
Lutheran Synod Quarterly



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Foreword

This issue of the Quarterly contains two sermons. The first sermon was delivered by Professor John Moldstad, Jr., in Trinity Chapel at Bethany Lutheran College on February 17, 2000. The sermon is based on Isaiah 53:7-9 with this theme: *He suffered, died, and was buried*. Isaiah clearly prophesied the suffering and death of the Suffering Servant of God which we confess in the ancient Christian creed, the Apostles' Creed.

The second sermon was delivered by Rev. Jonathan Madson at the Circuit Pastoral Conference, Vero Beach, Florida, on May 22, 2000. The theme of this sermon based on John 17:17 is: *You have the truth . . . use it*. Here the writer reminds us that God has placed us as shepherds of our flocks to preach and teach and live the truth of his holy Word. The greatest honor we can pay the truth is to use it.

Martin Luther wrote, "Therefore place the man who is able to nicely divorce the Law from the Gospel at the head of the list and call him a Doctor of Holy Scripture, for without the Holy Spirit the attainment of this differentiating is impossible." (Plass 2, p. 732; St. L 9:802) The proper distinction between Law and Gospel is vitally important, as we see also from Walther's great book, *Law and Gospel*. Therefore we appreciate the essay entitled *Preaching the Law in the Lutheran Sermon*. The author is the Rev. David Lillegard, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sebastian, Florida.

Professor Mark DeGarmeaux of Bethany Lutheran College has prepared an excellent though brief essay on the life and work of Johann Sebastian Bach. This presentation, entitled *The Lutheran Legacy of J. S. Bach, 1685-1750 Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of His Death*, is a fitting reminder of why we should commemorate this event. Through his profound music Bach continues to proclaim the saving

Gospel of Christ to a world in desperate need.

We are pleased to present an article written by the Rev. Donald Moldstad, pastor of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church. The article is entitled *The Life, Times, and Influence of Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth*. In this presentation he explains the significance of Krauth in American Lutheranism. He is beyond a doubt one of the most important American born Lutheran theologians.

Finally in this *Quarterly* there is an exegetical note discussing the Law/Gospel implication of Galatians 3:24. The study was made by Professor John Moldstad, Jr.

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Sermon on Isaiah 53:7-9

by John A. Moldstad, Jr.

Today we think of the words in the Apostles Creed where we confess our Lord Jesus Christ as the one who “suffered, died and was buried.” We use as our text the Messianic prophecy, Isaiah 53, verses 7-9, which reads as follows: *“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.”*

“I wish I could have gotten in on that conversation.” Who of us wouldn’t have loved to have been a bird perched along the side of the road as the risen Jesus carried on a discussion with those two disciples on the road to Emmaus that first Easter evening? The Bible says that he began with Moses and all the prophets and explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Who of us wouldn’t have loved to have been in the audience of the Nazareth synagogue when Jesus read from Isaiah 61 a prophecy about himself. We are told that he sat down and began his explanation to the congregation with the words, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

There’s another conversation we especially would have loved to be in on. Again, the Bible doesn’t tell us all the details. In Acts chapter 8 we have the account of the Ethiopian eunuch. You recall that the Ethiopian man was returning home from Jerusalem, traveling along the road to Gaza, when the Holy Spirit had Philip the evangelist run up to the chariot.

Do you remember what the Ethiopian was reading? He was reading from Isaiah – in fact, the very words that we just read from Isaiah 53. Philip, we're told, hopped into the chariot and began explaining what the man was reading. Wouldn't we have loved to have heard the entire conversation! Yet what the Bible records about that conversation is enough for us to know. We read in the book of Acts: "*Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.*" So, the Bible itself informs us that the words we just read from the prophet Isaiah refer to the suffering, death and burial of Jesus Christ. As we, like the Ethiopian man, focus for a moment on Isaiah's prophetic description of Jesus, the Suffering Servant of God, may we observe these three essential points: 1) Jesus suffered and did so **willingly**. 2) Jesus died and did so **thoroughly**. 3) Jesus was buried and it was done **honorably**.

First of all, *Jesus suffered and did so willingly*. Isaiah says, "*He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*"

Not all suffering is commendable. If you were to violate a law on this campus and had to suffer a suspension issued by Dean Thompson, I don't think you could expect to receive many congratulatory handshakes. If that's how it is in this microcosm of campus life, how much more isn't it this way in the court of God's justice and his Law and his sentencing. The fact is, you and I and all people have deserved to suffer – not just to suffer a slap on the wrist or a suspension or even the worst possible tortuous sentence that an earthly judge could throw at us. Because of your sin and mine against the Almighty himself, the Judge of heaven and earth could by all rights damn us to death in hell itself. It's even stronger than that. Not only *could* God do this; as a result of sin in the world, that *is* the fiery reality all people right at this moment

face if they do not (as did the Ethiopian) embrace the work of the Suffering Servant here in Isaiah.

But this is what it's all about! You and I have been privileged to be brought in on the conversation. By the grace of God working on and in our hearts by his Word and Sacrament, we have been led to see that Jesus Christ, his own Son, suffered *without having committed any sin of his own*, but that he **willingly** did so for you and me and everyone. He is the Lamb of God who suffered throughout his whole life, and especially on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, so that we sinners could be set free from all guilt and shame and punishment. And notice his loving commitment to his mission – all for you and me: He suffered and did so **willingly**.

More. *Jesus died and did so **thoroughly***. Isaiah writes, “*He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.*” Just think, this is God we are talking about! “*cut off from the land of the living.*” This death He died was so thorough that Isaiah four verses earlier calls Him “stricken by God, smitten by him.” We just sang those words put to music by Thomas Kelly:

*Stricken, smitten and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!*

But Christ's rejection was not only by man. He was **rejected by God!**

Does it seem at times as if the full fury of hell is bearing down on you, for you're painfully aware of having hurt a fellow classmate, a friend, a relative, a spouse, or – most importantly – your God? God has given us his law to remind us of our sins, but don't forget the beautiful Gospel of Isaiah that continues to resound on Gaza roadways today. The Suffering Servant of God, the Messiah – our Lord Christ – was so crushed for our iniquities that He even died the death of the

damned – your death and mine at the cross! “*God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*”

Pile on another comfort. Consider our final point: *Jesus was buried and it was done **honorably**.* Jesus was put to death with criminals, but He was buried with the rich, says Isaiah. In Matthew’s Gospel, Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the new tomb in which Jesus was buried, is described as being a rich man. Jesus died without dignity, but his burial was made to testify to the honor He deserves. (And we hasten to mention, his resurrection sealed that fact)

One day you and I will also be buried. Regardless of age, we don’t like to think about it. I doubt that many students here have bought a burial plot. As believers in Christ, however, we ought to take great comfort in Christ’s own honorable burial. In our ELS catechism the question is asked: “What comfort do you find in the burial of Christ.” Answer: **“The burial of Jesus assures me that Jesus truly died and thus paid for my sins. Because he rose from the dead I am assured that my grave is a peaceful resting place from which I also shall arise.”**

We have been privy to the conversation – reflected also in the compassion of the bold and ancient Christian creed: “He suffered, died and was buried.” Amen.

Sermon on John 17:17

by Jonathan N. Madson

Text: Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)

“The greatest honor we can pay the truth is to use it.” (A quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson.) To do this we need to know the truth. Sometimes the truth is hard to know. Two boys get into a scrap on the playground. When the teacher breaks it up and asks what happened, two different stories are told. Who is telling the truth? There is no such uncertainty in knowing the truth spoken by the Creator and Preserver of the truth – the Lord God Almighty. In the midst of his great prayer, Jesus confirms the truth of the Word of God and by doing so encourages us regarding its place in our lives.

You Have the Truth ... Use It

First, **GOD’S WORD IS TRUTH**. Truth was a foreign concept to Pontius Pilate at Jesus’ trial. His skepticism echoes from the mouths of millions today – *What is truth?* Folks have followed empty philosophies of would-be intellectuals; bowed down to the idols of science; paid homage to the shrine of knowledge; worshipped at the altar of pleasures. Some have turned to the stars to find answers. Most daily newspapers feed such false hope in listing horoscopes. There is no answer of truth in these.

Consequently, some folks of every age have concluded there is nothing absolutely true; it is an ever-changing proposition. Churches dance around the truth, not willing to take a stand and chastising those churches that do. Why are we so unwilling to state the truth where God’s word speaks clearly?

Sinful flesh avoids truth. Satan wishes us to go without truth or to follow propaganda that everything is true.

In spite of these skeptics who question truth, Jesus simply says: *God's Word is truth*. God's Word equals truth. Truth that hurts: *There is no one who does good, no not one*. No matter the number of excuses or the majority vetoing the concept of sin being damning, this is truth: *The wages of sin is death*. From generation to generation, God's word never changes in bashing our sins. If the word changes, Pilate was right – there is no truth. Then it would be to each his own; if it feels good, do it. However, to disobey God's word – killing human life in mothers' wombs; abolishing barriers for sex; get into heaven free cards for any religion regardless of what is believed – is sin.

Yet God's Word is truth revealing Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin. *Your word is truth* – Christ was born of a virgin. In humility he took on human flesh and lived his whole life without sinning once. He performed miracles, not for our space age to explain away, but to prove his power as God. God's truth declares of Jesus: *He gave up his spirit*. Christ died only to take up his life again. The truth of salvation is signed, sealed and delivered in the sinless life, innocent death and magnificent resurrection of Christ. God's Word is truth. You have the truth ... use it.

For, in the second place, it's **TRUTH TO MAKE YOU HOLY**. *Sanctify them by the truth* – you are made holy by grace alone, *not by works so that no one can boast*. There are not multiple ways to heaven, as some would have us believe. The truth to make you holy is Christ, who claims: *I am the way, the TRUTH and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*.

The truth is – that erased from your record are sins of greed, revenge, anger, indifference to the truth. The truth is: *He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities – as far as the east is from the west, so*

far has he removed our transgressions from us (Psalms 103). What you read in Scripture is what God wants. He wants you to be saved. What we proclaim in our pastoral calls is what God wants for our hearers – to be saved and know the truth. Christ completed everything to make you holy – forgiven, not guilty of sin. This truth is yours personally, and the truth to share. Jesus says: *If you hold to my teaching you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*

Truth – you are free from sin and hell; free to serve as God’s Word directs – kind, patient, forgiving, faithful. What is my role as husband and father? The truth: *Love your wives as Christ loved the church – Fathers, don’t exasperate your children but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.* How do I conduct myself around folks who aren’t so kind? The truth – *love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you* (Matthew 5). It is true, I will fail in these, but it’s also true, my Savior never failed for me.

God has placed us as shepherds of our flocks to preach and teach and live the truth of his holy Word. Remember the statement, *“The greatest honor we can pay the truth is to use it.”* The Word of God is for our use because it is true in every page – the truth to make and keep you holy. Isaac Watts writes in a hymn:

*Thy Word is everlasting truth;
How pure is every page!
That holy Book shall guide our youth
And well support our age. (TLH 286)*

By God’s grace we have the truth ... use it. AMEN.

Preaching the Law in the Lutheran Sermon

by David Lillegard

Preaching is really an impossible task. No one can do it as he should. No one is ever sure that he has preached the law and the gospel in the right proportion, or that he has preached enough law, or that he has preached enough gospel, or that he has preached the law personally enough, or that he has preached the gospel personally enough, or that he has spoken in such a way as to move the hearts of his hearers, or that he has made himself clear to all those sitting in the congregation before him, or that he is expounding the text sufficiently, or that he is applying the text to the needs of his hearers.

Luther was undoubtedly thinking of some of these difficulties, and probably others, when he said that if he knew how difficult it was to preach a sermon it would have taken a team of horses to get him into the pulpit.

