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THE HEART OF LUTHERAN PENTECOST PREACHING:
A COMPARISON OF LUTHER, WALTHER,
AND SPENER

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This thesis was prompted by the desire to aid Lutheran Pentecost preaching. It was hoped to do that both in a positive way, determining what are the good things to be said in a Lutheran Pentecost sermon, and in a negative way, determining what are the errors to be avoided.

In the actual carrying out of those goals the research focuses on two issues. The issue related to the positive goal is, are there certain emphases that are found throughout Lutheran Pentecost preaching? In relation to the negative goal the issue is, have these Lutheran emphases been influenced by differing views of the Spirit than that originally held by Martin Luther himself?

The method used to answer the first issue follows the scriptural injunction that every word should be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses (Matthew 18:16b RSV). The Pentecost sermons of three Lutheran preachers from three different centuries will be examined: Martin Luther himself (1500s), Jakob Phillip Spener (1600s), and C. F. W. Walther (1800s). If specific themes are found to be emphasized in all three periods, that should be sufficient evidence to establish these themes as common to Lutheran preaching.

However, before these themes are accepted as the proper emphases for Lutheran preaching they will be compared to yet another standard, that of the original Pentecost preacher, Simon Peter. While Peter is not a Lutheran, using him as a standard for Lutheran preaching is a very Lutheran thing to do. As it says in the Formula of Concord,

We believe, teach and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with (all) teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone.¹

Those themes will be accepted as proper positive Lutheran emphases if they can meet two criteria: one, they are held in common by all three Lutheran preachers and two, they meet the standards of scripture, primarily the Pentecost preaching of Peter.

The second issue, about whether or not these emphases have been influenced since Luther's day by a differing view of the Spirit, is more difficult to answer. Since Luther's time there have been a variety of heterodox movements which may have influenced Lutheran Pentecost preaching. Studying all of these, however, is well beyond the scope of this thesis. This thesis has chosen to focus on one particular movement known as Pietism.

Pietism was chosen for two reasons. First, Pietism traces its historical roots from within the Lutheran church.

¹"The Formula of Concord: Of the Summary, Content, Rule and Standard", Concordia Triglotta, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 777.

This is all the more reason to enquire whether it may have influenced Lutheran preaching. Secondly, while other movements differed with Lutheranism on the issue of the sacraments, justification or the like, the controversy surrounding Pietism engaged the concern of this thesis, Pentecost and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Pietism, therefore, provides a striking contrast to the Lutheran way in Pentecost preaching. It does not take too much reading to see that later Pietists like August Franke and Gerhard Teersteegen are poles apart from Martin Luther in their understanding of the Spirit.

For example, for Luther the Spirit always comes through the external means of grace appointed by God. For the Pietist the Spirit comes directly to illuminate man. For Luther the Spirit is the one who gives us faith or in other words, the one who gives us Jesus Christ and his gifts through the means of grace. For the Pietist the Spirit is also primarily a power to good works for the distinguishing of the Christian from his worldly counterpart. As a summation of this, for Luther the Spirit is always the Spirit of Jesus. Even on Pentecost the center of his preaching is always Christ. For the Pietist the Spirit takes on an existence and work replacing or independent of Jesus. The Spirit is a power who may even supersede the importance of Jesus in the daily life of the Christian.

Because of this great contrast this thesis will focus

its attention on the view of the Spirit held by Pietism. That decision means that the original goal and issue need to be restated. This paper does not endeavor to deal with all the errors to be avoided in Penetecost preaching, but only those evidenced by Pietism. Furthermore, the issue is not whether or not Lutheran preaching has been influenced by differing views of the Spirit, but in what ways has it been influenced by the view of the Spirit held by Pietism?

To answer this second issue the following method will be used. The same body of research used in resolving the first issue will be examined, that is, the Pentecost preaching of Luther, Spener, and Walther. Only here, the concern is not where they agree but where they differ. Also, unlike the first issue where they are treated in their similarities as equals, here, in their dissimilarities, they will have differing roles to play. Their roles could be compared to that of the elements in a simple equation such as $1+X=2$.

All equations have a known total or sum on the right side of the equal sign. Likewise, if this thesis is to determine the influence of Pietism on Lutheran preaching, there must be a sum or standard for that Lutheran preaching. The sum for this thesis will be the preaching of Luther. He will be the primary source for the positive criterion of Lutheran Pentecost preaching.

It is assumed by this paper that Luther (specifically

the mature Luther) is the proper standard for Lutheran preaching. It is the admitted bias of this paper that Luther should provide an excellent model of preaching the Pentecost themes laid down by Peter. Since for the most part those who examine this paper will be Lutheran preachers, it is assumed they will share this bias. However, should Luther deviate from the apostolic proclamation, it will be duly noted.

All algebraic equations also have a second known factor to the left of the equal sign which is contrasted with the sum. As said previously the contrasting factor to Lutheran preaching is Pietism. In this thesis that Pietistic contrast will be exemplified by the preaching of Spener. He will provide the example of the negative, the errors to be avoided in a sermon. He is less than the sum for while he carries the name of Lutheran he has been judged by history as a Pietist, being called "Pietism's foremost theologian, and its founder within Lutheran ranks . . ." ² He will be read as a known figure, and it may be expected to see the influence of Pietism in his preaching.

Other Pietistic preachers could have been chosen, some of whom would have more clearly shown the contrast between Lutheranism and Pietism. However, very few Lutheran preachers would fall into such obvious Pietistic errors.

²Bengt Hägglund, History of Theology, (St. Louis: Publishing House, 1968), 326.

Spener is perfect for this research in that he felt he was solidly Lutheran, but he is viewed as the predecessor of such extreme Pietist preachers as Franke and Teersteegen.³ He may provide an example of one who speaks as a Lutheran but teaches Pietism. As such he is an excellent diagnostic tool for Lutheran preaching.

The final element in an equation is the unknown, the 'X' factor. For this thesis the unknown factor is whether the Pietistic view of the Spirit which influenced Spener continued to influence Lutheran preaching after his day? The preacher chosen to represent this unknown factor is Walther, who preached some 200 years after Spener. It could be argued that Walther is anything but an unknown. He is after all one of the greatest theologians of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. His book The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel is a primary doctrinal and homiletical text in use at LCMS seminaries. While this paper has no quibble with the excellence of that particular work, it is its contention that even one like Walther who knows his theology so well, is still capable of showing other influences in his actual preaching.

Walther will be considered in his similarities to both Luther and Spener. In either case he should be of help in diagnosing sermons for Pietistic influences similar to those seen in Spener. Where he agrees with Spener will reveal

³Ibid.

important examples of how one can be Lutheran yet still be under the influence of another view of the Spirit. Where he agrees with Luther, he should provide helpful examples of how to clearly distinguish Lutheranism from Pietism. That is after all the one shortcoming of Luther as the positive example. Since he pre-dates Pietism he cannot give a direct response to it, although he does respond to similar tendencies evidenced by the Enthusiasts. Walther may then show how Lutheran preaching differentiates itself from the preaching of Pietism.

In answering the two issues mentioned above the paper is divided into seven chapters. The next chapter will look at the Pentecost sermon of Peter, as the scriptural rule and standard of all Pentecost preaching. It will also review exemplary sermons of Luther, Walther and Spener. These sermons are given as representative samples of the material which forms the body of research for this thesis. That body of research consists of a survey of Pentecost sermons based on Acts 2 available in the German by the three Lutheran preachers mentioned.

Luther's sermons studied reflect his later preaching from 1529-1544 and so represent the unquestionably mature Luther. The preaching of C. F. W. Walther comes from three collections of sermons representing most of his preaching career from 1843 until 1882. While there are two collections that provide the source for Jakob Spener's Pente-

cost preaching, the vast majority of the sermons referred to come from his Lauterkeit des Evangelischen Christenthums. There is a danger that conclusions made about Spener may reflect the bias of the unnamed editor of that work. However, the sermons in that work include samples from almost two decades of preaching, 1668-1684. Also the primary sermon referred to in that work is from 1882 which should reflect the fully developed thought of Spener.

After the sample sermons, the following chapters use the standard of Peter's preaching to provide the structure for the thesis. From a reading of his sermon there are three major arteries which flow from the heart of Pentecost preaching.

The first of these is Jesus. Although Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit, is delivering his message on the day the Holy Spirit was given, he still preaches this Jesus, whom God has made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36 RSV).

The second artery for Peter's preaching is the means of grace. At the end of Peter's Pentecost sermon he calls the people to receive the Spirit not in mighty wind, tongues of fire or another language, but by being baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38 RSV).

The third artery is faith and its fruits. After Peter's sermon, it is said, "All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had

need" (Acts 2:44 RSV). The purpose of Peter's sermon, fulfilled in some 3000, was baptismal faith, a faith which showed itself in the fruits of the sanctified life. As Luther says in the German phrasing of the meaning of the third article of the creed, "The Holy Spirit, . . . who in the true faith sanctifies and keeps me."⁴

Finally there is the heart from which all these arteries flow, the forgiveness of sins. When one speaks of the Holy Spirit in terms of Jesus, means of grace, and faith, he does not speak of unrelated items. Rather it is the Holy Spirit who through the means of grace gives us faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins. As Peter put it so simply in his Pentecost sermon, "Repent, and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38) This thought is echoed by Luther who said in the Small Catechism "in which Christian Church, He [the Holy Spirit] forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers".⁵

It is these four points from the New Testament Pentecost which will provide the framework for the analysis of the three Lutheran preachers. Within this framework some other related issues the preachers speak on will be examined.

⁴Martin Luther, "Small Catechism", Concordia Tri-
glotta, 545.

⁵Ibid.

Finally the last chapter will summarize both the positive emphases that have been discovered as well as the Pietistic errors that may have influenced these emphases. In addition, as a result of this analysis, the paper hopes to provide certain diagnostic questions which may help determine where Lutheran preaching has been affected by a Pietistic view of the Spirit.

CHAPTER II

PENTECOST PREACHING

The Preaching of Peter: Acts 2:14-39

This examination of Luthern Pentecost preaching begins with the original Pentecost sermon delivered by Peter in Acts 2. All of the quotations following are from the Revised Standard Version. The overall structure of Peter's sermon is one common to many modern sermons. It consists of a text, its exposition and finally its application to the hearer. His introduction, however, is certainly unique.

Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. (Acts 2:14,15)

Not many modern preachers begin their sermons by defending themselves against the charge of drunkenness. This accusation by the mockers is of course a ridiculous explanation for what was happening. Drunken babbling hardly would fit the crowds declaration that "we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11). In addition to this obvious reply to the mockers, Peter adds the practical one, it is simply too early in the morning for them to be intoxicated.

Peter not only refutes the gainsayers, but also uses their accusations as an introduction to the proper

explanation for this amazing preaching in various languages.

He quotes from Joel 2:28:

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. . . And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:17-21)

Following this scripture reading comes Peter's exposition of this text:

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know--this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (Acts 2:22-24)

Peter might be accused of using the Joel passage merely as a pre-text for his exposition. There is an apparent discrepancy as Joel is speaking primarily about the Spirit of God, yet Peter is speaking solely about Jesus of Nazareth. There are two explanations for this.

One is that Joel opens the door for the discussion of Jesus with his reference to the Lord in the last part of the passage "And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." This part of the passage is Peter's primary reference for his exposition. The other explanation is that, as Peter demonstrates later in the sermon, to properly speak of the Spirit one must first speak of Jesus. Whatever the explanation it is certainly striking to see Peter use a passage about the Spirit as a basis for

an exposition of the life, ministry and saving work of Jesus.

At this point Peter brings in his second scripture passage, this one from Psalm 16:

I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will dwell in hope. For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption. (Acts 2:25-27)

Again his exposition of this text is all about Jesus.

[David] Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. (Acts 2:30-31)

In addition to this Christo-centric exposition, Peter must also answer his contemporary exegetes who saw Psalm 16 as speaking only of David. He does so by first pointing out the obvious reason why this passage could not refer to David.

Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. (Acts 2:29)

It was evident that David's flesh had seen corruption, so plainly in Psalm 16 David must have been speaking of someone who would come after him.

Furthermore, Peter says, David never ascended to the right of hand of God. David did believe that one of his descendants would. This one would be so much greater than David that even King David himself would call him Lord.

For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet." (Acts 2:34,35)

The clear conclusion to all this is, according to Peter, that David did not speak of himself in Psalm 16 but prophetically spoke of the resurrection of the Christ.

It is in this part of Peter's exposition that he speaks of the relationship of the day's events and Jesus.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. (Acts 2:32-33)

Peter had told them at the beginning that the miraculous speaking in other languages was the fulfillment of the prophetic message of the Spirit. They had received this Spirit as God promised in the prophet Joel, but the crucial testimony was that this Spirit promised by the Father had been poured out on them by Jesus Christ. It was to this Jesus that they were witnesses, empowered by His Spirit.

Certainly Peter's Jesus-centered exposition of the Old Testament is remarkable. However, a sermon is more than just exegesis of a scriptural passage. It is a word directed towards the listener, and its working in him. Since this is not an exegetical paper but a homiletical one, the greater concern is Peter's application of his exposition.

Peter's application consists of two parts. First, in Acts 2:36 he says: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ,

this Jesus whom you crucified." The first part of this verse is a summary of his scriptural exposition, that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. The last half is the application, calling upon the hearers to consider how they have treated God's chosen one. Like all effective applications of the Law it achieves the desired result, the acknowledgement of sin. "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37).

The second part of Peter's application is the Gospel's call:

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

If the first part of the application was to trouble the hearers, the second was to comfort them by showing them a way out of their sins. As with the first application, it too worked the desired result. "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

Lutherans would label these two applications as Law and Gospel. The Law makes aware of sin, and utmost sin it was, the rejection of Jesus whom God had made Lord and Christ. The Gospel delivers the sinner with the promise that there is forgiveness for him, forgiveness by baptism in the name of Jesus.

The effect of this Law and Gospel preaching is to be faith. The Law does its alien work condemning sin, and so

prepares the heart for faith by showing the great need of the sinner. The Gospel is the proper worker of faith by giving the good news that sins are forgiven in Jesus Christ. On Pentecost, faith is accomplished with some three thousand souls being added to the number of those who "believed" (Acts 2:41-44).

If we as Lutherans want to label Peter's application as Gospel, and the goal of that application as faith, we should note that Peter himself does not use those terms in his sermon. That is not to suggest that faith and Gospel are not proper terms for Pentecost sermons. It is to suggest that the bare usage of the word Gospel or faith will simply evoke a question from the hearer, "What good news do you mean?" or "What is it I am to have faith in?" or better yet to combine the questions, "What is the good news you would have me believe?"

While Peter does not use the terms faith or Gospel, he does answer these faith/Gospel questions. For the purpose of this paper that answer should be delineated. The answer consists in four parts which are listed in Acts 2:38. The first part is the forgiveness of sins. This is the good news that even while we were yet sinners Jesus Christ died for us. This is what we believe, that in Christ we are forgiven.

The second element is the means whereby we receive this forgiveness and faith. In this case Peter calls to

Baptism since it is the means which creates faith/disciples as mandated by the Lord in his commissioning of the eleven disciples (Matt. 28:16-20). If he had been addressing more mature Christians he may have spoken of the other means ordained by Christ, such as the Word, the Supper, or the Absolution--"those who received his word" (Acts 2:41).

The third element is the source of the forgiveness and the giver of the means, Jesus Christ. As seen above, this Jesus, with his death and resurrection, is the central element of Peter's sermon. Jesus is the one who was put to death for our sins and raised for our justification (Acts 2:32, Rom. 4:25).

The final element is the gift of the Holy Spirit. What is noteworthy here, is that while speaking of the gift of the Holy Spirit Peter does not direct his hearer's attention back to the mighty wind, the tongues of fire, the speaking in various languages or any other miraculous manifestations of the Spirit. Neither does he direct the hearers to their own experience of the Spirit. Rather he talks of the gift of the Spirit in terms of the aforementioned elements, Jesus, Baptism, and the forgiveness of sins. These are the gifts of the Spirit (subjective genitive).

The four elements show that while Peter does not use the terms Gospel or faith he does address the theme of Gospel and faith. He gives the definitive answer to the

question, "What is the good news to believe in?"

In summary of Peter's Pentecost sermon the following items may be noted. One is Peter's masterful Christocentric exposition of the Old Testament. Even more important for this paper are the masterful themes of his application. He speaks Law and calls for repentance. He speaks Gospel in terms of Jesus, means of grace, and forgiveness. He speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit in relation to this Gospel. The final item of note is that this Spirit-filled Gospel evokes faith within the hearts of men.

The Preaching of Martin Luther: What Is the
Holy Spirit and the Rule of Christ.
The Signs of the Sending of the
Holy Spirit. His Office.

In a 1531 Pentecost sermon Luther proclaims:

This festival is rich and it offers much to be preached. But that we do not bite off more than we can chew we will defer the Gospel until we have preached on the history. . . . Then we will rightly learn what the Holy Ghost and the rule of Christ is. And this article, of which you have often heard us preach, is wholly the chief point of our faith that remains not in our works. . . . For of this festival his rule must remain.¹

In his introduction Luther comments on how difficult it is to preach on Pentecost for there is so much to say. However, he reminds the hearer that while there is much to say, whatever is said must not focus on our works but on faith and the rule of Christ.

¹Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, ed. Georg Buchwald, 2 vols. (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Publisher, 1925), 2:320.

What follows is a sermon structure very close to Peter's. There is a scripture reading, an exposition of the text, and then application. After the above introductory paragraph Luther reads the text for the day Acts 2:1-4, but as will become apparent in the rest of the sermon, he really covers all of Acts 2.

Following the scripture reading he begins, as he indicated in the introduction, with a brief exposition of the history of Pentecost.

The origin of Pentecost, that the Jews celebrated in the Old Testament, was from Moses. On that day they commemorated that they had received the law on Mt. Sinai. On Easter day the Jews had gone out from Egypt and after fifty days have received the law from Moses. . . . This was their Pentecost: They beheld not the Holy Spirit, but only the ten commandments, what they should do and not do; and these were so frightening to look on that they could not stand it and so spoke to Moses, 'You speak with us and we will hear, but do not let God speak with us lest we should die.'²

Such a discussion is common material for Lutheran preachers. Similar statements appear in other Luther sermons as well as the preaching of Philipp Spener and C. F. W. Walther. The contrast of the old Mount. Sinai Pentecost with the new Holy Spirit Pentecost is a natural for Lutherans with their concern for Law and Gospel.

For Luther the importance of the old Pentecost is not just the giving of the Law but also the response of the people. For the people of the first Pentecost the Law is a frightening thing and God is someone to be dreaded. Luther

²Ibid., 1:320.

continues to compare the two Pentecosts:

On Easter Christ is resurrected and he has led us out of Egypt. . . . He has led us out of the true Egypt, sin and death. And furthermore we commemorate this day for he has sent the Holy Spirit and has given a new law that is better than the previous one.³

As Moses led the people out of slavery in Egypt so Christ has led us out of the slavery of sin and death. As fifty days later God gave his Law to the Jews, so fifty days after Easter God gives a new and better "Law" to the Christians.

Luther will return to this comparison of the old and new Law, but at this moment he begins a discussion of the signs of the Pentecost. After speaking of the outward signs of the New Testament Pentecost, a strong wind, tongues of fire, preaching in other tongues, he goes on to say:

These are the signs by which the Holy Spirit made himself known. He will come now similarly. What God had ordered then so he orders now, that the Spirit be given in outward signs. Thus a Christian is to receive the Baptism. . . . Also if the Holy Ghost is to begin the Christian church, he must show himself in outward signs, that man can grasp. . . . Baptism is established, and the office of preaching is confirmed and its work ordered. Through these the Holy Spirit is given.⁴

For Luther the miraculous signs of the New Testament Pentecost are evidence that the Spirit is always given in outward signs. The signs that remain today were the same signs confirmed in that Pentecost, preaching and baptism.

From this Luther returns to a discussion of the two Laws but in the context of the signs of Pentecost. The old Law was given with splendor. The new Law that makes a new

³Ibid., 2:321. ⁴Ibid.

rule, comes also with similar splendor.⁵ He goes on to elaborate that the splendor of the new Law is that the disciples are equipped with "a powerful Spirit, divided tongues, gallant courage, and the gift of languages."⁶

All of this exposition on the signs, and the comparison of the old and new Pentecost provide the background for the application which now follows. "We must through this learn the office and work of the Holy Ghost, that a true difference remains between the worldly rule and the rule of Christ."⁷ Luther goes on to explain what this difference is:

Finally we hear that is is not a worldly rule that the Spirit establishes. Some are equipped with gun, armour, and castle, but he takes alone the poor tongue. So weak is its beginning. . . . Some have sword and fire but he takes only the tongue. Thereby he will show, that his rule is a preaching rule and will give his disciples courage, that they are not frightened by the devil, Caiaphas and Herod. His disciples do nothing more than speak the Word.⁸

What follows in his sermon is a polemic against the Papists whom he accuses of departing from the rule of Christ by "taking the sword and being worldly princes."⁹ He states that Christ's rule in the church is not one of Law and might but of the lowly preaching of the Word.

Christ's rule is a rule that takes action alone with the tongue and thereby brings together the Holy Christian Church. As we say in our article: I believe in the

⁵Ibid., 2:322. ⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., 2:323. ⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 2:324.

Holy Spirit, a Holy Christian Church, that is a communion of the sanctified. The Holy Spirit must make the disciples peaceful and courageous. He must give power to preach and to discipline the world and strike down the Law of Moses and others. Not as if He abolishes the law of the prince; but in Christ's rule there should be no other master or law than the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

Luther is quick to point out that he is not an anarchist. The rule of Christ does not abolish the rule of the prince, but rather these two rules must be distinguished. The worldly rule continues to be carried out by threat of sword and hangman. The rule of Christ in the church, however, is only carried out by preaching.

From this first application on the distinction of the world's reign and Christ's reign follows a second application based on the question, "What is this preaching?"

Thus as in Peter's preaching: I believe in the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins. That is the new teaching and preaching, that comes today from heaven and is to be preached. In the rule of Christ there is no other valid preaching than the forgiveness of sins. Outside of his rule and before one comes into it, the preaching of Law and repentance is in force. However, in Christ's rule one hears only the Word of forgiveness of sins and of grace.¹¹

Christ rules by preaching, and the preaching of Christ is the forgiveness of sins.

In his first application Luther takes the church leaders to task for trying to be worldly rulers rather than simply ruling with the words of preaching. In his second application he takes the individual Christian to task for placing a higher importance upon love than upon forgiveness.

¹⁰Ibid. ¹¹Ibid.

The Sophists best teaching is that the Holy Spirit serves to give us love in our hearts, and to help us love God and the neighbor, and to do good works. . . . While it is true that the Holy Spirit gives a fire of love, one must not thereon depend, saying, 'I have the Holy Spirit, that burns in me, effects devotion and makes me love God.' He must teach me another art, that is higher than my love, namely, that I know where my treasure is, the forgiveness of sins.¹²

As in the first application, Luther was not abolishing the worldly rule, so in this application he does not intend to abolish love. He is simply saying that in the church the work of the Spirit is first and foremost the proclamation and bestowal of the forgiveness of sins. "I must have love for God and the neighbor, but over this I must have the forgiveness of sins."¹³ "The Holy Spirit should first have this office, that you believe on Christ."¹⁴

The rest of Luther's sermon is further extolling of this forgiveness of sins. It is what makes the church a Holy Christian Church. For the Christian it is his holy life.¹⁵ It is what truly sanctifies us before God. He summarizes all of this by saying:

Thereby the Holy Spirit distinguishes the rule of Christ and the rule of the world. The worldly rule has a righteousness that drives the people, that they make indulgence with their own hand. The pope drives this righteousness. The Law of Moses drives, saying that they should love God with the whole heart. However, even if you had all this, you are not in the rule of Christ, into which you only come by grace. It is called forgiveness of sins, not satisfaction.¹⁶

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 2:325.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 2:326.

