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Introduction to Sacred Theology

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"But, beloved, remember ye *the words which were spoken before of the apostles* of our Lord Jesus Christ." These passages surely claim for the message of the apostles the same authority as that possessed by the writings of the prophets. But St. Paul speaks in the same strain. He writes Rom. 16, 25—27: "Now, to Him that is of power to stablish you *according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ*, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but *now is made manifest*, and *by the Scriptures of the prophets*, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever!" Again, in Eph. 2, 20: "And are built *upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*," where St. Paul even puts the apostles in first place. Also in Eph. 3, 4. 5: "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery . . . whereby, *when ye read*, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now *revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.*" Cp. 2 Tim. 2, 14. These surely are bold and comprehensive statements, and they would have little meaning if they could not be accepted in the spirit in which they were made, namely, that the writers of the New Testament were conscious of being on the same level with the prophets of old in the matter of inspiration.

(To be concluded.) P. E. KRETZMANN.

Introduction to Sacred Theology.

(Prolegomena.)

The Nature and Constitution of Sacred Theology.

10. Theology Considered as Doctrine.

As theology, in its subjective sense, is the habitude, or ability, to teach the Word of God as set forth in Holy Scripture, in all its truth and purity, so Christian theology, in its objective sense, or conceived as doctrine, is nothing more and nothing less than the true and pure presentation of the doctrine of Holy Scripture. 1 Pet. 4, 11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Titus 2, 7—10: "In doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned, . . . showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things." The claim of being a Christian theologian may be properly made only by such as teach nothing but Scripture doctrine. This doctrine, however, is not drawn or developed from human reason, but is taken in all its parts alone from Holy Scripture. The function of the Christian theologian therefore consists merely in grouping in distinct paragraphs and chapters and under proper heads the various teachings

which Holy Scripture inculcates in its several passages on one given subject. If he applies synthesis and analysis, it is merely in the formal arrangement of the various Scripture doctrines. So far as the doctrines themselves are concerned, he allows them to stand, neither adding thereto, nor taking away from them, no matter whether they appear consistent with reason and experience or not. In this way the Christian theologian secures his "system of doctrine," or his "dogmatic theology." In accord with this principle the Lutheran theologian Pfeiffer writes (*Thes. Herm.*, p. 5): "Positive theology [dogmatic theology] is, rightly estimated, nothing else than Holy Scripture itself, arranged under proper heads in clear order; whence not even one member, not even the least, must be found in that body of doctrine which cannot be supported from Holy Scripture, rightly understood." (Baier, I, 43. 76.) Luther very aptly calls all true theologians "catechumens and disciples of the prophets, who repeat and preach only what they have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles." (St. L. Ed., III, 1890.) This faithful repetition (*Nachsagen*) of the teachings of the prophets and apostles by the Christian theologian is to Luther a matter of so grave concern that he writes: "No other doctrine should be taught or heard in the Church than the pure Word of God, that is, Holy Scriptrue; or else let both teachers and hearers be damned." (Cp. Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik*, I, p. 56.) The same truth is expressed in the axiom: *Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum.*"

The Christian theologian must therefore exclude from his system of doctrine all opinions and speculations of men, and he must teach nothing but God's own immutable truth and doctrine (*doctrina divina*) as it is exhibited in Holy Scripture (*doctrina e Scriptura Sacra hausta*). This demand is made by God Himself, Col. 2, 8: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." And this divine demand involves not merely the chief doctrines, on which man's salvation depends directly, but all teachings of Holy Scripture, Matt. 28, 20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." In whatever matter Holy Scripture has spoken definitely, the Christian theologian must suppress his own views, opinions, and speculations and adhere unwaveringly to the divine truths revealed in Holy Scripture. At no place is he permitted to inject into the body of divine truths his own imaginings and reasonings, and at no time must he allow his reason the prerogative of doubt, criticism, or denial, but every thought must everywhere be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10, 5. That is the demand which God Himself makes on all who would serve Him as theologians; in every instance they are to attest and proclaim His Word, not their own.