The problem with saying all this is that it focuses everything on the preacher. And that is a grave mistake. Luther said that the preacher's only responsibility is to preach God's Word. He must leave everything else to God. "We are bidden to preach, but we are not bidden to justify people and make them pious. This thought should comfort all preachers and Christians, and everybody should pursue his calling and faithfully perform its duties... The Word is entrusted to him; this is God's will, and this Word he is to proclaim even though no one may want to listen to him."¹

If preachers do not bear this in mind, their impotence will certainly make preaching impossible. So Luther said, "God must blind preachers, as horses are blinded, when He wants to send them against Satan and the world. For what can

match the devil and man?"²

Yet nothing is more important in the church than preaching. The *Apology* says: "There is nothing that so attaches people to the church as good preaching."³ Walther says, "The most important of all the pastor's acts is his public preaching."⁴ Walther says again, "Since there is no substitute for preaching, a minister who accomplishes little or nothing by preaching will accomplish little or nothing by anything else that he may do... We are forced to say that all baptizing, pronouncing absolution and administering of Communion is useless if these matters have not been previously made the subjects of preaching to the people; for they are not the works of men, but of God Himself, who has connected with them a promise to be apprehended by faith. Accordingly, all these acts do not profit, but are rather harmful, in the absence of faith. If these operations of God are to be of any use, it is absolutely necessary that a thorough instruction concerning them be first given from the Word of God by preaching ... Christ ... gave ... this instruction: 'Go ye into all the world and *preach* the Gospel to every creature,' or as Matthew puts it: 'Go ye and *teach* all nations.' Then He adds: 'baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' Behold here the Alpha and Omega of the apostolic office, or the ministry of the Church: *it is preaching and teaching*" [emphasis ours].⁵

Walther continues by speaking about the difficulty of preaching, saying, "This function, however, is not only the most important, but also the most difficult function assigned to a minister of the Church. There are ministers who imagine that preaching is easy to them, and the longer they are in the ministry, the easier preaching becomes to them; for they reason that, if they are only careful to preach nothing but the pure Word of God, without any admixture of heresy, that must be sufficient. Such preachers are laboring under a great and

awful, a very pernicious error. A mere pious talk without aim and logical order is not real preaching. Genuine preaching is inspired only by the Holy Ghost through His Word. Accordingly, a real sermon is produced only after all the spiritual and intellectual energy of a truly believing preacher has been exerted to the utmost, after fervent prayer, after all earthly cares have been chased from the mind, and after the preacher has been freed from all vain desires. That is a difficult task.

“Administering Baptism properly is easy; anybody can do it. Likewise, pronouncing absolution correctly is quite easy; even a boy can do it. Administering Holy Communion is also very easy; any intelligent Christian can do it. But to preach properly is difficult.”⁶

With these thoughts in mind we would like to proceed in an impossible task, that of telling preachers how to preach. Nothing can be worse than that. And then we are going to neglect the most important part of preaching, the declaration of the gospel. But that is the assignment given. In speaking about the preaching of the law in the Lutheran sermon we will draw from the Holy Scripture, Luther, Walther, and our confessions.

We wish to divide the paper into the following parts:

- 1) The principal use of the Law in the sermon.
- 2) The aim in preaching the Law is to work genuine contrition.
- 3) The difficulty in distinguishing in practice the three uses of the Law.
- 4) The Law cannot make anyone improve his life and manner of living.
- 5) Preaching the law effectively and forcefully.
- 6) Law/Gospel/Law/Gospel/Law/Gospel.

1) The principal use of the Law in the sermon.

The most important principle to establish before everything else is that the chief use of the Law in the sermon is

to reveal sin. Both Walther and Luther speak of this as the *only* use of the Law. "Since the Fall the Law, you know, has but a single function, *viz.*, to lead men to the knowledge of their sins. It has no power to renew them."⁷ Luther writes in the same vein: "The Law at its best can do nothing but make consciences guilty, increase sin, and threaten death and eternal damnation."⁸ Again, "We do not abolish the Law but indicate its true office and use by saying that it is a very useful servant, driving a man to Christ."⁹ And again, "The first knowledge of the Law consists in this, that we see the inability of human nature to keep it. For it wants the heart, and if it is not kept from the heart, the observance is not valid before God. To be sure, you may do the works outwardly; but God is not satisfied unless they are performed from the heart and out of love, which is not possible unless a man is born anew through the Holy Spirit. God, then, *wants to achieve no more with the Law* (emphasis ours) than getting us thereby to recognize our inability, our frailty, and sickness—to recognize that, so far as we are concerned, we cannot keep one letter of the Law. When you feel *that*, the Law has done its work. This is what St. Paul means when he says to the Romans (3:20): 'By the Law is the knowledge of sin.'¹⁰ And again, "By 'Law' we should understand nothing but God's Word and command in which He commands us what we are to do and not to do and demands our obedience or service."¹¹

The Law must serve as God's hammer. Luther says, "In no other way than by the use of the Law can God soften and humble a man to cause him to acknowledge his misery and damnation. For the Law is the hammer of death, the thundering of hell, and the lightning of God's wrath, crushing the hardened and insensate hypocrites. Therefore the proper and true use of the Law is to fill with terror by lightning (as at Mount Sinai), by tempest, and by the blast of the trumpet, by a thunderbolt to beat down and to crush the beast called the delusion of righteousness."¹²

Accordingly, the preacher should fear no one, but speak frankly and openly, addressing the needs of his people. The preacher who is afraid to speak God's Law openly does both the Law and the Gospel a grave disservice. So Luther counsels, "He should not be silent or mumble but should testify without being frightened or bashful. He should speak out candidly without regarding or sparing anyone, let it strike whomever or whatever it will. It is a great hindrance to a preacher if he looks around and worries about what people like or do not like to hear, or what might make him unpopular or bring harm or danger upon him. As he stands high on a mountain in a public place and looks around freely, so he should also speak freely and fear no one, though he sees many kinds of people and faces. He should not hold a leaf in front of his mouth."¹³ Along the same line he says, "God wants us to stand fast in our calling and office, to administer them, and to give rebukes...God wants to use us too for the office of rebuking in the church...and if this were not God's ordinance and institution, I would not want to preach a sermon as long as I live."¹⁴

2) The aim in preaching the Law is to work genuine contrition.

The reason the preacher must speak boldly is to assure that he does not stand in the way of the clear Word of God, which pronounces judgment on the sinner. Here we must follow the example of the prophets and apostles. Reading in both the Old and New Testaments we have a clear picture of God's requirements for sinful mankind. Further, we have the Word of Christ, who tells us, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Since we know the Gospel, there is no need for us to soft-pedal the Law, or make the Law less than it is according to

God's measure (something the Reformed and Roman Catholic normally do).

In replying to the Roman sophists, who taught that true contrition comes from the love of God, the Apology says, "From contrition we separate those idle and infinite discussions, as to when we grieve from love of God, and when from fear of punishment. But we say that contrition is the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin, and which grieves that it has sinned. And this contrition takes place in this manner when sins are censured by the Word of God...And of these terrors Scripture speaks, as Ps. 38,4.8: *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me...I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.* And Ps. 6:2-3: *Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak; O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed; but Thou, O Lord, how long?* ...In these terrors, conscience feels the wrath of God against sin, which is unknown to secure men walking according to the flesh...It also flees from the dreadful wrath of God, because human nature, unless sustained by the Word of God, cannot endure it. Thus Paul says, Gal. 2,19: *I through the Law am dead to the Law.* For the Law only accuses and terrifies consciences."¹⁵

It should be noted that our synod catechism defines the "fear" of God mainly as "filial fear." It says little about "being afraid" of God, which is often the emphasis of the words of Christ, the prophets and apostles, and the Apology. When Luther says in his explanation to the commandments that we are to fear God, he is thinking of being afraid of God. Fear of God does not drive out love for God. The first is the response to the Law. The second is the response to the Gospel. When a person is truly afraid of God, his punishment, his anger, his holy demands, then he will be cast down, driven away, and prepared for the Gospel.

In commenting on 2 Corinthians 7:10, in which the

apostle speaks of “godly sorrow,” Walther says, “*Godly* sorrow is required because faith is required. God, by terrifying us, wants to produce this sorrow. We must not imagine that contrition is a good work which we do, but it is something that God works in us. God comes with the hammer of the Law and smites our soul. A person who wants to make himself sorrowful desires ever to increase his sorrow over sin. But a person merged in the right kind of sorrow yearns to be rid of it. He is tormented day and night.”¹⁶

Luther speaks about the difference between the Law and the Gospel, concluding first about the Law, “The preaching of the letter is also necessary in order first to put people to death by the Law and destroy all their self-confidence, so that they may know themselves, become hungry for the Spirit, thirst for grace, and so be a people prepared for the preaching of the Spirit... The effect of the letter is such that because of His wrath no one can continue to exist.”¹⁷

What the preacher needs to recognize and remember is that by nature a person (including the Christian) does not understand the depth of sin and depravity of his nature. He needs to have it laid out for him. Walther writes about this in an exposition of Romans 7:7-13: “This is the most appalling feature of our condition, that, as we are by nature, we do not know hereditary sin and imagine, when evil lusts arise in us and we do not exactly delight in them, that God will not lay them to our charge. However, the Law serves notice on us that evil lust renders us damnable in the sight of God. *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.* Even pagans, the wicked Ovid among them, have declared: *‘Nitimur in vetitum, semper cupimusque negata.’* That means: We desire the very things which are forbidden. ... The fall of Adam proves this... Man does not observe what an utterly corrupt creature he is, and while this condition lasts he may not break forth in gross crimes. But as soon as the Law is proclaimed to him in its

spiritual meaning, he becomes malicious and cries: 'What? Am I to be damned because sin is stirring within me?' Yes, indeed; the Law damns him; if he refuses to believe it, he will learn by experience that this is so. That is all the Law can do."¹⁸

Turnbull (a Presbyterian) puts it quite simply. "In this connection the preacher must speak of *sin*. For a long time the word has been out of fashion and many think it should be omitted from the vocabulary of religion. But people are bothered by it and somehow it keeps coming back to haunt the mind. T.S. Elliot, one poet of nimble mind and spiritual insight, has written the poem, 'The Cocktail Party,' and puts words into the mouth of one of his characters, Celia, who confides in a consultant for help:

'It sounds ridiculous—but the only word for it
That I can find, is a sense of sin.'¹⁹

3) The difficulty in distinguishing in practice the three uses of the Law.

The question arises as to the three uses of the Law — curb, mirror, guide. In preaching the Law to reveal sin, we will discover that all three functions often work together. There is a natural tendency to organize and compartmentalize. But things are not so simple in practice. If we preach the Law as a curb, in which we emphasize the restraining purpose of God in the Law, an individual Christian may very well be stricken with feelings of terror on account of the sins he has committed against God. As we speak of the Law as a mirror, revealing our true nature, the individual Christian may very well find himself downcast and despondent as he considers his many failings. As we speak of the things a Christian is to do according to God's Law, the individual Christian may very well sense his shortcomings and be overcome with a feeling

of inadequacy and guilt.

When the old nature is chastised (curb) and the Law is clearly explained as to what we should and should not do, sin is revealed and repentance is worked in the truly believing (the principal function). After the Gospel is believed the restored sinner does not immediately forget the Law he has heard, but now remembers it and joyfully goes about to keep it in love to God.

So Luther can say, “The Law, in its proper use, does nothing but reveal sin, engender wrath, accuse, fill with terror, and almost lead minds to despair. This is the proper use of the Law; here it ends, nor should it go any farther.”²⁰ And “Before receiving the comfort of forgiveness, sin must be recognized and the fear of God’s wrath must be experienced through the preaching or apprehension of the Law... On the other hand, where there are hearts in which the Law has performed its office, so that they are frightened by the knowledge of their sin, are timid and fugitive, no Law should be preached and proclaimed any more, but pure Gospel and comfort. For this is the proper office of Christ, to perform which He came and commanded the Gospel to be preached to all poor sinners and enjoined on them to believe it, that He might abolish and remove all charges, frightenings, and threatenings of the Law and might give the purest comfort instead.”²¹

This brings us to the next point, which is:

4) The Law cannot make anyone improve his life and manner of living.

The question has been raised as to whether sanctification should usually/always be preached after the Gospel is presented. In this same connection it is asked whether it is proper to preach Law/Gospel/Law in that order. The answer is that sanctification of the sinner is something that God accomplishes by the Holy Spirit through faith in the Gospel. It

would be better in this connection to speak of Law/Gospel/ Fruits of Faith. Most certainly sanctification or fruits of faith is to be preached! This is the order of Scripture throughout, in Old and New Testaments. Consider for a moment Ezekiel: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Or the apostle Paul: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:11-14).

Notice that it is "the grace of God" that teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness, and to live upright lives. It is the mistake of the Reformed and the Roman Catholic that they believe the Law produces these things.

Or consider the approach of Paul in writing to the Romans, where he lays out first the Law which reveals sin, then the Gospel with its message of justification, then the results of believing that justification. "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we

should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Rom. 6:3-8).