In many and various ways Luther emphasizes that the work of the Holy Spirit is not to drive us to good works, but to proclaim to us the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.

There is still one other point Luther deals with before closing. That point is the relationship between forgiveness and the sacraments. He points out that Baptism and Confession do not abolish forgiveness of sins, as if the performance of these actions was more important than forgiveness itself. Rather they are the means whereby forgiveness is distributed to us.

Therein the Holy Spirit stands, and also daily forgives the sins of the Christian, and can and may call that all be holy: [by the means of] Baptism, Word and Sacrament. But if I do not have these, what shall make me holy? For a Christian does not have the holiness of the monks but of Christ. He has poured out his blood for me. On this point that is enough.¹⁷

As Luther said, Pentecost is a rich festival that offers so much on which to preach. Thus there is much that could be said in a summary of Luther's Pentecost sermon.

The Lutheran emphasis on Law and Gospel is seen, especially in the contrast of the Old and New Testament Pentecosts. There was much said about the outward signs of the Holy Spirit, particularly Baptism and preaching. These outward signs were used by Luther to contrast the rule of the world to the rule of Christ.

The main element in all of this, though, is the forgiveness of sins. It is the characteristic preaching of the

¹⁷Ibid., 2:327.

rule of Christ. It is the reason behind the signs of the Holy Spirit. It is the treasure found in Baptism, Word and Sacrament. It is the chief office of the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis it is what distinguishes the rule of Christ from the rule of the world.

The Preaching of Philipp Jakob Spener: "The
Powerful Working of the Holy Spirit or
His Office wherein He Drives Us to
the Good, Is a Costly Treasure
of Our Blessedness."

This is from a Pentecost sermon preached by Spener in 1682. We begin by noting some outward characteristics of Spener's sermon. First it is highly structured, divided into three obvious sections labeled introduction, declaration, and teaching point. The first two sections are not in traditional homiletical style but are rather a simple listing of points with corresponding Bible passages. The more typical sermonizing begins with the the third section which introduces the theme that is recorded above.

Secondly this is not a textual sermon in the strict sense of the word. While the sermon begins with a reading of Acts 2:1-11, the sermon is less an exposition of the text than a fleshing out of the theme, 'the Spirit who drives [treiben] to the good.' It does, however, have numerous references to Bible passages throughout.

The introductory section is basically a listing of some background points that lead up to the sermon theme on the Spirit who drives us to do the good. There are two

major sections, the first deals with the giving of the Spirit, the second with the working of the Spirit.

In the first section Spener says that the giver of the Spirit is God the Father. The gift He gives is not only to the Jews but to all flesh. The gift he gives is His Spirit. This gift must be given to mankind because man is born without this Spirit, and with the spirit of the world.¹⁸

In the second section he simply lists some key terms that describe the working of the Holy Spirit and gives related Bible passages. The first of these terms is "The power: that out of you he will make such people." The second is "The standard: . . . which is the will and commandments of God." And the final word is "The working: conversion, keeping, and therefore doing."¹⁹ It is in this last word that he brings out his topic saying,

This is the working and office of the Holy Ghost that he drives us to the good, yet we have to take action from this.²⁰

The next section is called the declaration, what is usually thought of as exposition of the text. Although here it is again more an exposition of the theme of the driving Spirit. This section, like the first, is composed of three parts. The first part is on the driver himself, who is the Holy Spirit. He is described as "the Spirit of Christ,

¹⁸Philipp Jakob Spener, Lauterkeit des Evangelischen Christenthums, 2 vols. (Halle: Verlegung des Waisen-Hauses, 1706), 2:782.

¹⁹Ibid., 2:783. ²⁰Ibid.

that declares Him and will drive men to praise no other than Jesus who is worthy of honor."²¹

The second part is on those who are driven. They are the apostles, "They believe on Christ."²²

The third part is on the driving of the Spirit himself. He shows himself on Pentecost in five ways. First, there is a new understanding and enlightenment. Secondly, there is a power to do the good. Thirdly, there is a driving to speak of the great works of God. Fourthly, there is the response of the people that some three thousand came to faith. Fifthly, He shows himself in the love of neighbor which follows upon the repentance and faith.²³

If the above presentation seems rather short and highly structured, that is precisely the way it is in Spener's sermon. The first two sections are more a laying out of doctrinal points than sermonizing. The final section, labeled the teaching point, is in a more traditional homiletical style.

We men by ourselves, out of our nature and will, leave all good works undone and are not able to do them (2 Cor. 3:5). . . . We have no desire for the good but the turn of our human heart is evil from our youth (Genesis 8:21). . . . Where good is finally laid before us we are still not able to do it of ourselves. For the Law gives guidance but not power. It does not make us living (Gal. 3:21).²⁴

Spener begins this third section by laying out the

²¹Ibid. ²²Ibid., 2:784

²³Ibid. ²⁴Ibid.

fundamental problem of man's inability to do the good. Man is incapable of good works because his nature is corrupted from birth. It is not merely a matter of better education. For even where man knows what is good and proper he lacks the power to do it.

Even where the man is already born-again and also now has a desire to know God's will and is able to receive the good; he still needs the Holy Ghost to work in him the good and drive him to it. 'For I delight in the Law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind.' (Rom. 7:22,23) Therefore the fleshly desires are against the Spirit. (Gal. 5:17). . . . Therefore all need through and through this grace of the Holy Spirit. Without him no pure, true work can happen.²⁵

The answer to this need of man is the Holy Spirit. He is the one who can drive us to do the good. This must never be thought of as a one-time act. Even after the receiving of the Holy Spirit, the sinful nature remains. Therefore the driving to the good must remain a constant activity of the Spirit in our lives.

The Holy Ghost is He who in us works and drives the good. (Rom. 8:14). . . . Such work is also ascribed to the Father. (Eph. 2:10). . . . Also it is ascribed to Christ. (Phil. 1:11) But the Holy Spirit is distinctively manifested in the work of sanctification. Father and Son work through him.²⁶

In the issue of good works Spener does not wish to deny the validity of the Trinity. The driving of man to do good is certainly the desire of all three persons of the Godhead. However, this sanctification is the unique work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever Father and Son do in this regard

²⁵Ibid., 2:785. ²⁶Ibid.

they do through the Spirit.

In the beginning of this section Spener has presented the problem of man's inability to do the good. He has presented the solution, the Holy Spirit who works and drives us to the good. He continues to show what means the Spirit uses to accomplish this.

The Holy Spirit needs the divine Word and the Holy Sacraments. There is no inspiration or enlightenment without means. . . . But he needs the Word not only that through it we know what we should and should not do, as the Lord has commanded in his Word and Law. (Deut. 12:8-32). But the Holy Spirit gives the believing soul a right understanding of such Word and Law, that its spiritual meaning is understood. Moreover, therefore, he reminds us of our obligation to do such things. Yes, He puts in the divine Word a power that makes us able to do what it puts before us.²⁷

Unlike the Enthusiasts, Spener here denies any direct intervention of the Spirit, affirming the basic Lutheran confession that the Spirit works only through means. Through these means the Spirit not only gives simple outward direction, but he also gives spiritual understanding of God's Law. Not only does he give understanding, but he also infuses in the word the power to follow through on this new understanding. This new power is not only to be found in the word but is also a function of the sacraments.

Also the Holy Baptism is the bath of the new birth and renewal. (Titus 3:5) Out of this the power of good comes to all Christendom. . . . No less the Lord's Supper gives also what we need, a new spiritual power.²⁸

After addressing the issue of the means, he goes on to

²⁷Ibid. 2:786. ²⁸Ibid.

list exactly the works performed by the Spirit.

But the Holy Spirit's office is such that he accomplishes 1. A true spiritual understanding of the Law that we know it not only as outward moral virtue but as an inner circumstance of the heart. . . . 2. He works a love concerning such divine commands. . . 3. From there he works also a desire to do the good. . . . 4. Thereby also the power comes to man to do such good.²⁹

The Spirit not only moves man to do good things, but works at changing the heart of man. This is what makes the works truly good. The works in themselves are only good, because they come from a heart that the Spirit has enlightened. This is why a mere outward performance of the Law is not sufficient. What is needed is a spiritual understanding of the Law and the accomplishment of the Law out of a heart that loves and desires to keep God's commandments. "Where this kind of true good work is known, one clearly sees that all works before were not good works because they are only done by force and not by the heart."³⁰

The Christian must understand that when Spener says the Spirit drives man to do the good, that is not to be taken in a mechanical sense. Rather the Spirit gives a new desire and understanding towards God's Law, and from this the true good works flow. Likewise, a Christian must never seek credit from these works for himself, but must always give the glory to God.

These works as they are good, are not actually our works but God has worked them in us. . . and all honor belongs to God. (Phil. 1:11). . . . Therefore we earn nothing

²⁹Ibid. ³⁰Ibid., 2:787

with such works, because they are not our works but God's. (Eph. 2:8,9,10). Now this grace of the Holy Spirit that makes us able and drives us to do good is the marvelous gift of our blessedness. It is not the source or meaning of our blessedness but we already are blessed in that God and the Spirit are in us, and that they work such works in us.³¹

There are two errors that Spener wishes to avoid.

First, he wants it clearly understood that these good works are not meritorious for our salvation. Any thought of merit is eliminated by the fact that it is the Spirit who works them not ourselves. Furthermore he wants to make it plain that these good works are not the source or cause of our blessedness. Rather we are already blessed by the fact that God and the Spirit are in us. The good works we do are the resulting treasure that comes from this blessed presence of God.

Spener also wants to make it clear that our blessedness is the result of Christ and our works are acceptable only through him.

. . . It is such a gift of the blessedness in Christ. He has purchased us, he gives us the Spirit, the power is his, for his sake is our imperfect good accepted by God and through him does God accept our offerings. (I Peter 2:5, John 15:5)³²

Our works are not our blessedness. Rather the works are the fruit of the blessedness we have in Jesus Christ. It is only for the sake of Jesus that our imperfect good works are acceptable to God.

³¹Ibid. ³²Ibid., 2:788.

Spener goes on to explain therefore, what must first take place before we are capable of truly good works.

But many desire such good works and yet are not blessed but remain unfit for all good works. Namely because, the Holy Spirit is not allowed to work his power in them in his ordinary way. They are not first guided by true repentance and also faith, and good does not happen except as the fruit of repentance and faith. We should not strive after this blessedness except in this order: 1) That man comes to the knowledge of sin and therefore his need. For without the hatred of evil it is not possible to begin coming to the good. 2) That the faith comes in the heart. For outwardly it is impossible to achieve true works and sanctification.³³

Why many men lack good works is because they lack the foundation of good works. There must be true repentance, a true hatred of all that is evil. And there must be faith. Not just an external knowledge of scripture, but a faith of the heart. For it is from the heart that the commandments are truly understood and fulfilled.

From this discussion Spener comments on the important difference, then, in the working of Law and Gospel.

He must not be a servant's Spirit but a filial Spirit, so that faith precedes the works. This great distinction must be made. The work of the Law that man does out of fear of hell and from constraint, while outwardly notable is not inwardly a true good work. On the other hand the work of the Spirit that flows out of a filial heart and spirit, it is this that pleases God. . . . But where man has been brought first to repentance in the knowledge of sin, then must the grace of God in Jesus Christ be laid before him that he be brought to a true faith and trust in Christ. . . . For the Law cannot make us alive (Gal. 3:21). . . . But the Gospel alone is the living seed of faith and also the power to all good works.³⁴

Here is Spener's distinction between Law and Gospel. The

³³Ibid. ³⁴Ibid.

distinction circles around the fact that truly God-pleasing works are never mere outward obedience but the result of an inward change. The proper work of the Law is to begin this inward change by working a knowledge of sin and true repentance. No one can seek the good unless he first hates the evil.

The Law in itself cannot lead to truly good works. It only drives man by fear and force to perform that which is outwardly praised but inwardly damnable. The heart must not only fear the evil but it must also be taught to love the good. True Christian works are never done in the spirit of servitude but in the spirit of sonship. For that reason, those struck by the Law must then be presented the Gospel. It is the Gospel that changes the heart, giving it a true faith and trust in Christ. The works of this changed heart are truly good both outwardly and inwardly. The Gospel, not the Law, is the beginning of faith and the power for good works. Spener summarizes all this by saying:

We keep this comfort, that we have received from God the Holy Spirit and he drives us and makes us capable to do the good. But we are not capable of keeping the Law in its perfection and strictness. However, we are capable of performing a childlike and favorable obedience. This is a great honor that we are enabled to be truly converted. But what is lacking in our obedience is completed by the perfect righteousness of Christ.³⁵

As a man sees in his life the desire to do good, he knows that he has received the Holy Spirit and is blessed by

³⁵Ibid., 2:789.

God. He also knows that where his works are lacking, they are completed by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

This leaves one last point for Spener's consideration. What if one does not feel the driving to the good? Is that a sign that God has cast him off? Spener points out that it depends on whom you are talking to.

Those who do not strive after the ability [to do good] are not to be comforted in their evil. But of those who fear that they have experienced no driving . . . but only a divine sorrow and humility, the driving remains hidden. It is because of the remaining flesh which is with them and with which they war, that makes them fail to sense the driving to the good. These works which they do in fear and questioning and think that they happen not out of the driving of the Spirit are truly acceptable by God, for they occur out of an inner desire to please God that is of the Holy Spirit.³⁶

Spener recognizes that some are hypocrites who have no desire to do the good that God requires. However, there are others who truly want to do the good, but because of the sinful flesh, they are not even aware of this desire. Instead they know only the experience of repentance, sorrow and humility. However, the driving is there even when it remains hidden by the sins of the flesh. Even when we doubt our own works, they are accepted by God for they are still the result of the inward driving of the Spirit.

Spener concludes saying:

It is also a great comfort that out of this driving we have a certain sign of our gracious stand and adoption by God. (Rom. 8:1,4,14) That not after the flesh but after the Spirit we are changed. Also the good is not a source but a sign of our blessedness. Such driving

³⁶Ibid., 2:790.

makes the good for us a light and pleasant thing. The work of love and the commandments of God are no longer a burden. (1 John 5:3) However, with this driving of the Spirit there also remains the driving of the flesh which we must carry. But over this, we will be wholly free, the divine image and righteousness will be in us and we will need no other driving for we will not carry this flesh any longer.³⁷

Thus, Spener brings the hearer back to the theme: the driving of the Holy Spirit to the good is a precious treasure of our blessedness. It is not the blessedness itself, that remains in Christ alone. It is a result of the blessedness and a great sign of that blessedness. It is a sign for the present. While we still must carry the burden of the flesh, this driving for the good is a reminder that we are God's children for we possess God's Spirit. It is also a sign for the future. It is a reminder that we will not always need this driving, for the day will come when we will no longer carry the flesh, but will bear the perfect image of our Savior in heaven, the transformation will then be completed.

³⁷Ibid.

The Preaching of C.F.W. Walther Part I: The Giving
of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel of Christ,
an Incontestable Proof of its Divinity
and its Truth

Two sermons of Walther will be examined. In the light of the foregoing evidence we may observe whether they proceed in the way of Peter, Luther or Spener.

The first sermon from 1882 is entitled, "The Giving of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel of Christ, an Incontestable Proof of its Divinity and its Truth."

The real reason why we celebrate Pentecost is, therefore, not the miracle which the Holy Spirit did in the apostles. This, of course, is a great and glorious miracle, having most important results for the entire sinful world. . . . However, the pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on that first Pentecost had an even greater meaning. . . . The out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles was only the beginning of that which from that time on should happen to all men. . . . Peter therefore says in his Pentecost sermon to those who in amazement saw what happened, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." (Acts 2:16,17a) And has this prophecy perhaps remained unfulfilled? Not at all, my friends! . . . Wherever and whenever the Gospel of Christ is preached, there the Holy Spirit pours himself out in all places and times upon those who hear it, and fills all those who accept it in faith, and thus seals it as the divine truth.³⁸

In Walther's introduction he establishes three points. The first is that the miracles of Pentecost are not what give

³⁸C. F. W. Walther, Gnadenjahr. Predigten Über die Evangelien des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1891), 294.

the event lasting significance. These miracles "would cease in the course of time."³⁹

The ongoing importance of Pentecost rests not in the spectacular nature of the day but in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. That is Walther's second point, that the Holy Spirit is given to men through the Gospel. That was how the Spirit was poured out on the first Pentecost, and he continues to be poured out in such a way even today.

His final point provides the foundation for the sermon. This pouring out of the Spirit through the Gospel is followed by faith. This experience of faith is the proof of the Gospel's truth and divinity. The fleshing out of this theme falls under two points.

I. For the believers who experience this giving of the Spirit in their hearts, and II. For the unbelievers who perceive this giving of the Spirit to believers.⁴⁰

Under the first point Walther describes three things the Spirit works in the true Christian.

The first thing which all those have experienced who have become true Christians is this, that through the working of the Holy Spirit they have either suddenly or gradually come to the living knowledge that they are lost sinners who can never be saved in their natural condition.⁴¹

The first work of the Spirit is repentance, repentance being both a knowledge of actual sin and of a man's depraved

³⁹Ibid. ⁴⁰Ibid., 295.

⁴¹Ibid.

nature. This knowledge need not come immediately but may be realized over a period of time.

After this knowledge of sin the Spirit leads to a second experience.

There is a second thing which the Holy Spirit does so that a person becomes a true Christian. When a person, who is frightened over his sins and is concerned about his salvation, hears the Gospel of Christ, the Savior of sinners, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit enters his heart. There then arises in such a person the divine certainty that God is gracious to him and has forgiven him all his sins, that he has become a child of God justified by grace through faith and an heir of eternal life.⁴²

After the experience of repentance follows the experience of faith which Walther's describes with such terms as peace, joy, and inner certainty. Later on in this same paragraph Walther says such confident faith is the result of hearing "the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins."⁴³

A third work must always be added to these two works mentioned so far: man's fright over his lost condition and the joy at the grace he received. It is then that a hearer of the Gospel becomes an entirely new man. . . . His daily life is a daily struggle against sin. He tears his heart more and more free from the vanities. . . of this world. . . . He loves God and his Word more than anything else. . . . Love toward his brethren, yes to all men, even toward those who offend him burns in his heart. . . . In short, he becomes an entirely different person in heart, spirit, mind, and all his powers.⁴⁴

The final work of the Holy Spirit is the creation of an entirely new man. Not just a man who does good works but a man whose very nature has been totally altered for the good.

⁴²Ibid. ⁴³Ibid., 296.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Like the first two works of the Spirit, this is also the obvious experience of all true Christians. "I ask you, you Christians: Have you not experienced all this in your hearts?"⁴⁵

While for Walther these three things are the common experience of the Christian he does include this caveat.

Of course, a true Christian must also confess with Paul, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect,' Phil. 3:12a; but he can without lying immediately add, 'But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' This amazing inner and outward change is nothing else but the work of the Holy Spirit who is concealed in the Word of the Gospel like a heavenly, fruitful seed.⁴⁶

Walther wants to make clear that he is not advocating a doctrine of perfection. He realizes that sin still burdens the Christian day in and day out. This burden of sin cannot hide the obvious changes wrought by the Holy Spirit, nor can it conceal the Christian's experience of that seed of the Gospel working in him repentance, faith, and good.

Walther goes on to describe the significance of all this experience for the Christian.

Oh my dear Christians, do not let yourselves be deceived in your faith by the talk of unbelievers who want to prove sometimes out of the laws of a reason blind in spiritual things, sometimes from the course of the stars, sometimes from the bowels of the earth that the Bible and especially the Gospel of Christ cannot be God's Word. Within you you carry the proof of the truth and divinity of the Gospel which the wisdom of this world cannot overthrow.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid. ⁴⁶Ibid., 297.

⁴⁷Ibid.

For Walther this Christian experience is the conclusive evidence for the believer that the Gospel is true. No worldly arguments can surmount what the Christian has witnessed in his own heart. Walther goes on to conclude this first half of his sermon:

The Christian can answer to the most ingenious argument of mockers: Though I can not oppose your arguments from reason with even stronger arguments from reason, you are still to know this: the Gospel of Christ is the divine truth, God the Holy Ghost himself has enscribed it in my heart with flaming letters and nothing in heaven, nothing on earth, nothing in hell can erase this writing. . . . As little as a rational man lets himself be convinced that a sweet fruit whose sweetness he has tasted daily is bitter, so little does a Christian let himself be convinced that the Gospel whose divine power he has experienced every day in his heart is a powerless teaching of man.⁴⁸

The first point of Walther's sermon is that the three-fold experience of the Holy Spirit is the Christian's strongest proof of the truth of the Gospel. Walther goes on to state that not only is this experience valid evidence for the believer but also for the unbeliever.

For even though those who still do not have the true faith have not themselves experienced the giving of the Holy Spirit and with him the truth and divine origin of the Gospel in their hearts, they nevertheless perceive clearly enough the imparting of the Holy Spirit to believers.⁴⁹

While unbelievers may not have experienced the working of the Holy Spirit themselves, his working is evident to them in the believers. Like those who on the first Pentecost mocked that "These men are full of new wine," despite the

⁴⁸Ibid., 298. ⁴⁹Ibid.

conclusive evidence to the contrary, modern man has great testimony of the Spirit's work but refuses to recognize it. This is not rational behavior but a willfull resistance to the Spirit.

. . . some unbelievers mockingly said "These men are full of new wine. But why did they say this? Solely because they knowingly resisted the Holy Spirit. For was it not contrary to sound reason to call the apostles drunk because they were suddenly so changed. . . . The same thing is true of all unbelievers of all ages, also of our own day.⁵⁰

Much as he did in the first section, listing the three experiences that are evidence to the believers, Walther lists three external evidences of the power of the Gospel that are apparent to the unbeliever. The first of these is the life of the Christian.

Bear in mind: every day unbelievers see with their own eyes that those who are earnest about the Gospel have become entirely different people than they through it . . . [Walther goes on to list the many outward virtues of the Christian life] . . . Must not even the unbelievers conclude that a teaching which brings such fruit must be from God?⁵¹

Walther goes on to point out other outward evidences of the power of the Gospel.

Bear also in mind: even though the Gospel goes completely and entirely counter to the natural mind of man, unbelievers know that through the simple preaching of the apostles it has spread with tremendous rapidity over the entire world. . . . Must not even unbelievers conclude that a teaching which has such a divine power to convince and convert must be from God?⁵²

The great spread of Christianity is obvious to all men even

⁵⁰Ibid. ⁵¹Ibid., 299.

⁵²Ibid.

unbelievers. Certainly the unbeliever realizes that the Gospel is contrary to his natural mind. Despite the innate human unwillingness to accept the Gospel, it has spread throughout the world making converts wherever the Gospel is preached. Surely this is evidence of its power.

There is one more piece of evidence that Walther would have the unbeliever consider.

Finally, bear in mind: unbelievers read in the most trustworthy histories how in all ages the Gospel has been perverted, in part by heretical doctrines, in part disgraced by the godless lives of many confessors; in order to remove it from the world it has been in part assailed by the mighty as well as by the wise of this world. . . . How often have the foes of the Gospel already cried, 'Victory!' because they supposed that the Gospel was finished, and behold! the Gospel once thought dead has always celebrated the Easter of its resurrection. Must not even unbelievers conclude from this that a doctrine which has such an indestructible life must be from God himself?⁵³

The power of the Gospel is seen in the way it changes men. It is seen in its spread throughout the world. Finally, it is seen in its indestructability. Despite attacks from within and without the Gospel continues to be proclaimed to this day. All of this should be manifest evidence even in the eyes of the unbeliever of the truth of the Gospel.

Walther concludes his sermon with an evangelistic appeal to the unbeliever and an exhortation to joy for the believer.

Oh that you would not willfully close your heart. Oh, that you would still be captured by the power of the truth. Of a truth then you would also experience the

⁵³Ibid., 300.

imparting of the Holy Spirit in your heart. . . . And you my friends, who already truly believe and have therefore experienced the miracle of Pentecost, oh rejoice today on this triumphal festival of the Gospel; for the Lord has done great things in you.⁵⁴

Walther returns once again to his theme of the experience of the Christian as the proof of the truth of the Gospel. He exhorts the unbelievers to seek such experience and he encourages the believers to rejoice in this experience the Lord has worked in them.