All teachers of the Church who refuse to do this are not Christian theologians, but false prophets and pseudapostles, against whose pernicious work God warns His saints. Jer. 23, 16: "Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you. . . . They speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord." And in the New Testament this warning is reiterated with no less emphasis, 1 Tim. 6, 4; 2 John 8—11; Rom. 16, 17, etc. Luther's insistence on faithfulness in teaching God's Word is well known. He writes: "If any one wishes to preach, let him keep silent with respect to his own words." "Here in the Church he should not speak anything but the Word of this generous Host; otherwise it is not the true Church. Therefore he must say: 'God speaks.'" (Cp. Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik*, I, 60 ff.)

Emphasizing the great truth that all doctrine taught in the Church must be *divine* doctrine, our Lutheran dogmaticians asserted that all theology proclaimed by the Christian theologian must be *ectypal theology*, or *derived theology* (*theologia ἔκτυπος*), that is, a reprint or reproduction of *archetypal* theology (*theologia ἀρχέτυπος*), or *original* theology, as it is originally in God Himself. Hollaz explains these terms as follows (3. 4): "Archetypal theology is the knowledge which God has of Himself and which in Him is the model of that other theology, which is communicated to intelligent creatures. Ectypal theology is the knowledge of God and divine things communicated to intelligent creatures by God, after the pattern of His own theology." (*Doctr. Theol.*, p. 16.) Modern rationalistic theology has rejected this distinction as useless and misleading; in reality, however, it is most profitable since it expresses the Scriptural truth that God's ministers must speak only what their divine Master has revealed to them. Moreover, the distinction is Scriptural; for it declares very clearly that all true knowledge of God inheres originally and essentially in Him and that it is by divine grace that the knowledge which is necessary for man's salvation has been revealed by Him to His prophets and apostles. Matt. 11, 27: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." To ectypal theology belongs also the natural knowledge of God, which man derives either from the Law written in his heart or from the works of God, Rom. 1, 19 ff.; 2, 14. 15. Also this natural knowledge of God man owes to God's self-revelation, Acts 14, 17; 17, 26. 27. Nevertheless this natural knowledge of God, while true and useful in its place, is not sufficient to save sinners since it does not include the Gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus. For this reason the only ectypal theology which may constitute the source of the Christian religion is that of Holy Scripture, or the written Word of God. Whatever is beyond, and contrary to, Holy Scripture does not correspond to archetypal theology and is

condemned by Scripture as vain talking (*ματαιολογία*), 1 Tim. 1, 6: "From which some, having swerved, have turned aside unto *vain jangling.*"

The paramount truth that all doctrine taught in the Church must needs be Scripture doctrine has been all but universally discarded by modern rationalistic theologians. The present-day "scientific theology" no longer recognizes Holy Scripture as the only source and norm of the Christian faith; on the contrary, it regards the identification of Christian theology with the doctrine of Scripture as an "abnormality" and a "repristination of a discarded theological viewpoint." Nitzsch-Stephan writes: "No one bases his dogmatics any longer in the old Protestant way on the *norma normans, i. e.,* Holy Scripture." (Cp. Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik,* I, 65.) In place of Holy Scripture modern rationalistic theology accepts as the norm and standard of faith the dictates of human reason, more or less disguised under the terms "Christian consciousness," "Christian experience," "Christian self-assurance," etc., while loyalty to the Word of God is denounced as "Biblicism," "Intellectualism," etc., which is said to produce a "mere intellectual Christianity," "a dead orthodoxy without inner warmth," etc. (Cp. Pieper, *Christl. Dogmatik* I, 70 ff.)