To preach sanctification as though it were a mere keeping of the Law is a great mistake. Walther comments, “In the nineteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when an attempt is made, by means of the demands or the threats or the promises of the Law, to induce the unregenerate to put away their sins and engage in good works and thus become godly; on the other hand, when an endeavor is made, by means of the commands of the Law rather than by the admonitions of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good.”²²

Notice that Walther speaks of the “admonitions of the Gospel” rather than a preaching of sanctification which is thought of as Law-preaching (in the formula Law/Gospel/Law-Sanctification). He says, “The attempt to make men godly by means of the Law and to induce even those who are already believers in Christ to do good by holding up the Law and issuing commands to them, is a very gross confounding of Law and Gospel. This is altogether contrary to the purpose which the Law is to serve after the Fall.”²³

In proving this point, Walther quotes from Jeremiah: “‘The time is coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the LORD. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their

sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Walther continues, saying, “This precious, valuable text is like a sun that rose suddenly upon the gray dawn of the Old Testament. We see from it that, while the Law was written into the hearts of men even before the Fall, it did not serve the purpose of making men godly; for man had been created godly and righteous in the sight of God... This condition was changed by the Fall ... Concerning the new covenant which God purposes to establish He says that He is not going to issue any commandments, but is going to write the Law directly into their mind and give them a new and pure heart, so that they shall not need to be plagued with the Law, with enforcements and urgings: Thou shalt do this! Thou shalt do that! because that will not help matters at all. We cannot fulfill the Law either. We are by nature carnal, and manifestations of the spirit are not forced from us by the Law. God says: ‘I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.’ That is why the Law is written into our hearts. That means nothing else than this, that what the Law could not effect is accomplished by the Gospel, by the message of the forgiveness of sins. All that were saved in the Old Testament were saved in no other way, as Peter expressly declared at the first apostolic council. Now, then, what are those doing who make such a perverse use of the Law in the time of the New Testament? They turn Christians into Jews, and that, Jews of the worst kind, who regard only the letter of the Law and not the promise of the Redeemer. Not only do they mingle the Law with the Gospel, but they substitute the Law for the Gospel.”²⁴

The matter of order is important in the preaching of sanctification. Sanctification must always follow justification. In Thesis VII of *Law and Gospel*, Walther says that the Word of God is not rightly divided when “sanctification of life is preached before justification. Ps. 130:4 David says: *There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.* The psalm-

ist practically says to God: 'First Thou must grant us remission of sins; after that we shall begin to reverence Thee, by walking in a new, sanctified life.' The term 'fear' in this text does not signify merely awe in God's presence, but the whole work of sanctification.

"Ps. 119:32 we read: *I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.* First come the consolations of God...After that the psalmist expects to 'run the way of God's commandments.' ...To confound justification and sanctification is one of the most horrid errors. The most beautiful preaching is rendered useless by this error. Only by a strict separation of justification and sanctification a sinner is made to understand clearly and becomes certain that he has been received into grace by God; and this knowledge equips him with strength to walk in a new life."²⁵

The Formula of Concord treats this subject at length in the Thorough Declaration, *Of The Third Use of God's Law*. "But when man is born anew by the Spirit of God, and liberated from the Law, that is, freed from this driver, and is led by the Spirit of Christ, he lives according to the immutable will of God comprised in the Law, and so far as he is born anew, does everything from a free, cheerful spirit; and these are called not properly works of the Law, but works and fruits of the Spirit, or as St. Paul names it, *the law of the mind* and *the Law of Christ*. For such men are no more under the Law, but under grace, as St. Paul says, Romans 8:2."²⁶

There is more to be considered in this connection, however. The dispute over the so-called *Third Use of the Law* arose because some maintained that the regenerated do not need to learn new obedience from the Law, because they freely do what God wants. The other side maintained that although the truly believing do God's will from a free spirit, nevertheless the Holy Spirit uses the written Law for instruction. The *Concord* took the second position: "Although the truly believing and truly converted to God and justified Christians

are liberated and made free from the *curse of the Law*, yet they should daily exercise themselves in the Law of the Lord, as it is written, Psalms 1:2; 119:1: *Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth he meditate day and night.* ...For although *the Law is not made for a righteous man*, as the apostle testifies 1 Timothy 1:9, but for the unrighteous, yet this is not to be understood in the bare meaning, that the justified are to live without law. ... But the meaning of St. Paul is that the Law cannot burden with its curse those who have been reconciled to God through Christ; nor must it vex the regenerate with its coercion, because they have pleasure in God's Law after the inner man. And indeed, if the believing and elect children of God were completely renewed in this life by the indwelling Spirit, so that in their nature and all its powers they were entirely free from sin, they would need no law ... but they would do of themselves, and altogether voluntarily, without any instruction, admonition, urging or driving of the Law, what they are in duty bound to do according to God's will; ... However, believers are not renewed in this life perfectly or completely ... the old Adam clings to them still in their nature."²⁷

The *Formula* goes on to speak of the need for daily instruction and admonition, warnings and threatenings of the Law, because the regenerate still have the lusts of the flesh. The central point however is that the Law does not give the power to walk in the new life. The Holy Spirit must renew the heart. "Thereafter the Holy Ghost employs the Law so as to teach the regenerate from it, and to point out and show them in the Ten Commandments what is the *acceptable will of God*, Romans 12:2, in what *good works God hath before ordained that they should walk*, Ephesians 2:10. He exhorts them thereto, and when they are idle, negligent, and rebellious in this matter because of the flesh, He reproves them on that account through the Law, so that he carries on both offices together: He slays and makes alive; He leads into hell

and brings up again. For His office is not only to *comfort*, but also to *reprove*, as it is written: *When the Holy Ghost is come, He will reprove the world* (which includes also the old Adam) *of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*. But sin is everything that is contrary to God's Law. ... But in order that, as far as possible, all misunderstanding may be prevented, and the distinction between the works of the Law and those of the Spirit be properly taught and preserved, it is to be noted with especial diligence that when we speak of good works which are in accordance with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works), then the word *Law* has only one sense, namely, the immutable will of God." ²⁸

The *Formula* recognizes what the Reformed and Roman do not: that the old Adam and the new Adam exist side-by-side in the regenerated believer, as confessed by the apostle Paul in Romans 7. This is part and parcel of the doctrine concerning the proper understanding of the Gospel and the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel. The emphasis by the Reformed on sanctification arises because they do not understand that the Gospel, by itself, produces a good life. This is not to say we need no direction whatsoever, but the direction is necessary because of our evil nature. In concluding remarks on the Third Use of the Law, the *Formula* says: "But how and why the good works of believers, although in this life they are imperfect and impure because of sin in the flesh, are nevertheless acceptable and well-pleasing to God, is not taught by the Law, which requires an altogether perfect, pure obedience if it is to please God. But the Gospel teaches that our spiritual offerings are acceptable to God through faith for Christ's sake." ²⁹

Luther says, "The Creed... brings pure grace, sanctifies us, and makes us acceptable to God. For through this knowledge we come to love and like all commandments of God, since we see that God gives Himself to us entirely, with all that He has and is able to do, in order to aid and guide us

in keeping the Ten Commandments.”³⁰ Luther even speaks of ignoring the Law. “An amazing thing it is, and one unheard of in this world, to teach Christians to learn to ignore the Law, to live before God as if there were no Law. Yet unless you ignore the Law and are firmly convinced in your heart that there is no Law and no wrath of God but only grace and mercy for Christ’s sake, you cannot be saved; ‘for by the Law is the knowledge of sin’.”³¹

Luther adds, “So the Law of God convinces us by our experience that we are naturally wicked, disobedient, lovers of sins, and enemies of God’s Commandments. Now from all this one of two things must follow: presumption or despair. Presumption follows when a man sets himself to fulfill the Law with works and diligently sees to it that he does what the letter of the Law asks him to do. ... Meanwhile, however, he does not observe his heart, does not note the reason *why* he is leading such a fine, good life, that he is merely covering the old hypocrite in his heart with such a beautiful life. ... The face of Moses is, therefore, covered for him, that is, he does not recognize the meaning of the Law – that it wants to be fulfilled with a joyful, free, cheerful will... Such pleasure the Law would also find in us, so that when you ask a chaste person why he is chaste, he should say: Not for the sake of heaven or hell, not for the sake of honor or shame, but simply because it appears to me to be very fine, and I heartily approve of it even if it were not commanded. See, a heart such as this really loves God’s Law and keeps it with pleasure. ... But no man is thus constituted by nature. ...to love God’s Law is impossible for him... But after the first Word, that of the Law, has done this work and distressful misery and poverty have been produced in the heart, God comes and offers His lovely, living Word... that we may get out of this misery and that all sins not only be forgiven but also blotted out and that love and delight to fulfill the Law may be given besides. ... Our adversaries...consider Christ a Legislator and the

Gospel nothing but the teaching of new laws... Works do not belong to the Gospel; for it is not laws but faith alone... whereby the heart becomes glad and joyful in God and then keeps the Law gladly and freely.”³²

In a sermon on 2 Corinthians 3:4-11, and commenting on the “letter” and “spirit” in verse 6, Luther says: “St. Paul’s one objective is to beat down the boasting and pretension of false preachers and to teach them properly to understand and to view the power of his preaching of the Gospel. ... For if God’s grace in Christ is not recognized, the heart cannot turn to God, cannot trust Him or have love and delight in His Commandments but can only resist them; for human nature does not like to be compelled, and no one likes to be a captive in chains... St. Paul calls the Gospel ‘the ministration of the Spirit’ in order to show its power, inasmuch as it effects something very different in the hearts of men from what the Law brings about. It brings with it the Holy Spirit and transforms the heart... If a man receives and believes this message, it will at once revive his heart and give him comfort. Then he no longer flees from God but now turns to Him; and because he finds and feels this grace and mercy of God, he, in turn, becomes favorably disposed toward him; he now begins sincerely to call upon Him and to consider and honor Him as his beloved God. And the more this faith and comfort are strengthened, the more the longing and the love for God’s Commandments and for observing them increase. For this purpose God always wants the Word of the *Gospel* preached, to awaken the heart of man to a realization of this and to remind itself of God’s great grace and goodness...

“Observe, that all this is not the result of the power or operation of the Law or of men. It is the effect of a new, heavenly power exerted by the Holy Spirit. He puts Christ and His works into the heart and makes a real book of it, consisting, not of letters and mere script but of real life and activity ... The papists, the Anabaptists, and other sects cry out against us in

our time: 'What do you mean by preaching so much about faith and Christ? How does this make people any better? Really now, good works *must* be done.' It must be granted that such a representation has the appearance of truth. But when you look at it in the light of a closer investigation, it is found to be mere empty, idle talk. For if you want to talk about deeds and words, we already have the Ten Commandments; and these, as is well known, we teach and inculcate no less than they do." ³³

One caution needs to be mentioned in the preaching of sanctification, which Walther mentions in his *Law and Gospel*. It is that we should not give the impression that all Christians will always have the same fruits of faith in the same measure. The imperfect still clings to us, in different ways.

5) Preaching the law effectively and forcefully.

Preaching the Law is not a matter of form (which perhaps is the impression we get from reading a paper such as this) but of the heart. Effective and forceful preaching comes from a heart which is turned toward God. This heart sees the holiness of God with awe and fear.

Thus if we are going to preach the Law effectively, we must first plumb the depths of our own spirit honestly, and see our own sin in all its manifestations. In us live (or have lain) the love of money, a lust for power, trust in material things, a desire for riches, sexual lust, an unruly tongue, lukewarmness toward God, and many other sins impossible to enumerate. An arrogant/proud heart sees none of this. The apostle Peter had no power until he knew his sin, and trusted in his Lord for forgiveness and His life-giving power. Preachers will have no power either until they see their complete unworthiness, their sin, their innate corruption, their rebellion against God, their pride, their lack of faith, and their in-

ability to do what God demands. Then they will throw themselves on the mercy of God, trusting in Him for life itself, and for the power that comes from Him alone to bring the Word of Grace to a fallen world.

This leads to an important point. In order to preach the Law properly, we must understand the Gospel. We must be able to apply it to ourselves first, and then to those about us. Preaching the Law effectively cannot occur until we understand both Law and Gospel and properly distinguish them. Luther says, “The Law, in its proper use, does nothing but reveal sin... Conversely, the Gospel is a light that enlightens, revives, comforts, and raises up fearful minds; for it shows that God is gracious to sinners and to the unworthy for Christ’s sake if only they believe that they are delivered from the curse through His death, that is, from sin and death everlasting, and that through His death the blessing is given them, that is, grace, the remission of sins, righteousness, and life everlasting. By distinguishing the Law from the Gospel in this way, we give to both their proper use and office.”³⁴

In speaking about effective preaching in a very practical way, Walther says: “A sermon on the Law which you deliver from your pulpit, to be a proper preaching of the Law, must measure up to these requirements: There is to be no ranting about abominable vices that may be rampant in the congregation. Continual ranting will prove useless. People may quit the practices that have been reprovved, but in two weeks they will have relapsed into their old ways. You must, indeed, testify with great earnestness against transgressions of God’s commandments, but you must also tell the people: ‘Even if you were to quit your habitual cursing, swearing, and the like, that would not make you Christians. You might go to perdition for all that. God is concerned about the attitude of your heart.’