The Preaching of C.F.W. Walther Part II: The Important Meaning of the Pentecost Miracle for Those Who Are or Would Be Christians

In the introduction of this earlier sermon of 1848, as in the first, Walther contemplates the meaning of the miracles of Pentecost for the modern Christian.

While, my beloved ones, the event of this day past, with its wonderful proclamation of God's message by the holy apostles, is and was important for the salvation of the whole world; this Pentecost miracle, however, also has a very important meaning for each individual Christian. That is what we will contemplate today with the assistance of God the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵

Walther goes on to state the theme of the sermon and these two major points: 1. What is the true, proper way of Christianity. 2. How alone this true Christianity is worked in man.⁵⁶

Under the first point Walther begins by speaking of

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵C. F. W. Walther, Epistel Postille Predigten, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), 267.

⁵⁶Ibid, 268.

Christ's repeated references that the kingdom of heaven is near. He also points out that after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost it is said that the apostles preached of the kingdom of God. He concludes by stating that the kingdom is no longer just near but:

The Holy Ghost has been poured out over the Holy Apostles. Thus the new kingdom of Christ, that is, the Holy Christian church, is no longer only near but now finally really come into existence.⁵⁷

It is of the essential way of this kingdom that Walther speaks in this first section of his sermon.

The first major point about this kingdom of Jesus Christ is this:

Through this substantial fact, that Christ's rule was sealed by the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, God has for all time revealed the proper, true way of Christianity. That is first of all, that it is not properly a work of man, but it is a work of the Holy Spirit himself. . . . So Paul writes in the second chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians: The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, they are folly to him, and he cannot know them, for they must be spiritually understood. . . . Furthermore the apostle says in the twelfth chapter of this letter: No one can call Jesus, Lord, without the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸

The first essential of the Christian way is the acknowledgement that the kingdom comes by God not by man. This is supported by the parallel facts that man cannot come to Jesus by his own nature and that only the Holy Spirit can bring Jesus to man. This point leads to a very practical consideration of how one can tell whether his Christianity is his own work or the work of the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁷Ibid. ⁵⁸Ibid.

This is quite easy to know. What a man himself can give, what he himself can keep and avoid [is his own]. If you do not need the Holy Spirit to preserve your Christianity, if you need no hearing or reading of the Word of God, if you need no daily awakening, prayer and struggle; if you do not need always warnings, arousings, discipline, and comfort; if all of this is not necessary for your light of faith, your burning love, your courage and patience, to be honest and remain steadfast; behold, then, your Christianity is without a doubt your own concoction. However, if you experience that you can keep what you have only through daily repentance; if you experience [Erfahrst] your weakness in the driving [Treiben] of the Word, in watchfulness and prayer, and in struggle against sin; if also the light of your knowledge is cloudy, the life of your faith weak, and the fire of your love faint; then is your Christianity without a doubt ⁵⁹not your work but the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.

For Walther most of what man can do naturally and easily is man's work alone. Those works, however, in which man struggles, which are accomplished only with penitence and prayer, in which man sees clearly his weakness, these are the works of the Holy Spirit. Here is a contrast, though not necessarily a contradiction with his first sermon. In the first sermon it was the experience of the power of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life that was testimony to the Spirit's work. Here it is the experience of the Christian's weakness that is testimony that the Spirit is at work in his life.

The contrast here is not only between strength and weakness. It is also between outward works and inward works as Walther goes on to explain.

However, my beloved ones, the Pentecost miracle not only reveals that the true Christianity is not a work of human power, but a work alone of the Holy Spirit. The

⁵⁹Ibid., 269.

Pentecost miracle also reveals that the true Christianity is not something external but, something internal, a thing of the heart and experience.⁶⁰

If the first key to the way of Christianity is that it must be worked by God not man, the second key is that the way of Christianity is an internal thing rather than an external. Man's outward behavior is not crucial, but rather the inward experience of his heart. While it is true that there are outward changes in a Christian's life, they are a reflection of the change the Spirit has worked within the Christian.

While it is certain, that when a man is a true Christian, there is a certain outward change. . . . So it is also certain that the way of true Christianity does not stand therein. For when the Holy Spirit himself comes over a man, then the natural spiritual darkness and the natural spiritual death are driven out of him. And in its place a new heavenly light and a new divine life is kindled in him. The domination of a servile fear of Law, death and hell is taken from him, and in its place peace and friendship in the Holy Ghost. He is filled with a love towards God and man. His body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and his heart converted to a sanctified place in which the Triune God, with his gracious gifts, works and converts, dwells and is enthroned.⁶¹

The true way of Christianity consists, then, in two things. First, man is incapable of bringing it about by his own will or works. Christianity always stands alone as the work of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, what the Holy Spirit works is an internal change rather than an external. It will definitely show itself externally, but its essence does not consist in externals. Such outward change can even be true of hypocrites. The true way of Christianity, however, is the

⁶⁰Ibid. ⁶¹Ibid.

change wrought in the heart of man by the Holy Spirit.

This leads then to the second major point of his sermon, by what means is this true way of Christianity worked in man? Walther answers simply:

Behold this, the means, through which alone the true Christianity is worked in a man, is none other than the Word, that is the preaching of the great acts of God for the salvation of the world.⁶²

The Word with which the Spirit works is the Gospel, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ; but before a man can hear and believe that Word, he must be acquainted with another word.

But some mocked and said, 'They are full of new wine.' Where alone did this come from? These poor men did not know the Law of God, that they were poor, weak, forsaken, damnable sinners. They were however self-righteous, satisfied spirits, that hungered not after grace. . . . But note this all of you who have come to church today in order to celebrate this Pentecost. . . . No one can experience God's grace, until he has learned to feel God's wrath.⁶³

Without this word of Law and condemnation men are self satisfied and see no need of grace and salvation. Once the Law has worked a knowledge of weakness and sin, then there are hearts hungering for grace. This is the traditional Lutheran application of Law and Gospel. The Law condemns us as sinners, but only that we might be prepared to hear the Gospel. The Gospel must follow upon this Law or all that will result is despair. It is the Gospel alone that makes true Christians.

⁶²Ibid., 270. ⁶³Ibid.

But you might well say, we are well alarmed over our sins, but the true repentance is not in our hearts, for we mourn over our sins not out of love for God but alone out of fear of hell. But, my beloved, because you are sincere, poor, naked sinners, who come before God with nothing but your sins therefore are you the right hearers for the preaching of the great acts of God for your salvation.⁶⁴

Repentance is not a work presented to God in order to be worthy of his salvation. Repentance is only to acknowledge there is nothing to present before God but one's sin. In this knowledge man thinks not of his own works but hears only the preaching of salvation by the mighty working of God. In the end the Gospel must predominate. Whatever fear the Law has worked in man's heart must be overwhelmed by the promise of Christ's suffering, death, resurrection and ascension.

Walther then concludes his sermon making two points.

Remember this, all of you, that you do not only designate yourself sinner with your mouth, but that you feel fear and anxiety as poor, lost sinners.⁶⁵

It is important that the Christian remember that his way is an internal one not an external one. He must not only know and confess the Law's judgement with his mouth, but he must feel the condemnation of the Law in his heart. That condemnation should lead him to experience the mighty working of God by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. That is the second concluding point.

⁶⁴Ibid. ⁶⁵Ibid., 271.

Only cast off your own works and hold fast the faith in God's great acts for the salvation of the world and you, so God will do to you a great miracle of grace. Were your heart as cold as ice, only believe that you are saved and it will be melted and inflamed. And if it is hard as a stone, then only believe that you are saved, and it will be dissolved and softened like wax. And if it is filled with loud thoughts of despair, only believe that you are saved, and it will be filled with peace and friendship in the Holy Spirit. But if you remain in such faith on God's great salvation acts, so will your whole life be a life of love to your God and neighbor and even your enemies. And your death will be but triumph over the rule of death into the land of eternal life.⁶⁶

In these sermons of Walther he lists three works of the Spirit: repentance, faith, and the new life. In conjunction with this he emphasizes that these things are purely the work of the Holy Spirit and never the work of man. Also these three works are primarily internal in the heart of man. They may show themselves in external behaviors, but their essence is always the result of the Spirit's working within man.

There was also a traditional Lutheran presentation of Law and Gospel. Walther makes it clear that these alone are the means by which the Spirit works. The Law works a knowledge of sin. The Gospel is the proper work of the Spirit giving faith in the great acts of God for our salvation.

Both of these means are to be experienced by the Christian. The Law's condemnation of man as sinner is not merely to be a spoken confession. It is to be felt in the heart as fear and anxiety over one's lost condition. Like-

⁶⁶Ibid.

wise the Gospel is to be experienced as the mighty working of the Spirit in the changing of man's heart. This experience is a powerful assurance to the Christian of the divinity of the Gospel, and even a witness to the unbeliever of the power that exists in the Gospel.

Having now heard representative samples of the Pentecost preaching of all four men, the thesis will proceed to compare them according to the themes emphasized by Peter.

CHAPTER III
THE FIRST ARTERY--JESUS

First, a brief comment on the structure of the next four chapters. As was noted in the introduction both the good things to be preached and the errors to be avoided are to be presented. That will roughly provide the outline for these chapters. At the beginning of each chapter those things said by all three preachers will be identified. If all three preachers say them, they must be good things to say in a Lutheran sermon. Secondly, those issues on which there is divergence will be examined for possible deviation from the standard established by Peter in his Pentecost preaching. From an examination of these areas of disagreement we may be able to see how Pietism can influence Lutheran preaching.

In this first chapter under the central theme of Jesus two common teachings will be discussed. The first is just that, the centrality of Jesus for the preaching of Pentecost. The second is the teaching of the Spirit as the 'indwelling Spirit.' This particular topic is presented here in the chapter on Jesus, because the relationship of the indwelling Spirit to the external Jesus is critical for the understanding of these preachers.

In the area of divergence several issues will be looked at that reflect the relation of Jesus and the Spirit. A question to be faced is whether the Spirit is Christ's Spirit with nothing to give but of Christ or is He Christ's deputy, replacement, or independent contractor? A second issue is what means does the indwelling Spirit use to effect sanctification? Is He a new lawgiver, providing the converted with spiritual insights unknown to the unbeliever, or again is He Christ's Spirit alone with nothing to give but of Christ?

The Centrality of Christ

Everyone knows that Pentecost is about the Holy Spirit. It was Martin Luther's insight that Pentecost is even more about Jesus Christ. Luther learned this from Peter's Pentecost sermon. Peter mentions the Spirit in the introduction and conclusion of his message but the body of his proclamation is all about "Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst" (Acts 2:22).

There is then this great irony, that a sermon that speaks only about the Holy Spirit, is not a 'Spirit-filled' sermon, for the 'Spirit-filled' sermon would speak of Jesus. Luther points this out quoting John 16:4:

His office is: 'That he will declare me, for he will take what is mine and proclaim it to you.' That is his chief office. . . . First he should have this office, that you believe on Christ. In order to do that he will proclaim Christ.¹

One may not speak of the Spirit apart from the proclamation of Jesus. Indeed Pentecost sermons are not to proclaim the Spirit but Jesus. In and by the words which convey Jesus the work of the Spirit is accomplished.

This is why some would criticize Lutheran preaching, saying that it ignores the Spirit. Nothing could be further from the truth. For Luther does not downgrade the Spirit or suggest his unimportance. He confesses with the Athanasian creed "we worship the Trinity . . . of Majesty coequal."² Rather, Luther is simply saying that is the way the Spirit wants it, for the Spirit has no greater joy than to declare Jesus Christ into whose name Christians are baptized for the forgiveness of sins.

This is not to suggest the Spirit's insignificance but to confess his bestowal of Christ's gifts through the external means of grace. For as the Small Catechism says,

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it

¹Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, ed. Georg Buchwald, 2 vols. (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Publisher, 1925), 2:339. Hereafter cited as Predigten.

²"Athanasian Creed", Concordia Triglotta, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 33.

with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all sins to me and all believers, and will at the last day raise up me and all the dead, and give unto me and all believers in Christ eternal life.³

Without the Holy Spirit there would be no bestowal of and no faith in this great treasure of salvation in Jesus, Christ and Lord, crucified and risen for the forgiveness of sins. It is not that the Holy Spirit should be obliterated from Pentecost sermons, rather he should be strongly preached as to the importance of his office. His office is to give the saving gifts and so faith in Jesus Christ.

Philipp Jakob Spener, despite his Pietistic label, speaks similarly to Luther in his sermons. He also makes reference to John 16:14 saying:

He is the Spirit of Christ who for this reason declares him and also wills that men be driven to praise no other than this Jesus who is worthy of honor.⁴

In fact the title 'Spirit of Christ' is a fairly common one in Spener's preaching. In all his sermons he clearly declares that to have Jesus is to have the Spirit.

Elsewhere he also points out that this Spirit is entirely the gift of Jesus Christ.

³Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," Concordia Triglotta, 545.

⁴Philipp Jakob Spener, Lauterkeit des Evangelischen Christenthums, 2 vols. (Halle: Verlegung des Waisen-Hauses, 1706), 2:783. Hereafter cited as Lauterkeit.

But it [the ability to do good] is such a treasure of blessedness in Christ. He has earned it, he gives us the Spirit, the power is his.⁵

Statements such as these show Spener's Lutheran background. When Lutherans speak of Spirit and Christ they always do so in terms of inseparable relationship.

It is no surprise then that in C. F. W. Walther, the great preacher of Law and Gospel, we find Jesus central in his Pentecost preaching. Walther makes a clear statement of the relation of the Spirit and Jesus as he explains just why the Spirit was given.

For what reason is the Holy Spirit now publicly poured out? It should herewith be recorded that we men owe our confession of Christ as Redeemer alone to the high heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit. That through the life, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ we have been purchased. That we have actually been reconciled with God the Father through the Son. The public work of the Holy Spirit can lead man to the true means, through which the Holy Spirit enters the heart of man. Not the frightening preaching of the fire and earthquake of Sinai but rather the grace preaching of Golgatha namely the great acts of God, not the Law condemning our works, but the sweet and comforting Gospel of the free grace in Christ.⁶

Here is Lutheran Pentecost preaching at its finest: the clear proclamation of the Holy Spirit as the clear proclaimer of Jesus Christ.

Further consideration must be given to Spener as the representative or forerunner of Pietism. While he very

⁵Ibid., 2:788.

⁶C. F. W. Walther, Epistle Postille Predigten, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), 264 Hereafter cited as Epistle Postille.

Lutheranly speaks of the relation of Spirit and Jesus there is a difference between him and Luther. It does not take a computer analysis to see that for Spener's preaching 'Spirit' is the predominant term while for Luther's preaching 'Jesus' is the word that stands out. Indeed a quick review of Spener's sermons reveals a reversal of the Pentecost pattern established by Peter. For Spener, Jesus is always mentioned in the introduction. After all he is the one who gives us the Spirit and he deserves his due. Jesus is also always part of the conclusion, mentioned in those flowery benedictions that so many preachers like to throw in as a final wrap-up. Often, however, the body of the sermon is about the Spirit alone.

Even the quotes about Jesus that were given earlier show an interesting distinction. Luther talks about the Spirit "who wants to proclaim Christ."⁷ Walther tells of the Spirit who leads us "to the sweet Gospel of free grace in Christ."⁸ Both Luther and Walther in general terms speak about the Spirit giving Jesus. For Spener, however, it is Jesus who gives the Spirit, "He gives us the Spirit."⁹

Both statements are scripturally true. Certainly Walther and Luther also know from whom the Spirit comes. Yet Walther and Luther always close the circle by adding the

⁷Luther, Predigten, 339.

⁸Walther, Epistle Postille, 264.

⁹Spener, Lauterkeit, 783.

Spirit, who comes from Jesus, always and only gives the things of Jesus. For Spener it is sufficient just to know that the Spirit comes from Jesus. There is a significant reason for this as will be shown later in this chapter.

Before leaving this topic, one comment about Walther. As said in the introduction, he is to be assessed according to the evidence as to whether he preaches in the way of Spener's Pietism or Luther's Lutheranism. In this particular issue of the centrality of Jesus, as seen above, he is decidedly Lutheran and not Pietist.

There is, however, one distinction between Walther and Luther that should be noted. If for Spener the key term is Spirit, and for Luther it is Jesus, for Walther it is Gospel. That is not of great significance at this point. A re-reading of the lengthy quote of Walther mentioned before clearly shows that the Gospel is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that when Walther speaks of Gospel he is speaking of Jesus. This distinction will be taken up again in the last chapter that deals with the very heart of Pentecost preaching, and may then disclose a significant difference between Walther and Luther.

The Indwelling Spirit

At first glance the topic of the indwelling spirit may seem inappropriate in a chapter about Jesus. By the time the differences between these preachers are dealt with it will be apparent that the indwelling Spirit is very much a

Jesus issue. We simply note here that it is a teaching proclaimed by all three.

That Spener would talk about the indwelling Spirit comes as no surprise. Later Pietists would carry this so far as to divorce the Spirit from the external means and see his work in the direct inward illumination of man. In the next chapter it will be shown that this is clearly not yet the case with Spener. Nevertheless, the Spirit who enters and evidently changes man's heart is a popular theme for Spener. For him this change in man is a dominant concern.

For example, when discussing the significance of the mighty wind which filled the dwelling place of the disciples on Pentecost he says:

Therefore, it came to pass, that their preaching and Gospel, like a strong wind, passed through the whole world that it should move the hearts (as it had moved in the house.)¹⁰

Here we see the work of the Spirit connected with the Gospel and preaching. We also see that the purpose of this Gospel is to move the 'hearts' of men although this moving is not clearly differentiated in the way of the Law or the Gospel.

That the Spirit's purpose is to move into the hearts of men is seen even more clearly in another quote from the same sermon, where Spener explicitly says, "the ordinary way is that he, the Holy Spirit, dwells in our believing hearts." Once again we see a very Lutheran approach con-

¹⁰Ibid., 797.

necting the Spirit with belief. Also, here again, Spener speaks of a Spirit who comes to live in the hearts of men.

It may come as some surprise that on this topic Luther speaks similarly to Spener. After all one of the great emphases of Lutheranism is that salvation and its bestowal is extra nos, redemption is something achieved and given totally outside of the Christian. Salvation is not dependent upon a grace placed within us, but forgiveness is totally dependent upon the obedience of Christ that takes place outside of us. Also the confidence of the believer in his forgiveness is not dependent on the perception of some internal grace but on the external Gospel Words of Jesus which give what they say. Lutherans have traditionally been wary of any talk that suggests man's internal condition is the basis for his salvation.

Despite these concerns Luther plainly speaks of the Spirit who works in our hearts. Speaking of the appearance of the Spirit to the disciples on Pentecost he says:

There he came, pouring through their hearts, and producing different creatures, who now love God and freely do his will. This is nothing else but the Holy Spirit himself, or his work indeed, wrought in the heart. There he wrote in their hearts, pure, fiery flames, restoring them to life, so as to break forth with flaming tongues and energetic hands . . .¹¹

Later in the same sermon he says:

¹¹Martin Luther, "Cruicigers Sommerpostille", 1536, D. Martin Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 61 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Bölaus Nachfolger, 1883-1983), 21:440, l. 4. Hereafter cited as WA.

Thus you perceive here: He descends and fills the disciples, who previously sat in fear and sorrow, rendering their tongues fiery and cloven, and so inflaming them that they grew bold, and preached Christ freely, fearing nothing. Here you clearly see that it is not his office to write books, or to institute laws; but he is such a Spirit as writes in the heart, and produces a new courage . . .¹²

What is especially striking about this last passage is the phrase "it is not his office to write books . . . but he writes in the heart . . ." This kind of language sounds like that of the later Pietists who would teach that the Spirit cannot come from the written scriptures but must directly illumine man. Of course this statement of Luther must be taken in context but it is at least a surprising statement by a man who elsewhere highly praises the importance of the external Word and Sacraments (See Chapter 4).

The point of all this is that while it may be true that Spener emphasizes the Spirit in the heart more than Luther, there is no doubt that Luther clearly (and sometimes seemingly recklessly) also teaches that the primary work area of the Spirit is within the heart of men. There are two clarifications, however, to add to that statement. One is that this internal sanctification worked by the Spirit in man's heart must always be distinguished from man's justification which relies on Christ alone. The second is that this sanctification is the result of the Gospel by which man is justified.

¹²Luther, WA, 21:440, 1. 27.

If Luther teaches the work of the Spirit in man's heart, if Spener preaches the Spirit who dwells within man, it comes as no shock that Walther also teaches likewise. One of Walther's favorite expressions is the Spirit who gives man the "burning heart."¹³ He also speaks of the Spirit whose "grace full office and work is in the heart of man."¹⁴

Walther even shares common language on this topic with Spener and Luther. Like Spener he talks about the Spirit "who makes his dwelling place in this heart."¹⁵ Like Luther he speaks about the tremendous changes wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of the disciples.

[The Holy Spirit entered their hearts so that they] . . . preached with a burning heart and fiery tongues to their unenlightened brethren what filled their souls. Souls that burned with an everlasting, true fire.¹⁶

Still the best summary of Walther's view is when he says, "True Christianity is not something outward but something inward, a thing and experience [Erfahrung] of the heart."¹⁷ Here Walther clearly affirms that the work of the Spirit is something that can only be perceived inwardly by man.

¹³Walther, Epistle Postille, 265.

¹⁴C. F. W. Walther, Festklänge, Predigten über Festtexte des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1892), 354. Hereafter cited as Festklänge.

¹⁵Walther, Epistle Postille, 265.

¹⁶Ibid., 266. ¹⁷Ibid., 265.

We have established, then, a second thing which is true of all Lutheran Pentecost preaching. For all of the Lutheran concern for salvation being outside of us, it is still correct to speak of the work of the Holy Spirit being inside of us, in the heart. The main reason all three preachers speak this way is that it is the way Scripture speaks. As it says in Galatians 4:6, "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts." That is another positive thing about good Lutheran preaching. No matter what Lutheran presuppositions may say, it is still more important to say it the way Scripture says it.

However, the issue is, do all three preachers have the same understanding of the term heart as used by Paul in Galatians 4. While Paul speaks of the Spirit sent into the heart, the work of God described in Galatians 4:1-7 is totally extra nos, "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (Gal. 4:4,5a RSV). In addition, the Christian has not become God's son as the result of the Spirit entering and changing man. Rather the Spirit enters the heart as the consequence of God's adoption of the Christian as His heir (Gal. 4:7 RSV). The work of God described here is all quite forensic.

Furthermore, the term heart in Galatians 4 does not represent a special spiritual part of man where the Holy Spirit dwells. Rather it signifies that the Spirit works in

man all the way through so that man in his entire being cries out with the Spirit "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:6 RSV). This usage of the term heart to mean the whole of man with nothing left out is also seen in Peter's Pentecost preaching in Acts 2:26, 37, and 46.

It appears that it is this usage of Peter that Luther echoes in his Pentecost preaching. It is significant that for Luther the Spirit does not merely enter and dwell in the Christians' heart but is "poured through their hearts" changing not only a 'spiritual' part of their nature but "producing different creatures."¹⁸ For Luther and Peter the heart does not mean a inner spiritual part of man but the entirety of man.

Furthermore Luther repeatedly speaks of the Spirit as "writing in the heart of man."¹⁹ It is not that the Spirit moves into a spiritual section of man's being and begins the process of his work. Rather the Spirit gives to the whole of man the gift of God's Word of Gospel.

This is in striking contrast to the later Pietists. For them the term heart is a spiritual location in man separate from his material createdness. Man's problem is that this spiritual 'heart' has been corrupted by worldliness. The purpose of the Spirit is to dwell in this inner spiritual part of man and thereby "draw the heart wholly to

¹⁸Luther, WA, 21:440, 1. 4.

