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## The Dynamic of the Lutheran Reformation

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regiert, so daß ein Mensch die Gelegenheit hat, Gottes Wort, resp. das Evangelium, zu hören, daß er mit dem *medium gratiae divinae* in Kontakt kommt.

3. Der Mensch hat auch nach dem Fall, wie unser Bekenntnis sagt, die Fähigkeit, das Wort Gottes äußerlich zu hören und zu lesen; er kann zur Kirche gehen und kann der Predigt zuhören, wie er denn auch imstande ist, aus Vernunftgründen sein Leben äußerlich zu bessern oder überhaupt ein bürgerlich rechtshaffenes Leben zu führen.

4. Unter keinen Umständen aber ist der Mensch in sich selber und aus eigenen Kräften imstande, sich in irgendeiner Weise vor seiner Bekehrung zur seligmachenden Gnade Gottes zu schützen oder mit geschenkten Gnadenkräften sich für die Gnade Gottes in Christo zu entscheiden oder sich die Versöhnung Christi zuzueignen.

5. Die Bekehrung im biblischen Sinne des Wortes beginnt also nicht mit *motus praeparatorii* oder *actus paedagogici*, sondern besteht in der momentanen Veränderung, die von dem Geist Gottes durch das Evangelium bewirkt wird, wodurch der Mensch aus dem geistlichen Tode ins geistliche Leben versetzt wird und Christus und sein Gnadenheil im Glauben ergreift. Alle wirklichen *motus spirituales* fallen entweder mit der Bekehrung unmittelbar zusammen oder folgen ihr, und in letzterem Sinne kann man auch von Bekehrung oder Erneuerung im weiteren Verstande reden. Vgl. *Form. Conc., Sol. Decl., Conc. Trigl.*, 908 ff., §§ 73. 77. Man wird schließlich eine klarere und striktere Definition von der Bekehrung aufstellen können als die in unserm Bekenntnis gegebene: „Gott der Herr zeucht den Menschen, welchen er bekehren will, und zeucht ihn also, daß aus einem verfinsterten Verstand ein erleuchteter Verstand und aus einem widerspenstigen Willen ein gehorsamer Wille wird.“<sup>4)</sup>

P. E. Krehmann.

## The Dynamic of the Lutheran Reformation.

The Augsburg Confession is a confession of faith. But through its four hundred years it has become more: it is a witness to the persistence of the Lutheran Reformation. It was in its origin an episode in the growth of the Lutheran movement; it is a testimonial, after four centuries, to the permanent power of its principles. Why did the principles formulated under the inspiration of the Lutheran movement have this quality of persistence, becoming largely identified with the name and personality of Luther, maintaining their distinction through centuries and under varying circumstances? Why did not, for example, the Wyclifite or the Hussite movement persist under

4) Wir behalten uns vor, in einem späteren Artikel neuere deutschländische Abhandlungen zu besprechen.



its own impulse? Historians remind us of the "mysterious element" in all great revolutions of human thought (Trevelyan, p. 195); and the simplest explanation is thus summarized: "The greatness of Luther and Calvin, as contrasted, for instance, with Marsiglio, Wyclif, or Gerson, does not lie so much in greater zeal, more thorough method, more logical aim, as in their greater opportunity. The fullness of the time had come." (Workman, p. 17.) This opportunity is thought of as a complex of political, ecclesiastical, intellectual, doctrinal, and economic ingredients, proportioned according to the school of the historian. (Cf. Smith, p. 699 ff.) But it is startling to what an extent these ingredients are present in the manifold attempts at revolt from Rome and its system before the Reformation. A review of these ferments at work in the pre-Reformation period may serve to emphasize in a less usual way that principle which stands out, by contrast with the past, as the dynamic of the Lutheran movement—the *sola fide*.

We shall not pause to discuss the possible *economic* impulses for reformation—the rise of money power, the depreciation of currency, the influence of the new commerce and of discovery. These factors tended, indeed, to detract from the other-worldly ideal of the Church; but the Church itself had not been maintaining that ideal, and in the Jesuit reaction forsook it definitely; and the Reformation was not as thoroughly hither-worldly as economic historians would have us believe. Cause and effect are, furthermore, in the Reformation period inextricably interwoven in this sphere of economic interests. The Calvinist movement did indeed find support in the burgher class and tend to the cities; but the Lutheran movement from the beginning found its adherents in all estates of the day.