“Let me illustrate. You may say: ‘Listen; when God says: *Thou shalt not kill*, that does not mean that you are no

murderers when your hand has slain no one, when you have not assaulted any one like a highway robber, nor put his life in jeopardy. Do not think that you have kept the Fifth Commandment if you have refrained from such outward acts. By no means; the Law aims at the heart, at the spirit in man.'... If you do this, you will be handling a sharp knife that cuts into the life of people, and your hearers will go home dazed. From the effect of your preaching they will go down on their knees at home and make this self-confession: 'I am not as God would have me be. I shall have to become a different person.'

"Romans 3:20 we read: *By the Law is the knowledge of sin.* ...The Law makes no one godly; but when it begins to produce its proper effects, the person who is feeling its power begins to fume and rage against God. He hates the preacher who has shouted the Law into his heart. ...The Law must precede the preaching of the Gospel, otherwise the latter will have no effect. First comes Moses, then Christ; or, first John the Baptist, the forerunner, then Christ."³⁵

John H.C. Fritz writes, "Two general rules in reference to reproving sin deserve to be kept in mind: 1. Be serious, but not sour or sarcastic. 2. Rebuke sin, but do not in a public address single out an individual sinner...In reference to the first rule, Lucas Osiander says: 'In the entire presentation one must be careful not to be bitter, much less sarcastic, lest the hearts of the hearers be unnecessarily embittered or estranged. One may seriously rebuke sin and yet not be bitter; undue harshness of speech would indicate a harsh, surly, and unmerciful spirit prompting it. Speaking modestly, but seriously will quicker win the heart of the hearer; for, being not yet incorrigible, he will be convinced that the preacher is not letting his temper run away with him, but is in duty bound to be somewhat stern, having, however, only the spiritual welfare of the hearers in mind. If, however, it becomes necessary that a preacher use stronger language, he should not neglect

carefully to write his words out in full, not only in order that he may carefully reconsider them before they are spoken, but also that the hearers afterwards may not, by judging them, put upon them a wrong interpretation; for the preacher will then be in a position positively to assure any one concerned that he said no more and no less than just the very words that are found in his manuscript.'

"In reference to the second rule, Luther says, 'Christ directs us first of all to speak to the sinner individually... Where Christians and non-Christians meet, as is the case in the church service, one shall in general rebuke sin, even all manner of unbelief and vice, but not make the picture of any one single person stand out... The Word shall be preached boldly to all the people... We should get rid of the foolish notion that *our* preaching can accomplish anything in the hearts of the hearers, but we should rather diligently pray that God may, without our assistance and alone through the Word which He proclaims through the preacher and teacher, move men to action.'"³⁶

6) Law/Gospel/Law/Gospel/Law/Gospel.

In closing, a few comments in regard to a question regarding a consecutive preaching of Law and Gospel, thus: the Law, followed by the Gospel, followed by the Law, followed by the Gospel, and so on. There may be the idea among some preachers that we are to divide the sermon into two parts, first Law, then Gospel (or perhaps three parts, with Law/Gospel/Sanctification).

In response to this question let us say that preaching should flow naturally from a text and from the ideas the preacher is trying to present. To try to stifle a natural progression of thought in either text or application of the text in the sermon by following some sort of formula is a mistake.

Perhaps it would help us to consider briefly the ser-

mon President Orvick sent us for Christmas, one written by C.F.W. Walther. If we analyze it a little we will find that in his introduction he preaches first of all the Gospel (being joyful over the birth of Christ). In the first part he presents the Law (not being joyful over the right thing), then the Gospel (referring to the text in Luke 2:11). He then weaves together Law and Gospel in a series of statements about rejoicing over God's deliverance for us poor sinners. In the same part he then presents the Law, speaking of the Christian's sorrow at the littleness of his joy and immediately of the comfort he should have in even the drop of joy which is already a powerful river which will empty into the sea of eternal life (nice picture!).

In the second part he presents Law (the fear of the sinful shepherds and the heavy heart of sinners), then Gospel (the message of comfort and joy of the angels). In the third part we find the Law (the world a vale of tears by reason of man's sin), then the Gospel (redemption in Christ bringing joy). Then in a series of statements we find Law/Gospel presented in succession, with definite emphasis on the Gospel, and the sermon concluding with the Gospel.

Preaching is difficult. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can our preaching amount to anything. What people think of sermons means nothing. It is what God accomplishes through His holy Word that means everything. Let us continue to preach both Law and Gospel, faithfully applying to our people the Word of Truth.

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- ⁴ C.F.W. Walther. *Pastorale*, page 76.
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- ⁹ *Ibid*, par. 2342, p. 757.
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- ³⁰ *What Luther Says*, Vol. II, par. 2280, p. 733.

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³⁵ Walther, *Law and Gospel*, Thesis VI, p. 83.

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The Lutheran Legacy of J. S. Bach, 1685-1750 Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of His Death

by Mark DeGarmeaux

The place of Johann Sebastian Bach in our Lutheran heritage of music and theology cannot be overestimated. His is an ideal to which all Lutheran pastors and musicians ought to aspire. Many have attempted to analyze and review the work and thought of Bach. This will not be a full investigation of that, but a few guiding thoughts and reflections in hopes of stirring interest in this monumental Lutheran figure.

Views and opinions about Bach often are colored by the person writing the opinion. At times he has been portrayed as a mercenary musician who wrote sacred works only for the money and not from faith. But his library and his works demonstrate his true Christian faith very clearly, as Robin Leaver shows in his examination of Bach's copy of the Calov Bible Commentary. Bach has sometimes been considered a pietist, but his works, while at times striking deep in our emotions both musically and textually, are filled with Lutheran theology, which emphasizes the Gospel in Word and Sacraments, and faith which unites the believer with God. Bach's reputation for "preaching" the Gospel through his works is so strong that he is sometimes called the "Fifth Evangelist." His works reflect a Lutheran piety that is thoroughly Scriptural in image, thought, and language.

Günther Stiller in his book *Johann Sebastian Bach and the Liturgical Life in Leipzig* very clearly shows that during Bach's lifetime Leipzig remained a center of Lutheran

orthodoxy while surrounding areas of Germany were being overtaken by Pietism and the beginnings of Rationalism. In that city the number of services (*Divine Service, Vespers, and Catechetical services*) and the frequency of communion were increasing, showing what Stiller (p. 111) calls “a surprisingly extensive agreement between the requirements of the reformers and the liturgical practice in late orthodoxy.” Christian charity was also evident in a relief effort undertaken in the city.

As cantor in Leipzig, Bach was, at least for a time, in charge of selecting hymns for the services “in accordance with the Gospels and the *Dresdener Gesangbuch*” (*The Bach Reader*, 114). He complained once that one of the pastors was choosing new hymns against this tradition and without approval of the City Council. There are probably many ways we could interpret this, but it may serve to remind us to consider carefully which hymns we choose for services and how we deal with the people of our congregations. It is very important that traditions which promote the Gospel be maintained, for example, hymns which teach and comfort with the Gospel, as do the hymns of the Lutheran corpus, the chorales. We are also cautioned here in how we approach the introduction of new hymns, not thrusting them on the congregation, but teaching them through choirs and soloists, and making sure that they are hymns of quality and substance.

Church work was Bach’s life and his love. In his chapter “The Four Seasons of J.S. Bach” in *Bach Among the Theologians*, Jaroslav Pelikan shows how the Church Year governed all of Bach’s life and then analyzes various aspects of Bach’s theology in his works.

Bach’s library can also teach us what is useful and helpful to read. He owned two copies of Luther’s collected works, plus the *Table Talk*, Psalms Commentary, and *House Postil* (which has recently been made available in English). His library also contained Calov’s Bible Commentary and Chemnitz’

Examen. Robin Leaver also gives evidence that Bach used his library and compared the volumes with one another.

Musically J. S. Bach was both archaic and prophetic. While he lived at the end of the Baroque era, he continued in that tradition, for which many critics have considered him old-fashioned. But he took the Baroque style to unimaginable heights in musical vocabulary and art. Some of his writings anticipate developments of the Classical era. He was loved by Romantic era composers because of his exquisite harmonies and melodies. Not until the 20th century did the idea of inversion (playing a melody backwards or upside down) become common, but Bach's variations on *From Heaven Above* use this technique masterfully. The conclusion of Bach's *Kyrie God the Holy Ghost (Clavierübung III)* becomes so dissonant that it is almost 12-tone and yet conforms to all the rules of Baroque tonality. Letters and numbers also play a large role in Bach's music. For example, in a setting of Luther's Ten Commandments hymn (ELH 490), Bach repeats the motif ten times (Pelikan, p.33). Various studies of Bach's use of numbers demonstrate that this is not coincidence. In several works he spells out his name B-A-C-H with musical notes (in German musical notation B is B^b and H is B). In the Cantatas his settings of the chorales are phenomenal in variety and skill, so that one can understand why one might say that in his compositions is "*Anfang und Ende aller Music*. (The beginning and end of all music)." (This phrase is attributed variously to Arnold Schönberg and Max Reger.)

Of course, much more could be written (and has been written) about Bach as composer and Christian, but worthier and more lasting tribute will be made to him and his legacy if we emulate his love for theology and music as gifts of God to proclaim the Gospel. We can do this by using his works in our churches, listening to them in our homes, and studying their thoroughly Lutheran content. It has never been easier than now to be an avid Bach-listener and to appreciate his

music, especially his *Church Cantatas* and *Passions*. Several complete recordings are available.

It would be entirely appropriate for a church organist or choir to choose at least one piece by Bach for each Sunday of the coming church year. Congregations could hold a service commemorating the work of Bach, much as we celebrate at Reformation time what God did through Martin Luther and his colleagues to restore the Gospel. But, in keeping with Bach's theology and ours, let it all be done not to the glory of this man who is only the instrument, but to the Glory of God alone.

Sources and Suggested Reading

Bach Among the Theologians, Jaroslav Pelikan.

Johann Sebastian Bach and the Liturgical Life in Leipzig,
Günther Stiller.

J. S. Bach and Scripture: Glosses from the Calov Bible Commentary, Robin Leaver, ed.

The Life, Times and Influence of Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth

by Donald L. Moldstad

In recent years mapmakers have been scrambling to keep up with all of the changes of boundaries in Europe. With the stroke of a pen governments have changed hands, territories have been renamed and borders have been established for generations to come. Likewise, in the history of the church there are defining moments where the confession of a particular body is set on its course which may have enormous repercussions on the path it will take. For the current map of American Lutheranism there has probably been no greater moment of definition than what took place in the years 1820-1872. In these crucial years stands Charles Porterfield Krauth (CPK), whose life, work and influence were truly significant in defining those borders.

As we walk through his life and survey his work let us strive for these objectives: a renewed appreciation for our confession, a new willingness to stay with it, the ability and desire to restudy the old truths of our faith, a sense of humility to stand corrected, a higher respect for the doctrine of church fellowship with the loud percussions it has on the future of a church body, and a deeper gratitude to God for the path by which He has delivered His truth to our door.

Many of the issues which Krauth had to work through are still around us today, only in different packaging. There are great lessons for our generation in his story. Much of his work was in the definition of Lutheranism away from a deep-rooted Reformed infiltration in areas of worship, music, decision theology, the doctrine of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, fellowship issues, the status of the confessions, etc. In his time, not unlike our own, American Lutheranism was being

pressured by a blurring with the Reformed on one hand and a challenge from the rationalism in the universities on the other. Under the leadership of CPK the General Council (GC) would react to these dangers by an entrenchment in the Lutheran Confessions.

Charles Phillip Krauth, Sr.

In seeking to understand the influence of Charles Porterfield Krauth, we must begin by learning to know his father, Charles Phillip Krauth, born in Pennsylvania in 1797, the son of a teacher. Unable to come up with the money to pursue medicine, he was directed towards the Holy Ministry by a Rev. F. Schaeffer, whom he later describes as quite Biblical in his doctrine. In 1819, one year before the organization of the General Synod, he was ordained by the Pennsylvania Ministerium (PM). Schaeffer schooled him and had his student assist in the publication of a paper which contained many historical items on Dr. Martin Luther. By 1826 Charles Sr. was appointed as a director of the Gettysburg Seminary and soon elected President of the Synod of MD and VA.