¹⁹Ibid., 21:440, 1. 27

God and away from the earth."²⁰ Salvation is therefore not a gift given but a process worked out within the higher spiritual part of man known as the 'heart.'

The question is, which view of the heart is held by Walther and Spener? At this point the evidence is unclear. The following differences in language, however, should be noted. Unlike Luther, Walther and Spener do not describe the work of the Spirit as a "writing in the heart."²¹ Also Walther and Spener both speak of the Spirit who "dwells in the hearts of men," while Luther prefers to proclaim the Spirit who is "poured through the heart."²²

These differences do not indisputably establish that Spener/Walther and Luther have a different view of the heart. Determining a precise definition of the heart of Spener and Walther may be impossible. For Luther, however, there are certain statements that can be made regarding his view of the heart. For Luther the heart is not of significance as the place where God's work is subjectively experienced by man. Neither is it important as a location for certain piecemeal spiritual changes to be made in man. Rather the heart is where the Spirit gives Jesus and all his gifts which are of significance for the whole of man's being. These and similar emphases will be probed for in the

²⁰Gerhad Teersteegen, Geistlich Reden, ed. Albert Loschhorn and Winfred Zeller, (Göttingen: Vandenhoech and Ruprecht, 1979), 45.

²¹Luther, WA, 21:440, l. 27. ²²Ibid., 21:440, l. 4.

next section on the differences amongst the preachers.

The Spirit as Christ's Spirit

What all three preachers hold in common has been observed. Of first importance is the centrality of Christ in the preaching of Pentecost. They all speak of a Spirit at work in man's heart. Now two issues must be considered in which the preachers diverge. Interestingly these issues of disagreement are intimately related to those two areas of agreement.

For example, all three proclaim the close relationship between the Spirit and Jesus. However, for Luther and Walther it is the Spirit who gives us Jesus, while Spener emphasizes that Jesus gives us the Spirit. While both are scripturally true it is no mere coincidence that these preachers have chosen to highlight different sides of the matter.

Luther and Walther emphasize the Spirit who gives Jesus, because for them the Spirit is the one who delivers Jesus and His gifts. As Walther puts it:

We see our Savior on the throne, pouring out the Holy Spirit over the disciples, filling them with the Holy Spirit, and by him sending them out into all the world to proclaim to all who hear the heavenly message of the grace of the Father in the Son to all sinners.²³

Here we see not only that the Spirit comes from Jesus, but that the Spirit is poured out and fills men solely so that

²³Walther, Epistle Postille, 264.

the message of Jesus might be proclaimed to the world. He comes not to proclaim his own work, but to proclaim and so bestow the work of Christ.

Walther also notes that the Holy Ghost "comes alone through the Gospel of Christ,"²⁴ and Luther too emphasizes "this he [the Holy Spirit] does, he proclaims and preaches the Lord Jesus Christ."²⁵ For Luther and Walther, it is not enough to say that Jesus gives the Spirit or that the Spirit comes at Jesus direction. It must be made perfectly clear that the Spirit comes to bestow Jesus by proclaiming the message of salvation in Jesus. Jesus gives the Spirit to men but solely that the Spirit might give Jesus to men.

Spener speaks of this. Spener says that "the Spirit wills that men be driven to praise no other than this Jesus who is worthy of honor . . ."²⁶ However, that does not hold through in the actual way of his sermon. As mentioned earlier Spener's sermons tend to focus on the sanctifying will of the Spirit in man, rather than the justifying acts of Jesus Christ. Even in the above quote the emphasis is on the Spirit that wills the action of men, rather than the Spirit that proclaims the action of Christ.

Consider the Spener sermon highlighted in the first chapter.²⁷ He talks about the power of the Spirit, he speaks

²⁴Walther, Festklänge, 337.

²⁵Luther, WA, 21:440, 1. 36

²⁶Spener, Lauterkeit, 783. ²⁷ Vide supra 25.

of the rule of the Spirit. He even addresses the work of the Spirit which he says is "to drive man to the good."²⁸ Yet in this whole discussion of the Spirit's working there is no mention of Christ.

Whether intentionally or not Spener gives the hearer the impression that the Holy Spirit is a kind of independent contractor. While it is true that he is given and sent by Jesus, from there on, it seems, he is on his own, doing whatever is necessary to make man the performer of good works. For Walther and Luther the work of the Holy Spirit from A to Z is connected with Jesus. For Spener the work begins with Jesus but from then on we hear only of the Spirit working good in the heart of man.

It is not that Walther and Luther deny that the Spirit is involved in the good works of man (see Chapter 5) but that these are accomplished by the Spirit's proclamation of Jesus Christ. For them there is an essential nexus between justification and sanctification that must be clearly spelled out. The working of good in man's heart is the result of the forgiveness of sins given by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. However, at least when addressing the issue of the indwelling Spirit, Spener does not describe the inner Spirit as the giver of Jesus and therefore leaves the impression that the Spirit produces man's regeneration through his (the Spirit's) own individual power.

²⁸Spener, Lauterkeit, 782.

Indeed, addressing the rule of the Spirit with no mention of Christ or Gospel, Spener says that:

The new born-again man does not act after his own will but after the will and commandments of God . . . It is a gift of the Holy Spirit that the man is driven to the good and has given to him the will and the ability to do good.²⁹

Luther, on the other hand, recognizes that such a Spirit, who works good in man independently of the message of salvation in Jesus Christ, is a danger to Christ himself. As Luther says "If the Holy Spirit gives a passion [Brunst] towards God and the neighbor, then Christ is not necessary."³⁰ If the Spirit could work sanctification apart from the preaching of the forgiveness of sins, then there really would be no need for the saving work accomplished by Jesus Christ. The Spirit could simply come, enter the heart of man, and through his power make man holy as God had intended. Such a 'power of the Spirit' would make the cross of Christ no longer the sine qua non of our salvation.

In defense of Spener it might be said that this nexus between the justification of Christ and the sanctification of the Spirit is assumed. If so, this is a dangerous assumption that would allow later more extreme Pietists to call Spener their forerunner. Moreover, it is a definite difference from the preaching of Luther. When speaking of good works Luther clearly spells out that they flow out of the forgiveness of sins. Also he carefully words his dis-

²⁹Ibid., 783. ³⁰Luther, Predigten, 325.

cussion so as to avoid any confusion of sanctification with justification (See Chapter 5). Such language is missing from Spener. He speaks of the Spirit working sanctification without mention of justification by faith in the forgiveness of sins.

Another defense of Spener is that this nexus may be regarded as established by his use of the phrase faith and its fruits (see Chapter 5), and his references to the means of grace (See Chapter 4). There is merit to this defense if, like Luther, Spener equates faith with Jesus and the means of grace with the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins. These are questions that will be considered in the following chapters. At this point the evidence suggests that even if these terms are understood properly by Spener they are not the controlling influence in his sermons which tend to be dominated by the proclamation of the Spirit at work in men apart from any mention of Gospel or Jesus.

In this is an important caution for Pentecost preaching. It is not enough simply to emphasize Jesus more than the Holy Spirit. One must be sure that whatever work is ascribed to the Spirit is a work which requires Christ and the cross. Whatever work is attributed to the Spirit must be intimately tied to the work of Jesus. The failure to do so is to preach a Spirit that, as Luther warns, makes Jesus unnecessary.

The Spirit as Inner Guide or Outward Giver

As seen above, the Spirit never works independently of Jesus, but is always the one who delivers Him and the gifts He has won for us, that is in summary, the forgiveness of sins by way of the external means of grace. This is why Jesus must be central for Pentecost preaching, because Jesus is central to the work of the Holy Spirit. It was also said that the Spirit is at work in the heart of man. Here again it is very important that this work be a Jesus-centered work.

This is the way the 'indwelling Spirit' is taught by Walther and Luther. After Luther's lengthy comment on the Spirit who writes on the heart of man as quoted earlier, he goes on to qualify that statement:

What means does he employ to change and renew the heart? This he accomplishes by revealing and preaching Jesus Christ, the Lord, as Christ himself say, John 15:26: 'When the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he will testify of me.'³¹

That Spirit working inwardly in man's heart, enters that heart by the preaching of Jesus and continues His work there by his testimony to Jesus. The inward Spirit is an outward Spirit, entering and working by the gift from outside of forgiveness bestowed by the means of grace.

Earlier we heard a quote from Luther speaking in a way that sounded almost Pietistic claiming that it was "not his

³¹Luther, WA, 21:440, 1. 35.

[the Spirit's] office to write books."³² That passage must be taken in context. Later on in the same sermon Luther explains:

Hence, we have no further use for books, except to strengthen our faith, and to show to others that it is written as the Holy Spirit teaches. For we must not retain our faith simply within ourselves, but to let it break forth, establish and prove it, we must have the Scriptures.³³

Luther's original point was not to deny the efficacy of the Scriptures but rather to point out that the Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures not to give laws but to establish faith by the giving of the Gospel.

Be careful, therefore, not to regard the Holy Ghost as a law-maker, but as one who proclaims the Gospel of Christ to your heart, and makes you so free, that not a single letter remains, but for the sake of preaching the Gospel.³⁴

Luther clearly proclaims the critical point that the proper work of the Holy Ghost is the proclamation of the Gospel and never the Law. The Spirit's proclamation of the Gospel gives faith and with it the beginning of internal sanctification.

More will be said about this in the next chapter on the means of grace. Here the point is that the inward dwelling Spirit is still a Gospel Spirit. Whatever internal renewal he effects is always the result of the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. As Luther said

³²Ibid., 21:440, l. 27. ³³Ibid., 21:442, l. 3.

³⁴Ibid., 21:442, l. 7.

above, "we must not retain our faith simply within ourselves"³⁵. For the benefit of our faith and the faith of others, the Spirit in the heart is always the giver of Jesus Christ through the outward means of the Gospel.

Walther echoes these words of Luther about Law and Gospel, saying: ". . . the Holy Ghost comes not through the Law but alone through the Gospel of Christ."³⁶ He also shares Luther's concern that the Spirit in the heart is not just an internal Spirit but a Spirit experienced through the external means.

Hear the Gospel of Christ and faith. Silence the storming thunder of the divine Law. Then you will feel the sweet way of the grace Spirit in your heart.³⁷

In the conclusion of the sermon quoted earlier in which Walther emphasized the Spirit in the heart he concludes by reminding the hearers that this Spirit leads them to know that "Christ is the resurrection and the life."³⁸

Much of this will come up again under the topic of the means of grace. Important to note here is that with Walther as with Luther, to speak of the Spirit in the heart is to speak of a Spirit that gives Jesus by the outward proclamation of the Gospel. Therefore, as was indicated in the title of this section, the inward dwelling Spirit is really an outward giver, working in the heart by the external proclamation of the promise of salvation in Christ.

³⁵Ibid., 21:442, 1. 5. ³⁶Walther, Festklänge, 337.

³⁷Walther, Epistle Postille, 264. ³⁸Ibid., 271.

Here Spener take a totally different approach. For him the Spirit is more a source of inner guidance than an outward proclaimer of Jesus. He says:

The office of the Holy Spirit is that He gives us to know the true spiritual understanding of the law, that we are acquainted with it not only as outward moral virtue but the inner desire of the heart before God to do that which we cannot understand without his enlightenment.³⁹

This statement is consistent with the point made about Spener earlier, that he views the Spirit as an independent contractor. The job of the Spirit is not to proclaim Christ through the Gospel, but rather to lead us to a new understanding of the Law that we might be better workers for the good.

And the Holy Spirit gives a believing soul a right understanding of such words and laws that it understands the spiritual meaning therein; and he reminds us of our duty that we should do them.⁴⁰

The work of the Holy Spirit is not solely to proclaim the Gospel but to give an "understanding of words and laws." Furthermore it is not the Gospel but this new law understanding that moves man to keep the Law. Spener says elsewhere, "[The Holy Spirit] writes the Law in our hearts that gives knowledge, drives and empowers."⁴¹ It is not the Gospel that works sanctification but the Law that has been spiritually revitalized by virtue of being written in man's heart.

³⁹Spener, Lauterkeit, 786. ⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 793.

It may actually be that Spener felt in all this he was being very Lutheran. After all Luther said something very similar in the sermon quoted above.

First the written Law is that which God has commanded, and comprised in writing. It is called written or letter, because it does not proceed, and penetrate the heart; nor do works result from it. . . . The other Law is spiritual, not written with pen or ink . . . but the Holy Spirit wrote in their hearts, pure, fiery flames, restoring them to life, so as to break forth with flaming tongues and energetic hands, as new creatures, feeling that they have an understanding, disposition, and mind altogether different from that which they had before.⁴²

There are several similarities here. Both men speak of two kinds of Law, one recorded in books another given by the Spirit. Both speak of a Spirit who changes the hearts of men. Both speak of the Spirit giving the believer a new understanding. Yet, there appears to be a difference between the Spirit preached by Spener and the one here preached by Luther.

When Luther refers to the 'spiritual Law' it is a misnomer. Luther is really not speaking about the Law at all but about the Gospel. Immediately after speaking of the distinction between the written and spiritual Law he goes on to explain:

For this reason, God sends the Holy Spirit to impress such preaching in the heart, so that it may inhere and live in it. For surely there can be no doubt that Christ accomplished all things, took away our sins and overcame every obstacle so that through him we should be lords over all things.⁴³

⁴²Luther, WA, 21:439, l. 14. ⁴³Ibid., 21:441, l. 8.

The spiritual Law given by the Holy Spirit is not a new set of rules perceived only by the believer but the confidence that comes from the knowledge of Christ as Savior. The Spirit does not give some new 'spiritual' understanding of God's commands but rather preaches the Gospel of Christ who took away our sins. This Gospel is the living thing in the heart of man not a spiritually revitalized Law.

For Spener, however, the spiritual Law is just that, the Law. The only difference from the moral, written Law is that it is not merely an external performance of the Law but an obedience that flows from a desiring heart.

Luther would agree that the Law is to be fulfilled from the heart but that desire is created by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Spener gives the impression that the desire comes directly from the Spirit as he gives not Gospel but a new spiritual understanding of God's commands.

For Spener the Spirit may come through the Gospel but from there he begins a new work of making man holy by writing the Law in man's heart which brings with it insight and desire for the obedience of the commandments. The Spirit's task is to provide inner guidance and motivation for the performance of the good. For Luther and Walther, the Spirit is not some new inward Law giver, but rather an outward proclaimer of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that the Gospel will lead to a new heart eager to do God's commandments. Still the proper work of the Spirit

is not to preach new laws but to enliven and comfort with the Gospel of Jesus.

Before leaving this topic of the inner Spirit, we should take another look at Walther. Generally he is in agreement with Luther that the inwardly working Spirit must always be the Spirit who gives and is given outwardly through the Gospel. He makes one strong statement that may seem to contradict this emphasis. Speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit, as quoted above, Walther says: "True Christianity is not something outward but something inward, a thing and experience of the heart."⁴⁴

On the surface this seems to contradict the Formula of Concord which emphasizes that the work of the Spirit is an external thing of the Word and the experience of the heart is not to be relied on.

For concerning the presence, operation, and gifts of the Holy Ghost we should not and cannot always judge ex sensu (from feeling) as to how and when they are experienced in the heart; but because they are often covered and occur in great weakness, we should be certain from, and according to, the promise, that the Word of God preached and heard is (truly) an office and work of the Holy Ghost, by which He is certainly efficacious and works in our hearts, 2 Cor. 2:14ff.; 3:5 ff.⁴⁵

Luther shows how both these statements can be reconciled.

Now that God has sent forth His holy Gospel, He deals with us in a twofold manner: the one is external, the other internal. Externally He deals with us through the preached Word of the Gospel and through perceptible

⁴⁴Walther, Epistle Postille, 265.

⁴⁵"The Formula of Concord. Thorough Declaration, II. Of Free Will," Concordia Triglotta, 903 par. 56.

signs, that is, Baptism and the Sacrament. Inwardly He deals with us through the Holy Ghost and faith and its gifts. But all this in this manner and order, that the external parts should and must come first, and the internal follow and come through the external, so that He has determined to give no man the internal parts unless it be through the external parts; for it is His will to give no man the Spirit or faith without the external Word and sign.⁴⁶

Thus Luther demonstrates that to speak of Christianity being an inward thing is not in itself a false teaching as long as this inward Christianity is clearly shown to come from the external Word. This is exactly the viewpoint taken by Walther in this 1848 sermon, for the very next point of his message is: By what means alone is this true Christianity worked in man? He answers, "The means alone through which the true Christianity is worked in man, is with no other word than the preaching of the great acts of God for the salvation of the world."⁴⁷ Just as Luther, Walther definitely connects this inner Christianity solely with the external Word.

A reading of the context of Walther's sermon reveals that this bold statement about the internalness of Christianity is spoken out of concern for the hypocrite⁴⁸. However, while used correctly here and with good cause by Walther, in Luther's Pentecost preaching there is no such strong statement that 'True Christianity must be an inward

⁴⁶Martin Luther, St. Louis Edition, 2:202 [As translated in Francis Pieper's Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 2:185]

⁴⁷Walther, Epistle Postille, 270. ⁴⁸Ibid., 269.

thing.' Other such statements by Walther will be examined closely to see if they reflect the Lutheran understanding as is the case here, or whether they reflect the influence of Pietism and therefore fall under the Formula's warning against judging the presences of the Spirit ex sensu.

So far there are two positive emphases that are common to the three Lutheran preachers. One emphasis is that even though Pentecost is the festival of the Holy Spirit, the preaching of Pentecost is still a preaching of Jesus. This emphasis is powerfully shown in the preaching of Peter. A second common emphasis is that this Spirit dwells within man. While not an explicit point of Peter's sermon this point is certainly demonstrated in the event of the Pentecost, as it is said, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . ." (Acts 2:4a).

It has also been shown how a Pietistic view of the Spirit had influenced these Lutheran emphases. In the case of Spener, while he mentions Jesus, the Holy Spirit has become the central focus of his Pentecost sermons. In fact, the Spirit appears to take on an existence independent of Christ. While the Spirit is given by Christ, Spener at times speaks as if the Spirit works sanctification in man apart from the proclamation of Jesus. This is most clearly seen where Spener describes the Spirit as a lawgiver, filling man with a new spiritual understanding of the law, while for Luther and Walther the Spirit is the Gospel giver,

giving only Christ and his forgiveness.

There was a second Pietistic influence that was noted, this time in Walther. It was shown how Walther spoke of Christianity as a thing of man's inner experience, a very common emphasis in Pietism.⁴⁹ However it was also shown that such language can have a proper scriptural understanding and that was the understanding Walther had in this particular instance.

One final comment, the selection of Jesus as the first artery in the heart of Pentecost preaching is no accident. He is the main artery. The next two chapters merely offer further explanation of how Christ may be kept central in the preaching. The only reason Jesus is not here called the heart of Pentecost preaching is because the word Jesus means many things to many people. By the completion of the sixth chapter with its description of the heart of Pentecost it will be seen exactly what Lutherans mean when they speak of Jesus.

⁴⁹Bengt Hägglund, History of Theology, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 329.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND ARTERY--THE MEANS OF GRACE

For Peter the first major artery of Pentecost preaching is Jesus. Wherever Christ is being proclaimed, there is the Holy Spirit doing his work, for the task of the Holy Spirit is to bring Jesus' gifts to the hearts of men. Heart here is understood, as defined in the last chapter, not merely as some higher, inner part of man but as the whole of man without remainder. The second major emphasis of Peter's preaching is closely related to the first. How does the Spirit accomplish this task of bringing Jesus's gift to the hearts of men?

Peter explicitly answers this question in his conclusion when he says, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Here he plainly states that the Spirit is given and works through means. The means stated here is the water of Baptism.

Peter's sermon also gives an implicit answer to that question. Filled with the Holy Spirit and charged to give Christ to all nations what means does Peter use? He might have performed miracles and healed the sick. Scripture declares later in the book of Acts that the apostles were

blessed with such authority (Acts 3:7). For the giving of Jesus to the crowd in Jerusalem on Pentecost Peter simply preached the saving acts of God in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:11). In fact, the evident miracles according to Peter were merely to show that their message of Christ crucified was of God (Acts 2:12-24).

All of this is familiar territory for Lutherans. In the Augsburg Confession, Article V, it was clearly spelled out: "For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God . . ." ¹ In addition to the two means mentioned by Peter, Baptism and the preaching of the Word, the Lutheran Confessions add "the Lord's Supper and Absolution, which is the sacrament of repentance," as those means "which have the command of God, and to which the promise of grace has been added." ²

As mentioned in the introduction the Spirit's use of means is a fundamental difference between Pietism and Lutheranism. As just stated, Lutheran theology confessed the Spirit who works through the means of Word and Sacrament. Pietists tended to view this as a mechanistic way of thinking of the Spirit's working that inevitably lead to a view of the sacraments as opus operatum. They preferred

¹"Augsburg Confession", Concordia Triglotta, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 45.

²"Apology of the Augsburg Confession", Article 13:3, Concordia Triglotta, 309.

a living Spirit who is received experientially rather than through external objective means. As Bengt Hägglund points out in his History of Theology:

Another characteristic was that subjective events were taken to be the point of departure. The role of experience as the ground of certainty has already been emphasized. Inner spiritual phenomena and individual experiences elicited the greatest interest and provided the focus for theological discussion.³

Since all three preachers are of Lutheran background none of them goes to the extremes of Pietism and denies the means of grace completely. A close examination will be made to see if the Pietistic experiential theology has influenced them.

The first consideration is to enquire where all three are in agreement concerning the means. Secondly, there are two related issues to be probed in which there is divergence: one concerns the essence of repentance; the other deals with what constitutes the means of grace. In all these areas we shall test for Pietistic influences.

As said above, as Lutherans all three preachers speak of the Spirit working through means. Martin Luther comments on Peter's emphasis, "The Baptism is established, and the preaching office is confirmed and its work ordered, and

³Bengt Hägglund, History of Theology, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 329.

thereby the Holy Spirit is given."⁴ C. F. W. Walther see a similar lesson in the event of Pentecost. "Tongues, preaching, that is the Word, is that through which Christ establishes, builds, spreads and adorns his church in the world."⁵ Philipp Spener, echoes the words of the Augsburg Confession: "The Holy Spirit needs the Divine Word and the Holy Sacraments."⁶

All three illustrate their discussion of the means of the Spirit along similar lines. At one time or another in their preaching they compare the new Pentecost with the old Pentecost or as Walther calls it the "Old Covenant of God"⁷. The Pentecost of the Old Testament happens on Mount Sinai, fifty days after the Israelites left the slavery of Egypt. At this time God gives his people the Law. Likewise the Pentecost of the New Testament happens fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What God gives his people at this time is the Gospel. The Pentecost event provides the perfect format for the Lutheran presentation of Law and Gospel.

⁴Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, ed. Georg Buchwald, 2 vols. (Gtersloh: C. Bertelsmann Publisher, 1925), 2:320. Hereafter cited as Predigten.

⁵C. F. W. Walther, Festklänge, Predigten über Festtexte des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1892), 319. Hereafter cited as Festklänge..

⁶Philipp Jakob Spener, Lauterkeit des Evangelischen Christenthums, 2 vols. (Halle: Verlegung des Waisen-Hauses, 1706), 2:785. Hereafter cited as Lauterkeit.

⁷Walther, Festklänge, 302.

All three are in agreement that the new Pentecost is superior to the old. Commenting on the fact that Peter, in the new Pentecost, preaches on the mighty acts of God, Luther says:

The Moses preaching and the Law preaching is not preaching on the great acts of God, that is, what He has done. But it is what we should do, that is: Do good, gives alms, obey our parents.⁸

The problem with old Pentecost preaching is that while it gives a good and holy Law, it does not give the ability to fulfill that Law. Walther says, "It says we should be holy but it does not make us holy and perfect."⁹

This is the basic lack of the old Pentecost. Through it one knows God's will but is still unable to fulfill God's will. That is not to say that the Holy Spirit does not make use of the old Pentecost revelation of Law. "The Holy Spirit also works well through the Law but He is not given through the Law."¹⁰

While we do not receive the Spirit in the Law, He still is at work there. He uses this Law to work repentance in man, that is moving man to "fear and terror" over his sinfulness.¹¹ When it comes to making man righteous the Law is just "book learning" that can only lead to outwardly good

⁸Luther, Predigten, 336.

