICATION VERSUS "CHEAP GRACE"

76. Let us hear the scathing eloquence of Bonhoeffer:

We Lutherans have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ. It is true, of course, that we have paid the doctrine of pure grace divine honours unparalleled in Christendom. . . Everywhere Luther's formula has been repeated, but its truth perverted into self-deception. So long as our Church holds the correct doctrine of justification, there is no doubt whatever that she is a justified Church! So they said, thinking that we must vindicate our Lutheran heritage by making this grace available on the cheapest and easiest terms. To be "Lutheran" must mean that we leave the following of Christ to legalists, Calvinists and enthusiasts--and all this for the sake of grace. We justified the world, and condemned as heretics those who tried to follow Christ. The result was that a nation became Christian and Lutheran, but at the cost of true discipleship. . . .

We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale, we baptised, confirmed, and

absolved a whole nation unasked and without condition. . . . We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard. . . . What had happened to all those warnings of Luther's against preaching the gospel in such a manner as to make men rest secure in their ungodly living? . . . What are those three thousand Saxons put to death by Charlemagne compared with the millions of spiritual corpses in our country today? . . . Cheap grace has turned out to be utterly merciless to our Evangelical Church (The Cost of Discipleship, SCM, London, 1959, pp. 44-45).

77. One may say that Bonhoeffer exaggerates, that his own theology was heretical, that he was speaking of conditions in secularized state-churches, and the like. And no doubt it is true that, like Kierkegaard before him, Bonhoeffer blames Lutheranism for views and attitudes conditioned in fact by post-Enlightenment frauds and devastation. The pre-World War I "Christian, humanitarian and liberal tradition" in which Bonhoeffer grew up (Discipleship, p. 9) was heavily tinged with the optimistic ideology of A. Ritschl, whose denial of divine wrath, justice, and atonement in effect reduced God's love to mere sentimentality! Yet when all is said and done, the fact remains that there is terrible truth in Bonhoeffer's words, also for our contemporary, orthodox Lutheran congregations. It is perfectly true that "salvation by grace" is widely misunderstood as a license to take things easy spiritually, as a dispensation from holy living. We suffer from a widespread decline in moral seriousness, so that in place of an all-consuming hungering and thirsting after righteousness we often find a pathological loss of appetite.

It is futile and absurd to be forever and one-sidedly imploring crowds of comfortable modern people not to attempt to earn heaven by good works--when they really haven't the slightest intention of complicating or inconveniencing their lives with any serious interest in good works at all!

78. What is crucial here, of course, is the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. It is this right distinction and application alone which makes all the difference between the life-giving administration of the central mystery of our holy Faith, and the death-dealing poisoning of Bonhoeffer's Lutheran vultures with the cheap grace of "justification by faith" as an embalmed intellectual abstraction. For only the proper distribution of Law and Gospel--that high and awesome art of which in this life we remain but humble apprentices--can achieve the divine objective of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable, rather than vice versa (see the Magnificat and all parallels)!

79. The observations which follow are not meant to be in any sense exhaustive. Nor are they but a collection of random thoughts. The intention rather is to high-light certain aspects of Law-proclamation on the one hand and of Gospel-celebration on the other; namely, those which seem at least to the present writer to require especial emphasis today, in view of the cultural context in which our congregations must live and work.

1. Sin and Need

80. One of the prime deficiencies of our under-privileged age is an almost total absence of a sense of sin. Luther's "terrors of conscience" and his quest "for a gracious God" are perceived today, patronisingly, as something scarcely comprehensible, something from another, and strangely antiquated world. The "modern" instinct is to assign the problem to the level of chemo- or psycho-therapy for guilt-feelings!

81. There are no doubt many reasons for the virtual evaporation of the notion of sin from the public mind. One of the chief factors must be the almost universal acceptance of the evolutionary view of man's origins. Our whole secular culture is built on this cultural myth, reinforced daily in a thousand subtle ways. Christians too must daily breathe this evolutionary atmosphere, which is bound to colour their conscious and subconscious perception of reality.

82. The hideous moral relativism and nihilism issuing from this God-less view of the universe are daily becoming more explicit. From Freud to Kinsey to Ann Landers, from Elvis Presley to the latest TV starlet exuding oracular if inarticulate moral maxims for the masses, the message is predictable and in essentials unvarying: whatever is, is right; everything is beautiful in its own way; do your own thing; if it feels good, do it; guilt-feelings are pointless and old-fashioned, etc. usque ad nauseam.

83. The terrible thing about this decomposition of standards and behaviour is that it is perfectly logical--given the world-view of our

media-culture's pacesetters. If there is no God, then, as Nietzsche and Dostoevski foresaw with crystal clarity, though from opposite poles, "anything goes". If there was no divine creation, then we are but freaks of nature, and our lives devoid of moral significance. Whether it be human life or a litter of puppies, spiders, worms, desert cactus or blades of grass, or indeed the deadly sterile surface of the moon, or even helium, hydrogen, atoms, molecules, and sub-atomic particles or energy vibrations: it is all the same to an empty universe rushing headlong into cosmic perdition and extinction! In such an absurd universe moral values are but a trick of nature, a cruel joke. Apart from an eternal Creator and Judge, good and evil can mean no more than taste or preference, like liking or disliking oysters. Killing six million Jews might then still be emotionally distressing to most people, but intellectually it can mean no more than an unusual taste, an "alternative life-style"!

84. Few people have faced the de-humanising implications of modern "humanism" more clear-headedly than the humanist Bertrand Russell, who wrote:

That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labour of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness

of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins--all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.¹

85. H. J. Blackham, director of the British Humanist Association, quoted this remarkable passage in his essay, "The Pointlessness of It All," and commented: "It is too true to be good: let us acknowledge the truth, and provide the goodness ourselves, with pride and without hope."²

86. It should not be thought, however, that this philosophy affects only intellectuals, leaving the ordinary people unscathed. Francis Schaeffer has shown, especially in his splendid book, The God Who Is There, how this philosophy of meaninglessness has, through popular culture, engulfed the broad masses like a vast tide of pollution:

The Silence is a series of snapshots with immoral and pornographic themes. The camera just takes them without any comment. "Click, click, click, cut!" That is all there is. Life is like that: unrelated, having no meaning as well as no morals . . .