Church and State in the Middle Ages were coextensive in membership; the Church flaunted feudal and imperial authority, and the State was the agent of ecclesiastical discipline. This fact leads to a common interpretation of the Reformation as a *political* movement. Germany and Switzerland were fertile fields for revolt from Rome because the one was in its 365 imperial principalities too loosely bound to central Catholic authority, and the other was Europe's first democratic federation. The nationalization of the German Church gave local rulers the ascendancy over bishops, while the Papacy, to dominate the episcopate, had to humor the rulers. (Ritschl, p. 145.) It was advantageous for the local rulers to cling to a movement of revolt from Rome, for the secularization of church- and monastic property would enrich them. The trend of the times was nationalistic. And the infant Lutheran Church came under state supervision. But these formulas are either deceptive, or else they had already been tried and found wanting. The signers of the Augsburg Confession are not land-greedy. Luther counseled loyalty to the emperor; and



even during the religious wars resistance was more against the courts of judiciary or against Catholic leagues than against the emperor. (Cf. Ulrich of Wuerttemberg *versus* Ferdinand, 1534; Kurtz, II, 279.) The aims of the Protestant leaders were religious, with the belief of their subjects, not the tenure of their old or new lands, uppermost in consideration. Where the accepted order of society and government was being overthrown under the guise of religious revolt, as in the case of the Peasant Revolt and the Anabaptist excesses, there was prompt Lutheran disavowal. The participation of the civil government in the supervision of the Lutheran Church was an emergency measure, having nothing to do with the essence of the Lutheran Reformation; the congregationalism of the earliest years was only too often the opportunity for religious and political anarchy. (Cf. Boehmer, p. 314, and Dau.) Furthermore, we find political movements unavailing in the past and under similar circumstances. The refugees at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria, early in the fourteenth century, Marsiglio of Padua and William Occam, defined limitations to the temporal authority of the Papacy as radical as any afterwards; the former's *Defensor Pacis* is startling in its arguments for the autonomy of the State. It went through many editions, was placed on the Index, and through Occam influenced Wyclif and Huss. At the time there was much nationalistic agitation, the debacle of Boniface VIII was still fresh in men's minds; yet the movement remains academic. In Huss we have a more practical movement along political lines. We are pleased to think of Huss as a forerunner of Luther; but the force of his personality on Bohemia and the movement which he inaugurated are predominantly political. His sermons at Bethlehem Chapel were in the vernacular, followed by Bohemian hymns by the congregation. This principle of religious teaching in the vernacular was not purely religious, but largely patriotic; preaching on Neh. 13, 23—27, Huss bewails the breaking down of the Bohemian language (Luetzow, p. 274), and in his *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer* he writes, "Ha, ha; where are those slanderers and babblers who try to prevent the Bohemian language from being honored?" (*Ibid.*, p. 282). Huss published an *Orthographia Bohemica*, ca. 1411. Huss was the nationalist leader, sending congratulations to the king of Poland when the Teutonic Order was broken at Tannenberg in 1410 (*ibid.*, 284). Three of the four principles of the Articles of Prague, 1417, have a frankly nationalistic trend, namely, unimpeded Gospel-teaching in the vernacular, secularization of church property, and widening of the power of the civil courts; and the fourth, the *utraque*, or principle of communion in both forms, is rightly interpreted by Count Luetzow: "To the Hussites the chalice was an emblem signifying the equality of all true Christians" (p. 2). When the Council of Basel made its few formal



concessions to the Calixtine party, resistance collapsed, and the Catholic reaction could sweep the country, the Taborites, with their doctrinal and communistic vagaries, being defeated in 1434. The Hussite movement rose and fell with the need for national expression; doctrine was attached to political interest in the beginning and thus rode to a fall. Similar is the movement of Savonarola, who was the people's darling while he stood for the independence of Florence and whose popularity was forgotten when this issue passed away. Political expediency is not the key of religious reform in any century.