⁹Walther, Festklänge, 338. ¹⁰Ibid., 359.

¹¹Martin Luther, Luther Deutsch, ed. Kurt Aland, 10 vols. (Stuttgart: Ehrenfried Klotz Publisher, 1965), 8:246

works.¹² The purpose of the Law therefore, is not to make man holy but to show him his sin. To borrow a term from Christology the Law is the alien work of the Holy Spirit.

If the Law is the tool of the Spirit for repentance, the Gospel is the means whereby the Spirit gives the gifts of the Gospel. The Gospel is the proper work of the Holy Spirit.

Luther emphasizes that the Spirit works only through the means of the Gospel. In one sermon directed against the Enthusiasts, Luther grants them that God desires to give the Holy Spirit to those who pray for him but he added that one must go where God gives the Spirit which is only in the Word and Sacrament.¹³

Walther, the great champion of the distinction of Law and Gospel, also makes it clear that the Spirit makes alive only through the means of the Gospel. One sermon title boldly proclaims:

The visible pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the first Christian Pentecost, a certain sign, that the Spirit is given not by the Law but by the Gospel of Christ.¹⁴

While Walther often speaks of the experience of the Holy Spirit he never falls into the error of the Enthusiasts who

¹²Martin Luther, "Crucigers Sommerpostille", D. Martin Luther's Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 66 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Bölaus Nachfolger, 1883-1983), 21:439, l. 15. Hereafter cited as WA.

¹³Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 5:319, l. 4.

¹⁴Walther, Festklänge, 336.

desired the direct working of the Holy Spirit. For Walther and Luther He only works through means and those means are the Gospel, the means of grace.

Despite the effect of Pietism on his view of sanctification, Spener also affirms this point. For him there can be no working of the Holy Spirit apart from the "means" appointed by God.¹⁵

There is no dispute among these men that the Holy Spirit uses the means of Baptism, Lord's Supper, Office of the Keys and the preaching of the Gospel. There is a difference, however, in the way they speak of these means. One is likely to find all of these means extolled in Luther whereas this is not the case in Spener and Walther. One does not find in them that rejoicing in Baptism as the consummation of Pentecost as is the case with Peter and Luther. In Spener's preaching Baptism is seldom emphasized and when it is mentioned it is more frequently in summary "the Divine Words and the Holy Sacraments."¹⁶ Walther mentions Baptism even less, preferring to speak of 'the Gospel.' Still, the preaching of Spener and Walther is a far cry from the mature Pietists who denied the efficacy of the sacraments entirely. Yet, there may be a relation between this later Pietism and the neglect of Baptism in Walther and Spener.

In Peter's Pentecost preaching there is no room to

¹⁵Spener, Lauterkeit, 793. ¹⁶Ibid., 785.

interpret the work of the Spirit in a subjective or experiential manner. The gift of the Holy Spirit is clearly tied to the very external and objective means known as Baptism (Acts 2:38). This would also be true of Luther's preaching where he reflects Peter's concern with the water and the Word. However, where Spener fails to make such an emphasis he leaves the door ajar for later Pietists who would deny water Baptism and favor a newbirth demonstrated in man's experience of renewal. Likewise Walther's failure to emphasize Baptism may unconsciously show a background that stressed man's experience of the Word over the mere outward administration of the Sacraments.

If there is evidence of Pietistic influence where all three preachers agree, there may be even clearer evidence of this influence in two issues where the preachers differ. These two divergent topics are repentance and the means as power.

Repentance

The first of these questions is in reference to repentance. All three preachers are in agreement that the Law is the tool used by the Spirit to work repentance but each describes the Spirit working a distinctively different kind of repentance.

For Luther the purpose of the Law was to create a

"frightened and fleeing man"¹⁷ A man who recognizes his sinfulness, flees from any works of his own to the works of Jesus Christ alone. The chief purpose of the Law is to drive us to Jesus and the forgiveness of sins. The Law is the preparation of the heart for the creation of faith by the Gospel.

For Spener the Law induces fear not only to bring to Christ but to create a "hatred" of evil which flows into sanctification.

A man must be brought to a knowledge of his sin, for without the hatred of evil it is impossible to come to the achievement of good.¹⁸

In Spener man does not flee from all his works but only his evil works. The function of the Law is not primarily to lead to faith but to the hatred of what is evil. Certainly Spener would agree that such hatred of evil does not make a man sanctified. True sanctification requires the Holy Spirit to use other means as well. It is not enough, however, that man just hate the evil he must also do the good.

For Luther sanctification is purely the result of the Gospel. It is suggested by the comment of Spener above that the Law also contributes to the creation of the sanctified heart. More than just preparing the heart for the Gospel it contributes that part of the renewed heart that hates evil, while the Gospel contributes that part that loves the good.

¹⁷Luther, Luther Deutsch, 8:247

¹⁸Spener, Lauterkeit, 788.

This mixing of Law and Gospel in sanctification is reminiscent of comments made in the last chapter on Spener's view of the indwelling Spirit.¹⁹ For Luther, repentance is rejection of our works that leads to faith on Christ's work alone. For Spener repentance is a rejection of evil works that leads to the performance of good works.

At times Walther also speaks like Spener, that the Holy Spirit leads men to hate their former sins.²⁰ Unlike Spener this is not a preliminary work that contributes to sanctification but rather is a fruit of one already justified by faith. Walther, like Luther, teaches that the Law creates fear of sin that men might hear and believe the Gospel.

There is a difference between Walther and Luther. While Luther speaks of the fear of the Law, that emotion is always secondary to the pronouncement of the curse of the Law and of the promise of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. For Luther the emotion is unimportant compared to the clear declaration of God's Word. Walther attributes much more importance to the experience of that emotion.

Remember this, all of you, that you do not only designate yourself sinner with your mouth, but that you feel [fuhlen] fear and anxiety as poor, lost sinner.²¹

¹⁹ Vide supra 73.

²⁰ C. F. W. Walther, Gnadenjahr. Predigten über die Evangelien des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1891), 296. Hereafter cited as Gnadenjahr.

²¹Walther, Epistle Postille, 271.

Walther's concern here is to condemn a false repentance whereby a man speaks the words of confession "I a poor miserable sinner" but does not mean what he says. While repentance does not merely consist in the voicing of words, by using the language of 'experience' and 'feeling' Walther could lead one to seek the evidence of true repentance in one's own emotions.

When Luther speaks of repentance he uses emotive language; "fear, terror."²² However, he recognizes that in our sinful condition one does not always feel the right emotion. So to the man who does not feel his sinfulness, Luther directs him simply to believe God's Word.

Therefore, if you can not feel [fuhlen] it, then believe the Scripture for it will not lie to you, for it knows your flesh better than you yourself.²³

This issue of experiencing the Holy Spirit will be a continuing concern for Walther and his teaching of sanctification, and this is yet another indication that his preaching may be influenced Pietistically.

Along with these differing views of repentance, there is a second area in the question of means where the preachers differ. While all agree that the Spirit works only through means there is some disagreement as to what constitutes those means.

²²Luther, Luther Deutsch, 8:246, 247.

²³Martin Luther, "Large Catechism", Concordia Triglotta, 771.

Faith or Power

For Luther and Walther the means are summarized as the Gospel which gives first and foremost faith. Walther says, after the Law works a knowledge that we are lost sinners then the Spirit steps in with the Gospel.

When a man, who is frightened over his sins and is troubled concerning his blessedness, thereafter hears the Gospel of Christ, the Savior of the sinners, then the Holy Spirit draws peace and joy into his heart. Thereby there rises in such a man a divine certainty that God is gracious and has forgiven all his sins. And that he out of grace through faith has become a righteous child of God and an heir of eternal life.²⁴

While couched in the language of experience (frightened, peace, joy, certainty) Walther clearly teaches that through the means of grace the Gospel's gift of forgiveness in Jesus Christ is given.

Luther also clearly says that the work of the Spirit in the Gospel is to give faith. ". . . so must the Holy Spirit come, given into our hearts, that we believe."²⁵ Luther is specific as to what that faith is: "In these stand the Holy Spirit, Baptism, Word, and Sacrament. Through these He can and does daily call us to forgiveness of sin in Christ, that all may be holy."²⁶ For Luther the work of the Spirit is the giving of the Gospel faith, which is faith in the forgiveness of sin.

²⁴Walther, Gnadenjahr, 295-296

²⁵Luther, "Crucigers Sommerpostille", WA, 21:441, l. 14.

²⁶Luther, Predigten, 327.

Spener introduces a new word into the discussion, power. For Spener the means are the power to do good works. For example in regard to Baptism it is not primarily a washing away of our sins but "The Holy Baptism is the bath of the new birth and renewal. Out of this the power of good comes to all Christendom."²⁷ Baptism is essentially a power that enables us to do all good. He speaks similarly of the Lord's Supper. It is not first and foremost the body and blood given and shed for remission of sins but "no less the Holy Supper gives us as often as we partake of it a new spiritual power."²⁸ It too is essentially a source of spiritual power. While Spener retains the means, the focus of those means has changed from the Gospel which gives Jesus with his forgiveness of sins to an undefined power for the performance of good works.

To this point the evidence shows that all three preachers speak about the means of Word and Sacrament. Walther and Luther speak of these means in conjunction with Gospel, forgiveness and faith. For Spener the common corroborative word for the means is power.

The use of the word 'power' in itself does not indicate that Spener's understanding of the means is different than Walther's and Luther's. There is a Gospel power as Paul explains in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, it is the power of God for salvation to every one

²⁷Spener, Lauterkeit, 786. ²⁸Ibid., 786.

who has faith." Walther, too, speaks of the Gospel as the means of power:

. . . only the hypocrite desires alone comfort to make him happy. On the contrary the righteous Christian wants not only the comfort concerning sins to make him happy, but also the power to acquire a new, godly life.²⁹

Walther speaks of power, but like Paul this power is connected to the comfort of the Gospel of forgiveness of sins. The issue is whether Spener also has such a Gospel understanding of the term power.

The strongest argument against a Gospel understanding is the very language Spener uses when discussing the means. As stated, Walther and Luther, following Paul's example, always make reference to the means of Word and Sacrament with the terms Gospel, forgiveness, salvation and faith. In their preaching the means are explicitly shown to be means of grace, that is the Gospel.

In two of Spener's sermons, one from 1668 and the other from 1682, while speaking of the means of Word and Sacrament he never mentions Gospel, nor forgiveness, nor salvation. In the 1668 sermon reference he does speak of faith in the phrase "faith and its fruits." This only leads to the issue, examined in the next chapter, whether Spener speaks here with a Gospel understanding of faith. However, at this point in Spener's discussion of the means there is no mention of Christ's forgiving work of salvation but only

²⁹Walther, Festklänge, 359.

power for man's sanctification.

A further argument against a Gospel understanding can be seen in Spener's own explanation of what is crucial to the Spirit's power. In his sermon on the "powerful working of the Holy Spirit" he makes three points of the work of the Holy Spirit. The first is that He gives power. The second is that the standard of this spiritual power is the commandments and Law of God. The third is that the working of the Spirit itself is a conversion, keeping and doing of the good.

Converted, they keep before themselves the law. Kept, they diligently consider and fasten their eyes upon the law. Doing, they fulfill what it says with their acts.³⁰

Two things are of note here. The first is that the standard (Regel) of the Spirit's power is not the Gospel but the Law. Furthermore, it is significant that Spener offers a new explanation of the Spirit's work of keeping. According to the third article of the Small Catechism the Holy Spirit sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith.³¹ In Spener's sermon the Spirit keeps by the obedience to God's commandments. For the Catechism the keeping of the Christian is a Gospel thing, for Spener the keeping is a Law thing.

All of this confirms the tendency documented in the last chapter where Spener spoke of the Spirit working sanctification in the Christian not solely by the Gospel but

³⁰Spener, Lauterkeit, 783.

³¹Martin Luther, "The Small Catechism", Concordia Triglotta, 545.

by giving into the Christian a new spiritual understanding of the Law.³² This emphasis on the Law as an essential element in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is quite a contrast to Luther. Sometimes in Luther's sermons he preaches the Gospel so powerfully it almost appears he is going to throw out the Law entirely.³³ Indeed, he often speaks as if Christians have no need of the Law. However, for Spener it appears that the Gospel is not the only means that the Spirit uses to keep the Christian in holiness until life eternal. Spener's Spirit keeps a man in holiness by empowering him to good works by a means that is a mixture of Law and Gospel.

For all the negative things said about Spener's concept of the means as power, there are some positive points to mention. For all his emphasis on the Holy Spirit as the power for good works, he does not revert to the Enthusiast error of the direct working of the Spirit. As mentioned before Spener speaks much of power but this power does not come directly. Spener ties the work of the Holy Spirit to Word and Sacrament.

This emphasis on the Holy Spirit as power is also clearly distinguished from the Romanist teaching of gratia infusa. Spener makes at least two distinctions between his view and that of Rome.

First, he points out that these good works empowered

³²Vide supra 73. ³³Vide supra 71.

by the Spirit are not done for our merit. "We do not merit by such works because they are not our works but God's" (Eph. 2:8,9).³⁴ Plainly he wants no talk of meritorious works. The argument of the divine monergism in regard to our works, however, does not assure a Gospel understanding of the means.

This can be seen in Spener's own reference to Ephesians 2:8,9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God--not because of works lest any man should boast." The focus of this passage is faith. The merits of men's works are completely replaced by faith, that is the meritorious works of Jesus Christ. Our righteousness is something totally given us from outside of us, totally independent of what we do, solely resting on what Jesus Christ has already done.

Spener's usage of this passage centers not on "faith" but on the "not our doing." In the text men's works have absolutely no righteousness, the only righteousness is Jesus. In Spener's argument a man's works can retain an element of righteousness as long as he remembers that they are really not his work but the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells within him.

Essentially we have two different definitions of the word 'grace' and the phrase 'gift of God.' In the text

³⁴Spener, Lauterkeit, 787.

these refer to the gift of Jesus Christ for our forgiveness, for Spener they refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit at work within us. As Spener says:

Now this is the grace of the Holy Spirit, that he makes us capable and drives us to do good. This is a magnificent treasure of our blessedness.³⁵

The point of Paul's proclamation is that we boast not in our works but the works of Jesus Christ on the cross. Spener seems to say that we boast not in our works, but the works we do by the driving of the Holy Spirit.

Returning to the good things of Spener, there is a second distinction Spener makes between himself and the Romanists. He says:

It [the power for good works] is not the source or meaning of our blessedness. But we are already blessed in that God and the Spirit are in us, and that as such work in us.³⁶

Spener wants to make a clear distinction between his teaching and the teaching of the Romanists and the semi-pelagians. He wants it known that the indwelling spiritual power is not some preliminary requirement that man must meet in order to receive the blessedness of God. Nor is this power the cause or reason for God's blessing. However, the question is, if the power is not the "source of our blessedness," what is?

Spener goes on to say "but he who has the Holy Ghost and God in him is already blessed."³⁷ Spener is talking

³⁵Ibid. ³⁶Ibid. ³⁷Ibid., 788.

about the blessedness of man with no mention of faith. There is no mention of Jesus at all! He is left out of the formula quoted above, "He who has the Holy Ghost and God in him." Seemingly man's blessedness is not based on the external work of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, but on the indwelling of God.

Here is the same problem, as seen earlier, with reference to man's works being the works of God.³⁸ Spener wants to distance himself from the Romanist teaching but at the same time he distances himself from the Lutheran teaching by replacing the blessedness of faith in Jesus with the blessedness of the power of the indwelling Spirit.

In summary, the fault of Spener is not so much what he says, as what he does not say, at least in the content of his Pentecost preaching. The Spirit does use means to give power to sanctify man. What Spener fails to clearly point out is that the means and power is solely the Gospel.

Before concluding, we return to Walther's comment about power again.

. . . only the hypocrite desires alone comfort to make him happy. But on the contrary the righteous Christian wants not only the comfort concerning sins to make him happy, but also the power to acquire a new, godly life.³⁹

Walther and Spener's comments have this in common, that they are both concerned about the "hypocrite." As Walther said, he is disturbed by the hypocrite who wants

³⁸ Vide supra 96. ³⁹Walther, Festklänge, 359.

only comfort for sin and not the power to overcome sin. Spener also felt that the church of his day had become infested by dead orthodoxy, that the concern for right teaching had blotted out a concern for right living.

Perhaps this is the rock upon which Spener runs aground and endangers the preaching of Walther. When one looks at the church of any age it is much easier to see the sin therein than the living faith. Today the oft spoken criticism of the church is that it is filled with hypocrites. Such a diagnosis that the church is populated by hardened hypocrites leads to a preaching that concentrates on exhortation to 'right living' that the sleeping might be awakened. Francis Pieper says:

Some of the Pietists plainly had a good intention. With a 'heartfelt', 'living' Christianity they wanted to oppose the externalism which unfortunately had become rampant in the Lutheran Church and made an opus operatum of the use of the divinely appointed means of grace.⁴⁰

Perhaps this is the reason Spener avoids using the terms Gospel and forgiveness, and only uses faith in reference to its fruits. Perhaps he felt these terms, while good in themselves, were so misunderstood by the carnally minded as to be unusable. Forgiveness, Gospel, and faith had become the excuses of the man unwilling to live the new life in Christ. That is why in his sermon he emphasizes not the grace of the means but the power of the means for

⁴⁰Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3:174.

sanctification. It is an apparent attempt to combat the view of the sacraments as opus operatum.

These same concerns have been voiced by Walther. As stated this underlies Walther's concern that repentance be a thing of feeling.⁴¹ He does not want the carnally minded comforted simply because he has spoken the words of confession. It is also the concern of the passage above about the comfortable hypocrite. For Walther, the church needs to move beyond just comfort concerning sins by the mechanical performance of the sacraments, to a new power by which the church will be renewed.

Do Walther and Spener have an accurate diagnosis of the problem of the church? According to the Augsburg Confession in the church on earth "there are many false Christians and hypocrites" but still the church is "the gathering of all believers and saints."⁴² What is necessary in the preaching of the church is not primarily an exhortation to the hypocrite but the devastating preaching of the Law and the gift of forgiveness to the repentant sinner. Luther recognizes the problem of hypocrisy but also believes God's promise that His Word will not return void. He agrees with the Augsburg Confession that what is necessary for the renewal of the church is not preaching to a power for new

⁴¹Vide supra 89.

⁴²"Augsburg Confession", Concordia Triglotta, 47.

life but "the pure preaching of the Gospel and the offering of the Holy Sacraments in conformity to the Gospel."⁴³

In this respect a word must be spoken in defense of Walther. He also shares Luther's diagnosis. While in the aforementioned quote he condemns the hypocrite and warns the believer against such hypocrisy, Walther realizes that hypocrisy is not the chief characteristic of the church. This is seen in that the bulk of his preaching is addressed to the comfort of the sinner. This is in contrast to Spener who felt the organized church was corrupted and therefore called for the formation of conventicles within the church where the Word of God could be studied and the church as a whole renewed. The bulk of his preaching concentrates not on the Gospel as the comfort of forgiveness but on the Holy Spirit's power to good works.

This also leads to another difference between Walther and Spener. Spener often talks as if this power is the essence of the working of the Holy Spirit. Compare that with Walther who says:

Comfort concerning our sins, without power, that we might be free of sin, is like food without spice, without salt. But it is to our good, that our Pentecost peace has also this spice, this salt.⁴⁴

Spener speaks as if the meat or substance of the Holy Spirit's work is the power to do good. Here Walther indicates that the power is a salt which adds flavor to the real

⁴³Ibid. ⁴⁴Walther, Festklänge, 359.

substance which is the comfort of the sinner.

However, there is a flaw in this analogy of Walther's. Food without spice is a blah, tasteless affair, sometimes inedible. While spice is not of the essence of food it is something necessary to complete it and make it whole. In other words, the Spirit of comfort is incomplete without the Spirit that empowers to good works. While the meat of the Spirit's work may be comforting the sinner, that work still requires in addition the Spirit of power to make a meal tasty and complete for the consumption of the Christian.

Luther would contend that the Spirit of comfort is a meal complete in itself, having no need of additional salt. To continue the food analogy Luther perhaps would call the Spirit of power a 'garnish.' It adds to the visible beauty of the Spirit's work as Christian and unbeliever alike witness the sanctified life of the faithful. It, however, does not contribute to the essential work which is simply to comfort the sinner by the proclamation of the Gospel.

The best analogy however is that of Christ: he speaks not of food but of the vine and the branches. Jesus calls himself the vine and the Christians the branches. Apart from him we can do nothing; in him we will bear much fruit. The critical issue is not the fruit, however, but the relationship to the vine. One can preach long and loud to the branches about bearing fruit, but only as they are connected to the vine will there be any fruits. The critical issue is

our attachment to the vine from which the living sap flows.

Spener avoids using terminology which he feels is conducive to dead orthodoxy. In its place he uses exhortations to power and good works and speaks of God's Word and Sacrament as the means to a holy life. In so doing he has cut off his hearers from the true power and means of the sanctified life which is found in the Gospel of forgiveness in Jesus Christ alone. Where there is no Gospel vine there can be no fruits. It should be noted, however, that this omission of the Gospel so far has been demonstrated only in the context of Spener's discussion of the means. It remains in the next chapter to see whether he makes a similar omission in the discussion of faith.

Whether this emphasis on power without explicit mention of the Gospel is true of Walther as well remains to be seen. The evidence shows that his concerns about the condition of the church are similar to Spener's. There is also an apparent concern that Law and Gospel be things experienced by the Christian.⁴⁵ In the quotes above he appears to speak as if the Spirit has two works, one of comfort and one of power.⁴⁶ According to his analogy of meat and spice, the Spirit of the Gospel is incomplete without the Spirit who empowers man to good works.

Perhaps this is unfair to Walther and his analogy is pressed too far. Perhaps by the analogy of meat and spice he

⁴⁵Vide supra 89. ⁴⁶Vide supra 101.

is only trying to illustrate the confessional principle that faith is bound to bring forth good fruits. There is, however, a difference in the language of Walther and Luther. In the aforementioned quotes of Walther, he not only speaks of meat and spice, but he also talks as if the true Christian must move beyond the Spirit of comfort to also embrace the Spirit of power.

Luther also speaks of a Spirit who moves, "that we do what is the blessed will of God." He refers to him not as a Spirit of power but as the "Holy Spirit, who also sanctifies our lives."⁴⁷ Of greatest importance is that this Spirit is clearly identified as the Spirit of 'comfort.'

Throughout his sermon Luther emphasizes that the Spirit who sanctifies us is the Spirit who comforts us with the forgiveness of sins. What a true Christian needs then is not to move beyond comfort to power for new life, but rather to know better the Spirit of comfort. There is no Spirit but the Gospel Spirit. There is no power to sanctification but the comforting of the forgiveness of sins.

Walther would probably not deny this but at least in this instance Walther blurs something that Luther makes perfectly clear, that there is no Spirit of power apart from the Spirit that comforts the sinner with the forgiveness of sins. However, this now moves from the question of the means of sanctification to the topic of the next chapter

⁴⁷Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:318, 1. 25.

"Faith and Fruits."

Another positive emphasis for Lutheran Pentecost preaching has been established. It was shown by the example of all three Lutheran preachers and confirmed by Peter's preaching that Pentecost preaching should emphasize the means of grace. It should be made perfectly clear that there is no working of the Holy Spirit apart from the preaching of the Gospel, the Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Confession and Absolution of sins.

This emphasis that the Spirit works through means is no guarantee, however, that a sermon is free from all Pietistic influence. Once again two Pietistic influences were noted.