The posters advertising Antonioni's Blow-Up in the London Underground were inescapable as they told the message of that film: "Murder without guilt; Love without meaning."³

87. Most people will regard self-indulgence as the only sensible response to such an obscene universe. And that indeed is the basic thrust of much contemporary literature and drama. This point is well made in Professor Duncan Williams' book, Trousered Apes, sub-titled: "Sick literature in a sick society." The secret of happiness, we are told in this sick literature, lies in the satisfaction of our biological, organismic instincts and urges. Reason, morality, religion, culture, and the like, only get in the way, being artificial and therefore "hypo-critical" constructs. Malcolm Muggeridge put it well when he described Williams' book as "a cogently argued, highly intelligent and devastatingly effective anatomisation of what passes for culture today, showing that it is nihilistic in purpose, ethically and spiritually vacuous, and Gadarene in destination"!

88. The tragedy is that the churches have yielded almost completely to these secular superstitions--hence, e.g., the jargon about avoiding anything "judgmental." Popular sloganeering makes the word "evangelical" mean about the same as "permissive." And in the name of this fraudulent pseudo-gospel people are being robbed of all clear moral categories, whilst their religion decays into a few self-serving cliches, like, "we're all sinners anyway." Here "sin" is no longer a horror but a comfort, almost a point of pride rather than a source of shame.

89. This deep corrosion cannot be reversed with touching rhapsodies about "the love of God" and tremulous verbiage about "the Cross" without an honest confrontation and unmasking of evil for what it is. It is just such pietistic evasions which spawn unspeakable offences like "Lutheran" abortionists, who sigh religiously about "evangelical freedom" and "responsibility" while they butcher helpless unborn babies for profit! Such moral cretinism, sad to say, appears to be more common among Lutherans than among Roman Catholics, who, whatever else may need to be said about their theology, are generally equipped at least with some basic and clear-cut moral categories!

90. But, our cheap-grace advocate may object, is not all this rather external, on the level of civic righteousness, hence far inferior to the real, spiritual righteousness of the Gospel? I can only reply that any "spiritual" righteousness which is indifferent to the murder of human beings is a sham and a fraud. The Lord says not that our righteousness is to be less than that of the scribes and Pharisees, but that it is to be more! The divine love of sanctification, to be sure, far surpasses the mere justice of civic righteousness. But a "love" being less than justice while purporting to be more, would not be love.

91. It sounds very pious to condemn all moral distinctions and categories as so much Talmudic, rabbinical legalism. "One sin is as bad as another--and didn't Christ Himself abolish casuistry?" No, the Lord did not abolish all distinctions. He clearly taught that some things are much worse than others and will result in different measures of punishment (Mat. 12:45;

21:28-32; Lk. 10:12-15). What He condemned was the invention and exploitation of self-serving distinctions (Mt. 23:16-22)! But the rejection of distinctions can be just as self-serving. When the Lord said that giving oneself to evil lust was as bad as doing the evil deed, He could count on His hearers recoiling in horror from the evil deed; He was stressing the guilt of the thought, not the innocence of the act, the importance of the former, not the unimportance of the latter. In today's climate, however, people are likely to draw the opposite conclusion: not that thoughts are as wicked as deeds, but that deeds are as harmless as thoughts! In other words, if I am already "guilty" for thinking the evil, I may as well have the satisfaction of doing it as well. Here the denial of moral distinctions has become self-serving and productive of moral chaos.

92. A related excuse for moral laxity in the name of "cheap grace" is what we might call the fallacy of motivational perfectionism. It is the fallacy of the man who never gave more than 50 cents because, as he explained, the Lord loves a cheerful giver, and he simply couldn't be cheerful if he gave any more! The inner logic of this fallacy runs something like this: human acts are worthless morally unless they are done for the right reason, from right motives, which must include sincerity. Therefore if I "don't feel like" doing something, I shouldn't do it, because I would not be "sincere" if I did. And so we neglect important Christian duties and functions, prayer, devotions, church, sacrament, help and service to our neighbour, while piously waiting for a spirit of sincerity and proper disposition to waft gently into our hands! But the whole point of Christian life, discipleship, and discipline is precisely

to keep on doing what we, or rather our flesh, does not feel like doing! The spirit is always willing, but it dare never wait for the flesh-- that will be weak till doomsday. The new man must daily arise, take up his cross, manfully crucify the flesh with its "feelings" and lusts, and assert anew the victory of Christ over the dragons of the world, the flesh, and the devil. To shirk duty and service for the uncertain prospect of fickle moods and feelings is to fall prey to one of the prime seductions of "cheap grace".

93. This wishy-washy sort of self-indulgence has a vested interest in moral muddle-headedness. Basically the muddle reflects secular confusions and resists clarification. Here it is essential to preserve and assert the indissoluble connection between the First and Second Articles of the Creed. While it is true that the First Article is not properly believed except "through" the Second Article, it is also true, paradoxically, that the Second presupposes the First and collapses into vacuous sentimentality without it. Secular, evolutionary superstitions need to be thoroughly exterminated by means of a serious, credible doctrine of the Creation and Fall, without which the Redemption itself loses its point and savour. It is only within the framework of a realistic, no-nonsense reading of the First Article, that the Law can be treated with any sort of ultimate respect. Where Darwin and Freud are regarded as the real authorities on man's origin and nature, rather than Moses and Jesus, there the Law will never be more than a harmless, toothless old hound, to be endured with impatience perhaps, but certainly not with terror. Sin is sin only where God is God--hence the church's teaching and preaching

must relentlessly and uncompromisingly break down all the secular idolatries that paralyze Christian minds, in order to release the latter into the glorious liberty of the children of God!

94. There is one more secular factor that needs to be considered in this context, and that is the prevailing success-and-achievement cult. This too cannot but have the effect of suppressing any serious consciousness of sin, for as Lefferts E. Loetscher observed laconically: "Men could not forever bow as wretched sinners on Sunday and swell with self-importance the other six days of the week"! The popularity among Lutherans of Norman Vincent Peale's crass promotion of success and self-confidence is an alarming index of the erosion of the Christian understanding of man and of life. The insatiable appetite, also among our people, for such "how to" books, offering themselves in the guise of practical, down-to-earth advice for the practice of Christianity in daily life, may also indicate a deficiency in the church's preaching and teaching in this regard. Mere theological generalities are not enough. People need concrete and continuous illumination, from the Word of God, of the relation between Christian piety and discipleship, and the problems and realities of daily life. If such guidance is not forthcoming from Lutheran pulpits and Bible-classes, it will be sought in a proliferation of courses and "institutes" which owing to their Calvinistic, legalistic, or even secularistic orientation, dangerously short-circuit the real evangelical and churchly source and basis of sanctification.