Closely connected with the political interests of the day was the attitude toward the supremacy of Rome; and the Reformation is popularly thought of as a revolt against this supremacy. The German nation is shown to be oppressed by the papal exactions caused through the union of papal and imperial interests after the Concordat of Vienna between Nicholas V and Frederic III; the *gravamina* of the German nobles against these exactions from 1452 till 1518 and the stir of Gregory of Heimburg had fanned public opposition to white heat. Hence the facility with which the charge of Antichrist is maintained; hence the definiteness of the break with Rome. Against this view must be maintained: The Reformation had gained its momentum before the break with Rome and fostered the break because of other reasons entirely. The principles upon which a break with the Papacy might be urged, furthermore, had been long before enunciated. It was the thesis of the *Defensor Pacis* to show "by the witness of Scripture in both its literal and mystical sense, according to the interpretation of holy men and other approved doctors, that neither the Roman bishop, called Pope, nor any other bishop, presbyter, or deacon has a right to any sovereignty or judicial authority or coercive jurisdiction over any priest, ruler, community, association, or individual of whatsoever condition" (Emerton, p. 36); the claim of Peter's first bishopric at Rome is demolished on critical grounds (*ibid.*, 46) and the supremacy of Rome ascribed to natural prestige and experience (*ibid.*, 49); a head for the Church is necessary and Rome should be it, but not by divine right (*ibid.*, 58). Occam transmitted these opinions to his intellectual posterity. The Franciscans, of whom Occam is representative, perished in scores for their convictions, namely, that the Roman Church was the carnal church, the whore of Babylon, the synagog of Satan, and the Pope the Antichrist (Workman, p. 97). In England these principles were most popular. "The student of the Reformation would do well to realize how persistent and continuous in England, in the fourteenth century, were the efforts of all classes 'to remove the Pope from off their backs' and to 'curb his power'" (Workman, p. 38). Why did this movement fail? Workman suggests as causes the policy of Henry V and the wars of the Roses; the impossibility of a local reformation in the



Middle Ages and of the cutting off from the solidarity of medieval thought (p. 38.213). Under Wyclif we find the movement gaining a new impulse. His theory was that of "dominion," that through sin the Pope forfeited the fief of dominion which he held of the Lord. Walter Brute, one of the prominent Lollard leaders, reporting his opinions to court, stated Rome to be the daughter of Babylon and the Pope the beast, *dux cleri* being computed to be the number 666. Workman suggests absence of environment for the spread and development of his ideas and the lack of a strong personal stamp like that of Luther, as also the negative and subverting nature of his movement rather than constructive suggestions for a new order, as the causes for the failure of Wyclif's revolt (pp. 213 ff.). Huss followed Wyclif in the opposition to the primacy of the Pope. The insecurity of the idea as a basis for permanent revolt is reflected in the Calixtine settlement noted above. Savonarola is credited with raising definite revolt against the authority of the Pope; but his influence in Florence is due to his popular preaching and his hold on public sympathy and his death to a fantastic chain of circumstances rather than to the punishment of the offended Curia. Against the contention of Ranke that the resisting of excommunication by Savonarola was a "step towards transforming the constitution of the Church itself" Villari asserts: "It is no less certain that he left dogma unassailed and always recognized the authority of the Pontiff to be indispensable to the unity of the Church" (II, 246, n.). We find therefore that movements previous to the Reformation which attacked the Papacy definitely on grounds of criticism of its authority and practise, even when supported by popular opinion and noble prestige, fell to pieces; and Luther, on the other hand, though he definitely and violently opposed the supremacy of the Papacy, did so not for the sake of the stimulus which it would offer his movement, but because of its opposition to, and confusion of, the doctrine of justification. (Cf. Smalcald Articles, IV, 3. 4. 12, *Trigl.* 470 f.)

Momentarily, under the influence of a materialistic humanism, the *intellectual* revival of the day is given credit for certain phases of the Reformation's progress. Much stress is laid on the critical independence of the time, making the questioning of papal absolutism possible. But it must be remembered that the revival of learning and the casting aside of moral and ecclesiastical restraints ran their course within the confines of the Church. Poggio, representative of moral rebellion, and Lorenzo Valla, critic of everything written, were papal secretaries. As the natural reaction to the pagan renaissance came, the Church in its own confines accepted a more Christian humanism, as witness the Jesuit reform. Also the Northern humanists, more interested in classical Christian literature than their Southern contemporaries, did not dream of subverting the organiza-



tion of the Church; More would not even yield to Henry VIII; and on the continent, Erasmus, university man's paragon, became offended at Luther's criticism of free will and his highly practical measures for achieving, not merely talking about, improvement of faith and morals. Regarding actual popularization of Scripture, for which humanism is given much credit, Wyclif had been much more effective, and the limited influence of Faber Stapulensis in France was alone in line with the genius of the Reformation. The desire for knowledge induced by humanism and culminating in the discovery of printing is a trend of the times which helped the Lutheran movement immensely, and the new universities were useful organs for promoting the new doctrine; but these were means, not the dynamic. Melancthon, the humanist of Luther's coterie, is typical of the strength and weakness of his kind. Systematization of doctrine, diplomatic treatment of opposition, he could effect; but his indecision, yielding of substance to style and of truth to harmony, were positively injurious.