Charles Phillip Krauth, Sr. always had a deep fondness for the writings from the "old country" and in 1832 delivered a paper on "*The Advantages Arising to the American Student from His Access to German Literature.*" One of his colleagues, Dr. K.R. Demme, helped him obtain books from Germany, especially those on Confessional Lutheran theology. Krauth admits that prior to this he "knew next to nothing of German theology." Demme, who was known for his translations of German works, seems to have had a great impact on him. Having become quite fluent in Hebrew, C. Phillip Krauth was selected to the position of professor at the seminary in 1833. He loved teaching and gained a reputation of having a bent toward historic Lutheranism. He also served off and on as a parish pastor and for a short time as editor of "*The*

Evangelical Review.” As an instructor the Augsburg Confession became his standard for what was Lutheran. Adolph Spaeth writes of him, “There could be no doubt that in spite of his aversion to actual participation in controversy, the real weight of his influence was on the side of conservatism and faithfulness to the standards of his church.”² In his own words, (regarding the Confessions) “...they... contain, on all vital points of Christianity, the noblest instruction... Our verdict is unequivocally in behalf of the study, the thorough study, of this theology.”³

Years later CPK wrote about his father, “The church can never repay what it owes to him. Had his spirit pervaded it, and his counsels been followed, we should be free from all that now agitates and distresses it.”⁴ Charles Phillip Krauth saw his role as a Lutheran educator with the goal of turning the ship around toward the Confessions, rather than jumping into a rowboat, which is what his son would later do. He chose to bail hard but remain on the sinking ship of the General Synod.

Early Years

Charles Porterfield Krauth was born in Martinsburg, Virginia in 1823. His mother died when he was only one year old. Young Charles grew up with a great love and respect for his father which remained constant throughout his life. His father remarried in 1833, to a woman named Harriet. The ten-year-old boy loved his stepmother dearly and later spoke of the wonderful Christian home in which he had been raised.

Even as a young child CPK was an avid reader and writer, with a fondness for poetry. As a teenager he studied German, a skill that would serve him well in the future. He attended Pennsylvania College while his father was the President, and entered the Seminary in October 1839 at age 16. Here he studied under S.S. Schmucker, but enjoyed his father

as his favorite instructor. At the end of two years he graduated, and was examined and licensed to preach the Gospel by age 19. His first call was to a Congregational Church in Canton, near Baltimore, Maryland. He writes of his first parish, "There is not, to my knowledge; one Lutheran in the congregation." ⁶ It was at this stage where he began to do serious digging in the works of Lutheranism.

Good, Fatherly Advice

During the 1830s new students were flowing into the Gettysburg Seminary from Germany and were bringing with them a different view of Lutheranism which was surfacing in the universities of the old country. Charles Phillip Krauth encouraged his young son to study the Lutheran classics and become familiar with the German writings. He writes in one of his letters to his son, "If you desire to become extensively acquainted with the best theological works you should cultivate the German language." ⁶ Correspondence from this period is telling as it reflects a new focus in his studies. In 1842 CPK requests a work by Hengstenberg. In one letter his father advises him to avoid being influenced by the popular Reformed authors of the day. From 1845-8 his father sends him a number of works by Martin Chemnitz. We begin to see the young pastor writing of his new fondness for authors such as Gesenius, Ewald, Furst and Delitzsch. However, along with his increased study, this was a time of intense personal struggle. In 1844 he was joined in marriage to Susan Reynolds, who would struggle with poor health until her death eight years later. ⁷ He would also lose a daughter in 1847. In addition to the many difficulties at home, his first call was also full of many challenges, but the numerous letters from his father helped him through it all.

In his private reading, CPK came to focus more on the writers of the Confessions. On his own, he embarked on a

“step by step investigation of the cardinal points of Lutheran theology, the Christological question, and the Real Presence.”⁸ Prof S. Fritschel writes of him at this time, “He had reached his decided Lutheran views without such personal acquaintances and direct influence of earlier or modern Lutheran theologians, simply through the study of the Lutheran Confessions themselves.” The timing could not have been more perfect for Krauth to begin his study of Lutheranism. Many factors would be set in motion which would soon put him on center stage in the struggle for the true Lutheran faith in America. His son-in-law writes, “When he turned away from the illusions of American Lutheranism in total disappointment and dissatisfaction, he found in the Confessions the very thing he had longed for, as an old treasure, shining in ever clearer and more perfect lustre.”⁹

The role of his father was significant. Charles Sr. himself began coming around slowly on key doctrines such as the Lord’s Supper. In 1845 he had believed in only a symbolic presence of Christ in the Sacrament, but then admits to his 23-year-old son, “I am not certain I have looked at the themes involving a real presence with sufficient care. In common I had considered the Lutheran view as so clearly related to the Roman Catholic as perhaps not to give it a proper hearing.” He then concludes with words that would be prophetic of Charles, Jr.’s future, “I should like to investigate the whole subject *‘de novo’*... Do not be afraid of the truth.” Within 5 years he had come to a truly Lutheran view of the Real Presence.

By the year 1850, Charles Phillip Krauth wrote that his desire was to see Confessional Lutheranism prevail in the General Synod. Nevertheless he still would stop short of requiring Confessional subscription and sought to have all of this happen in a context of harmony. Years later, when the *Definite Platform* hit the scene (1855) he was opposed to it, drawing the wrath of his colleague, S.S. Schmucker. Still,

CPK, Sr. felt that the GS was the only hope for Lutheran unity in America. Though father and son had a common view theologically, they differed in matters of polemics. Charles, Jr. tended to be more confrontational, more controversial, and unafraid of debate. Though the elder Krauth loved the truth, and worked toward its preservation, he saw intense debate as an evil in the church and something to be avoided. His son had more of a grasp on the role others like Missouri might play in the oncoming surge for Confessionalism in the United States and could foresee a truly Lutheran church body as a real possibility. His father's context was that of the imbedded American Lutheranism, which made him timid about destroying the overall unity. Years later, when the new seminary was established in Philadelphia (1864), and his son installed as professor, the older Krauth said sadly from his post at Gettysburg, "Now a division of the church cannot be avoided."

The Sad State of Affairs in American Lutheranism

In order to truly appreciate Krauth's movement toward a Confessional position we must understand just how far he had to come in the theological, so-called "Lutheran" environment of his day. Though Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg had brought a fairly Lutheran approach with him to these shores, his subtle pietism showed a tolerance for Reformed teachings. The following generation held a lax view of doctrine and was overwhelmed by strong influences of pietism. The American Lutheranism of Muhlenberg had never had a proper view of church fellowship.

Three years before CPK's birth, the GS was organized in 1820. The PM was the "mother synod" which comprised half of the larger Synod, and in that year was working toward a union with the American Reformed churches. The GS's purpose was not to be a doctrinal force, but simply a practi-

cal, functional way of going about church work among those who held to some main teachings in common. Dr. F. Bente states, "The sole ambition (of the GS) was to unite the whole Lutheran Church in the United States in a well organized and imposing body. The object was not unity, but governmental union."¹⁰

During the early years of the GS the country was ripe for revivalism. It had experienced a time of moral decline. Many Christian laymen and clergy sought anything that would address man's behavior through the churches. We see this same reaction all around us today; "Let the church focus on fixing the many moral problems troubling our society. " People did not want a theology that was divorced from daily life. Many felt that the scholastic, academic approach of the orthodox Lutheran dogma left a vacuum that other theological systems were quick to address. For a large group of people the pietistic leaders of the day met this need perfectly. This was the period of great growth in the American Methodist movement. When religious apathy and moral decay are rampant, the garden is ripe for the planting of Reformed ideas which seek to address behavior through the Law and focus on man's responsibility in his actions. That same hunger keeps resurfacing, as we see in movements such as the "Promise Keepers." This is a very subtle way of taking the spotlight off the cross.

What we might consider even a soft form of Lutheranism was rarely seen. By 1849 Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, one of the pietistic leaders of the day, wrote (with great delight!) that in his own Synod of Maryland, which contained 60 churches, not even 30 American members could be found who believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. ¹¹ During the 1830-40s revival meetings swept through the east. Many Lutheran congregations took part in the gatherings, and some pastors began using revivalist methods in their own services. It was what most of the people wanted. It appeared to work as far as bringing in numbers is concerned. The Means

of Grace were relegated to the back corners. Revivalism sought to focus on the heart and feelings of the participant, throwing aside doctrinal differences and the need for instruction. The intent of the movement was to bring “truly spiritual life” back into the churches, or at least the people. Seeing its popularity, many pastors tried to “Lutheranize” the methods of the great tent preachers such as Charles Finney and others. Reformed practices came pouring into Lutheranism.

The older Lutheranism of Europe was seen by many in the GS as having a lax indifferentism toward Christian life. For this reason many of the Synod’s pastors leaned toward Puritanism and loved its writers. They also shared the English language with these Americans, and so an alliance with the Reformed appeared to be the best road ahead for significant mission work.

Trying to go in the direction of Confessional Lutheran theology was an incredibly difficult task in this setting. Yet, by age 20, only one year out of seminary, we see the young Charles embarking on a course away from the popular trends. In 1843 we see him already strongly condemning the practice of inviting Reformed pastors and “pseudo-Lutherans” of a revivalist style into the parishes. Though not a popular move in his congregation, he begins to cultivate an established liturgical order for public worship.

By the mid-1840s a few of his colleagues were also returning to the roots of the Reformation, and a growing polarization developed between the majority who were “New Measure Men” and the growing band of conservatives, or “Symbolists.” In 1844 the GS established a committee to put together a doctrinal statement (a forerunner of the *Definite Platform*). The final draft was full of Pelagian and Arminian errors and included outright denials of the Real Presence and the power of Baptism. Its stance on the confessions read, “We regard them as good and useful exhibitions of the truth, but

do not receive them as binding on the conscience, except so far as they agree with the Word of God.” [If you bought him lunch, your average Baptist could go along with that.] The American Lutheran church had grown hopelessly Reformed. The New York Ministerium had agreed to consider the mission work of the Episcopalians as if it was their own. As Dr. Franz Pieper later wrote, “They had hardly more than the name Lutheran.” Krauth reflected on this period, “There were men who profaned the pulpits and professorial chairs under the name of Lutherans, who were infidels - hardly disguising their real character, and from these men, down to a sober negativism, were men who deviated in various degrees from the faith of the Church.”¹²

In each generation some struggle with a certain arrogance that they are the answer to all that has gone on before, and that they can now create a new path which will benefit the Kingdom of God better than anyone in previous generations. Dr. Benjamin Kurtz gives us an incredible example of this:

The Fathers - who are the ‘Fathers?’ They are the *children*; they lived in the *infancy* of the Church. John the Baptist probably knew less, and that less distinctly than a Sunday-school child, ten years of age, in the present day... Who are ‘the Fathers?’ They have become the children compared with the present and advanced age, they are the Children, and the learned and pious of the nineteenth century are the Fathers. We are three hundred years older than Luther.¹³

These were the strong prevailing winds of the day in Lutheranism. For someone like Krauth to come along and hold up the historic Lutheran confessors, and the Fathers of the early Church, as teachers was highly uncommon and unpopular.

The Sacrament of the Altar: Discovering a Jewel

The real gateway into Confessional Lutheranism for young Krauth was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, a study which began in 1846. The GS asked him to review a paper by Professor Moses Stuart which openly denied the Real Presence and never delved into Lutheran sources from the Reformation. Stuart's criticism, in keeping with the mood of his day, was based upon the false assumption that the doctrine of the Real Presence was essentially a Papal doctrine with a few twists. Krauth writes in his review: "In the American Lutheran church . . . there is an awakening too manifest to be mistaken, and whose tendency is toward the doctrine of a true sacramental presence." He then begins by sketching a history of the doctrine of consubstantiation and shows how American theologians had misunderstood it, as well as Luther's doctrine. He asks the great question, "Are we truly Lutherans?" This teaching of the Eucharist came to the point of the gauntlet: "We believe that the time has arrived when the question what the Lutheran Church is and the associated question what she has been must be answered – not evaded but answered."⁴

Krauth directs his readers to investigate on their own the actual Lutheran teaching by searching the confessions, and not to let their views be defined by the ideas of others. No longer does he see the Reformed as a theological ally against Rome, for both contradict the Gospel. A new ground which is distinct from both Geneva and Rome begins to emerge for him. On United States soil Phillip Melancthon had been held high as the genius of Lutheranism, the one who had toned down the extremes of Luther. Krauth, even at the young age of 23, is beginning to see and express that Lutherans should have great concerns with Melancthon for his lack of precision in many areas of doctrine, and especially on matters pertaining to the Eucharist.

Through his research he begins to see a different approach to how Lutherans had done their theology centuries before. He follows the format of Chemnitz, Luther and the great dogmaticians, reaching back to the early fathers of the church. "There is not in ecclesiastical testimony one disputed doctrine on which the testimony of the church has varied so little, and has been so continued and so universal as this, that there is a real presence of Christ, as distinguished from a spiritual one, in the Eucharist, and that the medium of communication with the entire person of Christ is by the Sacramental emblems."¹⁵ No other Lutheran theologian on American soil, not even Walther, had done such a major work on the subject, and no one would for many years to come.

For Krauth the controversy with the Reformed on this teaching goes "to the very centre of the doctrine of the person of Christ, to involve the whole peculiarity of the incarnation, and to concern intimately the definiteness, if not the very existence, of the Christian's hope in regard to the continual presence, sympathy and succor of our great High Priest."¹⁶ A letter to his father from this time period states that he sees the Reformed doctrine as being even more unscriptural than that of the RCC. Commenting on the GS's coziness with the Reformed, he laments, "Our views of Christ's presence are tending to the other and far more dangerous extreme." The primary focus of his work centered on establishing and defining the true presence of Christ, which could be recognized only through a proper view of the consecration.