However, in demanding for itself these unscriptural norms, modern rationalistic theology only deceives itself, as even only a superficial consideration of the matter will show. Thus, for example, Christian experience can in no way serve as a source or norm of faith since the true Christian experience is never prior to Holy Scripture, but depends upon, and follows, its acceptance; that is to say, only he who believes the Word of God as set forth in Holy Scripture experiences in his heart both the terror of guilt and the comfort of grace. As a person studies and accepts the divine Law, he becomes convinced that he is a sinner; as he studies and accepts the Gospel, he becomes convinced that his sin is forgiven through faith in Christ. In short, there is no true Christian experience of sin and grace without the means of grace, or the Word of God. This is the true reason for Christ's emphatic command that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations," Luke 24, 47. (Cp. also Acts 26, 20.) Thus the Christian experience becomes actual only through the preaching and acceptation of the Word of God, or, we may say, the Word of God is the only means by which the Holy Ghost works the Christian experience of repentance and faith, Rom. 7, 7; 1, 16. 17. On the other hand, where the Word of God is not preached, there is no true Christian experience. The proof for this truth is furnished by the very advocates of Christian experience as a faith norm. Schleiermacher, for example, who insisted upon Christian experience as a norm of faith, rejected the central doctrine of Christianity by denying the vicarious atonement of Christ and consequently also the doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

Schleiermacher's experience moved him ultimately to rely on his good works for salvation. But such an experience, as it is evident, is not Christian, but carnal, rationalistic, and paganistic, in short, the very opposite of Christianity.

So also the "Christian faith" or the "Christian consciousness" can in no way serve as a source and standard of Christian theology; for just as the "Christian experience," so likewise the "Christian faith" or the "Christian consciousness" results from faithful acceptance of Holy Scripture. Now, since the "Christian faith" is the fruit of Holy Scripture, it can never be the source and norm of Christian theology, just as little as the apple growing on a tree can be its own cause or source. But just as the apple is produced by the tree, so the Christian faith is produced by Holy Scripture; it is found only where Holy Scripture is adhered to and believed. Rom. 10, 17: "Faith cometh by hearing." John 17, 20: "Who believe through their Word." Hence every "Christian faith" or every "Christian conscionsness" which is not rooted in the Word of God, but presumes to judge the Word of God, is not Christian, but carnal and antichristian, 1 Tim. 6, 3. What Luther writes on this score is certainly true and deserves conscientious consideration. He says: "Faith teaches, and holds to, the truth; for it clings to Scripture, which neither lies nor deceives. Whatsoever does not have its origin in Scripture most assuredly comes from the devil." Those who would make the "Christian faith" or the "Christian consciousness" a norm of faith would do well to heed this severe, but correct judgment. Our Savior declares: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed." Such statements as these settle the question so far as the Christian theologian is concerned; his discipleship as also his theology is grounded only on God's Word and on nothing else, for whatever theology is not of Scripture is carnal theology, as the rationalistic theology of all subjective, or "I-theologians," proves, from Aquinas, Scotus, and Schleiermacher down to the present-day Modernists. Wherever the Word of God is not being accepted in its truth and purity, rationalism reigns and destroys.

Moreover, the "regenerate heart," or the "regenerate I," cannot serve as a source or norm of the Christian faith, since a person is truly "regenerate" only as long as he, with simple faith, believes Holy Scripture, Mark 16, 15. 16: "He that believeth not shall be damned." The "regenerate heart" which modern rationalistic theologians would set up as a standard of faith is, in the final analysis, the carnal and unbelieving mind of an unregenerate person, rising in rebellion against the mysteries of the faith. This is proved by the fact that practically all who would make their "regenerate heart" a norm of faith deny both the inspiration and the infallibility of Holy Scripture. Such an outrage, however, no truly regenerate heart will perpetrate.

From all this it is clear that all theologians who reject Holy Scripture as the only source and standard of faith have fallen into the error of a most pernicious self-delusion. Their very insistence upon another source and norm outside Holy Scripture proves the spirit of unbelief by which their minds, either consciously or unconsciously, are actuated. Rationalistic theology demands other norms than the Word of God, just because it is rationalistic and unchristian. The believing child of God says with Samuel: "Speak; for Thy servant heareth," 1 Sam. 3, 10. Only blind unbelief and wicked rebellion against God presume to judge His Word by establishing norms of faith in opposition to the revealed divine truth.