The Pietistic emphasis on the experience of man was documented a second time in Walther. The reference here was to repentance with Walther seemingly saying that the essence of repentance includes feeling the condemnation of the law. This is in contrast to Luther who spoke of man who may have no feeling, but who nevertheless is simply to believe the law's proclamation of his sin and condemnation.

It was also demonstrated how the term 'power' can carry Pietistic implications. Although the word power can be used properly in the context of the means of grace, apparently for Spener the power of the means was not solely Gospel, but also the implanting of a new spiritual law within the Christian.

While Walther might not go as far as Spener, he too,

obscured the issue of the means and power. Walther speaks of the Christian moving beyond the Spirit of comfort to the Spirit of power. In so doing he gives the impression that the Gospel Spirit is not enough, but for sanctification to be complete the Gospel must be followed by a Law giving Spirit. Unlike Spener, however, Walther elsewhere explicitly says that the means are Gospel alone.

Finally, both of these errors, the emphasis on experiencing the Word and Sacraments, and the emphasis on the power to good works apart from an explicit Gospel, may have been arrived at from an honest desire to combat hypocrisy in the church. Both errors, however, cloud the true source of renewal which is only the Gospel. The first by placing greater concern upon man's experience rather than God's actions in Law and Gospel. The second by preaching powerful means apart from the source of their power which is the forgiveness of sins. In contrast Luther preaches the means solely as the Gospel whereby the Spirit gives forgiveness, which is also life and salvation.

CHAPTER V

THE THIRD ARTERY--FAITH AND FRUITS

The above title touches on a fundamental difference between Pietism and Lutheranism. In a way these terms are representative of their opposing viewpoints. For Lutheranism the center of theology is justification by grace through faith for Jesus Christ's sake. For Pietism it is the newbirth and the fruits thereof. Yet, can Walther and Luther be so simply distinguished from Spener? At first it may appear so, for as was already discussed in the previous chapter, Martin Luther and C. F. W. Walther preach the Spirit as the giver of the Gospel for faith but Philipp Spener preaches the Spirit as the giver of power for good works. However, while there may be an element of truth in characterizing Pietism as a theology of works and Lutheranism as a theology of faith, such characterization would be to oversimplify the analysis of the three preachers under consideration here.

A reading of these three men reveals that all speak of the Spirit as the giver of faith, even Spener who has been called the father of Pietism. Similarly all three speak of the fruits of the Spirit, even the great preacher of justification by faith alone, Martin Luther. Lutheran

theology has always maintained that the Holy Spirit in giving the forgiveness of sins by faith also gives new life. It will be seen in this chapter that all three preachers are in agreement with that. While they may not so simply be divided, differences do remain.

Before considering these differences this chapter will follow the procedure of the previous ones and begin with a discussion of the similarities. From this can be established what good Lutheran preaching does say about faith and fruits.

As mentioned above, all three preachers speak of the Spirit as the giver of faith. In regard to Luther the theme of the Spirit as the giver of faith was already touched on in the last chapter on the means of grace. As Luther clearly stated, ". . . so must the Holy Spirit come, given into our heart, that we believe."¹ Again he confessed with the Augsburg Confession, saying "The Holy Spirit, who works faith in those who hear the Gospel."²

It is not difficult to find similar sayings in the

¹Martin Luther, "Crucigers Sommerpostille", D. Martin Luther's Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 61 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Bölaus Nachfolger, 1883-1983), 21:441, 1. 14. Hereafter cited as WA.

²"Augsburg Confession", Art. 5, Concordia Triglotta, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 45.

preaching of Walther. "For we believe in Jesus Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Spirit."³ And again Walther says, ". . . in faith in Jesus Christ we speak: Abba, beloved Father. To this Jesus Christ helps us alone through the power of the Holy Spirit."⁴ The Spirit is He who gives man faith.

In the last two chapters the preaching of Luther and Walther has been contrasted with that of Spener. It was noted that Spener could speak of the Spirit without Jesus. It was also noted that Spener could speak of the means of Word and Sacrament without mentioning Gospel or the forgiveness of sins. One might expect to see the same pattern in Spener's preaching on faith. It is not so. When speaking of faith Spener does mention both Jesus and Gospel. In one particularly clear passage Spener says,

But where man has been brought first to repentance in the knowledge of sin, so must be laid before him the grace of God in Jesus Christ that he be brought to true faith and trust in Christ.⁵

In much of Spener's preaching there is little mention of Jesus and Gospel. On the topic of faith, however, these themes are clearly enunciated. Here he speaks of "the clear

³C. F. W. Walther, Festklänge. Predigten über Festtexte des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1892), 308. Hereafter cited as Festklänge.

⁴Ibid., 312.

⁵Philipp Jakob Spener, Lauterkeit des Evangelischen Christenthums, 2 vols. (Halle: Verlegung des Waisen-Hauses, 1706), 2:789. Hereafter cited as Lauterkeit.

Gospel and the pure preaching of the divine grace and free blessedness given in Christ, by which faith is worked in man."⁶

In light of this evidence previous criticisms of Spener need to be re-evaluated. There have been essentially two criticisms. The first is that Spener fails to establish the nexus between sanctification and justification. Sanctification is spoken of independent of Jesus and Gospel. On the topic of faith, as seen in the above quotes, Jesus and Gospel predominate. Furthermore, he clearly connects this justifying faith with man's sanctification. "The faith comes in the heart for without this it is impossible to acquire true works and sanctification."⁷ He often speaks of the "faith with its fruits."⁸

The second criticism was that it seemed for Spener that the means of sanctification was a mixture of Law and Gospel. Here, however, he bluntly states "The Gospel alone is the living seed of faith and also the power to all good works."⁹

This is not to deny the other evidence. It is still true the Jesus and Gospel do not predominate in Spener's sermons as they do in Luther's. There is still the evidence

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 793.

⁹Ibid., 789.

that Spener allows the Law also to be part of sanctification.¹⁰ For all this talk of faith and Gospel, there is still no reference to the forgiveness of sins. There is still no discussion of Christ crucified and resurrected which is the predominant theme of Peter's Pentecost preaching.

It is clear, however, that Spener's failure to emphasize these things is not from a lack of knowledge and understanding. He obviously knows the Lutheran doctrine of Law and Gospel, and justification and sanctification. If at times there appears to be a confusion of Law and Gospel it does not appear to be something he is aware of. Gospel may have been lacking in certain parts of the sermon, but to say it was missing entirely would be false.

If a Lutheran concern for faith is found in one who is generally known as a Pietist, can there also be found a Pietistic concern for the fruits of faith in those known as Lutheran?

This concern for the fruits of faith are found also in Walther. It is seen in this quote from the 1848 sermon reviewed in the first chapter.

For when the Holy Spirit himself comes over a man, then the natural spiritual darkness and the natural spiritual death are driven out of him. And in their place a new

¹⁰Vide supra 73, 88, and 93.

heavenly light and a new divine life is kindled in him. . . . He is filled with a love towards God and man.¹¹

This theme is a common one in Walther, appearing in many of his sermons throughout his preaching career. Consider this statement from a later sermon:

This revelation [the Gospel] not only comforts the sin frightened man, but also converts his heart and fills it with love for God and the neighbor, makes it desirous and happy to do and to suffer all that his God wills.¹²

And also this from his 1882 sermon reviewed in the second chapter.

A third work must always be added to these two works mentioned so far: man's fright over his lost condition and the joy at the grace he received; it is that a hearer of the Gospel then becomes an entirely new man. . . . His daily life is a daily struggle against sin, he tears his heart more and more free of the vanities . . . of this world. . . . Love to His brethren, yes to all men, even to his enemies burns in his heart.¹³

This teaching of the Spirit that bears fruit in man's heart and life is obviously not only the teaching of Spener but Walther as well.

The same kind of concerns are also voiced by Luther,

Then follows another sanctification of the Holy Spirit, that he makes our life holy, that we no longer desire to remain in sin and love evil as we did before. But He holds us and pours into us that we do what is the blessed will of God. . . . Such is the Holy Spirit's

¹¹C. F. W. Walther, Epistel Postille Predigten, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), 269. Hereafter cited as Epistel Postille.

¹²Walther, Festklänge, 360.

¹³C. F. W. Walther, Gnadenjahr, Predigten Über die Evangelien des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1891), 296. Hereafter cited as Gnadenjahr.

office and work, that He begins in us a new, right, sincere obedience towards God, that we resist sin and kill the old Adam, and through faith receive the forgiveness of sins.¹⁴

Furthermore Spener's phrase "the faith with its fruits" is not original with him. It was used by Luther before him.¹⁵

All three preachers speak of a Spirit who works faith in men. All three preachers speak of a Spirit that changes man, enabling him to do the will of God. Both of these statements are common ground in Lutheran Pentecost preaching. In addition these two teachings are in agreement with the sermon of Peter. While he did not explicitly mention faith or fruits in his preaching, faith and its attendant fruit were the result of his proclamation of Law and Gospel. "And all who believed were together and had all things in common and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need" (Acts 3:44,45 RSV).

However, as was seen in the previous two chapters, mere agreement on certain themes does not mean those themes are immune from the influence of Pietism. Following the practice of earlier chapters, those faith and fruit issues on which the preachers differ will next be examined for the possible marks of Pietism. Those areas of concern here are the teaching of perfectionism and the doctrine of resisting the Spirit.

¹⁴Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:317, l. 24. ¹⁵Ibid.

Perfectionism

While all three preachers speak of the Spirit who produces fruit in man, they also proclaim that these fruits will never be complete in this lifetime. Luther with his great concern for faith and the comfort of the sinner preaches powerfully against perfectionism. He realizes how quickly all comfort would be lost if a new convert would think that now as a Christian his life must be perfect in all things.

Therefore I must say, that one must be alert and thereby see that he does not crush the comfort and peace of the Holy Spirit, as some arrogant, presumptuous Enthusiast spirits do . . . [when they teach] that one may in all respects be perfect.¹⁶

The teaching of perfectionism offers a false comfort to the Christian. It promises the peace of feeling the completion of the Spirit's work in the believers life, but what it promises it cannot deliver. The Christian, is still made of "flesh and blood as other people and impoverished with sin and evil lust".¹⁷ The expectation of perfection in his works would soon lead to despair. His failure to realize perfection would make him doubt the Spirit's presence. In fact the more a Christian strives for such perfection the more he becomes aware how far he is from perfection. Luther realizes in the real world of the sinful flesh perfectionism

¹⁶Luther, "Crucigers Sommerpostille", WA, 21:442, 1. 30.

¹⁷Ibid., 21:442, 1. 34.

only crushes what comfort and peace the Spirit would give.

Luther is very plain in declaring this is not the way the Holy Spirit works.

For we also do not preach of the Holy Spirit and His office, as if he had already fully accomplished and achieved his work. But he has only begun and always goes on wrestling, that he may always more and more drive [treiben] us and not cease.¹⁸

The significance of this particular passage is that the perfectionism that Luther opposes is not only that the believer's works can be perfect but that the believer can internally and emotionally perfectly perceive his faith. Not only are the Christian's works still tainted by sin, but also his perception of his faith is still clouded at times by fear. Luther goes on to say:

For the scripture declares well what the Holy Ghost does, namely, that his office is to redeem us from sin and fear, but that is however not wholly completed.¹⁹

Luther's Spirit 'drives' to the knowledge that the Christians "are redeemed from sin and fear." That driving is never "wholly completed"²⁰ in this lifetime. Luther thereby offers a double comfort. Not only should Christians not despair when they see that sin still remains in their life, but likewise they should not despair when their faith is also sometimes colored by thoughts of fear. Rather they should turn to the Gospel and find comfort in the Spirit's proclamation of Christ.

¹⁸Ibid., 21:442, l. 15 ¹⁹Ibid., 21:442, l. 20.

²⁰Ibid., 21:442, l. 22.

The presence of such fear and the recognition of sin in a Christian's life does not mean that he should despair of the Spirit's coming. Rather such recognition means his heart is ready to receive the Spirit's help.

He must be of such a heart, that he feels and sees his poverty and that nothing can come from within. For he must be struggling should the Holy Spirit come and help.²¹

From his own experience Luther knows that when a Christian looks inward, strength and peace are quickly replaced by weakness and fear. This weakness need not lead to despair. Rather it only shows how much one needs the comfort of the Holy Spirit. A comfort which is freely given in the forgiveness of sins.

In another sermon Luther lists why the Spirit's work is never perfect in this life.

For flesh and blood is too weak, the devil is too strong for us, and we have received only the first fruits of the Spirit.²²

Even Christians are still in the sin corrupted flesh. Even though the devil is defeated, he is still a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. It is precisely because of this that Luther does not emphasize the Christian's works but the Gospel with its proclamation of the completed works of Jesus Christ. In sanctification the believer has received only the first fruits from the Spirit, but in his justification

²¹Ibid., 21:443, l. 22.

²²Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:317, l. 34.

by faith the Spirit has given him the completed fruits of forgiveness.

Luther does teach of a perfection for the Christian. That perfection is faith. In the Christian's subjective experience he may not perceive this perfection. As Luther said earlier, man's perception of faith is still bothered with fear. However, when Luther speaks of faith here, he means the forgiveness of sins. As he says,

Also we see here, whereby the Holy Spirit receives such name, namely, that he will make us holy, that is through the word he awakens in us faith in Christ, that we through him should receive forgiveness of sins.²³

When a Christian sees sins in his life or struggles with doubts in his mind, he always turns to the perfection of forgiveness given him in Jesus Christ. This is the perfectionism that Luther teaches. It is not the perfection of the fruits in a Christian's life, or his subjective experience of faith but the perfection of forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Such is the Holy Spirit's office and work: that he begins in us a new, right, and heartfelt obedience towards God, that we struggle against the sin and kill the old Adam, and that through the faith all sins become forgiven.²⁴

This is an excellent summary of Luther's teaching on sanctification. While it is true that the Spirit moves to good works and obedience these are only a beginning. The real completion and perfection are only found in the faith

²³Ibid., 52:318, 1. 2. ²⁴Ibid., 52:317, 1. 26.

in the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Spener, despite all his talk about the power to do good, also speaks against the perfection of our works.

These good works are also not our own but God has worked them in us. . . . We have them not as our own because in us still adheres weakness and imperfection. What remains and is truly good therefore belongs to God alone.²⁵

Notice how characteristically of Spener, the Spirit is the one who empowers to do good works. Despite all the power of the Spirit the sinfully corrupted nature remains. Therefore a Christian is always a witness of these two things, his own weakness and the power of God to do good. That is precisely why a Christian does not look to his works for salvation, for they are not his works but the works of God.

It is likewise this imperfection that leads to Christ's role in sanctification.

But it is such a treasure of the blessedness in Christ that he makes us worthy. He gives us the Spirit. The power is his. For his sake God will accept our imperfect good works and God accepts our offering through Him.²⁶

Christ gives the 'Spiritual' power to do good works. Since in this lifetime that power is never perfect in the Christian's life, it is also Christ who makes his works acceptable to God. In this way Spener refutes the error of perfectionism. The Christian is not to judge the acceptability of his works on the basis of their perfection. Rather he judges his works acceptable on the basis of the

²⁵Spener, Lauterkeit, 787. ²⁶Ibid., 788.

Holy Spirit who empowers the works and Christ who makes the imperfect works acceptable to God.

As the other two preachers so also Walther rejects any form of perfectionism. For Walther the problem with perfectionism is that it denies the proper functioning of Law and Gospel. The Law never gives evidence of a Christian's perfection, rather the Law results in "... fear, a knowledge of our evil will, our own powerlessness, and our struggling heart . . ."27. Likewise the answer to this knowledge of the Law is not a Spirit-filled feeling of perfection, but rather the Gospel. This Gospel is not the teaching of the perfectibility of the believer, but as Walther puts it, a pure teaching of "free grace and mercy."28

Like Luther, Walther recognizes the weakness that still adheres in man,

However, a true Christian must also confess with Paul, 'Not that I have already attained or am perfect,' but he can, without lying, likewise say, 'But I follow after, that I may take hold of that for which Christ Jesus has already taken hold of me.'29

Walther is well aware of the corrupt sinful nature of man. He is also aware that even after man's conversion by the Holy Spirit that sinfulness remains.

Walther goes on to counsel that the recognition of imperfection should not detract from man's experience of the conversion worked by God. As he quoted Paul, even though

²⁷Walther, Festklänge, 341. ²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Walther, Gnadenjahr, 296.

the believer is not perfect he still follows after, that he might take hold of that for which Christ Jesus has already taken hold of him. After this Walther goes on to say:

This amazing inner and outward change is nothing else but the work of the Holy Spirit who is concealed in the Word of the Gospel like a heavenly, fruitful seed.³⁰

A Christian has sin within him, but he also has the Gospel by which the Spirit works a wondrous change.

A Christian's perception of his weakness should not lead him to despair. Rather a Christian should remember the various times in which he has experienced the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

I ask you Christians: Have you not experienced [erfahren] all this in your hearts? Was there not a time in your life when God's Word pierced your innermost soul like an arrow, when you were restless because of your sins and the question escaped from your heart, 'What must I do to be saved?' After a longer or shorter time was there not also that time in your life when the Gospel of Christ made you certain of your pardon from God and certain of your salvation? And finally, did not the point arrive from which time on you became the foe of all sin and began to pursue the Christian life?³¹

For all of his imperfections the Christian has experienced the ongoing work of the Spirit in the feeling of sorrow for sin, in the feeling of certainty of salvation, and in the feeling of desire to flee sin and lead the Christian life.

Finally, Walther adds that the knowledge of imperfection can in fact be evidence of the Spirit working within the Christian. Those works that come easy to the believer are probably nothing more than "outwardly, makework, . . .

³⁰Ibid. ³¹Ibid.

that is the result of our own power." Only those works that are accomplished after "daily growth, prayer, struggle, admonition, awakening, warning, discipline, and comfort"³² are the ones truly worked by the Holy Spirit. Thus the self-satisfaction of the perfected Enthusiast shows a lack of the Spirit. The Spirit is most powerfully at work where there is weakness. Therefore, the Christian's experience of his imperfection is no proof that the Spirit has left, as long as he also has the experience of the on-going struggle for what is good.

Walther clearly refutes perfectionism. As he says, even the great Saint Paul was never fully perfected in his lifetime. How much more then will common Christians experience their imperfection? Walther reminds his hearers that their imperfection should not cause them to doubt the great conversion that the Holy Spirit works within them. While a Christian must be aware of his shortcomings he must also remember ". . . the Gospel whose divine power he has experienced [erfahren] every day in his heart . . ."³³

While all three preachers agree in their opposition to perfectionism, how they arrive at that conclusion suggests once again that their thought may reflect the effect of Pietism. For example there are important similarities yet differences in the language of Luther and Spener that reveal

³²Walther, Epistle Postille, 269.

³³Walther, Gnadenjahr, 298.

the Pietistic concerns of Spener.

Both men use the word drive (treiben) to describe the work of the Holy Spirit³⁴. In Luther's sermon where he described the office of the Spirit as driver, he also says:

His office is, namely, that he gives us the treasure, Christ, and all that He has; and through the Gospel proclaims, applies and gives Him into your heart that He may be your own. When he accomplishes this and you feel such in your heart, then it follows that one says, Is this the meaning, that my works now no longer help, but the Holy Ghost must do it? What remains then of my works and Law? Also all men's work and Law fall thereby, yes also Moses' Law . . .³⁵

For Luther the driving of the Spirit is a Gospel driving. He drives us away from our works and draws us towards the treasure of Christ alone.

This is a stark contrast to Spener who speaks of the Spirit "who drives men to good works."³⁶ Spener's driving is a Law driving. Spener's Spirit drives man to obey the Law and commandments. This is a perfect example of the difference in approach of the two preachers. In Luther's preaching the driving Spirit proclaims Christ so loudly as to blot out all word of Law. In Spener's sermon the proclamation of Christ is almost overwhelmed by the Spirit who empowers for obedience to the Law.

This is not to say that Luther never speaks of the

³⁴ Vide supra 25 and 113.

³⁵ Luther, "Cruciger Sommerpostille", WA, 21:441, 1. 31.

³⁶Spener, Lauterkeit, 783.

Spirit as the worker of obedience. Luther says the "office and work of the Holy Spirit is to begin a new, right, and heartfelt obedience towards God."³⁷ This is also very similar to Spener's statement that the "Holy Spirit's office and work is to drive us to the good." What is significant is that Luther goes on to state that this obedience is always secondary to the Spirit given faith whereby all sins are forgiven. No such corrective is given in the statement of Spener.

In Luther's discussion of perfectionism he often uses language identical to that of some of Spener's sermons. Despite the similarities a clear distinction remains. As was mentioned in the last chapter, for Luther the concern of sanctification is faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. For Spener the dominating concern is a Spirit given power to do good works.

The same point can be made by looking at Spener's statements concerning perfectionism. He sounds very much like Luther. Indeed in his discussion of perfectionism Spener makes one of his most Christo-centric statements concerning sanctification. As was quoted previously Spener says. "For His sake [Jesus], God will accept our imperfect good works."³⁸ Despite this mention of Christ the differences are still there. One can say the right words without

³⁷Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:317, 1. 26.

³⁸Spener, Lauterkeit, 788.

evidence of their influence in the rest of the sermon.

A close look at this section of Spener's sermon reveals no emphasis on faith or forgiveness of sins. Once again the primary concern is good works. More than that, Spener's statement suggests a partim partim approach to the Christian's works. The works are good in themselves although they are not perfect. Only the imperfections need be covered over by Christ. Therefore the works are partially good by the believers doing, and completed in their goodness by Christ.

Luther speaks of a full blown forgiveness that leaves no room for any works.³⁹ God accepts not only the Christian's imperfect works for the sake of Christ, but all of his works are acceptable to God only and solely for the sake of Christ. The only good work is a forgiven work.

Likewise Walther's comments on perfectionism affirm conclusions that were made earlier about his preaching. As was mentioned in the third chapter on the topic of repentance, for Luther repentance is essentially believing what the scriptures have declared concerning sinful man. For Walther, however, repentance is spoken of more in terms of feeling and experience. That emphasis on experience also comes through on the issue of perfectionism. Only here the Christian not only experiences the pangs of the repentant heart, but also the joy of a heart certain of its salvation,

³⁹Vide supra 122.

and the zeal of a heart desirous to do good works.

It may be that in all this talk of man's experience of the Spirit Walther felt he was simply teaching the old established dogma called the 'inner testimony of the Spirit.' If so, Walther's understanding of that dogma may also show the influence of Pietism. There appears to be an essential difference in Walther and Luther in the understanding of the scriptural doctrine of the 'inner testimony of the Spirit'. For Walther the 'inner testimony' means that the Christian knows the truth of God's Word through his experience of the Holy Spirit in his life. That is not to be understood as an immediate experience apart from the Gospel but is an experience which results from hearing the Gospel.

Luther would agree that the 'inner testimony of the Spirit' is a result of hearing the Gospel. However, that testimony is not to the experience of the Spirit at work in our lives but a testimony to the truth of the Gospel itself. If a Christian wishes to know that God's Word is true, he does not consider what subjective effect that Word has had in his life; but rather he simply turns back to the Word itself, reads, marks, learns and inwardly digests. The words convey the gifts they say.

So far it has been shown that all three preachers make similar statements about faith and its fruits. However when a specific fruit issue was discussed, that of perfectionism,

there were suggestions that each may emphasize those fruits and faith in a different manner. These different emphases will be more clearly seen in the consideration of the next topic.

Resisting the Fruits of Sanctification

The issue of the perfectability of the fruits of faith has been discussed, next the opposite problem will be considered. What about when the fruit is lacking, or even worse when a person exhibits behavior that is opposite of the fruits of the Spirit? All three preachers agree that this condition does exist and all three give this problem the same name. It is called 'resisting the Holy Spirit.'