His son-in-law, Adolph Spaeth, records that despite all the time and energy the young theologian put into the study, it was taken off the table due to its great length. But the process had enormous implications for Krauth himself and the vast majority of his writing would be placed into his "*Conservative Reformation*" at a later date.

On a Different Wave-Length

CPK was out of step with his time. American Lutheranism had other things on its mind. Many assumed that the best path toward making Christianity appealing was to tone down the elements of the historic nature of the church, make the faith logical and reasonable for unbelievers. Reformed theologians became allies in the great defense of Christianity. Differences were to be pushed aside.

Neve comments, "The liturgy, the ancient lessons of the Gospels and Epistles, the festivals of the church year, the gown and other usages were given up, in order that as little as possible might be seen of these Lutheran peculiarities. Hoping to gain others, they lost themselves. The Lutheran church had given away her own spirit, her own original life and character."¹⁷

In addition, there was a mood toward blending already permeating Europe. An alliance appeared to have great appeal and potential. The Prussian Union was seen by many in the United States as the wave of the future. The philosophy and mindset of Melancthon were to be embraced, not pushed aside. The motive behind it seemed admirable: to increase the Kingdom of God. The path of least resistance was chosen as the way to get this work done. But as Bente stated, "Whenever Lutherans unite with the Reformed, the former gradually sink to the level of the latter. Unionism always breaks the backbone of true Lutheranism."¹⁸ The growing love for Reformed music is a primary example in our day.

For the members of the GS, the language element also played a key factor in the movement toward other American Reformed churches. The common English language had a unifying quality. The majority in the GS had no concept of the German tongue, and roots to the old country were very thin. In addition, a common citizenship in this new land of the Puritans added fuel to the unionistic fire. This was

America, after all. Grandparents had fought and died together in the Revolutionary War. Being drawn to fellow *American* Christians was more important than growing closer to those of a faraway land. However, as Krauth put it, "The world owes more to the Reformation than to America."

Those on the other side of the fence from Krauth had a strong voice in Professor S.S. Schmucker, who exerted great influence in the GS during the 1830-40s. He called for a loose federation with the Reformed (*The Apostolic Protestant Alliance*) where "non-essentials," such as the sacraments, would be set aside in order to get some common work done. The GS bought the idea as a whole in 1848. In a letter to like-minded churches in Germany they stated: "The distinctive doctrines which separate the Lutheran and Reformed churches we do not consider essential. The tendency of the so-called old Lutheran party seems to us to be behind the times. Luther's particular views concerning the Lord's body in communion have long been abandoned by the majority of our ministers."

¹⁹ By trying to leave things fuzzy for the sake of including others, they were lost altogether. As is always the case, the Reformed influence on Lutherans hit hardest on the sacraments, which became secondary (and even less) to the Gospel. There was a failure to see how each article of faith is intimately connected to the cross. This defect in American Lutheranism is one of the great differences which would distinguish it from the Norwegians and Missourians who saw everything as touching the Gospel.

Battle Lines Drawn as Immigrants Pour In

The movement toward the Reformed had a polarizing effect. Those who clung to the Confessional Lutheran doctrines were branded as cold, unloving extremists. This caused many of the Symbolists to seek each other out in order to galvanize their efforts. The more Schmucker, Kurtz, Sprecher

and others drove toward a church body untied to Europe, the more C.P. Krauth and his followers would hug the Lutheran Symbols and delve into the older writings of the church. The New Measure men saw the writers of the Confessions as zealots who had over-reacted to the issues of their day. The Symbolists saw in them the true gem of the Lutheran church.

By the fifth and sixth decades of the century the flood of Lutherans from Europe had begun. The older sister arriving from overseas now looked with disdain at her American sibling and was appalled that she no longer held at all to the family name of Lutheran. Likewise the younger sister hardly recognized her new visitor and picked on her for being too "Romish" in her views on Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Absolution, worship and so on. In Bavaria Wilhelm Loehe, known for his high view of liturgical worship and the sacraments, began sending young men over to our shores. When they arrived and saw the state of the eastern churches, many shook their heads with disgust at the revivalist movement and couldn't believe that those who called themselves "Lutherans" had bought into it. Loehe himself published a paper which critiqued the un-Lutheran bent in the GS and praised those, such as Krauth, who were striving for a Confessional position. He directed his young followers to Krauth as a hope for the future in the new land.

Though it was a tough road ahead, things were definitely moving in the right direction. More and more were turning their attention to the repristination theology of Germany. Writings by Hengstenberg, Rudelbach and others were republished in United States theological journals. Suddenly bold challenges were being made through the written word. By the late 1840s Krauth attacked Kurtz over his views of the Lord's Supper and other key doctrines. CPK was intrigued by the study of what his church had once been. He welcomed the older Lutherans and saw in them hope for the future.

Confessional subscription began to stand out as the

glue by which the splinters of Lutheranism could be reconstructed on American soil. He had witnessed the things that Biblical theologians from his father's generation had to put up with due to imprecision in their statements of faith and their apprehension most often with damnatory clauses. They had failed to see that by dismissing the "negative" aspects of confession they were also undermining the "positive" statements. Much of Krauth's energy began to focus on what it means to make a confession which American Lutherans had always seen as a dirty part of church work, rather than a positive one. We can hear his thinking expressed later in his address to the Pittsburgh Synod in 1866: "There can be, there is, no true unity but in the faith . . . the one token of this unity, that by which this internal is made visible, is the one expression of faith, on 'form of sound words,' used in simple earnestness and meaning the same to all who employ it . . . All kinds of beliefs and unbeliefs may exist under the plea of toleration."²⁰

C.F.W. Walther's arrival on the American scene was well timed for Krauth. Walther's early writing would often focus on the purpose of Confession. By the late 1850s he produced a masterpiece on Confessional subscription in which he denounced the idea of a conditional position since it then weakens the intent of the confession. At issue is "why do we even have a confession?" He writes,

It is essential to keep in mind that the purpose of our Symbols is a) that our Church clearly and unequivocally confess its faith and its doctrine before the world; b) that it distinguish itself from all heterodox bodies and sects; c) that it may possess a united, certain, general form and norm of doctrine for all its teachers, on the basis of which all other writings and teachings can be judged and regulated. But if the Church demands only a conditional acceptance of its Symbols, it virtually retracts the faith and the doctrine which it had set forth in the Symbols.²¹

Writings such as this did nothing but bolster Krauth in his pursuit of genuine Lutheranism.

With the arrival of Europeans, the face of the Church was changing. Some statistics help to tell the story. In 1864 *The Lutheran Observer* reported: "In the year 1845 there were probably no more than 1 or 2 dozen 'old Lutheran' congregations in this country. Now there are perhaps no less than 700." In 1840 there were 1,200 Lutheran churches in the United States. Thirty years later, with the influx in the Midwest, the number was 3,417 (by 1893 it reached 9,119). Lutherans were the fastest growing Protestant denomination in America.

Krauth was an avid reader. He read the papers and journals of the new arrivals and liked what he saw. In 1844 Walther began publishing "*Der Lutheraner*" and stated that its purpose was "to prove that the Lutheran Church is the true Church of Christ, not a sect. It is to unite the divided members of the Lutheran Church." Krauth was now convinced that establishing a Confessional Lutheran church in America could actually happen. Pastor F. Wyneken had come over from Germany in 1838 and served a congregation near Krauth in Baltimore in the early 1840s. With their common love for the old faith it is easy to imagine them conferring with each other on doctrine and the future of Lutheranism. Due to his resolve to avoid unionism Wyneken severed his ties with the GS by 1845 and sought out Missouri. You can be sure that Krauth and like-minded men felt this loss in the Synod of Maryland. A few years later, at Missouri's opening convention they formulated strong statements against fellowship with anyone who was not strictly Lutheran. The presence of the Missourians, the Norwegians and others pulled Krauth toward taking a stand, though still inside of the GS. Others were beginning to speak out against the laxity. J. Seiss, a young colleague of Krauth's, writes him a letter with a scathing analysis of S.S. Schmucker's weak views on the Supper, and concludes with the invitation, "I am almost ripe for a reorganization *now*."

What do you say?" Young Charles responded, at this point, with his father's optimism: "Truth is winning its way silently in our church. Let us hold it together tightly, that we may carry it as one body into the camp of truth."²²

His theology was having a definite effect on his practice. In 1849 the Virginia Synod asked him to chair the committee which was to examine the liturgy published by the GS in 1847. In his report he recommends going back to the older forms of worship and hymns and advises staying clear of the more recent hymns of the pietistic persuasion. In the following years we find him advocating the wearing of the gown by the clergy during worship services.

The huge battle for the heart of American Lutheranism would continue for sixteen years. Opponents boldly attacked the Augsburg Confession – even in the Gettysburg Seminary. Krauth countered by publishing an analytical bibliography of the best studies done on the AC, hoping that young theologians would begin to see its value. Lines were being drawn. The Krauths brought a resolution to the GS calling for subscription to the Symbols in 1851. It failed. However, support was growing.

Counter-Attack

The New Measure men sought a way to lure back some who might be comfortable with a middle ground. S.S. Schmucker and Kurtz, without Synodical request or approval, produced a statement which they hoped would restore unity, and published it anonymously in 1855 under the title, "*The Definite Synodical Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinary, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod.*" It openly charged the AC with false doctrine because of its approval of private confession and absolution, its denial of the divine mandate for Sabbath worship, its recognition of the

power of Baptism and of the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, and so on. The fact that the writers felt that this sort of a “compromise” would lure some back to their cause shows just how sad things really were. In the end, only three of the district synods signed on to it. But now their position was clearly in the open. These were the key leaders of the synod and seminary. Their slip was showing.

Prompted by the appearance of the *Definite Platform*, Walther extended a call to all true Lutherans to unite under the Augsburg Confession. He saw that the only hope for those in the GS who loved the confessions was to establish a new church body. Though Krauth was an avid admirer of Walther, at this point he still felt compelled to turn the General Synod ship around. He still saw hope for the GS since many appeared “winnable.” In the middle of the extremes on both sides of the General Synod stood a significant group of pastors which he described as “The Moral Weaklings.” Each side saw this central group as being on its side. But any proposal now brought or supported was in essence the old *Definite Platform* with new boards.

A New Weapon In the Fight

The Moderates had always possessed a powerful tool in the form of “*The Lutheran Observer*,” through which Kurtz continued to pound home the ideas of the *Platform*. Many of Krauth’s articles had been published in other less important works, and the conservative wing of the GS felt it was an urgent necessity for the church to offer an “antidote,” and so it established “*The Lutheran and Missionary*.” Dr. Krauth was selected as the general editor (a seat he would fill for the next 7 years), and Rev. W.A. Passavant was named co-editor. The first issue appeared on Reformation Day, 1861, and Krauth was given “carte blanche” toward content. Seeing the enormous potential for the cause of the faith, he resigned his

post as pastor and pursued the position as a full-time occupation. Now twice a month his words could pour into the minds of young theologians all around the country urging them toward the Symbols.

This position clearly positioned him as the champion of the cause. It enabled others, such as Walther and the Norwegians, to get a regular, first hand account of Krauth's theology and what he had in store for the future. But the enemy paper fired back with every issue. As each convention drew near the editors urged their readers to stand firm in their positions. In preparation for the 1864 General Synod Convention Kurtz requested, "No time should be wasted by the discussion of controversial points of doctrine pertaining to the sacraments."²³ Both sides wanted to keep the Synod together, but for completely different reasons.

The Time for Action

While the country was embroiled in a great Civil War, Lutheranism was also. 1864 became the watershed year. Two key events set the stage for the upcoming pull out and establishment of the General Council (GC). First, at York, Pennsylvania, the GS met to consider the request of the pietistic Franckean Synod (FS) for entrance into its ranks. In its twenty-seven years of existence the FS had established a reputation of being very unconcerned with doctrine. Some of its members not only openly despised the Augsburg Confession but were even considered questionable on the doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ.²⁴ When the vote for acceptance came to the floor of the convention there was bitter debate, but when the tally was complete ninety-seven stood in favor of the FS and only forty opposed it. Immediately a protest was drawn up charging the Synod with a violation of its own constitution. The Pennsylvania delegation tendered their resignation from the Synod. The mother church body

was leaving. Chaos reigned on the floor of the convention. A committee was selected by the Synod to propose amendments to the constitution that would appease the confessional men, but Krauth, Passavant and others were unmoved. They had finally had enough.