Modern rationalistic theology prides itself on its true evaluation of the "historical character" of the Christian religion. But orthodox theology has never denied this "historical character"; in fact, the historicity of Christianity has been always asserted by believing theologians just because of their firm faith in Holy Scripture. Yea, just because of their faith in the "historical character" of the Christian religion they are opposed to all norms which are put forth against Holy Scripture. For "historical Christianity" can be learned only from the Bible, not from any other source. Tradition cannot reveal it to us, nor can human reason originate it. Only what Christ and His holy apostles tell us of the Christian religion in the holy Bible is "historical Christianity." The "historical Christ" whom modern rationalistic theologians wish to construct outside Holy Scripture and the "historical Christianity" which they desire to build up apart from Holy Scripture are both alike unhistorical and false, for they are figments of their unbelieving minds. For the true "historical Christian religion" we must rely solely on the Bible, Matt. 28, 19. 20; John 8, 31. 32; 17, 20; Eph. 2, 20.

In short, rationalistic theology is a product of unbelief and as such intrinsically false, ungodly, and unscriptural. Our divine Lord invariably affirmed, "It is written"; modern rationalistic theologians reject that formula with contempt and substitute for it their own subjective opinion, "I believe," and, "I think." Thus they teach their own word, not the Word of God. Modern rationalistic theology can be cured of its ingrained falsity only by returning to Holy Scripture and by adopting Luther's fundamental principle: *"Omnis fiducia vana est, quae non nititur Verbo Dei. Deus solo suo Verbo voluit suam voluntatem, sua consilia deformari nobis, non nostris conceptionibus et imaginationibus."* (St. L. Ed., VI, 70; III, 1417.)

11. Divisions of Theology Conceived as Doctrine.

Theology, considered objectively, is Christian doctrine, or Bible doctrine, which, as we have seen before, is inspired in all its parts, so that in the whole Bible there is not a single teaching which is not divinely given and useful for salvation. Nevertheless, while it is

the scope and purpose of the entire Bible to save sinners from eternal perdition, distinctions must be made between the various Bible doctrines regarding their special function and importance. We thus speak of: 1. Law and Gospel; 2. fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines; 3. theological problems, or open questions.

1. Law and Gospel.

The distinction between Law and Gospel is one made by Holy Scripture itself. For while at times the term *Law* is used for the entire Word of God or every revealed truth in Holy Scripture (Ps. 1, 2; 19, 7; 119, 97), nevertheless this term, in its proper and narrow sense, has a distinct meaning, which properly does not apply to the whole revealed Word of God. So, too, the term *Gospel* is sometimes applied to the entire doctrine of the Bible (Mark 16, 15. 16; 1, 1; 1, 15; Rom. 2, 16; Matt. 28, 19. 20); yet in its strict sense this term denotes a definite message, which must not be identified with the entire Scripture content. Therefore, properly or strictly speaking, the Law is not Gospel, nor is the Gospel Law, but the two are opposites. Accurate definitions of them will readily prove this. Thus the Formula of Concord defines the Law: "The Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God and reproves everything that is sin and contrary to God's will." The same confession defines the Gospel in its narrow sense as follows: "The Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law and therefore is condemned by it is to believe, namely, that Christ has expiated, and made satisfaction for, all sins and has obtained and acquired for him, without any merit of his, forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life." (Form. of Conc., Ep. V, 2. 4.) These definitions are Scriptural and nicely show the radical difference between the Law and the Gospel. How essential this difference is, is obvious from the fact that Holy Scripture expressly excludes the Law from the province of salvation. Its pronouncement is: "By grace are ye saved, . . . not of works," Eph. 2, 8. 9. "Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified," Rom. 3, 20. "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law." v. 28.