95. The impact of the secular success-cult has this in common with the New Pentecostalism's "Quest for Power,"⁵ that it entices the Christian

away from Gethsemane ("not my will but Thine be done") and into the orbit of magic, which seeks to work one's own will on God and His world. This attitude regards the problem of sin as a kind of initial, primitive stage of the Christian life, which is soon settled, and from which one then advances to "greater things," i.e., the preoccupation with "results,"--especially gaudy fireworks like "healings" and "tongues." Genuine Christian growth by contrast is never finished with the problem of sin, retains life-long an attitude of humble, ever-deepening penitence, and cultivates the resignation of Lazarus (St. Luke 16:19 ff.), and therefore quite deliberately finds joy and fulfilment not in earthly shadows but in the central miracle of Christianity: the love and mercy of God in His Son, freely and generously offered in His Word and Sacraments!

96. These means of grace become boring and "repetitious" only where the secular indifference to the frightful reality of sin has taken hold. From this insensitivity and boredom arises the dreadful demand that worship be replaced with some form of religious entertainment. And so the historic Liturgy, which for centuries has carried the precious communications between God and His people, is pushed out more and more, in favour of some sacharine "format" patterned after the inane banalities of television! Where is the consciousness of sin, or minimal respect for God, when the Christian mysteries are reduced--as happens regularly in some, perhaps many, Lutheran schools!--to a series of vulgar and raucous night-club acts on religious themes, to the accompaniment of thumping, clapping, and guffaws from the audience? Truly, a proper understanding of the radical nature of sin is beyond the grasp of man's reason--it needs to be learned and inculcated again and again from God's own Word (Apol. II,13; IV,164).

97. So far we have looked at the more external, environmental factors which today conspire to create a climate deeply hostile to the very idea of sin. But is there something in the Lutheran doctrine of justification itself which is one-sided, distorted, and therefore bound to work itself out in history as "cheap grace"? Is Lutheranism a balanced, integrated version of biblical Christianity, or is it simply a protest, a reaction, incapable of an independent, positive existence (e.g., last century's "Anti-Missourian Brotherhood"?)

98. Luther himself was fully aware of the horrendous potential for evil which lay in the abuse of his doctrine. Indeed, he had a good taste of it during his own life-time already. The Large Catechism, for instance, refers repeatedly to the "swinish," "loutish" behaviour of those who misunderstood and misused the new freedom of the Gospel to embrace total Epicurean abandon. Such people, writes Luther in a brief appendix on Confession, have no idea what the Gospel is. They deserve to be returned to the pope's tyranny, to be driven, compelled, and tormented harder than ever before! "For the rabble who refuse to obey the Gospel are fit for nothing but such a torturer, to be God's devil and hangman!" (par. 6)

99. Actually the objection that his doctrine encouraged moral laxity and dissipation was not new; it had been urged already against St. Paul (Rom. 3:8; 6:4. 15) and, by implication, against the Lord Himself (St. Matthew 11:19). But like the Lord and St. Paul, Luther refused to "save" the Gospel by adulterating it with moralising "safeguards". Such a cure would have been worse than the disease--seeking to

prevent the abuse of the Gift by abolishing the Gift! Yet no one can accuse Luther of not stressing the necessary consequences of faith and justification. The Large Catechism's explanation of the Ten Commandments is in large measure the so-called "third use of the Law."

100. And the Creed is regarded as "enabling us to do what according to the Ten Commandments we must do" (par. 2). From a true, evangelical knowledge of God "we get pleasure and love towards all the Commandments of God, because we see here how God gives Himself to us wholly and entirely with everything that He owns and can do, as Help and Support for us, to keep the Ten Commandments" (par. 68-69). Here in this life of course we "remain half and half pure and holy, so that the Holy Ghost may ever work in us through the Word and daily distribute forgiveness until that life where there will be no more forgiveness, but completely and entirely pure and holy people, full of piety and righteousness, liberated and free from sin, death and all misery in a new immortal and glorified body" (par. 58).

101. No, it is not from Luther that modern Lutherans have learned the Pharisaism of the publican: "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, scrupulous, self-righteous, moralists, or even as this Pharisee. I never fast, but commit adultery twice a week, and am not so superstitious as to pay conscience-money to the church!" . . . Whose damnation is just, as St. Paul observes, Rom. 3:8.

102. All good gifts of God--above all His greatest and best: His own forgiving grace--are meant for our welfare and salvation. And all of them can be abused quite contrary to the divine intention. The fault lies not in His good gifts,

but in our wicked flesh, which seeks to twist and manipulate everything to its own self-seeking, idolatrous ends. As for justification, the mere verbal formula can be got right by saint or scoundrel alike: what is all-important is the right application. It is one thing to offer Gospel-consolations to the tormented Christian who seeks earnestly to keep the Commandments and finds that he cannot; it is quite another to cast these pearls before hedonistic swine who seek from religion only a cloak of respectability for continuing exactly as they are. Or, to use Kierkegaard's example: when a wise old scholar, after a life-time of strenuous intellectual labour, confesses that "we can know nothing," he utters a noble truth. The young student expressing the same sentiment to excuse his own laziness is but mouthing a phrase, without integrity. Just so the Lord offers rest to those who "work hard and are heavily burdened," viz., under the conviction of God's holy Law, but not to those who couldn't care less!

103. Finally, if the devil can't get to us in one way, he will try the opposite approach. Those who are conscientious, and do want to please God, in response to His surpassing mercy, are then tempted--quite contrary to the Beatitudes, and to the fruits of the Spirit--to spin for themselves vast webs of spiritualising fantasies and self-chosen observances, which may dazzle and impress but are otherwise of no earthly or heavenly use. Thus arise ever new versions of monasticism--like the New Pentecostalism! Let Luther bring us down to earth and point us to the Ten Commandments:

It seems to me that all hands would be fully occupied just keeping these, gentleness, patience, love towards enemies,

chastity, helpful acts, etc., and whatever is connected with such things. But such works don't rate or seem like much in the world's eyes. For they are not rare and puffed up, bound to their own special time, place, manner, and gesture, but are ordinary daily housework, such as one neighbour can practice towards another; therefore they command no great reward. But those other works arrest eyes and ears, besides they help themselves with much ostentation, cost, and magnificent structure, and ornament them, so that everything must gleam and shine; there they use incense, sing and ring, light candles and lights, so that before these works no others can be seen or heard. For when a priest stands there in a golden chasuble, or a layman spends all day in church on his knees, that is called a precious work, which no one can praise enough. But when a poor maid takes care of a young child and faithfully does as she is told, that must count for nothing . . . But look, is it not an accursed presumption of the desperate saints, who dare to find a higher and better life and conditions than the Ten Commandments teach. . . ? (Large Catechism, Commandments, 313-315)

104. We need again and again to come face to face with the real demands of God, that we may be driven by the divine earthquake from the comfortable shelters of our religious routines and our conventional respectabilities. Dwarfed and crushed by the mountain of His holiness--at once so necessary and commanded, and yet so infinitely unattainable--we stand before Him alone, defenceless, and inexcusable. We plead in Peter's words: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,

O Lord"--only to find, with Luther, that the righteousness of God is first and foremost His free and saving gift in Jesus! And so it is that we learn to crave, with the insistence of newborn babies, the pure Word-milk of God, that by it we may thrive (I Pet. 2:2)!