Turning to distinctive doctrines of the Reformation, we note the *sola Scriptura*, the formal principle of the Reformation. The flood of Scriptural exposition, culminating in the publication of New and Old Testaments and facilitated by printing, caused universal participation in the discussion of the day. The people were made to realize that they possessed in their tract or their Testament authority higher than the Roman pontiff. The participation and possession were new; the principle was not, however, unheard of. Scripture was never, for one thing, denied or doubted as the Word of God; the control of the Papacy had consisted in its right of interpretation and the acceptance of tradition and Fathers. Marsiglio began to narrow down the field; only those interpretations, writings, and traditions are to be accepted, beside Scripture, as are declared by a general council to be valid (Emerton, p. 50). Wyclif and his movement are distinctive for the importance they attached to Scripture. Wyclif wished to exalt the pulpit at the expense of the Sacraments (Op. Ev., i, 375, quot. Trevelyan, p. 128); he wished to base religion on the Bible instead of tradition (Works, II, 405; Trevelyan, p. 131). Here we doubtless find the source of that success which the Lollard movement did enjoy; Wyclif had asserted the priesthood of all believers (S. E. W., i, 350, Trevelyan, 140 ff.), and the Lollards practised it, and they penetrated well beyond their founder into Biblical truth. Walter Brute, whose doctrine of the Antichrist has been quoted, said: "The just man shall live by his faith, whereby it is manifest that by the faith which we have in Christ we are justified from sin and so do live by Him who is the true bread and meat of the soul" (Workman 279). The Lollards, indeed, present the highest example of persistence which we find in the pre-Reformation movements. Bishop Tunstall in 1520 could write to Erasmus: "It is no question of pernicious novelty; it is



only that new arms are being added to the great band of Wyclifite heretics" (quoted by Lindsay). It is remarkable, however, that the Wyclifite movement prospered just in that class which could least afford the expensive copies of the Scriptures (there were but few upper-class patrons of Lollardry, such as Sir Thomas Latimer and John Trussel; Trevelyan, pp. 317 ff.). The power of the movement was curtailed by the negative and tendential heritage from its master. Wyclif's purpose in exalting Scripture was to abrogate the temporal power of the Church and to purify the clergy (Smith, p. 37); and in specific doctrine he was indecisive. "He said that no man knew whether he or any other was saved or damned. He believed that, strictly speaking, every man was predestined to salvation or damnation, but he held that actions and not dogma were in this life the only test of his state" (Trevelyan, p. 141). He retained his belief in purgatory (*ibid.*, p. 142), but opposed transubstantiation on the ground of blasphemy (*De Blasphemia*, p. 31; Trevelyan, p. 173); he "believed the body was in some manner present; though how he did not clearly know; he was only certain that bread was present also" (*ibid.*, p. 176). This indecision and speculation was the legacy to the Lollards. Their movement degenerated into a protest against saints, images, and shrines (Trevelyan, p. 317). The official renunciation from Lollardry was a promise to worship images (Trevelyan, p. 321). Time was devoted not merely to discussing the nature of the host, but also to the bane of negative Bible study, the brooding over eschatology (Workman, p. 278). In France we note Faber Stapulensis, whose expositions were used by Luther and who translated the Vulgate into French. He wrote on 1 Cor. 8: "It is almost profane to speak of the merit of works, especially toward God. . . . Our only hope is in God's grace" (Smith, p. 53). But his influence did not extend beyond Briçonnet's bishopric of Meaux. Scripture indeed was bringing the dynamic of revolt from the outward and establishment of substantial religion; but it is the lesson of the previous ages and of the Reformation itself that this dynamic had to be concentrated and used.