Walther does not make a major point about resisting the Spirit in his Pentecost sermons. He does mention it in reference to the Acts passage where some of the hearers of the apostle attributed the miracle of speaking in many languages to a simple over indulgence in wine on the part of disciples. Such an obvious contradiction of the facts of the Pentecost events could only be, Walther says, "because they knowingly resisted the Holy Spirit."⁴⁰

Walther does not desire to emphasize the negative side of those who willfully work against the Spirit. He would rather focus on the positive actions of those who are enabled by the Spirit. Rather than highlighting the evil

⁴⁰Walther, Gnadenjahr, 298.

results of resisting the Spirit he details the wonderful fruit of those made "capable and willing" by the Spirit:

[They are] . . . zealous in church attendance, they are also faithful and diligent in their earthly calling, conscientious in their business in general, give everyone his due, steer clear of dishonest profits, do not seek to become rich, are peaceable, gentle, and reconcilable, unassuming over against everyone, friendly and obliging, chaste and decent in their works, words, and attitude; moderate in eating and drinking, truthful and reliable in words and promises, generous to the poor, willing to lend to him who would like to borrow of them in his difficulty; they are faithful, loving husbands and faithful obedient wives, faithful neighbors, good citizens, who are concerned about the welfare of the country . . .⁴¹

It is apparent that Walther would rather list the good things that come from the Spirit than list the evil that comes from resisting the Spirit. For Walther the Christian should not worry about resisting the Spirit. Rather he should focus on doing the things that show the Spirit's presence, so that his life might be a testimony of the Spirit's work both to himself and those around him. Furthermore, in contrast to later Pietists, the fruits of the Spirit's work that Walther exalts are those of a man's everyday calling and not some super spirituality.

Like Walther, Luther does not place a major emphasis on the problem of resisting the Spirit, although he does carry it further than Walther. For Luther a man not only can resist the Spirit's work initially, as the case in the example used by Walther above, but even after receiving the

⁴¹Ibid., 299.

Spirit one can:

. . . through a wanton, wild, vulgar life, and malicious sin not only hinder the work of the Holy Spirit, but also drive Him out from us. For the Spirit cannot dwell where the devil dwells.⁴²

For Luther it is not only a concern that unbelievers prevent the Spirit from entering their life, it is also a concern that believers might drive the Spirit away.

For this reason Luther says the Christian must always pray for the Spirit's help in "fighting against the devil, the flesh and all sin."⁴³ The Christian is always to recognize the danger of these three in his life and thereby remain repentant. Then the Spirit can come:

. . . whose peculiar work it is, as I have already said, that he first sanctifies us through faith and forgiveness of sins and thereafter should help us that we might oppose sin and live in obedience to God.⁴⁴

For Luther the possibility of driving out the Spirit is a very real danger and yet another reason why the Christian should always be reminded of the forgiveness of sins, whereby the Holy Spirit works and remains in us.

Spener gives much more time to the topic of resisting the Holy Spirit than these other two preachers. The issue is frequently mentioned in his Pentecost sermons. Indeed in

⁴²Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:319, l. 31.

⁴³Ibid., 52:320, l. 1. ⁴⁴Ibid., 52:317, l. 38.

his sermon collection "Evangelisch und Epistolische" he devotes one entire Pentecost sermon to the topic.⁴⁵

For Spener it is not just a problem that the Christian might actively work against the Holy Spirit, it is also a matter of his willing obedience to the Holy Spirit. Not only are Christians to avoid the open sin which signifies the wanton rejection of the Spirit "but much more also they should willingly follow His driving and his rule."⁴⁶ The Christian risks losing the Spirit not only in acts of active resistance but also if he does not prepare and maintain his heart so that the Spirit might remain there. At all times the Christian must willingly maintain an attitude of "obedience to the Holy Spirit."⁴⁷

Furthermore, Spener says, this obedience to the Spirit is essential for the Christian's faith and comfort. When he experiences this "right driving to do the good . . . it is a sign of the indwelling Spirit and his gracious gift."⁴⁸ If resisting the Spirit is an indication that the Christian is losing the Spirit, much more is the desire to do good a valid sign that the Spirit still dwells within him. Spener says this "is a great comfort that we have in this driving a sure sign of the gracious status and adoption of God."⁴⁹ For

⁴⁵Philipp Jakob Spener, Evangelisch und Epistolische, (Frankfurt: Johann Philipp Andrea, 1716), 470.

⁴⁶Ibid. ⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Spener, Lauterkeit, 790. ⁴⁹Ibid.

Spener it is not only that a Christian should beware of resisting the Spirit. He should actively seek to obey the Spirit, not only to avoid losing the Spirit, but also to establish God's gracious dealings towards him.

In all this a major distinction between Luther and Spener becomes apparant. In all that Spener said above sanctification is an anthropocentric issue. It is necessary for man's will to strive and to seek to cooperate with the Spirit and thereby be sanctified. Most significantly Spener contends that this human striving is the evidence of our salvation. At least in these quotes Spener plainly centers sanctification in man.

Yet, for Luther, sanctification is Christocentric. For him man's regeneration and renewal is equated with his forgiveness. For him man's will is at worst a negative force in opposition to the work of the Spirit and at best only a force of gifted passive cooperation.⁵⁰ In addition it is not man's striving that is a sign of his salvation but rather the testimony of the Gospel of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. What is seen here may be more than just a minor influence of Pietism. This differing view of resisting the Spirit indicates that there may be a crucial difference at the heart of the Pentecost preaching of Spener and Luther. More on this in the next chapter.

⁵⁰Martin Luther quoted in "The Formula of Concord. Thorough Declaration, 2. Of Free Will", Concordia Triglotta, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 915.

To complete this topic Walther and Luther still need to be compared. While Walther does not make the strong anthropocentric statements that Spener makes on the topic of resisting the Spirit, there are some troublesome things about what he says. Walther gave a simple ordo salutis which included first fear of repentance, then the certainty of salvation and "finally, did not the point arrive from which time on you became the foe of all sin and began to pursue the Christian life."⁵¹ In the listing of these things Walther gives the impression that these experiences are progressive and that true Christians should have all arrived at the final point. In real life these experiences seldom follow such a neat order and the typical Christian at any given time feels some, none, or a mixture of these emotions.

Furthermore, Walther gives a long list of what true Christians are like.⁵² As in the previous list of Christian experiences, this list of Christian works is hardly true of all Christians at all times. While these lists are intended to comfort the Christian, the hearer is left feeling very uncomfortable where he sees his life failing to match up with the ideals given by Walter.

Luther, does not call upon the Christian to focus on his experience of the Holy Spirit in his life. While Luther certainly does not deny that the Spirit works such fruit in the Christian, he also realizes that sometimes these fruits

⁵¹Walther, Gnadenjahr, 297. ⁵²Ibid.

are not so visible. Sometimes in the Christian's eyes his sins far outweigh the good that the Holy Spirit has wrought in his life. Therefore Luther directs the Christian not to what he experiences of the Spirit, but to the Spirit's testimony in the Gospel. Or as Luther was quoted above "He [the Spirit] first sanctifies us through faith and the forgiveness on sins."⁵³

What must be determined is whether Walther's preaching on the believers experience of the Holy Spirit is the same as the anthropocentric and subjective emphasis of Spener, or is it merely poorly applied Law and Gospel?

Probably the latter. Francis Pieper speaks of the testimonia Spiritus Sancti externa that good works provide a testimony to the Christian's state of grace.⁵⁴ That is what Walther is speaking of here. However, by presenting the Ordo Salutis in such a rigid fashion without allowing for the variety of emotions that are experienced in all Christians and by presenting a list of Christian works without a reminder that no Christian fulfills these perfectly, Walther's supposed comfort carries the sting of the Law.

Walther's approach may not have come from Pietistic teaching but it does share the anthropocentric error of

⁵³Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:317, 1. 38.

⁵⁴Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3:29.

Pietism by placing more emphasis here on what man experiences than on Christ. Walther, is distinguished here from Pietism in that for Pietism such subjective experiences are the center of one's knowledge of salvation. For Walther they are still secondary and solely the result of the true source of salvation knowledge which is the Gospel.

In summary, for Luther the answer to the Christian who is concerned about resisting the Holy Spirit is to point him to the forgiveness of sins. In comparison with him, Walther and Spener's answers are too man-centered, Spener on man's empowered will and Walther on man's experience of the Spirit. For Luther the center, as in all things with the Spirit, is on the forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

The Meaning of Faith

Having seen the differences in the three preachers on two topics concerning the fruits of faith, there is need now to examine their view of faith itself.

It is significant that when Spener speaks about faith it is so often in the context of good works. When he talks about the necessity of "the faith that comes in the heart," he goes on to say it is necessary for "outwardly it is impossible to achieve true works and sanctification."⁵⁵ Faith is not sola fide but an essential component of our good works. When speaking of man being brought to "true

⁵⁵Spener, Lauterkeit, 788.

faith and trust," in his very next sentence he goes on to say "the Gospel alone is the living seed of faith and also the power to all good works."⁵⁶ The Confessions also say that "this faith is bound to bring forth good fruits," but go on to say we are saved and receive forgiveness of sins without works but "by faith alone."⁵⁷ The impression given from Spener's preaching is that good works not only flow from faith but are an essential component of faith. Faith is not truly complete until one has witnessed its renewing power at work in man.

Both Luther and Spener speak of 'the faith with its fruits' but they mean different things. Spener speaks as if there are two faiths. One faith is the Lutheran Gospel faith, but the other faith is a faith of power. The faith of power may not justify but without that sanctifying power the Gospel faith cannot justify either. For Luther there is only one faith. That faith is synonymous with Jesus and the forgiveness of sins. Good works are not a component or completion of that faith but rather the result of that faith which stands alone as our righteousness.

Unlike Spener, Luther often speaks of faith without any mention of works. Furthermore, when he does speak of the fruits of faith, he speaks like the Confessions and

⁵⁶Ibid., 789.

⁵⁷"Augsburg Confession", Art. 6, Concordia Triglotta, 45.

always reminds the hearer that it is faith in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ that is crucial. For example in the quote used at the beginning of this chapter Luther said:

Such is the Holy Spirit's office and work, that He begins in us a new, right, sincere obedience towards God, that we resist sin and kill the old Adam, and through faith receive the forgiveness of sins.⁵⁸

It is not that Luther denies the fruits of faith, but he always clearly distinguishes the fruits from the faith and our justification, and he always relates the faith to the forgiveness of sins. He says in a 1531 Pentecost sermon:

I have the Holy Spirit, who makes me fervent, devout and loving towards God, but He must teach me another art that is higher than my love, namely that I know where my treasure is, that is the forgiveness of sins.⁵⁹

This is characteristic of Luther, that when he speaks of the fruit of the Spirit he does so in a very careful way so that there may be no infringement on the Gospel. His concern is that the hearers do not place their faith in the fruit but in the forgiveness of sin. His concern is that wherever the Spirit is mentioned He be known as the giver of faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and that it is only in such faith that there is new life and fruit.

In all of this it would seem that Luther and Spener have a different understanding of faith. For Luther faith is interchangeable with Jesus. As he says in his 1535 commentary on Galatians:

⁵⁸Luther, "Hauspostille", WA, 52:317, l. 30.

⁵⁹Luther, Predigten, 324.

It [faith] takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak the One who is present in the faith itself. . . . so we say that it is Christ who forms and trains faith or who is the form of faith.⁶⁰

For Luther faith is always Christocentric.

For Spener, however, faith is often anthropocentric. He speaks of the Holy Spirit's gift as "faith and trust."⁶¹ That implies that what is needed is not only what the Spirit gives but man's trusting reaction to that gift. Furthermore, as has been noted, for Spener what is important about faith is the good works that it produces in man. Faith is not the equivalent of Christ, but rather a condition in man which has its form in the driving of man to good.

For Luther faith is nothing more than having been given Christ. This possession of Christ is said to be by faith because it is not a thing visible to our eyes. Our grasping of him is obscured by the sin that remains within us. So faith is the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1) or as Luther says "For when faith ceases, it will be replaced by glory, by means of which we shall see God as He is (I John 3:2)."⁶² Thus while the Christian looks forward to the day when he will see Christ with his own eyes for now

⁶⁰Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians", Luther's Works, 55 vols., gen. eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Tihehman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 26:129, 130.

⁶¹Spener, Lauterkeit, 789.

⁶²Luther, "Lectures on Galatians", 26:274.

he grasps his presence only in faith.

For Spener, on the other hand, faith is a visible thing here and now. It is something that can be quantitatively measured on the basis of man's good works. For Luther faith is solely a grasping of Jesus Christ that appears to our eyes weak and troubled by sin. For Spener faith is the visible power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in the Christian's life of love. Luther calls the Christian to hold on to Christ alone in the face of his weakness. Spener calls the Christian to respond to his weakness by embracing the Spirit's driving to the good.

On this issue it is difficult to make final conclusions about Walther. He does not emphasize the Spirit of power as Spener does. The fruits of faith do not predominate in his preaching over faith in Jesus Christ. Whenever he speaks of the fruits they are tied to the Gospel of Jesus. "This revelation (the Gospel) not only comforts the sin frightened man, but also converts his heart and fills it with love for God and neighbor."⁶³

However, when speaking of the fruits he lacks the qualifying, cautious language of Luther that always leaves the hearer focused not on his works but on forgiveness in Christ. In fact, Walther sometimes sounds like Spener giving the impression that faith and fruits are two separate works of the Spirit, that the Christian must be lead from

⁶³Walther, Festklänge, 360.

the faith to the completion of his Christianity in the converting power of the Spirit. This is in contrast to Luther who always makes it perfectly clear that there is only one essential work of the Spirit and that is to give faith, that is to give Jesus. Where that faith is given there will always be new life and fruits. For as Luther says, "It is a wonderful preaching: my righteousness, my holy life is the forgiveness of sins."⁶⁴

Once again, two vital Lutheran emphases have been established, both of which are affirmed in the working out of the Pentecost story. The first emphasis is that the Holy Spirit comes to give man faith in Jesus Christ. The second emphasis is that this faith always bears fruit in the life of the Christian. All three men made strong statements to both of these. In fact, on this topic even the Pietist Spener spoke with strong Gospel language. The Gospel that Spener lacked in his discussion of the means of grace and the work of the Spirit, he makes explicit on the topic of faith.

However, despite these strong Gospel statements of Spener the influence of Pietism is still apparent. He may speak of a Gospel-centered faith but the carrying out of the fruits of that faith are for him a man centered issue. Likewise Walther, who spoke strongly of Gospel and faith, also spoke strongly of man's experience of that faith both

⁶⁴Luther, Predigten, 325.

in his heart and life. For Luther, on the other hand, the emphasis of faith is not on its fruits or man's experience but solely the Spirit's gift of Jesus, that is the forgiveness of sins.

CHAPTER VI

THE HEART--FORGIVENESS OF SINS

These are the major arteries that make up the true preaching of Pentecost. The first is that the Spirit is the giver of Jesus' gifts. The second is that the Spirit works only through the means of grace, that is the preaching of the Gospel, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution and Holy Communion. The third is that the Spirit's chief office is the giving of faith from which flows all fruit. On these things all three preachers are in varying agreement. Despite this agreement there have also been some striking differences in these preachers perception and proclamation of the work of the Spirit.

One can speak of Jesus, means, and faith; and really be talking about different things. That is why there is still one more chapter to consider, a chapter about the heart of Pentecost to which all three arteries must be connected. The purpose of this chapter is to so clearly focus the heart of Pentecost that there will no longer be any doubt as to what is meant by Jesus, the means of grace, and faith. Without this focus one can still say many Lutheran things but be teaching a Spirit who is quite Pietistic in His work.

Unlike the other chapters this one does not begin where all three preachers agree, because it is precisely at the heart that they differ. Although there are similarities, as there have been before, each preacher has his own distinctive emphasis as to what is the center of Pentecost.

Even more than in previous chapters Martin Luther will be important. For in this particular matter he serves to establish what is the proper heart of Lutheran Pentecost preaching. First, however, the heart of Philipp Spener's preaching will be considered.

It should be apparent by this time that the chief emphasis of Spener is the Holy Spirit as the power to do good. Certainly looking over Spener's sermons reveals that his favorite term for the Spirit is power. In one of his sermons he lists what kind of gift the Spirit is and in that list he is called the gift of "power."¹

C. F. W. Walther and Martin Luther also recognize the power of the Spirit. Pietists and Lutherans alike recognized the Spirit who changes man, sanctifying him with an inward power to the good. The Lutheran emphasis is to distinguish this renewal from our justification and to present the Gospel of Jesus as the sole cause of this renewal.

As a Lutheran, Spener includes Jesus in his Pentecost preaching, although not to the extent of Luther and

¹Philipp Jakob Spener, Lauterkeit des Evangelischen Christenthums, 2 vols. (Halle: Verlegung des Waisen-Hauses, 1706, 2:831. Hereafter cited as Lauterkeit.)

Walther. Indeed Jesus at times seems to take second place to the Spirit. The fact remains Jesus is still there in the preaching.

Spener speaks of Word and Sacrament as the means used by the Spirit. It should be noted that this is a key emphasis in almost all of his Pentecost sermons. No one should confuse Spener with the later Pietists with their emphasis on the direct intervention of the Spirit.

In addition, in reading over Spener's sermons there is a Lutheran Law and Gospel emphasis. Consider these closing remarks from a sermon of 1674, where the wind of Pentecost is related to the Spirit.

It is a wind which will work all in us. We require the repentance that has regret and sorrow for sin and we require true faith. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit. He works through the Law the regret and it is therein a wind that blows from the mountain and is a shattering rock. And here he has given the Law of the old Pentecost. But after this proceeds the new partaking. For we require also chiefly the faith and comfort. This is now the wind of the Pentecost of the New Testament that comes for the sake of the sinful soul with the comfort of the promises of Christ . . .²

These words could have been spoken by Luther, Walther or any Lutheran. The contrast between the old Pentecost Law and the new Pentecost faith is common to Luther and Walther. Here Spener even uses Luther's favorite term when speaking of the Spirit, 'comfort'. It is especially noteworthy that faith and comfort here are described as the 'chief' work of the Spirit. If this were only the chief thing in Spener's

²Ibid., 838.

sermons.

There is much good in Spener's sermons as is seen above, the only problem is that these themes are not the chief things in his sermons. While faith is highlighted in the above quote, sola fides is not that common in the preaching of Spener. Most often Spener seems to speak of faith as if it must be completed by holy works.

This emphasis on sanctification in the narrow sense also dominates his other Lutheran concerns. The Word and Sacrament are noted for their power for good rather than as the way the gifts of the Gospel are given. The Gospel is more located in man empowered to good work than Christ's saving work extra nos. This can all be summarized in a title from one of his sermons "The precedence of the days of the New Testament Pentecost over the Old Testament Pentecost; that in the first was the memorial of the Law and in the other the Gospel with its power for good."³ For Spener the main emphasis in Pentecost is the power for good.

What for Walther is the center of Pentecost? Walther is most remembered for his work The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel. It is the contrast of these two which form the central issue of his Pentecost preaching. Consider the following sermon titles. "The visible pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the first Christian church, an

³Ibid., 817.

actual sign, that not the Law but the Gospel of Christ gives the Spirit."⁴ Or, "The superiority of the New Testament Pentecost revelation over the Old Covenant."⁵

Such a discussion of Law and Gospel is not unique with Walther. Spener also contrasts the old Pentecost with its Law and the new Pentecost with its Gospel⁶ as does Luther.⁷ What is unique is that while Spener mentions this contrast, for Luther and Walther it can be seen as foundational to all their Pentecost preaching.

Consider further some of the sub-divisions of Walther's sermons. In one he speaks of the pouring out of the Spirit as a revelation of how the Spirit is poured out over all flesh. How is the Spirit poured out, first through the Law and secondly through the Gospel.⁸ In another sermon he makes the point that "true Christianity alone is worked in man by the Gospel not the Law."⁹ Again in another sermon he speaks of the Pentecost gift where the Law is replaced by the Gospel.¹⁰

⁵Ibid., 355. ⁶Spener, Lauterkeit, 838.

⁷Martin Luther, Predigten D. Martin Luthers, 2 vols., ed. Georg Buchwald, (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Publisher, 1925), 3:320. Hereafter cited as Predigten.

⁸C. F. W. Walther, Epistel Postille Predigten, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), 262. Hereafter cited as Epistel Postille.

⁹Ibid., 270. ¹⁰Walther, Festklänge, 314.

It would be interesting to see if similar themes are found in other of Walther's sermons. Undoubtedly they would be. It is certain that in Pentecost Walther finds a key text for his expounding of Law and Gospel.

To be totally accurate, however, the real central theme of Pentecost for Walther is not Law and Gospel, but only Gospel. For example, one sermon speaks of "The wondrous proclamation of the builder for the building of the Christian church".¹¹ In the sermon this proclamation is the Gospel. Furthermore one sermon is simply entitled, "The preaching of the Gospel as the first gift to the Christian church."¹²

Walther does mention the Old Testament Pentecost of Mount Sinai and the giving of the Law, but this is only a foil for his greater elaboration of the New Pentecost with its giving of the Spirit through the Gospel. Wherever the Law is mentioned it is a contrast to the greater gift Christians have in the Gospel. In summary the real central theme of Pentecost for Walther is the giving of the Gospel.

There are two related issues to this central theme that are worth noting. First, for Walther, the Gospel is something to be experienced by the Christian. As he said in the sermon theme from the first chapter:

The giving of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel of Christ, an incontestable proof of its divinity and its

¹¹Ibid., 305. ¹²Ibid., 314.

truth for the believers who experience this giving of the spirit in their hearts.¹³

Walther emphasizes the response of the people to the preaching of Peter on Pentecost, the fact that they were cut to the heart by the Law, and the great response of believing faith to the Gospel. For Walther the Gospel is always a message that must be experienced by the Christian. The more detailed discussion of this was given in chapters 3 through 5.

Related to this experience of the Gospel is also the radical change that is worked in the Christian by the Gospel. This change is experienced by the Christian himself, "I ask you Christians: Have you not experienced all this in your hearts."¹⁴ This change is so radical as to even be recognized by unbelievers. "Bear in mind: every day unbelievers see with their own eyes that those who are earnest about the Gospel have become entirely different people . . ."¹⁵

If the central theme of Walther's Pentecost preaching is the Gospel, it is a Gospel experienced by the Christian both in its comfort and also in its radical change of behavior.

This may sound very similar to Spener with his empha-

¹³C. F. W. Walther, Gnadenjahr, Predigten über die Evangelien des Kirchenjahrs, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1891), 296. Hereafter cited as Gnadenjahr.

¹⁴Ibid., 296. ¹⁵Ibid.

sis on the Holy Spirit as the driver to good. There is a fundamental difference between Walther and Spener, however. For Spener, the work of the Holy Spirit often sounds independent of Jesus. That is, Christ begins the work by giving the Spirit, but then the Spirit continues on his own in creating good works. For Walther the experience and the good works always rest solely in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is true that Walther and Spener have in common the emphasis on the Christian's experience of the Spirit that leads to a new man who desires the good. For Spener this experience and goodness rests on a new spiritual power worked in man's heart by the Holy Spirit. For Walther what the Spirit gives in man's heart is simply faith and it is this faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that the Christian experiences and forms the basis for his new life.

In summary the heart of Pentecost for Spener is the power of the Holy Spirit that drives the Christian to the good. For Walther the heart is the Gospel experienced by the Christian. It still remains to consider the heart of Luther's preaching.

The heart of Pentecost preaching for Luther can be clearly seen in this quote.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, in forgiveness of sins. This is the new teaching and preaching, that today is given from heaven and is preached. In the rule of Christ no other teaching is valid than the forgiveness of sin.¹⁶

¹⁶Luther, Predigten, 324.

For Luther the center of Pentecost preaching is simply the forgiveness of sins.

The Pentecost preaching of Luther on this topic is so good and so powerful an extended quote is warranted.