2. Gift and Treasure

105. The world sees clergymen mainly in two stereotypes: either as sulphur-and-brimstone doomsayers straight from Mt. Sinai, or else as "bleeding heart" social gospel "do-gooders" with a ridiculous penchant for the latest secular fadlet! In conscious opposition to these decay-products of Puritanism, the Evangelical Lutheran pastor must see himself, and be seen, as the "steward of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1, cf. Apology, XXIV, 80), the servant of Him Who came to be Saviour to sinners, Physician to the sick, Help and Hope to the poor and lost. This means that as proclaimer of "Law and Gospel" the Lutheran pastor can never forget that the two terms of this phrase do not possess equal weight, stature, and dignity. One is subservient to the other, even as the permanent, New Covenant ministry of righteousness has far greater splendour than the temporary ministry of condemnation, engraved on stone (II Cor. 3:2-18)! The Apology, following Luther, expresses this by calling the Law, God's alien or "strange" work, while the Gospel is His very own or "proper" work (XII, 51-53). The terrors of the Law are there not for their own sake, but to plough and prepare the ground, to make it receptive to the seed of the Gospel, which alone is the bearer of life and salvation. This divinely ordained relationship must shape, direct, and sustain the entire public ministry of the Word and Sacraments.

It must certainly determine the whole nature and intention of evangelical preaching.

106. Nothing is easier and more tempting than to preach moralising sermons. Especially when the level of sanctification seems to us to be lagging far behind what we think it ought to be, the natural inclination is to resort to an endless nagging and wheedling with the Law--as if that could produce the fruits of the Spirit! The only solution is to preach Jesus into the hearts of people. Then they will love Him and willingly serve Him.

107. Only gradually, after years of preaching in the parish ministry, did it dawn on me how many people there are in our churches, precisely among the serious, conscientious members, who torment themselves with past guilt, and never quite dare to see themselves as fully accepted, absolved, and loved by God. Many such people never obtain the necessary relief from much of the preaching that goes on, which on the contrary, serves only to compound their sorrow and despair. We pastors must realise, with Luther, that devout consciences, under accusation by the Law, do not readily believe themselves forgiven (Apology, IV, 250-264). They require the certain, firm, immovable promises and assurances of God Himself. And these need to be offered and proclaimed not hesitantly, or in small, grudging doses, but lavishly, continually, and in many different ways. Out of such preaching there flows into anxious souls a great and joyful confidence in Christ the Redeemer. Then the fearful devastations of unrelieved guilt are exorcised, and the miracle of forgiveness unleashes and boundless and upbuilding energies of true love and gratitude (St. Luke 7:36-50).

108. Rousas Rushdoony maintains that the average Reformed Sunday School is "subversive of all Christianity," because it "inculcates either outright Pelagianism and works-salvation, as in liberal circles, or a judaizing faith in conservative circles. Its effects are almost invariably moralistic, with atonement and cross simply "added on to goodness and works as the means of salvation."⁶ Do Lutheran Sunday Schools avoid these pitfalls? Unless the Sunday School teachers are properly trained and supervised by their pastors, they will lapse only too easily into the moralising pattern ("The point of the story, dear children, is that Jesus loved and helped people, and so we should love and help people too"). Teachers need to be trained to see and appreciate the evangelical thrust and intent of the various Gospel pericopes. They also need to develop a keen sense of the intimate links between the New Testament text then and there in the past and its present realisation here and now in the concrete means of grace of our church-life. The Reformed approach to New Testament events is: "This happened then and there, and now we remember it and think about it." The Lutheran, sacramental understanding of the text differs from this as totally as realism differs from symbolism: "This happened then and there, and we today do not merely remember it, but actually participate in it." Thus Baptism actually incorporates us into Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3 ff.; Col. 2:12). Through the absolution and Gospel-preaching of His appointed servant, the risen Saviour Himself Who showed Himself to Thomas, again effectively repeats His greeting: "Peace be with you!" He is not far away "in heaven," but in and with His believers, assembled in His Name. The same holy body which Simeon held in his arms, is now

distributed to us, so that we too "have seen His Salvation." As He touched, blessed, and healed the paralytic, the dropsical man, the deaf-mute, the woman with the issue of blood, the lepers, and even Lazarus and others who had died, so we today hear His self-same life-giving Shepherd's Voice in His Gospel, and receive the cleansing touch of His Real Presence, whereby we too are released from the leprosy, paralysis, misery, and death of our sins. All this presupposes of course the full sacramental realism of the New Testament which we considered in the previous lecture.

109. In this way Justification, that is, God's acceptance of the sinner in Jesus, remains not simply one point among others, but the continuous and central thrust of our whole church-life, the focus of our appropriation and celebration of the mercies of God in Baptism, preaching, and Eucharist. Very helpful in this connection is the old Lutheran custom of preaching on the Gospel for the Day at the main service. In this way the concrete Person of the Saviour and His actual words and actions are immediately at the centre of attention. Everything else must take its cue from there. Here the Vine supplies, cherishes, and renews His branches.

110. Not surprisingly, it is precisely concentrated pre-occupation with Gospel-riches which provides the greatest impetus for sanctification. Why? Simply because, as the Lord explains, "he to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (St. Luke 7:47). Generosity begets generosity, whilst scarcity compels even the noblest to economise. The first European refugees to leave a devastated Europe, after World War II, for the fabulous shores of America, were

not accustomed to unrestricted supplies of sugar. And so they emptied the sugar-bowls of the ships' dining-room tables, and stuffed as much as they could into their pockets. They stopped this only when they were reassured that the supplies were plentiful, and saw the crew dumping sugar on the floor for sweeping up. So too we Christian absurdly claw and scratch about, anxiously stuffing our pockets with pebbles--when the whole universe is ours! Are we not heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? We will believe this and act accordingly only if these treasures are constantly preached and sealed into our hearts and minds. Small, unworthy notions of the goodness of God will in turn make us mean and grudging towards our fellow men. The more we grow in genuine appreciation of God's mercy, the more we ourselves are enabled to be merciful. Law-tormented Pharisees, on the other hand, cannot but torment others with the Law in turn.