This distinction between the Law and the Gospel, which is so clearly taught in Holy Scripture, the Christian theologian must conscientiously observe and neither weaken the condemning force of the Law nor diminish the saving comfort of the Gospel. He must declare without qualification the whole guilt and condemnation of sin which the Law reveals, Ezek. 3, 18. 19: "When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou give him not warning nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." So also the Christian theologian must proclaim fully and without any

qualification the whole consolation of the Gospel with its matchless offer of divine grace, pardon, and eternal life. Matt. 11, 28: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." 1 Cor. 2, 2: "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Unless the Law and the Gospel are thus preached as two distinct and cantradictory doctrines (*plus quam contradictoria*), the Christian religion is eviscerated of its distinct content, is paganized through the introduction of work-righteousness as a cause of salvation, and is rendered incapable of saving sinners. The sinner indeed needs the Law in order that he may know his sin and the condemnation of God which rests upon him because of his sin; but he needs the Gospel in order that he may know divine grace, which through Christ Jesus has fully removed his sin and offers to him forgiveness of all sins. Gal. 3, 10: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." Gal. 3, 13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." Whenever the Law with its condemnation is weakened and sinners are taught to rely for salvation on the works of the Law, even in part only, also the Gospel is being corrupted, since a weakened Law means a weakened Gospel. The final result is that the sinner is robbed of the salvation which is offered in the Gospel; for this offer is received only by those who implicitly trust in its divine promises and cast themselves on God's mercy, in short, by those who absolutely repudiate the error of salvation by works. Gal. 5, 4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace." Gal. 3, 10: "As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse." As the Law must forever remain the "ministry of condemnation," 2 Cor. 3, 9, so the Gospel must forever remain the "ministration of righteousness." For a person is a Christian only in so far as he comforts himself against the terrors of conscience with the free and full promise of forgiveness "without the deeds of the Law."

This fundamental truth requires special emphasis to-day in view of the fact that both Romanism and modern Protestant sectarianism have discarded the Scriptural distinction between Law and Gospel and have mingled the two into each other. (Cp. Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, I, 84 ff.) The reason for this is obvious. Both Romanism and modern sectarianism are basically paganistic, since they insist upon work-righteousness as a condition of salvation. However, where work-righteousness is consistently taught, the distinction between the Law and the Gospel must be eliminated, and each is deprived of its distinctive character. Salvation by works has room only in that type of theology which affirms that sin is not as hideous as Holy Scripture pictures it and that divine grace is not as glorious as the Gospel pro-

claims it. In other words, the paganistic error of salvation by work-righteousness is possible only if neither the Law nor the Gospel is taught in its truth and purity. Against this pernicious corruption of God's holy Word let every true theologian be warned. Our divine Lord says: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." And St. Paul writes: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1, 8. — With regard to the use of the Law and the Gospel the following distinctions must be conscientiously observed: —

1. Knowledge of sin must be taught from the Law; however, forgiveness of sin must be taught from the Gospel. Rom. 3, 20: "Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified." Rom. 1, 16. 17: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . . For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith." All who teach forgiveness of sin from the Law or on the basis of work-righteousness are not Christian theologians, but pseudapostles, Gal. 5, 4. "I would they were even cut off which trouble you," Gal. 5, 12. Because by the Law there is knowledge of sin, it must be preached to secure sinners, who, filled with carnal pride, refuse to admit their guilt. Rom. 3, 19: "That every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." On the other hand, the Gospel must be proclaimed to contrite hearts, that is, to penitent sinners, humbled by the Law, who seek salvation as a free gift and without any assertion of even the least merit of their own. Luke 4, 18: "He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted." It is needless to say that the right apportionment of Law- and Gospel-preaching must remain a matter of pastoral wisdom. Nevertheless the true minister of Christ is a Gospel preacher and will therefore not deny his hearers a full and overrunning measure of Gospel comfort.

2. By means of the Law the Christian theologian teaches what good works are; but by means of the Gospel he produces true joy and zeal to do good works, Matt. 15, 1—6; 22, 35—40; 19, 16—22; Rom. 12, 1; Gal. 5, 24—26; Eph. 6, 5—10; 2 Cor. 8, 8. 9, etc. These diverse functions of the Law and the Gospel have been fittingly expressed by the axiom: *Lex praescribit; evangelium inscribit.* Luther writes: "A legalistic preacher compels by threats and punishments; a preacher of grace calls forth and moves by showing divine goodness and mercy." (St. L. Ed., XII, 318.)