The Lutheran movement is held to be so vigorous because it was essentially *popular* in its doctrinal aims. This is, of course, not an explanation, but an observation. Why was it popular? The popular mysticism of the preceding age is an instructive contrast. The mystic school in general is marked by emphasis upon piety, a natural stress in view of the degeneration of the time; but the doctrinal substratum is not new. (Cf. Smith, p. 34.) Mysticism was "liable to mistake giddiness of starved nerve and emotion for a moment of vision and of union with God" (*ibid.*). In the case of Savonarola we see perhaps the greatest popular stir resulting from the mystic fervor. "The secret of Savonarola's enormous success may be entirely attributed to



his mystic religious ardor and to the earnest affection he felt for the people and elicited from them in return" (Villari I, p. 142). We note this expression: "The love of Jesus Christ is the lively affection inspiring the faithful with the desire to bring his soul into unity, as it were, with that of Christ and live the life of the Lord, not by external imitation, but by inward and divine inspiration" (*Trattato dell' Amore di Jesu Cristo*; quoted Villari I, p. 113). Savonarola's power utterly collapsed with his execution. In the Northern mystics we find a more sober following, but yet no more secure results. Meister Eckhardt and his near-panteism needs no consideration; his doctrines needed popular interpretation in themselves. The *German Theology* partly did this, that is, stated the object of man to be union with God, accomplished through appropriating the life of Christ in humility, poverty of the spirit, and fulfilment of the Law (Ullman, 214 ff.). "Put off thine own will, and there will be no more hell," was its thesis (Smith, p. 31). John Tauler, also favorably regarded by Luther, emphasized simple faith in contrast to knowledge and formal piety. The estimate of Mackinnon regarding Luther's impression of the *German Theology* and Tauler is without doubt correct: "It is questionable whether he did not read into these sermons more of his own apprehension of the Gospel than they really contained and whether, in making use of these mystic ideas and terms, he did not impart a different significance from that of Tauler. . . . Making due allowance for the evangelical element, what strikes one in these sermons is just the absence of any definite statement of the Pauline doctrine of faith and works" (I, p. 233). In Holland, Ruysbroek, Groot, and Radewyn, culminating in Thomas à Kempis, present the more practical trend of the movement through the organization of the Brethren of the Common Life; Kempis especially was influential through his *De Imitatione Christi*. But in all of these popular teachers there is an emphasis on subjective attainment of spiritual ideals by personal forces, which may have seemed attractive by contrast to the coarseness of the divines and crudity of the formal religion of the day, but which was bound to remain an ideal only. Johann von Wesel in Germany emphasized the authority of Scripture and opposed indulgences, but was silenced before his work, dealing chiefly with abuses, could take root. Wessel Gansfort of Groningen is regarded by Ullman (p. 461 ff.) as the brightest exemplar of Reformation doctrine before Luther, and his works were collected by the latter; but his sphere was largely academic, and his closing years were spent in quiet composition (p. 1489). Those reformatory doctrines from his somewhat confused system which were influential merged their force in that of the Lutheran movement. To sum up: Mere attention to popular needs and piety, even when proceeding with a Scriptural background, had not proved altogether powerful to restore the vigor of religious life.



The modern theory of the Reformation doctrinally is that Luther broke the reign of the *sacramental theory*, instituting the supremacy of Scripture, reason, or whatever the historian may define, thus making Luther the lineal descendant of Wyclif. (Of. Smith, p. 37; Troeltsch, quoted in Boehmer, p. 282.) It is true, the Lutheran Reformation inveighed against Sacraments efficacious *ex opere operato*. But if by sacramental ideal the idea of the bestowal of the grace of God by means is meant, then, of course, the sacramental ideal is far from denied, as just the Catechisms of Luther bear witness. The emphasis on the Word, which meets us everywhere in Luther, is in itself a sacramental ideal. True, the idea of the grace bestowed is different. The forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness had hitherto been regarded as a consequence of the infused grace, not as grace itself. And the acceptance of grace had been regarded by mystic and humanist alike as the function of man's free will. Luther reversed cause and effect, pointed to faith as the acceptance of saving grace, itself made possible by the power of God. (Of. Boehmer, p. 282 ff.) The change of the sacramental idea in the Church, the breaking down of the authority of the priesthood, the denial of the *nulla salus extra ecclesiam*, these were consequences, not the dynamic, of the Lutheran movement. The latter denial we find enunciated already by Marsiglio (Emerton, p. 33), but to no avail, who defined the Church as "the whole body of believers who call upon the name of Christ, and includes all parts of this body in whatever community they may be."