111. What we are dealing with here is not mere religious psychology; it is deeply theological. The theology of it was spelled out by our Lord in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or rather, of the Elder Brother. The younger son, deeply conscious of his unworthiness, yet overwhelmed by fatherly mercy and love, now thinks the most menial work a precious privilege. We can imagine him kissing the very soil in gratitude--as Cuban refugees have done upon their safe arrival in America. Yet the older brother revealed by his reactions that he did not consider working for his father a joy and a privilege. To him it was dutiful drudgery. Basically he envied his brother for his irresponsible spending spree. He might have done it himself had he had the courage or foreseen a safe reinstatement. He bitterly resented his brother for having, as it seemed, got "the best of both worlds."

112. Here we see the eternal contrast between the Law-oriented religion of the Pharisee and the mercy-motivated piety of the converted sinner. The former can have no pity or compassion for sinners; he basically envies and resents them for being somehow, if only perversely, more "fortunate." The latter can approach his former companions in evil with genuine compassion. He cannot envy them, for he understands only too well the terrible shackles of sin. He is no longer fooled by the glittering illusions of false freedom and self-fulfilment. Both men may work actively for the conversion of sinners--but from totally different motives. The Pharisee seeks to stop the scandal of other people enjoying pleasures which he must, with gnashing teeth, deny himself. Their condition subtly threatens and entices him, for deep-down he regards it as preferable to his own hollow round of duties. The justified tax-collector, on the other hand, has actually found something genuinely and incomparably better, and is doing his best to share his new-found treasure with others. Whose mission-work is likely to have the greater credibility? The religiously ornamented natural man, that is to say the Pharisee, can indeed be stung into a veritable frenzy of proselytising activity (St. Matt. 23:15)--only to ensnare others into his deadly cage. But the Good News of full and free pardon in Jesus can rescue captives from Satan's deepest and darkest dungeons, and can so wonderfully supply them, that others are bound to ask them, longingly, for the reason for the hope that is in them (I Peter 3:15)!

113. What a great pity that the religion of the Word is so often perceived as a religion of words! Why is it that the standard Sunday School response to the question, "What can we do to

please God?" is something like: "Tell others about Jesus" (or worse, "teach others")? As if the practice of Christianity were first and foremost a matter of words and of verbalising! To be sure, telling is an important aspect of discipleship--but only in the context of being and doing. While right talking does matter, mere talking lacks all integrity. Certainly the royal priesthood's praising of God in I Pet. 2:9 means something much more than merely "telling," or informing others (cf. v. 12 and the whole chapter). If justification is more than words, if indeed it opens to us all the treasures of our generous God, then, wherever this is truly believed, the response will be far more than verbal. We will seek to be merciful, as we have received mercy. Luther does not hesitate to say that "just as He is Christ for us, we should also be Christ for them."⁷ As the Gospel-treasure is real, not imaginary, so it transforms our reality, not just our world of ideas. Says Luther:

You should give yourself to your neighbour with your whole life, just as Christ does in the words of the Sacrament with all that He is. . . . We should say to our neighbour: "Dear brother, I have received my Lord and He is mine. I now have more than enough of everything. Take what I have; it is all yours. I place it at your disposal. . . ."

If you find that the words and the sign of the Sacrament are softening your heart and moving you to be kind to your enemy, to receive your neighbour, and to help him bear his distress and sorrow, all is well. If this is not the result of your partaking

of the Sacrament, you cannot be certain that you have profited from the Sacrament, even if you were to partake of it a hundred times a day with the greatest devotion. . . is also very dangerous, because it is so completely self-centered and misleading.⁸

114. The Chief Article of our Christian faith, by which the church either stands or falls, does not require human ingenuity and techniques to give it effect. It wins its own victories, far above all that we are able to ask or think. If it is but confessed, applied, and grasped, without human adulteration, it will achieve its God-given purpose:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:8-10).

Footnotes

1. H. J. Blackham, ed., Objections to Humanism (London: Constable, 1965), pp. 106-107.
2. Ibid.
3. Francis Schaeffer, The God Who Is There (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), p. 42.
4. Lefferts E. Loetscher, The Broadening Church (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), p. 9.
5. Paul Barnett and Peter Jensen, The Quest for Power (Sydney: Anzea, 1973).
6. Rousas J. Rushdoony, Intellectual Schizophrenia (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 121.
7. Paul D. Pahl, tr., Luther for the Busy Man (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1974), p. 271.
8. Ibid., pp. 92-94.

REACTOR'S RESPONSE

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JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

It is not without historical sensitivity that we Lutherans should be sharing a discussion of "justification by faith" in this particular year. Four hundred years ago, on May 28, 1577, to be exact, a theological committee handed the Elector of Saxony the final form of the confession they had hammered out at Cloister Bergen. This Formula of Concord had its formal beginnings some four years previous. The occasion was the first of six sermons preached by Jacob Andreae. His topic: "On the Righteousness of Faith in God's Sight." I suspect the Reformation-lecture committee consciously coordinated the assignment of this theme with the observance of the anniversary year.

But our aim is not to rehearse Andreae's arguments which are imbedded in the Lutheran Confessions. Professor Marquardt has transferred our view to the contemporary significance of this article of faith. Nevertheless, we do find a striking similarity between the efforts of both men. Both are equally concerned about bringing the confused interpretation of this previous doctrine into its clear Biblical focus, and by this effort to help the simple Christian in his faith. The argumentation of each takes off on a different track and overlaps chiefly in the basics.

But one cannot help sensing that a strong apologetic and pastoral motive are the strength of both writings.

Take just a sample from Andreae's First Sermon. He proceeds in dialog:

"Yes," says the simple layman, "I hear that both parties attribute our righteousness in God's sight to the Lord Christ, but they have different interpretations. I hear, to be sure, that both parties cite Holy Scripture. Who will tell which party speaks correctly or incorrectly about this matter? For I am simple layman and can neither write nor read. Whom should I believe or follow?"

Here a simple layman should take the simple creed of the children and seek in it his righteousness. In this way he would soon see which party is correct and which incorrect. For every simple Christian must seek his righteousness in God's sight only in his Christian faith. . . described in his Christian creed.

What does it say? There you recite: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins. . ."

What should we say to the opinion and argument of the other party, which asserts that also the essential righteousness of God is ours and is in us, and that it impels us to do what is right, and if such an impulse from God is not in us, our faith is nothing.

To that the simple Christian should answer: "it is true that God is righteousness, as He is also wisdom and truth, Himself.

It is also true that God, who is eternal righteousness Himself, dwells in the believers and elect as in His temple and sanctifies them and impels them to do what is right.