3. The Law checks sin only outwardly, while it increases sin inwardly; but the Gospel, by converting the sinner, destroys sin both

inwardly and outwardly. Rom. 7, 5: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." V. 6: "But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." V. 14: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law, but under grace." This important truth is stated in the axiom: *"Lex necat peccatorem, non peccatum; evangelium necat peccatum, non peccatorem."* Luther writes: "Hence, whosoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture." (St. L. Ed., IX, 802.)

2. Fundamental and Non-Fundamental Doctrines.

The doctrines of Holy Scripture have been fittingly divided into fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. The purpose of this division is not to discard certain teachings of the Word of God as practically unimportant or unnecessary. Such a procedure would be in direct opposition to Scripture itself. Matt. 28, 20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Rom. 15, 4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." According to these words, God demands of the Christian theologian that he teach the entire Scriptural content, adding nothing and taking away nothing. Nevertheless the distinction of which we here speak is fully Scriptural and serves an excellent purpose. It helps the Christian theologian to recognize and distinguish those doctrines of God's Word which "are so necessary to be known that, when they are not known, the *foundation* of faith is not savingly apprehended or retained." (Hollaz.) In other words, the fundamental doctrines are those "which cannot be denied consistently with faith and salvation because they are the very foundation of the Christian faith." (Quenstedt.) In order that we may understand this, we must remember that not everything which Holy Scripture teaches is the object or foundation of justifying and saving faith. For instance, we are not saved by believing that David was king or that the Pope at Rome is the great Antichrist. However, the Christian theologian does not for that reason deny these facts, for they are based upon God's infallible Word. But these truths which the theologian accepts as such are non-fundamental as far as saving faith is concerned. Saving faith is faith in the forgiveness of sin through the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, or trust in God's justification of a sinner without the works of the Law, for Christ's sake. That is the essence of the Christian religion, the foundation on which the entire Christian hope is built. Of this essence and foundation nothing can be removed without destroying the whole

Christian religion. Any one who denies even a particle of this fundamental doctrine is outside the pale of the Christian Church. Luther says very correctly: "This doctrine [of justification by faith] is the head and corner-stone, which alone begets, nourishes, builds up, preserves, and protects the Church, and without this doctrine the Church of God cannot exist one hour." (St. Louis Ed., XIV, 168.) Again: "As many in the world as deny it [justification by faith] are either Jews, or Turks, or papists, or heretics." (St. Louis Ed., IX, 29.) Because of its paramount importance our Lutheran dogmaticians have called the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ's vicarious satisfaction "the most fundamental of all doctrines" (*omnium fundamentalissimum*).

The doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ's atonement, however, presupposes and includes other fundamental doctrines. These are —

1. The doctrine of sin and its consequences. All who deny the Scriptural doctrine of sin cannot have saving faith because saving faith is implicit trust in God's gracious forgiveness of sin. The true Christian believes that all his sins, both original and actual, are fully pardoned for Jesus' sake. In other words, he believes both the divine Law, which condemns sin, and the divine Gospel, which pardons sin. Both doctrines, the doctrine of sin and that of forgiveness of sin, are fundamental. This truth our Savior affirms when He says that "repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name among all nations," Luke 24, 47. According to Christ's direction the preaching of repentance for sin, or of contrition, must precede the preaching of forgiveness. Our divine Lord further illustrates this great truth by the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee, who did not believe the Scriptural doctrine of sin and who therefore did not regard himself as a sinner, could not be justified; in his opinion he had no need of justification and forgiveness. The publican, on the other hand, believed the fundamental doctrine of sin, declared himself guilty and lost, and, trusting in divine grace, received forgiveness through faith. In short, saving faith can exist only in a contrite heart, that is, in a heart which is terrified and sorry because of its sin. Is. 66, 2: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My Word." Is. 57, 15: "I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Ps. 34, 18: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Cp. Ps. 51, 16. 17; Luke 4, 18; Matt. 11, 28. Hence we rightly classify the doctrine of sin among the fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture.