This is his office: to preach forgiveness of sins. Thereby comes into being one holy church. It is a wondrous preaching: my righteousness, my holy life is the forgiveness of sins. And it is a wondrous righteousness, by it one is holy through our sins having been forgiven. . . . The church is holy because it has the Gospel and her sins are forgiven her . . . There is no other way being a Christian than remaining in the article of the forgiveness of sins to the end. . . . Thus the Christian church is holy and without sin, not through her works, but through the Holy Spirit, who teaches that Christ is our mediator and bishop, not a judge but the Savior whose blood has been shed for us. That you should keep and know, and that is known through the article of the forgiveness of sins. I am not made holy by my love which the Holy Spirit has given me, but in this my life is holy, that the Holy Spirit proclaims to me the forgiveness of sins.¹⁷

Here Luther explicitly states that the task of the Holy Spirit is nothing other than the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins.

For Luther this is the chief article upon which Pentecost preaching must be examined. Where Pentecost and the Holy Spirit have been truly proclaimed the hearers will have been given first and foremost the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. This is the main diagnostic for all Lutheran Pentecost preaching: When all is said and done the forgiveness of sins should have been proclaimed above all else.

It is this issue that clearly shows the distance

¹⁷Ibid., 325-326.

between the preaching of the Pietists and of Luther. In Spener's Pentecost sermons, for all of his Lutheran language, there is hardly any mention of the forgiveness of sins. Compare that to Luther where no matter what else he may preach forgiveness stands at the forefront.

There are some qualifications that need to be made. This paper did not research the earlier Luther Pentecost sermons in the Latin. The statement about the centrality of forgiveness reflects a reading of the mature Luther. It is also true that some of Luther's Pentecost sermons do not show this central focus on forgiveness. Especially in the sermons preached in the last few years of his life the theme of forgiveness is almost swallowed up in the polemic against the Papists. Luther often compares the Pharisees and scribes, who suppressed the Gospel by mocking the disciples as drunkards, with the Papists of his day who through their persecutions would also suppress the Gospel.¹⁸

When he allows such polemic to override his emphasis on forgiveness he is not being true to his own principles. As he plainly proclaims in previous sermons the main stress must be on forgiveness. An overview of all of his sermons surveyed show that for the most part this is true of his preaching. Even where Luther himself fails in this endeavor, there still remains a stark contrast from the preaching

¹⁸Martin Luther, "Predigt am Pfingsttag", D. Martin Luther's Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 61 vols. (Weimar: Hermann Bölaus Nachfolger, 1883-1983), 49:446-447 l. 24.

of Spener where often forgiveness is not mentioned at all.

What about Walther compared to Luther? It is obvious that Walther is more like Luther than Spener. This can be seen in Walther's emphasis on Law and Gospel. It is also true that Walther spends more time speaking of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On occasion Walther explicitly talks of the forgiveness of sins. However, despite all this nowhere in the sermons of Walther surveyed is there such a direct, dominant presentation of the forgiveness of sins as in Luther.

It is not that Walther lacks the forgiveness of sins in his preaching, as was true in the various Pentecost sermons of Spener. It is simply that at times to the hearer other things seem to predominate. At times Walther seems so fascinated with the distinction of Law and Gospel that he forgets what the Gospel is intended to proclaim, the forgiveness of sins. Other times it is the experience of the Gospel or the new man in the Gospel which take center stage.

It is not that such things are absent from Luther. Luther also makes clear distinction between the Law and Gospel. Such distinction, however, is always in service of the article of forgiveness.

Luther knows about the experience of the Christian. He speaks to the joy and comfort that Christians receive in the Spirit. This joy, though, is explicitly related to the

fact that the sins are forgiven.¹⁹

Despite Luther's great emphasis on faith rather than works, he also speaks of the new man in the Gospel. He knows the love that is wrought in man by the working of the Spirit. Luther also explicitly states, "I must have love for God and the neighbor, but above this I must have forgiveness of sins."²⁰

It is not that Luther feels these issues of Walther should not be mentioned. Nor is it the contention of this paper that all such issues should be expurgated from Pentecost sermons. The point is that when Luther speaks he clearly makes all such things subordinate to the forgiveness of sin. He does this by distinguishing between justification and sanctification, clearly showing that our new life has no part in our forgiveness. Also he shows that the Christian's experiences and good works are never independent manifestations of the Holy Spirit but always the result of the Spirit's proclamation of the Gospel of forgiveness of sins. This is the example that should be followed whenever such secondary issues are brought up in preaching.

The contrast between Walther and Luther is not that Walther does not speak of forgiveness. It is not that Luther never mentions the Christian's life or experience. It is that Walther appears to give these equal status. For Luther it is the forgiveness of sins that predominates.

¹⁹Luther, Predigten, 325. ²⁰Ibid., 326.

It might be argued that really Walther in this matter is a better example for preaching than Luther. Is not what is witnessed in Luther's sermons merely the result of his own bias? Is not this emphasis on forgiveness at Pentecost merely a reflection of Luther's concern for salvation by faith as opposed to the righteousness of works? In this respect is not Walther's the more balanced presentation, seeing that he speaks equally of forgiveness, as well as the Christian's experience and the Christian's new life? Is not this really a more accurate presentation of the teaching of Pentecost?

It could so be argued, but the contention of this paper is that such issues are better presented following the example of Luther. The problem with Walther's presentation is that he leaves open a Pietistic interpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit. Not so Luther. His preaching of the heart of Pentecost, the forgiveness of sins, stands preeminent in Lutheran preaching.

It might be argued that Walther's emphasis on Law and Gospel as well as his concern for the means of grace is sufficient to clearly distinguish him from Pietistic teachers. Certainly that would be enough to distinguish him from the later Pietistic preachers. However, we have already seen that despite Spener's emphasis on these issues he is still considered the forerunner of Pietism. The mere mentioning of the means of grace or Law and Gospel does not

automatically exclude a Pietistic view of the Spirit.

Several times in this paper great labor has been taken to distinguish Walther's teaching from that of Spener. That is exactly the problem. That such an effort had to be made shows that Walther's teaching is open to Pietistic interpretation. This is not to contend that Walther is a Pietist. It is to say that to the casual reader he may sound Pietistic in his emphasis on the experience and life of the Christian in the Holy Spirit.

Here is where the superiority of Luther's approach shines clearly. Luther speaks of Christian experience but explicitly relates it to the forgiveness of sins earned by Christ on the cross. As noted earlier Peter and Luther both guard against any subjective anthropocentric explanation of the Spirit's work with their emphasis on the objective extra nos means of Baptism, a subject that is not given such weight in the preaching of Spener and Walther.²¹ As a result Luther is not open to a subjective interpretation that places the focal point of Christian experience in the inner emotions of man's heart. In Luther these experiences are clearly the result of the objective proclamation of Christ's crucifixion and forgiveness distributed to us by Baptism, Word and Sacrament.²²

On the issue of the new life in Christ Luther leaves no room for Pietistic interpretation. He directly subordi-

²¹Vide supra 86. ²²Luther, Predigten, 327.

nates this life of love to the forgiveness of sins. He makes it plain that there is no holy life apart from the holiness that is ours in the Spirit's proclamation of forgiveness in Jesus.

Walther's fault is not that he teaches the errors of Spener. His fault is not clearly distinguishing himself from the errors of Spener. The issue to address is why does Walther fail to make the clear distinctions that Luther does, when Walther was indeed acquainted with the history of Pietism, and may even be said to have grown out of it. The question is then whether he can always be seen as having grown clear of it.

The outcome of this paper is that both Spener and Walther may be seen as pendulums. Like all pendulums they swing between two points. One is the point of Luther with his emphasis on the Spirit of forgiveness of sins. The other is the point of Pietism with its emphasis on the Spirit of good works.

The pendulums they ride on, like all pendulums, never stay long at one point or the other. They are always moving somewhere between. Here is the difference between Walther and Spener.

Spener's pendulum is moving away from Luther and towards Pietism. While Spener always wants to remain Lutheran with his confession of Jesus, the means of grace, Law and Gospel, it is obvious that the weight of his preaching will

carry him away from these things toward the teachings of Pietism.

Walther, on the other hand, is swinging towards Luther. He still speaks of issues that were of concern to the Pietists, but for him these issues are being controlled and shaped by the very Lutheran teaching, that is the Gospel. He has not of yet come full swing to the realization of Luther that it is the forgiveness of sins which defines Gospel, Jesus, faith, means of grace, and makes these terms virtually interchangeable. Not that these other terms are less important than forgiveness, but they are of great importance when they are understood correctly in light of the article of forgiveness of sins.

This brings us back then to the point of this paper, which is not only to compare these preachers, but to provide practical guides for preaching. The heart of Pentecost preaching is the forgiveness of sins. In preaching the hearer should receive above all the forgiveness of sins.

This may still sound strange in the context of Pentecost preaching. Forgiveness may seem more appropriate to the Christmas season with its emphasis on the birth of the Christ who comes to save his people from their sins. It may seem more appropriate for the Good Friday sermon, with its emphasis on the Jesus who dies for the sins of the world. It is Luther who reminds us that it is also the only appropriate emphasis for Pentecost. This is not Luther's idea

but rather the idea of the first Pentecost preacher himself, Peter. When all the speaking in various languages was finished, what was the one message that Peter would leave his hearers with? "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 2: 38 RSV).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION--DIAGNOSIS OF PREACHING

At the outset of this paper two goals were established. One was to present the good things to be said in Lutheran Pentecost preaching. The other was to detail the errors to be avoided.

Two Pietistic errors were observed. The first was an emphasis on experience as opposed to the objective reality of salvation achieved and bestowed propter Christum extra nos. This was found in the preaching of C. F. W. Walther. It was seen already in his introductory sermon where he spoke of "the believers who experience this giving of the Spirit in their hearts."¹ The same emphasis would again reveal itself in a variety of issues.

There were hints of this emphasis on experience already in the the third chapter where Walther talked of Christianity being an internal thing that must be experienced by man's heart.² It was apparent in Walther's discussion on repentance.³ For Walther repentance was a thing that must be truly felt in order to be authentic.

The same concerns arose in Walther's discussion of

¹Vide supra 37. ²Vide supra 61.

³Vide supra 89.

perfectionism. Like Martin Luther he rejects perfectionism as a blatant lie. The Christian is always aware of the sin in his life. From this, though, Walther argues that the Christian should comfort himself in the face of his imperfections by feeling and experiencing the work of Law and Gospel in his life.⁴ It is also Walther's response to the danger of resisting the Spirit. Such sin is best avoided by focusing on the experience of the Spirit's working in one's life.⁵

Several things should be said in defense of Walther. While he often speaks of experience the German word he uses is significant. As referred to in Chapter 3 the Formula of Concord warned against judging the presence of the Holy Spirit on the basis of experience (Empfindung).⁶ Walther's word for experience is Erfahrung.⁷ While the Formula word focuses on the feelings and emotions, Walther's word is more a term of empirical, observable knowledge. When Walther speaks of experience it is not so much the emotive reaction of the Christian as his witnessing the empirical changes in his life. Unlike the Pietists who called upon man to seek the presence of the Holy Spirit through his feelings, Walther simply is saying that the presence of the Spirit through Gospel and Sacraments can be empirically witnessed in the life of the Christian.

⁴Vide supra 120. ⁵Vide supra 127.

⁶Vide supra 76. ⁷Vide supra 120.

This emphasis on the Gospel as the means by which the Spirit comes is another crucial distinction between Walther and the Pietists. In the later Pietists the principle of experience would replace the principle of the Gospel. What is so dangerous about experiential theology is that it places man's hope not on the unchanging objective testimony and gifts of the Gospel, but rather on the shifting ground of one's own emotions.

For all of Walther's talk of experience he never denies the objective truth and operation of Law and Gospel. It is these objective truths that work their effect in man. It is because they are so powerfully and certainly true that they affect man this way, with great fear of the definite condemnation of the Law, and with great joy of the certain comfort of the Gospel.

This does not necessarily mean that Walther is without any Pietistic influence. While Erfahrung is Walther's common term he also speaks of Christianity as a thing that a man feels (fuhlen)⁸ which has more of an emotional sense than empirical. It is also true that the experience (Erfahrung) Walther points to is often an emotive one: fear, certainty, love.⁹ It might be hard in actual practice to distinguish the 'experience' (Erfahrung) expected in the Christian by Walther, from the 'feeling' (Empfindung) demanded by the Pietist.

⁸Vide supra 89. ⁹Vide supra 120.

Furthermore, even if Walther's constant reference to experience is understood only in the empirical sense of that word, it still remains that Luther's Pentecost preaching does not have a similar emphasis. There is no evidence in the sermons surveyed that Luther uses the Christian's response empirically or emotively as proof of the Spirit's presence in man. He prefers to emphasize the Spirit as evidenced by the proclamation of the Gospel alone, by Baptism, by the Absolution and the by the Lord's Supper.

Unlike the later Pietists, Walther does not want to undermine the important principle of the objective truth of the Gospel. He may not do it intentionally, but when Walther emphasizes the human experience and response to the Spirit he is in danger of being understood as doing just that.¹⁰ It is not that Luther denies what Law and Gospel do in man, but that he always qualifies this, that it is not anything read off man that is important but the simple statement of God's Word.¹¹ Walther lacks such qualifying statements (at least in these Pentecost sermons) and is in danger of leaving the hearer with the impression that God's Word is not valid and true until man has observed his experience of it.

There is a second Pietistic error to be avoided, that is an emphasis on conversion or the conduct of life. This error was seen in Philipp Spener. As it was with Walther's

¹⁰Vide supra 124. ¹¹Vide supra 90.

emphasis on experience, so also Spener's emphasis on conversion to do good was obvious from the very beginning with his sermon titled "The powerful working of the Holy Spirit or his office wherein he drives us to the good."¹²

In every point of discussion this emphasis of Spener was witnessed. It was seen on the topic of Jesus. While he preaches Jesus, it is the Spirit who takes the dominant role in Spener's preaching.¹³ While Jesus may be Savior, it is the Spirit who changes man and empowers him to the good. The Spirit appears as one who independently completes the work begun by Jesus.¹⁴ The Spirit is most important to the Christian for his inner guidance. The Spirit's office is primarily to give the believer a spiritual understanding of the Law rather than to lead the sinner to Christ and bestow his saving gifts.¹⁵

The same emphasis is found in Spener's discussion of the means of grace. For Spener they are not essentially the gift of forgiveness but a gift of power that enables man to please God.¹⁶ This same language of the Spirit as the power to good was apparent in his discussion on perfectionism¹⁷ and resisting the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ As was documented in the last chapter for Spener the teaching of the Spirit as con-

¹²Vide supra 25. ¹³Vide supra 66.

¹⁴Vide supra 67. ¹⁵Vide supra 73.

¹⁶Vide supra 92. ¹⁷Vide supra 118.

¹⁸Vide supra 129.

verter and enabler of the good is the heart of Pentecost preaching.¹⁹

From all of this two key mistakes of Pietism may be noted. One is the failure to clearly distinguish justification from sanctification. One dictum of Lutheran preaching is that while the Spirit of Jesus sanctifies man that sanctification is not the ground of man's justification.²⁰ Justification remains solely based upon the works of Jesus Christ alone bestowed by Baptism, the preaching of the Gospel, Holy Absolution, and Holy Communion. Pietism with its emphasis on human experience and the evidence of conversion blurs that distinction.

Luther's sermons are first and primarily concerned with man's justification by faith alone. Spener's sermons are dominated by the concern of sanctification, so much so that one might conclude that this internal change is an integral part in man's certainty of salvation.

A second mistake of Pietism is the failure to clearly state that sanctification is solely the result of the Spirit's giving of the Gospel's gifts. This is seen in Spener's constant reference to the sacraments as means of power rather than a means of forgiveness. As noted he often speaks of Word and Sacrament without the vital qualifying term, Gospel.²¹ In addition Baptism did not seem as crucial

¹⁹Vide supra 143. ²⁰Vide supra 151.

²¹Vide supra 93.

for his preaching as it was for Peter and Luther.²²

While these criticisms may be wholly true of later Pietists they do need to be qualified in the case of Spener. While he may not mention the Gospel in his presentation of Word and Sacrament, in his discussion of faith Spener does clearly say that it is the Gospel alone which works sanctification.²³ Here he establishes the crucial nexus of justification and sanctification, showing that sanctification is not the cause of our salvation but the result.

Despite this proclamation of the Gospel, as a whole Spener's sermons lead in other directions, and he unwittingly leaves the door ajar for the more extreme Pietists that enter later. One way in which he does this is the anthropocentric reference of his preaching. Spener's sermons focus on what is happening in man. Even when he mentions Gospel and faith it is in the context of conversion and works that faith produces in man. Gospel and faith are used to show the monergism of God and hence his predeliction to speak of power that is not clearly in the way of the Gospel.²⁴ This is in contrast to Luther where everything flows from a Christocentric reference of faith and the gifts given, which are summed up in the forgiveness of sins.²⁵

²²Vide supra 86. ²³Vide supra 109.

²⁴Vide supra 96. ²⁵Vide supra 148.

Another Pietistic fault of Spener is his view of God's acceptance of man's work as partim partim.²⁶ For Spener not all of man's works are corrupted by sin, only the wicked ones. Therefore in repentance man does not flee from all his works, only the evil ones. Furthermore Jesus' works do not replace man's works before God, rather for Jesus sake God overlooks the imperfections in our works. Man's sanctified works are not accepted by God propter Christum but are accepted for their own sake as far as they are good, and for Christ's sake as far as they are imperfect.

A final opening to Pietism provided by Spener is his view of the church as so much a congregation of hypocrites.²⁷ For Spener the problem of the church was a dead faith that needed to be made alive through exhortation to the renewed life in the power of the Spirit. The sacraments needed to be revitalized by emphasizing their power for sanctification. The Gospel needed to be made relevant to the church by emphasizing its fruits in man.

For Luther the problem was not hypocrisy but sin that is unbelief. What was needed was not exhortation but condemning Law and comforting Gospel that brings with it the gifts of new life.²⁸

Finally even with all these Pietistic concerns, Spener still speaks very much like Luther. He even quotes Luther

²⁶Vide supra 124. ²⁷Vide supra 98.

²⁸Vide supra 100.

himself to support his cause. Spener does not carry his teachings to the lengths of later Pietists. However, by unwittingly changing the emphasis from a Spirit of Jesus, faith and Gospel; to a spirit of inner conversion, power, and spiritual understanding of the Law, Spener left open the way for later Pietistic thought.

Simply avoiding the errors, however, does not assure that a good Pentecost sermon will be preached. In addition to avoiding the errors the proper things must be said.

Borrowing from Peter's sermon, the chapter titles of this paper suggest what is important for Lutheran Pentecost preaching. Here Luther is to be valued for he gives the best example of these things. These issues are also in Walther and Spener to varying degrees, but do not so clearly and fully hold the field.

The first major artery of good Pentecost preaching is Jesus. The great insight of Luther was that the preaching of Pentecost must be a preaching of Jesus. That is because the Spirit's job is not to present himself but to present the things of Jesus.²⁹ As seen in Peter's Spirit filled Pentecost sermon the theme was not the Spirit but Jesus.

The second major artery is the means of grace. All proper Lutheran preaching will make it clear that there is no Spirit apart from the preaching of the Gospel, Baptism, Lord's Supper, and Absolution.³⁰ The clear teaching of

²⁹Vide supra 52. ³⁰Vide supra 85.

Peter on Pentecost is that the Spirit comes through the means of the Gospel alone.

The third major artery was faith and its fruits. All three preachers spoke of the Spirit who gives faith. All three preachers spoke of the Spirit who bears fruits in the life of man. The great danger here is that the fruits began to predominate over the faith, that the connection between faith and fruits is lost as the emphasis switches to sanctification rather than justification, that justification and sanctification become mixed so that faith becomes the starting point and fruits the completion. Luther clearly shows that while the Spirit-filled man is a new creation, the most important task for the Spirit is to lead us to the treasure of forgiveness of sins³¹ from which alone comes life and salvation. More on this later.

Good Lutheran Pentecost preaching will always emphasize these three things. Still, merely mentioning these items does not guarantee a sermon free from any Pietistic influence. As was documented, all three preachers spoke to these issues and yet Spener and Walther still showed the influence of Pietism.

It is not the mere inclusion of these elements that are important but how they are used. There are several diagnostic questions that may be discerned from our study that can help determine whether these topics have been

³¹vide supra 147.

properly proclaimed.

The first diagnosis is shared by Luther who caught the importance of Jesus statement in John 16:4, "That He [the Spirit] will declare Me [Jesus], for He will take what is Mine and proclaim it to you." The work of the Holy Spirit is only to give the things of Jesus. Whatever work a sermon proposes for the Holy Spirit it cannot be apart from Christ. The assumption of this fact should not be left to the hearers but should be spelled out. There is no working of the Spirit apart from Jesus. So wherever one speaks of the Spirit at work, that work must be something which bestows Christ and his cross. Indeed, the work of the Spirit is to give Christ and his cross.

A second diagnosis is to whom is the sermon directed? It was seen that Walther's and Spener's perception of the audience led to Pietistic trends in their sermons. At times for them the church had faith, but it was a dead faith. It was a faith that received the doctrine but now needed to move farther; to man's experience (in Walther), to the power for good (in Spener). It was the perception of the church as a having so many hypocrites that led to a call for a more visible kind of faith, active in the lives of the parishioners.

Luther, however, realized that while there are hypocrites in the body, the body is still that of those simul-

³²Vide supra 98.

taneously saints and sinners.³³ What is needed is not an exhortation to living faith, but a Law which gives man knowledge of sin and most importantly a Gospel which gives forgiveness and comfort to the sinner. Where that is preached, no matter how it may appear outwardly, there is living faith.

A good question to ask, then, is whom does the sermon address? If it is speaking primarily to hypocrites then there is danger of a Pietistic call for experience and good works. If the audience is the body of sinners who need the comfort of forgiveness then proper Lutheran preaching should prevail.

There are several other good diagnoses that involve the interchangeability of terms. It is not that these are necessarily synonymous terms but they are so intimately related that they basically carry the same freight.

For example, whenever means of grace is used it should be interchangeable with forgiveness of sins. This is the great downfall of Spener. For him the means were not exchangeable with forgiveness but rather they represented God's divine power for the driving of man to good works.³⁴ Walther is not consistent on this diagnosis. Often the means spoken of in his preaching are interchangeable with Christ and forgiveness. Occasionally, however, they are more synonymous with man's experience. The Law interchanges

³³Vide supra 100. ³⁴Vide supra 92.

with fear and the Gospel interchanges with inner certainty.

Another set of interchangeable terms is faith and Jesus. In Luther one can be substituted for the other.³⁵ In much the same way as with the terms means of grace and forgiveness Spener fails this test. Faith is not so much interchangeable with Jesus as is it with power. The Holy Spirit is the power coming into man. Then faith is the internal power worked in the heart of man. Once again, when Walther emphasizes the experience of the Spirit he is in danger of doing the same thing. When the experience of faith is emphasized faith becomes the internal emotive response of man rather than Jesus himself.

A third diagnosis by interchangeable terms is found in the relationship of forgiveness and the new life. In one of Luther's Pentecost sermons he echoes the words of the Small Catechism on the Lord's Supper, ("For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.") saying, "It is a wonderful preaching: my righteousness, my Holy life is the forgiveness of sin."³⁶ The forgiveness of sins is interchangeable with the holy life. When speaking of the holy life we must not give the impression that it completes our forgiveness, or that it is something a Christian needs in addition to forgiveness. Rather it should be stated that our life is holy in that our life is forgiven. Where there is forgiveness there is always holy,

³⁵Vide supra 135. ³⁶Vide supra 148.

that is forgiven, life.

All of the above is a reminder that the true heart of Pentecost is the forgiveness of sins. All arteries of Pentecost flow from this single heart. The importance of forgiveness was covered in detail in the last chapter. It is mentioned here as one final diagnostic issue and the most crucial one.

When the preaching is all done, have the people been given the forgiveness of sins? Have they understood Jesus, means of grace, faith all in terms of this forgiveness? Has the objective fact of Christ's cross replaced any reliance on their own experience? Has the free gift of forgiveness replaced any trust in their own works? If so, then Pentecost has been properly preached. Should there happen to be other influences in the preaching the preacher may plead that they will be graciously covered over by the preaching of this forgiveness.

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