"But it is a completely different question and does not belong in this discussion if a person asks what God looks at in a poor sinner and for what reason He regards him as godly and righteous as if he had done nothing else but render perfect obedience to the Law with heart, thought, words, and works."¹

In this manner Andreae proceeds to clarify the right from the false teaching concerning justification. This is his apologetic motive. But in distinguishing, he is not performing mental gymnastics. At bottom, he is concerned that the Biblical distinction between justifying faith and its attendant works be maintained for two reasons: for the sake of the preaching of God's Word and for the Christian conscience. This is his pastoral concern.

These same two motives I find excellently represented in the three lectures we have heard. The thrust of my comments, therefore, will be directed to the essayist's apologetic and pastoral concerns.

I. The apologetics of "Justification" in the service of the pastoral ministry.

Perhaps the matter that struck me, first of all, after a reading of the essays, was that Prof. Marquardt chose to deal with two opponents of the all sufficient righteousness of Christ: Rome and

the Protestant free spirits. In taking on the Roman apologists, especially Newmann, Kueng, and Pfner, our essayist reaches deeply into the old controversial expressions of "declaring righteous" and "making righteous" to lay bare the real nub of the problem, namely, the Roman view of man both before and after faith. It seems that, even today, Rome has not extracted itself from the Platonic notion that natural powers remain in man, even after the Fall, and that these powers need to be activated by divine grace. In this way justification still is taught in a medicinal sense.

The analogy would go something like this. A sick person is sick unto death. And although his body keeps fighting the disease, he is fighting a losing battle. What is needed is an injection of penicillin. This miracle drug helps defeat the disease until the natural powers of the body can take over again, a process that is a long time a'coming. So the man is saved by the medicine indeed. But it does not work without the aid of the natural resistance that man has to disease.

The application follows simply. As the sinner is sick unto death, so Christ's righteousness, like an injection of infusion of medicine, helps him overcome his sinfulness. The power of Christ's righteousness supplements the defects in his own being. It saves him. In fact, it can even be said that the imputation of Christ's righteousness is what makes him, in Kueng's words, "really and truly, outwardly and inwardly, wholly and completely" well.²

The test question now becomes: what about his life after healing? What about his natural powers? It is here that the Romanists, caught in the medicinal scheme, must see man's sin-fighting in one of

two ways. For one it is a progressive advance on becoming whole in God's sight or another must downplay the potential and power of sin in the Christian life. The Christian then is led either to wonder how righteous he is at a certain time and be left in uncertainty, or he will begin to feel comfortable and secure in himself.

At this point, the Lutheran/Biblical teaching concerning our justification and righteousness before God shows its pastoral concern. Following Paul, Luther did not separate the "declaring righteous" (that is, our faith) from the "making righteous" (that is, our life of faith). Prof. Marquardt pointed this out carefully and I would like to highlight the point because of its practical importance.³ In Lutheran theology, the medicinal scheme is rescued from its logical consequences by turning to, or better still, by returning to the Biblical distinction of Christian faith from Christian life without separating the two, by distinguishing, but not dividing, justification from sanctification.

Now that may sound too heady. So I would like to take a moment on the importance of distinctions. Contrary to some notions, distinctions are not scholastic and rationalistic, if they are Biblical. Already from early times the church struggled with distinctions without separating the matter itself. To preserve the mystery of the three-in-one for the worship and praise of God, the persons of the Godhead were distinguished without dividing the substance of God. So the two natures of Christ were distinguished without falling into the Nestorian separation of Christ into two Christs, one God and one man, or without ending up with the confusion of Eutyches. So in regard to our theme, faith is distinguished from

our faith-life without separating them from one another. Why?

Luther gives us an answer, when he interpreted the difficult passage concerning the repentance of the sinner, Hebrews 6:4: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him into an open shame." Luther did not conclude with the Novations that a person who sinned after Baptism could not be absolved again. "You must understand this text correctly," he says, and then explains that the passage must be understood in the terms of preaching rather than in terms of the action itself.⁴ If a person sins, he must hear about the awfulness of sin and its consequences in the hardening of heart. He must know for conscience sake that the rejection of Christ's righteousness reaches a point of no return. Thus he is warned by that preaching.

For the sake of preaching, therefore, we must distinguish the works of men from the work of God. Here Luther's Biblical scheme "simul justus et peccator" comes into its own. The totally-just man remains totally sinner, as illogical as it seems to fit two totally's into one man. The works of men remain deadly in God's sight and become doubly deadly if we rely on them. The Christian remains wholly sinner throughout his life and always stands in need of Christ's righteousness. As Christians, we continue to need to hear the just requirements of God's Law. Any other view concerning the Christian man leads to a

flattening out of preaching. This latitudinarian effect makes for "cheap grace."⁵ The comforting words of Romans 8: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus" must be viewed Biblically in the context of Paul's outcry in Romans 7: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. . . , O wretched man that I am."

The same pastoral motive lies behind the distinctions with which Paul preaches justification by faith. For the sake of preaching, Paul, and Luther with him, distinguished faith from the life of faith. "How shall I, a sinner, answer. We are justified by faith alone (Romans 3:28). Justification by faith is here set off against the works of love that follow. The answer of God is clear to the sinner. Christ has done all. Trust Him! This faith God imputes to the sinner for righteousness (Romans 3: 21-26). For the sake of preaching, for the sake of the hearer, faith and faith-life must remain distinct.

But Paul also knew that justifying faith and Christian works were not two commodities to be played off against one another. For while it is true that Christ's righteousness, which He worked for us and is therefore foreign to our nature, must be distinguished from the righteousness which He works in us, lest we rely on our works and not on Christ, yet Paul also knew that in me, that is in my life, the two are in a union. As he told the Galatians, "Faith works" (Galatians 5:6). In the Christian life, faith is its own dynamic, it produces, it works "by love." "The second kind of righteousness is our proper righteousness," Luther once explained, "not because we alone work it, but because we work with that first and alien righteousness. This is that manner of life spent

properly in good works."⁶ And Paul spoke of the mystery of Christ working in and through us sinners by confessing, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20). Notice the back and forth of the "in me" and "for me." In this sense Luther could give his lovely soliloquy on faith in the Preface to the Romans, where he too acknowledges that "faith works": "O when it comes to faith, what a living, creative, active, powerful thing it is. It cannot do other than good at all times. It never waits to ask whether there is some good work to do. Rather, before the question is raised, it has done the deed and keeps doing it. A man not active in this way is a man without faith. He is groping about for faith and searching for good works, but knows neither what faith is nor what good works are."⁷

I would like to round out this discussion of the necessity of distinguishing Law/Gospel for the Christian man because he is simultaneously sinner-righteous with an observation from Wilhelm Maurer. In a very incisive essay The Beginning of Luther's Theology, Maurer points out that the consistency of this doubleness of Law/Gospel, sinner/saint finds its roots in the revelation of God Himself. After reviewing Luther's first lectures on the Psalms (1513) where the sinner/saint theme is evident, Maurer concludes, "The doctrine of justification is the fruit, not the root, of Lutheran theology and churchliness. The root, which supports, carries, and nourishes everything is the revelation of God in Christ, which is comprehended in the Holy Scriptures and in the ancient creeds."⁸

In explanation, Maurer points out that there is, therefore, no "Mathematics of justification," but, as we follow the Scripture testimony, God deals with us through the incarnation of His Son. As this Son is simultaneously God and man, wholly divine and wholly human, yet without sin, so this paradox also applies to the redeemed. Paradoxically, we are in Christ wholly righteous, yet we remain wholly sinner in our present life.