2. The doctrine of the Person of Christ. The doctrine of the Person of Christ is fundamental because saving faith is trust in the divine-human Redeemer who died for the sins of the world. For this

reason the denial both of Christ's true deity and of His true humanity makes saving faith impossible. Our divine Lord very severely discountenanced the opinions of those who regarded Him as John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or as one of the prophets and required of His disciples that they believe in Him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Matt. 16, 13—17; cp. also 1 John 1, 1—4. Modern rationalistic theology, which denies the true deity of Christ and ascribes deity to Him only *honoris causa* (cp. Ritschl's declaration: "In our judgment we ascribe to Him the value of a God"), is not Christian, but Unitarian and so *extra ecclesiam;* that is to say, the doctrine of God which modern rationalistic theology inculcates is essentially paganistic, for it rejects the true God of the Bible. It is self-evident that true faith in the divine Christ must include also faith in the Triune God. In other words, the true Christian who believes in the deity of Christ believes also that the true God is none other than the *unus Deus,* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for without faith in the Father no one can believe in the Son, Matt. 16, 17; 11, 27; and again, without the Holy Ghost no one can call Jesus Lord, 1 Cor. 12, 3; Rom. 8, 15; John 16, 13—15. The Scriptural doctrine of the Holy Trinity is therefore as fundamental as is that of the deity of Christ. — However, also the doctrine of Christ's true humanity is fundamental; for the denial of Christ's substantial humanity (cp. the error of the Docetae) implies the denial of His actual suffering and death. Saving faith is trust in the vicarious atonement of the theanthropic Christ (*θεάνθρωπος*), John 1, 14—17: "The Word was made flesh; . . . and of His fulness have all we received grace for grace. . . . Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Hence we rightly classify among the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, of Christ's true deity, and of His true humanity.

3. The doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement. Saving faith is faith in Christ, not merely as a Teacher of the divine Law or as an Ensample of Virtue or as the "Ideal Man," as modernistic theology claims, but it is faith in Christ as "the Mediator between God and man," who has given His life as a ransom for many, and the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," 1 Tim. 2, 5. 6; Matt. 20, 28; Eph. 1, 7; John 1, 29. All who decline to put their trust in the vicarious satisfaction of Christ (Is. 53, 1—6) are obliged to trust for reconciliation and pardon in their own good works and thus sever themselves from the grace of God secured by Christ's substitutionary death, Gal. 5, 4. That is true of all who depart from the Scriptural doctrine of justification by grace through faith and reject the *sola gratia* and the *sola fide.* The Semi-Pelagianist, the Arminianist, and the synergist, if they consistently hold to their error, are as much *extra ecclesiam* as is the rationalist and the Modernist. The warning

of the Apology is well in place: "But most of those errors which our adversaries defend, overthrow faith, as their condemnation of the article concerning the remission of sins, in which we say that the remission of sins is received by faith. Likewise it is a manifest and pernicious error when the adversaries teach that men merit the remission of sins by love to God prior to grace. In the place of Christ they set up their works, orders, masses, just as the Jews, the heathen, and the Turks intend to be saved by their works." (Art. IV, 22.) If within those churches that teach the paganistic doctrine of work-righteousness individual persons still remain Christians, this is due to the paramount grace of God, as the Apology rightly reminds: "Therefore, even though Popes or some theologians and monks in the Church have taught us to seek remission of sins, grace, and righteousness through our own works and to invent new forms of worship, which have obscured the office of Christ and have made out of Christ, not a Propitiator and Justifier, but only a Legislator, *nevertheless the knowledge of Christ has always remained with some godly persons.*" (Art. III, 271.)