The doctrine of Luther, then, it is in which we find the particular source of power for his movement; and it is the doctrine which moved him to his inmost depths and steeled him against emperor and Pope, as well as gave him the peace of conscience for which he yearned — the *sola fide*. If it be permitted to dissect Christian doctrine, we find the dynamic not in the *sola Scriptura* simply, not in opposition to papal authority, not in the new notion of the Church, but in the principle that the sin of man is forgiven, and the righteousness of Christ is reckoned his own, by God by virtue of his simple attitude and acceptance of faith, which is the mainspring of hope and life together. This principle faced the problem of sin squarely, admitted its guilt and terror wholly, and gave utter and complete assurance of its removal before God's justice. The premises, for that day, were old; the principle was new and powerful. Thus Workman: "The man of to-day may laugh at Luther's struggles with a personal devil; but one secret of the success of Luther lay in his tremendous consciousness of the reality of sin, just as one secret of the failure of Wyclif lay in the doctrine that sin is but a negation, 'that it has no idea,' to quote the language by which Wyclif, the realist, linked it on to his philosophy" (p. 214). Mackinnon, I, p. 250:



"Erasmus was too optimistic in his belief that all that was needed was the leavening, the pervasion of men's minds by a new knowledge, an enlightened reason. . . . Personality, character, combined with the dynamic of an overmastering religious conviction, could alone suffice for even the practical reformation, not to speak of the far-reaching religious transformation which Luther effected. This dynamic, Luther discovered in the overmastering power of personal faith, operating in both heart and mind." And Smith (p.41): "Luther's doctrine of justification by faith only, with its radical transformation of the sacramental system, cannot be found in these his predecessors, and this was a difference of vast importance." A good historical, even if not theological, estimate. But it is true that this ingredient had been missing. In the types of pre-Reformation thought which we have considered, Marsiglio, the political pamphleteer, Huss, the patriotic divine, Savonarola, the moralistic demagog, Wyclif, the reforming scholastic, simple Dutch and German mystics, suave humanists, all fall short of the essential understanding of this doctrine. No doubt there were thousands who found, as did Wessel on his death-bed, the Crucified as the one means of sure hope; but the doctrine was not plainly taught. Reviewing the Waldenses and contemporaries, Ullman decides (p.461): "Their religious life has a certain tincture of legality and righteousness by works, which no doubt in practise is simpler and purer than that of the dominant Church, but in principle is not so very different as is customary to suppose. Gerhard Groot himself and the Brethren of the Common Lot, in spite of their internalism and devotedness to God and Christ, always recognized some meritoriousness in human works. The pious Thomas à Kempis . . . speaks not infrequently of meriting salvation and has not kept even the *Imitation of Christ* itself perfectly untainted by this thought" (p.461). Wessel Gansfort is Ullman's paragon of a pre-Reformer. True, his *Farrago* closes its second part with "Propositions Concerning the Grace of God and Faith in Jesus," taken from Paul and commented upon (cf. Miller and Scudder, II, pp.144 ff.); but we agree with Ritschl (129 ff.) that Wessel with the rest inclined to the Thomistic notion that Christ makes our practise possible, whereby justification ensues. Small wonder that when the Augsburg Confession made the first formal declaration of the new church principles, Melanchthon found himself obliged to expand in the Apology particularly on Articles IV, VI, and XX. This would bear the brunt of Roman opposition, this marked the new movement most apart. In calling the *sola fide*, with its implication of the vicarious atonement (for thus alone it has substance in Lutheran doctrine) of Christ, the dynamic of the Reformation, it is not denied that the *sola Scriptura* is basic or other distinctive doctrines essential. The first is fundamental, and many of the others, such as the view of the Sacraments,



of repentance of the Church, of church government, are implied in it. The conviction of sin, furthermore, is a postulate for it, whether that conviction had been stifled by indulgences or is being dismissed with the negation of God and morality. But the importance of isolating this doctrine as the dynamic of the Reformation is this: It is one finding permanent application to the greatest need of the heart, that of perfect assurance of salvation; and—it is a positive doctrine. In the age of materialism as well as in the Middle Ages positive aid for the soul is worth a thousand prophylactics of morality or mysticism. Though combat and refutation and criticism may pave the way for clear thinking and an unmasking of error, it is the positivism of this supreme religious truth which compels. The doctrines surrounding this jewel of divine grace and revelation remain, after four centuries, a valid expression and norm of religious conviction, while even those Calvinistic parallels of the Lutheran Reformation at first swept on in its impetus are now faced with division and indecision or have succumbed to abject denial of the Christian way. (Cp. Krauth, p. 120.) Four hundred years, therefore, are a cumulative admonition to the Church of the Word of the present to use that Word indeed, but to use it vigorously for that for which it is given, for the implanting of positive faith in the merits of Christ Jesus.

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