From the perspective of this paradox or mystery (I Tim. 3), anchored in the revelation of God in Christ, three things follow clearly in the Scriptures. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to us stands out in bold relief, as the work of Christ who was made sin for us is transferred to us sinners. Secondly, faith really remains what faith is, namely, that which lays hold of a mystery. For without the God-given mystery of Christ's person and work, salvation would indeed be a matter of an "engaged" or "strait-jacketed" understanding of the matter, as Prof. Marquardt carried out.⁹ And finally and above all, the Scriptural insights into the preaching of Law and Gospel throughout the Christian's life is affirmed.¹⁰

In his final lecture, our essayist carried out what all this means, practically speaking. It means rightly handling the Word of God. It means we must pay attention to preaching and not neglect the Law in its severity, and the Gospel in its clarity.¹¹

II. The ministerial motive

There is, however, another dimension of the lectures that I would like to underscore in conclusion. Beside the apologetic and pastoral

concerns, a third and important motive is the ministerial one. Here the essayist emphasizes the Sacraments as a means, along with the preaching of God's Word, whereby Christ's righteousness is brought to His church. Here the ministerial function of the church comes to the forefront. Christ instituted the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the Sacraments (CA V) as a service to His church, when He said, "Go and preach the Gospel. . . baptize." (Matthew 28) Again He gave us His Supper and said, "Take eat, This is My body. Take, drink this is My blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do in remembrance of Me." (I Corinthians 11)

Contrary to the false criticism of the social-Gospel advocates that maintains the Luther-type experience is an individualistic-personalistic view of justification by faith, we recognize the fellowship the Gospel brings. The Gospel in and through preaching, absolving, baptising, and communing unites all Christians in the faith. We have a precious unity which we must strive to keep, even as have one Lord, one faith, one Baptism. (Ephesians 4) The Holy Supper of our Lord is a sharing in common the body and blood of our Lord and Savior, under the elements.

This fellowship we have, through the Sacraments He ordained, is something different from the fellowship pictured in Yoder's The Politics of Jesus. Yoder writes:

"Stendahl demonstrates one by one that all constitutive elements of the classic "Luther-type experience" are missing in both the experience and the thought of the Apostle. Paul was not preoccupied with his guilt and seeking for the

assurance of a gracious God; he was rather robust of conscience, and untroubled about whether God was gracious or not. He never pleads either with Jews or Gentiles to feel an anguished conscience and then receive release from that anguish in a message of forgiveness.

Second, Paul's understanding of the meaning of Hebrew law is not that its function was to make men know their guilt, to prepare men for the message of forgiveness by deepening their awareness of their sinfulness. The law was rather a gracious arrangement made by God for ordering the life of his people while they were awaiting the arrival of the Messiah. It is true that, once present, law makes its opposite, sin, more visible; but that is not its first purpose nor its primary effect for the believer.

Third, faith was for Paul not a particular spiritual exercise of moving from self-trust through despair to confidence in the paradoxical goodness of the judgment of God, faith is at its core the affirmation which separated Jewish Christians from other Jews, that in Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah had come. A Jew did not become a Christian by coming to see God as a righteous judge and a gracious, forgiving protector. He believed that already, being a Jew. What it took for him to become a Christian was not some new idea about his son or God's righteousness, but one about Jesus.

The subjective meanings of faith for the self-aware person, and its doctrinal meanings for the believing intellect, build upon this prior messianist affirmation. They cannot precede or replace it.

He then explains what justification means to Paul:

Markus Barth plunges right to the heart of the classic discussion in Galatians (2:14ff):

We have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one shall be justified.

What does "justified" mean here? Can it really mean, as Protestant tradition assumes (Lutheranism most sweepingly, but the Anglican and Reformed liturgies give the same testimony), that it refers only to the quasi-judicial status of man's guilt before God, which is annulled or amnestied by a declaration of the judge in response to the act of faith?

Through very careful analysis of this classic passage, Markus Barth clarifies that the particular issue at stake, carried on unbroken from the earlier part of chapter 2, was whether Jewish and Gentile Christians were to live together acceptingly in one fellowship. To be justified is to be set right in and for that relationship. "Justification" is, in other words, in the language of Galatians the same as "making peace" or "breaking down the wall" in the language of Ephesians.

Sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the means of justification: only in Christ's death and resurrection is the new man created from at least two, a Jew and a Greek, a man and a woman, a slave and a free man, etc. . . . The new man is present in actuality where two previously alien and hostile men come together before God. Justification in Christ is thus not an individual miracle happening to this person or that person, which each may seek or possess for himself. Rather justification by grace is a joining together of this person and that person, of the near and far; . . . it is a social event.

He then concludes with the question:

If the reader can grant that in the company of Stendahl, Barth, Bartsch, and Minear we may properly understand Paul's concept of justification as a social phenomenon centering in the reconciliation of different kinds of people, what has that to do with the problem with which our study began, namely the ethic of revolutionary non-violence which Jesus offers to his disciples?

May God preserve us from this type of emptying of the work of Christ! For presenting the fullness of the Scripture message in Law and Gospel, in justification and in the admonition to the Christian life of faith, we thank you Prof. Marquardt. For we were edified.

Endnotes

1. The sermon is found in Robert Kolb, Andreae and the Formula of Concord (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), pp. 74-76.
2. Marquardt, Lecture I, 19
3. Marquardt, Lecture I, 20
4. Luthers Sämtliche Schriften, Walch² or St. Louis edition, Vol. VII, p. 959f.
5. Marquardt, Lecture III
6. LW 31, 299, Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness (1519)
7. LW 35, 370, Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (1522/1546)
8. The article "Die Anfänge von Luthers Theologie" is found in Wilhelm Maurer. Luther und das Evangelische Bekenntnis (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), p. 32.
9. Marquardt, Lecture II
10. Marquardt, Lecture III
11. Marquardt, Lecture III
12. John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus. (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI, 1972) The chapter from which the quotations are taken is entitled "Justification by grace through faith," pp. 215-232.