4. *The doctrine of the Word of God.* The Word of God, that is, the external Word of the holy Gospel, which Christ commanded His blessed apostles to preach and teach to all nations (Matt. 28, 19. 20; Mark 16, 15. 16) and which is set forth in Holy Scripture, is both the *object* and the *means* of saving faith. It is the object of saving faith because saving faith believes the Gospel, Mark 1, 15; Rom. 1, 1. 2; it is the means of saving faith, since saving faith is engendered only through the Gospel, Rom. 10, 17; 1, 16; John 17, 20; Jas. 1, 18. Every "faith" that is not produced through the Word of God is not faith, but a figment of the mind or fancy. Such faith Luther rightly styles "faith in the air." True, saving faith is always God-made, never man-made, 1 Tim. 6, 3. 1 Cor. 2, 1—5: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." For this reason the doctrine of the Word of God is likewise a fundamental doctrine. The penalty of the rejection of the Gospel is damnation, Mark 16, 15. 16.

5. *The doctrine of the resurrection.* Modern rationalistic theology discards the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection, denying both Christ's glorious resurrection and the resurrection of all the dead. In place of the resurrection it teaches the immortality of the soul. Holy Scripture, however, affirms that the denial of the resurrection involves the denial of the entire Gospel of Christ, 1 Cor. 15, 12—19. Those who deny the resurrection it unqualifiedly condemns as having made shipwreck of their faith and erred concerning the truth, 1 Tim. 1, 19. 20; 2 Tim. 2, 17. 18. Hymenaeus and Alexander, who denied the doctrine of the resurrection, were delivered by St. Paul "unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme." The denial of

the resurrection is therefore tantamount to blasphemy of Christ. It is for this reason that we classify the doctrine of the resurrection among the fundamentals of the Christian religion.

When we speak of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, we mean, of course, these doctrines as they are presented in Holy Scripture, not the dogmatic formulation of these teachings or the dogmas of the Church. Dogmas may be faulty; the teachings of Holy Scripture are infallible. Nevertheless it must be borne in mind that, whenever the doctrines of Holy Scripture have been formulated correctly, the rejection of such dogmas or creeds is nothing less than the rejection of Holy Scripture itself. Thus Modernists who reject the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed or the Athanasian Creed reject the very Word of God, because the doctrines expounded and defended in these confessions are the teachings of Holy Scripture.

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(To be continued.)

Schreibfehler in den Büchern Samuels.

Daß der hebräische und griechische Text der Heiligen Schrift, wie wir ihn in unsern jetzigen Bibelausgaben vor uns haben, das inspirierte Wort Gottes ist, und zwar auf Grund wörtlicher Eingebung, das steht für jeden lutherischen Theologen von vornherein fest. Daß aber diese Inspiration auch die massoretischen Punkte mit einschließe, wie man in reformierten Kreisen zuerst behauptete, und daß sie auch alle Schreibfehler bis auf diesen Tag ausschließe, das sind Annahmen, die sich einfach nicht mit den uns vorliegenden Tatsachen vereinbaren lassen. Die Männer, die im Laufe der Jahrhunderte die Abschriften der heiligen Bücher besorgten, waren gewöhnliche, oft sogar verhältnismäßig ungelehrte Menschen, die darum auch leicht irren konnten, besonders in einem rein menschlichen und darum zum Teil mechanischen Unternehmen, wie es das Abschreiben von Texten nun einmal ist. Wollten wir die Möglichkeit und das tatsächliche Vorhandensein von Schreibfehlern leugnen, so würden wir gelegentlich mit der Schwierigkeit von Scheinwidersprüchen zu rechnen haben.

Diese Tatsachen kennen wir, und mit ihnen rechnen wir, indem wir die Grundsätze einer konservativen Hermeneutik zur Anwendung bringen. Es ist nämlich ein gewaltiger Unterschied zwischen wirklicher, vernünftiger Textkritik und der in manchen Kreisen noch heute üblichen Konjekturalkritik zu beachten. Erstere geht rein objektiv zu Werke, indem sie sich lediglich bemüht, „über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Textes sich Gewißheit zu verschaffen" (Fürbringer); letztere geht mit subjektivem Vorurteil an die Zerstückelung des Textes, und zwar meistens im Interesse der höheren Kritik.