Within only days of the York assembly the PM met to consider an idea they had been kicking around for years: the establishment of their own seminary. Since S.S. Schmucker had retired from his professorship three months earlier, an opening on the Gettysburg faculty was available. However, the General Synod had now shown its true heart. The PM had no delusions of placing a confessional man in the chair. Krauth was, by this time, their shining star in theological work, but due to his sharp polemics against the softness of the faculty, there was no way he would be selected. It turned out to be a good thing. Had he been appointed to the post, all that was to follow might not have taken place.

The PM men knew they must now take another course. They unanimously resolved to start their own seminary in the city of Philadelphia. Its doctrinal character was to be "unreservedly and unchangeably based on all the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." (Sp. II, p.140). Three professors would constitute the initial faculty: Dr. W.J. Mann for the German Department, Dr. C.F. Schaeffer for the Intermediate Department and C.P. Krauth for the English Department. The school was soon up and running with an enrollment of eleven students, though within eight years it would reach sixty. Professor Krauth conducted classes in the areas of Church History, Church Polity, Systematics, Hebrew and both Old and New Testament Exegesis. Students remember him lecturing from German works and then applying them to the theological climate in America. Through his insistence the seminary library obtained many German books. Knowing the value of theological periodicals, he established one among the student body in order to teach them the finer points of polemics.

Nevertheless, through all of this CPK still had hopes for the GS and viewed the new seminary as a way of harmonizing the fighting. For the leaders in the GS, however, this was the last straw. The confessional men in PM were branded “extremists” and “a Romish threat” seeking to force others to bow to the confessions of the church. But with their removal from the Synod and his new role as educator, Krauth was in the driver’s seat and arguably the most influential Lutheran in the land.

Fort Wayne, Indiana was the site for the 1866 GS convention. The PM sent a delegation, led by Krauth, with the hope of restoring their status. The convention refused to receive the credentials of the twelve men. So, within a few weeks, the mother synod met at Lancaster, Pennsylvania and officially declared its withdrawal from the GS on confessional grounds. The apple cart had been tipped. The New York Ministerium and five other synods pulled out. Splinters from them reorganized, and some returned, but the GS dropped from nearly 900 congregations to only 590 by 1868. Krauth and his followers saw that hopes for pulling the GS back with them were lost, and there was now a sense of purpose to what they must do. For him the entire event magnified not only the great problems in doctrinal matters, but also a defect in the sphere of church government. When the word of the Ministerium’s withdrawal reached St. Louis, Walther cheered: “Scarcely any event, within the bounds of the Lutheran Church of North America has ever afforded us greater joy.”²⁵ Missouri had been working toward fellowship with a number of other church bodies. With this news Walther saw fellowship with Krauth’s party as a distinct possibility on the horizon.

A Call to Unite

The PM immediately established a committee charged with organizing a general church body on a truly Lutheran

basis. Krauth and seventeen others were assigned the task of issuing a statement to all Lutheran synods that held to the AC and inviting them to the formation of a union. Charles penned the fraternal address:

It is most clear that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America needs a general organization, first and supremely for the maintenance of unity in the true faith of the Gospel, and in the uncorrupted sacraments, as the Word of God teaches and our Church confesses them; and, furthermore, for the preservation of her genuine spirit and worship, and for the development of her practical life in all its forms . . . In the light of the history of our whole church, and more especially of this Western portion of it, we are called, in the simplicity of the faith of our fathers, and in the honest singleness of their heart and confession, clearly to declare what is the great end for which we build, to wit: The pure Gospel and its Sacraments, the preservation and extension of which can alone give to Synods a true value. The Church needs an organization in which Christian liberty shall work under the law of love and in the grace and beauty of divine order, in which shall be unmistakably acknowledged the common faith once delivered to the saints, the testimony of which is found in unmingled purity in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, in its native, original and only true sense, on which our Church rests as her unchangeable confessional foundation. . . . The condition and wants of our Church in this land make it clear that we are not moving in this matter on insufficient or doubtful grounds. . . . There is danger that the genuinely Lutheran elements may become gradually alienated, that misunderstandings may arise, that the narrow and local may overcome the broad and general, that the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace may be lost, and that our Church, which alone in the history of Protestantism has maintained a genuine catholicity and unity, should drift into sectarianism and separatism which characterize and curse our land. . . . Moved by these great facts, and by a hearty desire for the unity of Zion, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the oldest of

Lutheran Synods in the United States, has felt that, under providential guidance whose history is too recent and familiar to all to need repetition here, her motives could not be misunderstood in taking this necessary initiative to future action. In conformity with her resolution, therefore, we invite you to appoint delegates to represent you in a convention for the purpose of forming a union of Lutheran Synods. ²⁶ (Sp. II, p.167)

The invitation went out not only to synods, but also to pastors and congregations directly. In many local parishes people were split over what to do. Lawsuits were filed in the courts to determine what all the legal ramifications would be. The leaders of the GS were furious. They appointed a committee of five men to prepare an address condemning the action and calling churches and pastors to remain with them. In a move to stem the flow toward the new Lutheran body, the committee compelled the elderly Dr. Charles Phillip Krauth to add his name, by their request, as a statement against the actions of his son. He did so but, we can only imagine, reluctantly. He passed away the following year.

Formation of the General Council

The year 1866 was to be a year of extreme highs, lows and major stress for the 43-year-old professor. He and his wife lost two children: Julia who was only three, and Robert, an infant. His father was ailing and still on the other side in all of this, which broke his heart. In addition to his work at the Seminary, his writing for the paper and his central position in all of the synodical work, he was also serving a vacancy in Philadelphia.

Nonetheless, his church needed his leadership more than ever. The great gathering was to be held at Reading, Pennsylvania December 11-14, 1866. The synods present were: Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Min-

nesota, Iowa, Missouri, Canada, New York and the Norwegian Synod. The Swedes sent a letter but no delegates. The opening sermon was preached by the editor of the *Lutheran Standard*, the Rev. Mathias Loy, the new Professor at the Seminary in Columbus, Ohio and President of the Ohio Synod. Missouri sent a representative, Rev. J.A.F.W. Mueller, who read a friendly letter from Walther and Sihler, whom the LC-MS had selected as delegates, but neither of them was able to attend.

The 13-year-old Norwegian Synod sent Rev. F.A. Schmidt, who, at this point, was a promising young theologian of twenty-nine. Schmidt was teaching at the newly established Luther College and probably knew Krauth personally, having served for two years in a neighboring congregation in Baltimore from 1859-1861. His German background made him unique among the Norwegian pastors. In the years that followed, Schmidt's writings on the GC appear to carry a lot of weight in the NS. One gets the impression that he was one of the point men in regard to synodical relations with east coast Lutherans. At the Reading convention Schmidt stated the thoughts of his Synod, that the time was not ripe for forming a new general Synod and that it would be necessary to hold free conferences for a number of years to forge unity in doctrine.²⁷

Two papers by Krauth took center stage at the Convention. These would later form the basis for the constitution. Initially there was perfect agreement on all the points, the only questions being how quickly to move toward forming the new body and under what structure should it be developed. The Missourians and Norwegians loved the premise of the union, but felt that it was too early to tell if there was true unity. They requested more free conferences to ensure doctrinal agreement. Krauth kindly disagreed with their request and in the spirit of the day called for the organization to begin immediately as a place where others could find shelter. He

had no animosity toward either the LC-MS or the NS. Until his death it would remain his desire that both be brought in under the GC tent for the sake of confessional strength.

The following year (1867) the formation of the Council would finally take place. A somewhat western site was chosen, Holy Trinity in Fort Wayne, Indiana, possibly with the hope of luring more of the midwestern confessional Lutherans to attend. Ironically it was the same site from which the PM was bounced from the General Synod a year and a half earlier. The Norwegians and Missourians sent representatives to the convention, but only as observers. The Wisconsin Synod initially joined, feeling that subscription to the AC was sufficient. However, within the year they withdrew for doctrinal reasons. Rev. Adolf Hoenecke, having arrived on United States soil only four years earlier, was an instructor in the newly established seminary in Watertown. Under his direction the Synod was growing closer to Walther and it became obvious early on that issues of fellowship were not completely resolved. The Wisconsin Synod lost two pastors and Professor Martin, President of Northwestern College, over the pullout. Inside the GC the withdrawal of Wisconsin drew fierce words and Missouri was blamed for having a rigid doctrine of fellowship. Krauth, however, never expressed any animosity but continued to speak of Wisconsin in a positive light.

A Crack Left Open in the Door

The issues that caused division for the Council were known as the Four Points: Altar Fellowship, Pulpit Fellowship, Secret Societies and Millennialism. There was not solid agreement on these matters, especially in how they would be handled in practice among the various churches. Though Krauth himself agreed doctrinally with such as Walther, Wisconsin, and the Norwegians, nevertheless he saw the role of

the new body as helping weaker brothers come around to the truth. Bente summarizes his attitude: "Unite with us, and then we shall see what can be done." CPK felt that if a Synod or church could come to the Confessions as their true standard, then we should be patient to allow their practice to catch up. In fairness to him, he had probably witnessed this sort of movement in the various bodies in which he had served, and had hopes it could work again. In his mind he had seen Lutherans push so far away from the Reformed toward the confessions that he saw no reason they couldn't be brought even further. The four issues were mostly new to the American scene and there was not as much of a historical perspective on them as on other doctrines which had been dealt with sufficiently in the Reformation. It is amazing how quickly the initial zeal and unity of the GC degenerated into disharmony. Complete agreement was never there.

The errors inside his own Council were quite apparent to CPK. According to his son-in-law, "Only one year afterward Dr. Krauth declared, in private conversation, his sincere conviction that the position of the Iowa Synod on the question of church fellowship was the only correct and consistent one, and that this whole matter would not be settled in the General Council until it had reached the same position."²⁸ It never did.

Hoping to find an answer to why some had stayed out, the GC asked Krauth and two others to wrestle with the matter. Spaeth later observed that the problem was that they did not touch the main issue (fellowship) but instead saw things pertaining only to the "sphere of pastoral rules and regulations and not as a fundamental principle of faith and confession." For the church bodies that stayed out, these matters were very real and not simply things on paper. The fact that one of the GC pastors was known to be a practicing Free Mason demonstrates their concerns.²⁹

In general the GC clergy reacted harshly to the stance

of the LC-MS, the NS and Wisconsin. Though they had come so far, they had only an American context of fellowship which viewed the primary purpose of a church body as functional, not doctrinal. The concept of having a finely tuned statement on practice was completely foreign. One of the great misunderstandings regarding a truly confessional position on fellowship is that it is rigid and unloving. We must honestly admit that our position (at points when it is misapplied or not understood) can have that edge to it. But we must always view, teach and express our doctrine of church fellowship as part of true Christian love – love for Christ, love for his Word, love for our children and love for those caught in heterodoxy.

The GC theologians failed to see how all of these areas related to the Gospel. One of the GC historians, J.W. Richards, later wrote concerning the four points: “Not a single one of the points of difference touches the heart and center of Lutheranism, but they all belong to its periphery.”³⁰ Walther and the Norwegians clearly saw the connection. Every point of theology reaches the cross. Missouri continued to correspond with the GC for four years, but finally stopped when it appeared things would not change.

Krauth had done much to close the door of unionism, but the tiny crack, which he left open, was still enough to keep these confessional synods away. His practice was not tight. Bente observed that as late as 1868 CPK held that “exceptionally, non-Lutherans might be admitted to Lutheran pulpits and altars.”³¹ We can see it in Krauth’s own words from that year: “If there were a Romish Priest now (who was straight on the Gospel), . . . although still under the sway of Rome, I believe that I would be doing nothing wrong to admit him into my pulpit to preach the doctrine of justification by faith . . . We must make a difference between those who differ with us on the essential Christianity, and those who agree with us on those precious truths which rise above all distinctions.”³²

As time went on the GC fell into the habit of failing to pass disciplinary action on straying churches. Laxity in practice finally produces laxity in doctrine. Missouri had worked with many of these synods now in the GC. Some had attacked them for their doctrine and practice, and therefore true unity could not exist without arriving at common ground. We can see the differences between the Council and the NS, the LC-MS and Wisconsin by noting how the Synodical Conference would be formed. The GC had attempted to unite Lutherans by way of confessional subscription. The Synodical Conference attempted to unite Lutherans on the basis of confessional subscription *and* consistent practice. Every aspect of faith, life, words and actions, is ultimately a confession of Christ. Four years after the organization of the Council, F.A. Schmidt delivered a paper to the NS regarding their relations to other Lutherans. He spoke of the General Synod as a sect and was elated to see so many leave their ranks. When addressing the newly founded GC he speaks well of their efforts, but claims that their doctrinal basis was an empty one because the consequences in practice did not follow. He charges that "the synods did not really accept the doctrines they claimed to espouse."³³ He states that the Norwegians saw more than just the four points as problems. At the heart of the whole matter, he felt, was the relation of the authority of the symbols to the authority of Scripture. In addition he states that the GC had failed to answer also other questions: What is the Church? The Ministry? What is to be our Church Government? And what is the doctrine of the Anti-Christ? Nevertheless, the NS continued to hold out hope that the new church body could grow thoroughly confessional. Early in the 1870s, F.A. Schmidt pleads with and invites the GC to be united with the NS by 1880, in celebration of the Formula of Concord's 300th anniversary.