REACTOR'S RESPONSE

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There have been many issues raised in these lectures upon which we could most profitably engage in further study and discussion. It is our hope, of course, that this subject, What It Means To Be Justified and By Faith, will be actively pursued in the studies of our pastors and professors and in the personal devotions and meditations of the many students and lay people here.

We would be remiss if we did not heartily urge all to go directly to the Scriptures and study the central passages concerning justification and then also to go to the Lutheran Confessions and study them, especially the Apology, Article IV, and the Formula of Concord, Article III. The confessions are today available to our people in a readable translation in the Tappert edition. The Book of Concord should not be regarded as a handbook for professionals, but ought to be understood and used as the property of all Lutherans.

I should like to focus my remarks here on the first issue raised by the essayist in the second lecture--the matter of the sacraments, or more broadly, the Means of Grace and Justification. In the second lecture, Prof. Marquardt has said, "A 'low' view of the Means of Grace is generally thought to go hand in hand with an evangelical (view of justification)" (paragraph 38). I speak

especially in support of the essayist's observations in paragraph 93.

I would submit that this fear of Professor Marquardt's is, unfortunately, a little more correct than we would like to think. And I would submit further that we need very carefully to look at ourselves and at our Lutheran Confessions to see if we have not lost something.

Being a Confessional Lutheran today can be lonely indeed. And when one is lonely, he looks hard for what he might have in common with those around him and makes friends where he can. In the last sixty or seventy years, conservatives have been cast together with some of the Reformed or Fundamentalists, often those in the Baptist and Holiness groups, because of one thing they have had in common--the doctrine of an inerrant Scripture. While we have devoted much energy against the false ecumenical movement moving toward Rome, we have at the same time entered into an "unholy alliance" ourselves. While it is true that we have had in common with many so-called "Evangelicals" a high view of the authority of Scripture, there the similarity has ceased. With a high commitment to an inerrant Scripture, the Fundamentalists and Evangelicals have also stressed a "low," a "Zwinglian" view of the Means of Grace.

One of the first things to go from our midst was the Confessional view of Absolution. In the Confessions and in Luther, Absolution was not simply a broad proclamation of forgiveness to all, synonymous with preaching, but it was a particular application to the individual of the forgiveness of sins. And thus today we do not often speak as Luther did of the four Means of Grace, which included Absolution. While the preaching of the

Gospel and The Sacraments are absolution in a broad sense, Luther and The Confessions nevertheless treat absolution in a narrower sense as a Means of Grace.

The doctrine of Baptism has been greatly weakened, so that a great number of Lutherans, and conservative Lutherans at that, have not been able to see the disastrous consequences of the unbiblical view that posits two baptisms, one with water and one spiritual, one by Jesus and a second one by the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper has been greatly weakened as well. We have witnessed that weakening in those Lutherans who have been able to come to agreement with the Reformed, in agreements where the Reformed have distinctly not changed their position at all, but continue to believe in a presence of Christ in the Sacrament that is less than real and is vaguely spiritualized. Among orthodox Lutherans, little have we heard of a Real Presence in the Sacrament that is in fact real in the sense that Luther and the confessors confessed a real presence. One often wonders what difference there is in the attitudes of the Reformed and the Lutherans today as they kneel at their altars.

Among orthodox Lutherans today, little do we hear of a Word which is not only inerrant, but all powerful; a word which created the world, which raised Lazarus from the dead, which makes the water of baptism a "washing of regeneration," which creates the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament, and which is truly the power of God unto salvation in the holy Scriptures.

Not much has been said among Lutherans of the relationship between Word and Sacrament, between

Means of Grace and Justification. The great depth of the mystery of Justification is certainly found in the confession that Justification is to declare righteous on the basis of Christ's merits alone. God declares the sinner righteous. To declare is to use a word. And if God declares it, it is. Surely, the sinner in this world is not "trans-substantiated" into a different material, from sinful substance to righteous substance. But nevertheless God's forensic declaration of righteousness is absolutely real. It is based on the real merits of Christ, and it is not a vague "as if," a pretend righteousness.

In absolution, Jesus Christ himself forgives the sinner. And that forgiveness has all of the reality of the holy God himself. So, when the minister or another Christian pronounces the specific absolution to the sinner himself, it is indeed Christ himself saying to the sinner, "I forgive you."

In Baptism, Paul goes to great pains to tell us that being baptized into Christ Jesus means being baptized into his death (Romans 6:3), into his righteousness (Galatians 3:27) and into his resurrection (Colossians 2:12). And of course, it is not only Paul who ascribes such power to baptism. "Baptism doth also now save us," says Peter (I Peter 3:21), and Jesus himself, "Unless you are born again of water and the Spirit . . ." (John 3:5).

We are saved by Grace, through Faith. We are saved by the merits of Christ. We are saved through God's justification of the sinner. So, must we not say then that through Baptism, God has indeed given us all of Christ's merits as our very own and real possession? Does not Baptism touch

the doctrine of Justification so intimately that to not have the doctrine of Baptism is to hopelessly denude also the doctrine of Justification?

And of the holy Sacrament of the Altar, Paul wants to tell us in I Corinthians 10:16 that in partaking of the bread and wine, we have fellowship with, we participate in the very body and blood of Christ, with the righteous life of the crucified and risen Savior, with the suffering and death and resurrection of our Savior. There, too, justification is most intimately connected with this Sacrament.

In other words, one does not have the doctrine of Justification apart from a "high" view of the Means of Grace--and by a "high view" we mean giving to the Means of Grace, the Gospel, Absolution, Baptism, the Lord's Supper ALL that Christ gives to them by his Word of Promise and his Word of Command--no more, no less, and letting them occupy their rightful place in the life of the Church.

The Lutheran Church of the Reformation will not long live with only half truth. It can only live with the full depth of the wisdom God has revealed. An inerrant Word, stripped of its glory in Word and Sacrament, is not much of a treasure. But what a treasure it is that was taught to us again in the Lutheran Confessions--a Word which is inerrant and a Word which is powerful and which is connected, with all of its power, to the Sacraments and Absolution.

We cannot but help to have noticed what many of our youth have been saying--what we hear in so many testimonies, such as those collected by Larry Christensen. The plea is "Christ has to become REAL to me." Should we not have answered to the very first of those pleas--he IS real. He IS real in the Word; he is really there in Absolution, forgiving YOUR sins; and he IS real in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.