The Norwegians had come to America as a self-contained entity. Since they were a smaller group of immigrants,

they tended to pick up English more quickly than Germans who were also arriving in the mid-1800s. By the 1860s they were not yet infiltrated by the American idea of blending in. Later generations have a tendency to let go of their identity in order to “flourish.” But at this point in time they were still settling in and were very selective about fellowship. The NS pastors were very careful to thoroughly examine the doctrine and practice of others before proceeding. Having struggled with the Haugean influence of Elling Eielsen, they had a nose for pietism and saw small remnants of Reformed theology in some of the American Lutheran synods.

A Legacy in Words

Krauth would serve his church body as president from 1870-1880. In 1871 much of his previous work on the history of the Reformation, the Confessions, and the Sacraments would be published in *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*. Earlier papers, articles and lecture notes taken by students were pored over, edited and added to for a fresh presentation. The book clearly demonstrates his love for the history of our confession and shows why Walther and others had such high regard for his work. He dedicates over 300 pages to the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper. It represents the seasoned, mature Krauth, who states that “in no case has any line been allowed to stand which does not express a present conviction, not simply as to what is true, but as to the force of the grounds on which its truth is argued.”³⁴

As the Council continued to struggle with matters of fellowship, CPK published a set of theses on the subject in 1877 and penned what has been known as the famous Galesburg Rule, “1. The rule is: Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran ministers only, Lutheran altars are for Lutheran communicants only. 2. The exceptions to the rule belong to the sphere of privilege, not of right. 3. The determination of the

exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles, by the conscientious judgment of pastors, as the case arises.”

³⁵ The rule was lambasted in the public newspapers and became an embarrassment to some of the churches. Though it received general approval, its directive was never truly followed. The history of the GC shows a final caving in to the liberal elements at work by the turn of the century. The record indicates that the concerns of those in the Synodical Conference were well founded. It is somewhat ironic that this excellent theologian spent the final years of his life defending the very doctrine of fellowship which, by being practiced un-Biblically against his wishes, would ultimately strangle his influence.

Throughout his life, Krauth continued to have an admiration and respect especially for Walther. He would later write to his own men in the Council:

I have been saddened beyond expression by the bitterness displayed toward the Missouriians. So far as they have helped us to see the great principles involved in this disputation they have been our benefactors, and although they have misunderstood some of us, that was perhaps inevitable. They are men of God, and their work has been of inestimable value.

During the election controversy the aging Krauth would support Walther and the NS. He remained well versed in all the issues of the debate. He clung to the FC Article XI: “The truth in the Formula so strictly follows the line of Scriptural thinking that it is hard to get a spear’s point under the scales of its armor.”³⁶ At Krauth’s death in 1883 Walther would consider him “the most eminent man in the English Lutheran Church of this country . . . wholeheartedly devoted to the pure doctrine of our Church, as he had learned to understand it, a noble man and without guile.”³⁷

Sad to say, his influence was never thorough in the

GC. Pieper commented: “While Krauth advocated the strictly confessional principle . . . the General Council united with the General Synod, the United Synod of the South and other Lutheran Synods to form the ULCA without regard for the principles of Krauth. We cannot escape the conviction that neither Walther’s nor Krauth’s influence had gained the ascendancy.”³⁸

Somewhere in the attic of today’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sits an old trunk from a great-great grandfather, which contains the beautiful gem of Charles Porterfield Krauth’s work. We can only hope that some of his children will venture up those stairs, dust off the lid and peak inside. The failure of his movement to stay alive, and the suddenness of its death, should remind us of how vital the issues of doctrine and fellowship must be for our generation. How quickly the truth can be perverted. May God preserve us in our confession and our practice.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Demme was trained in Halle, but appears to be somewhat orthodox. He was involved in liturgical and hymnological studies. *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, Concordia Publishing House, 1954 Edition, p. 228.
- ² Adolph Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, Christian Lit. Co. 1898, Vol. I, p. 20.
- ³ *Ibid*, p. 20.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, p. 24.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, p. 43.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, p. 51.
- ⁷ The year before her death the family moved to the West Indies for better weather. While on St. Thomas CPK served as pastor of a Dutch Reformed Church.
- ⁸ Spaeth, Vol. I, p. 72.
- ⁹ *Ibid*, p. 72.
- ¹⁰ F. Bente, *American Lutheranism*, Vol. II, CPH, St. Louis, 1919, p. 19.
- ¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 72.
- ¹² Spaeth, Vol. I, p. 326. As an example of laxity on the Lord's Supper; the NY Ministerium's Communion invitation read: "In the name of Christ, our common and only Master, I say to all who own Him as their Savior and resolve to be his faithful subjects: ye are welcome to this feast of love." The GS statement was even broader.
- ¹³ From an editorial, November, 1849, found in Spaeth, Vol. I, p. 344.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 119-120.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 126-127.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 134.
- ¹⁷ J.L. Neve, *A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America*, German Literary Board, 1916, p. 120.
- ¹⁸ Bente, Vol. II, p. 68.

¹⁹ Neve, p. 115.

²⁰ F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1950, Vol. I, p. 182.

²¹ Reproduced in CTM, Vol. XVIII, #4.

²² Spaeth, Vol. I., p. 193.

²³ Spaeth, Vol. II, p. 128.

²⁴ It is interesting to note that in the 1850s three Norwegian pastors left the Elling Eielsen Synod to join the Franckean Synod. Our fathers in the NS had an early aversion to east coast Lutheranism. See *Vivacious Daughter*.

²⁵ Spaeth, Vol. II, p. 162.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 167.

²⁷ John Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?*, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1966, p. 55.

²⁸ Spaeth, Vol. II, p. 204.

²⁹ Bente, p. 208.

³⁰ J. Richards, *The Confessional History of the Lutheran Church*, Philadelphia, 1909, pp. 613-615.

³¹ Bente, p. 183.

³² Spaeth, Vol. II, p. 201.

³³ Tietjen, p. 70.

³⁴ C.P. Krauth, *The Conservation Reformation*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1978, Preface XIII.

³⁵ Bente, p. 203.

³⁶ Bente, p. 185.

³⁷ *Lehre und Wehre*, 1883, 32.

³⁸ Pieper, Vol. I, p. 182.

What is the Law/Gospel Implication of Galatians 3:24?

by John A. Moldstad, Jr.

Galatians 3:23-25: Πρὸ τοῦ δὲ ἔλθειν τὴν πίστιν ὑπὸ νόμον ἔφρουρούμεθα συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι, ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν· ἔλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἔσμεν.

Galatians 3:23-25: Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

We entertain the above question for two reasons. First, there exists a wide variety of translations of παιδαγωγός. Secondly, questions have arisen as to what is meant by “to Christ” (εἰς Χριστόν) or, as the prepositional phrase is better rendered by a footnote in the NIV, “until Christ came.”

Three terms in the first half of verse 24 are crucial to a correct understanding of what the apostle Paul conveys here in his polemical letter written as a defense of the true doctrine of justification in opposition to the “faith + works” system of the Judaizers. These terms are ὁ νόμος, παιδαγωγός, and Χριστός. Is “the law” the entire Mosaic system, or is it specifically the Decalog (the moral law), or is it just to be taken as a reference to the whole Old Testament? Depending on how one takes “the law,” should παιδαγωγός be translated “tutor” (NASB, Beck), “guardian” (God’s Word), “schoolmaster” (KJV, NKJV), “custodian” (RSV), or – as a phrase – “put in charge to lead” (NIV)? Finally, the exegete

must determine whether the use of Χριστός in its accusative form with the preposition εἰς refers to the time when Christ would come (the incarnation and the New Testament era) or – more specifically – to the doctrine of the gospel in the narrow sense.

For the most part, we could list the various views as follows:

- 1) In the past, the law (the Old Testament) served as a teacher (a schoolmaster) in leading people to Christ as the Savior. [This view is given prominence by the King James Version.]
- 2) In the past, the law (the Decalog) served as a guide in having people see Christ as the Savior.
- 3) In the past, the law (the whole Mosaic system) served as a nanny until the time when Christ came (the New Testament era). [Here we wish to mention an excellent article in the January, 1998, edition of the *Lutheran Spokesman*.]
- 4) The law (the moral law) is a necessary precursor to hearing the gospel, since it shows the sinner his need for the Savior.

Any interpretation which would make the law—in terms of the Decalog (a summation of the moral code for all time) – a kind of assisting guide/teacher in performing the actual function assigned only to the gospel, does an injustice not only to Paul’s line of argumentation in Galatians but to all of Scripture. Views 1) and 2) above leave open the possibility, if not actually teach, that the law plays a part in bringing salvation to the sinner. But this can never be, for Paul clearly delineates in this letter how the law and the gospel must be kept in their proper spheres. The law shows the sinner his abject spiritual poverty before the all-encompassing, perfect demands of a holy and righteous God. For example, the apostle says, “For through the law **I died** to the law...” (ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ **ἠπέθανον**), Galatians 2:19. In his letter to the

Romans, Paul similarly speaks of the law as having a mirror effect, reflecting for the consciousness of the sinner the gravity of his sin for what it really is: "...through the law we become **conscious** of sin" (διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας), Romans 3:20. Our Lutheran Confessions define the law as "a divine doctrine which reveals the righteousness and immutable will of God, shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thoughts, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God, and threatens the transgressors of the law with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishment" (FC, SD, V, 17; Tappert).

In light of the wide range of meanings given to παιδαγωγός by our English versions, one would be tempted simply to transliterate: "pedagogue." But this also does not do justice to the term. The common understanding of a pedagogue is that of "a dull, formal, or pedantic teacher" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition). Yet, as we can see from the immediate preceding and succeeding context, Paul is making the point that the religious/ceremonial aspect of the entire Mosaic Law system served a **useful purpose**, not dull or boring! It served the purpose of fostering, guiding and "babysitting" the people who were under the old covenant until the time when Christ would come on the scene. Verse 25 especially brings home this point. Paul writes: "Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."

Louw/Nida, Bauer/Arndt/Gingrich, et. al., remind us that the classical meaning of the term παιδαγωγός was that of a young male slave whose job was to bring a boy to and from school and who also was expected to tutor and supervise him by his whole demeanor. For this reason, the rendering "chaperon" may be one of the better suggestions put forth for παιδαγωγός. [See the People's Bible commentary *Galatians, Ephesians* by Armin J. Panning, p. 69.]

But the real issue in the hermeneutical handling of

Galatians 3:24 doesn't center so much on the translation of παιδαγωγός. It focuses more on the question as to whether the apostle Paul is here treating the pedagogical use of the moral law (intended for all people) as preparatory for the presentation of the Gospel, or whether he is referring particularly to the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Law (intended for God's people of the old covenant) which tutored and guided the people until the time Christ would come and make the once-for-all atoning sacrifice for sin. This writer believes the latter is the case. I tend to agree with the comment made by W. M. H. Petersen in his *Hermeneutics* of 1899. Petersen feels that, on this verse, conservative Lutheran scholars in their commendable zeal to set forth the clear distinction between the Law and the Gospel, often have overlooked the immediate context. He writes:

This passage is usually explained of the pedagogical use of the moral law, but the context (v. 23, 25 and 28, and chapter 4:1-4) shows that it treats of the pedagogical use, not of the moral law for every man in particular, but of the pedagogical use of the ritual and ceremonial law for the Jews in general, and how that was to prepare them for the Gospel. The passage may, by analogy, be accommodated to and applied to the moral law, but its true sense is the one here given, as we can see from the context and connection. (p. 160 of the handwritten edition)

At the risk of appearing presumptuous, we offer an extended paraphrase of Galatians 3:23-25. We can picture Paul pleading with his Galatian readership not to be bound by ceremonial regulations as having an effect on their salvation:

"Before the time when the faith appeared on the scene (that is, the one in whom our faith centers) we—God's people of the past—were guarded like prisoners until this long-anticipated "time of faith" was revealed. In

this way the whole Mosaic law system became our chaperon (especially through the shadows and types of the O. T. ceremonies pointing to Christ) until the time when Christ arrived. This was done so that we might be justified (only) through faith—faith in Christ. But now that the “time of faith” has come we don’t have any use any more for putting ourselves under a chaperon like the Old Testament Mosaic law system.

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