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Romanism, Calvinism, and Lutheranism on the Authority of Scripture

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den großen Hirten der Schafe durch das Blut des ewigen Testaments, unsern Herrn Jesum, der mache euch fertig in allem guten Werk, zu tun seinen Willen, und schaffe in euch, was vor ihm gefällig ist, durch Jesum Christum, welchem sei Ehre von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit!"

S. Fürbringer

Romanism, Calvinism, and Lutheranism on the Authority of Scripture

The desire for a large Pan-Protestant union has endeavored to minimize the theological differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism. True, Luther and Calvin had many things in common, e.g., the rejection of Pelagianism and the Roman hierarchical system. But only too often the divergent conceptions of sin and grace, of faith and works, of atonement and justification, of repentance and sanctification, are viewed only as minor differences. P. Tschackert: *"In der Hitze des theologischen Streites [Lutheranism vs. Calvinism] hatte man den Nachdruck auf das Trennende gelegt und das Gemeinsame zuruecktreten lassen. . . . Es gibt aber eine alle Unterschiede ueberwiegende geistige Einheit des Protestantismus."* (*Entstehung der luth. u. ref. Kirchenlehre*, 626. Cf. also Klotzsche, *Chr. Symb.*, 194.) Admittedly the starting-point of Calvin's theological system is his theory concerning the absolute sovereignty of God. B. B. Warfield (*Studies in Theology*, 132) and L. Boettner (*Doctrine of Predestination*, 1. 2. 15) claim that also Luther put the doctrine of predestination into the center of his theology. But there is a fundamental difference between Lutheranism and Calvinism; the one excludes the other. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper is by no means the only divisive factor between the two churches. Wherever the two systems have met, there has been bitter warfare, not merely in one or the other doctrine, but in principle, in spirit. Yes, we can go even a step farther—many of the doctrines and principles which separate Calvinism from Lutheranism are very closely related to Romanism. Outwardly, especially in the cultus and in church government, there is a marked dissimilarity between the Roman and Calvinistic churches. But in a number of fundamental doctrines Calvinism has remained very close to Romanism.¹⁾

1) Professor Koehler: *"Alle die Eigentuemlichkeiten, die Calvin von Luther unterscheiden, stehen in organischem Zusammenhange zueinander und sind nach evangelischem Urteil dem Katholizismus naeher verwandt als dem Luthertum. . . . Er hat mit Rom die Gesetzlichkeit, die Aeusserlichkeit, die Vermischung von Staat und Kirche gemein. Das Luthertum ist nicht etwa ein Mittelglied zwischen Rom und Calvinismus, sondern eine von beiden durchaus verschiedene Auffassung vom Weg zur Seligkeit."* (*Kirchengeschichte*, 192. Cf. C. T. M., IV, 255 ff.; Raun, "Church Discipline of Luther and Calvin," *Lutheran Ch. Quart.*, 1933, January; W. Walther, *Lehrb. d. Symb.*, 282 f.)

Our topic is not an academic question, but one of practical significance to the Lutheran minister. 1) This is an age of religious indifference. Comparative Symbolics is viewed by many as the theological discipline which should bring out the consensus, rather than the dissensus, among the various churches. The late Soederblom: "The pure light of the divine truth is refracted and appears in the divisions of Christ's Church in many colors, which are unlike one another. . . . They are all needed to form the pure and perfect light." (*Christian Fellowship*, 26.) All who are indifferent over against the Calvinistic leaven should take to heart Selnecker's words: "*Der Zwinglianismus und Calvinismus stecket so voller Irrtum, Greuel und Laesterung in gar vielen, wo nicht in allen, Hauptpunkten des christlichen Glaubens, dass ein gottesfuerchtig Herz dafuer erschrecken muss.*" (Appendix zu Hutters "Calvinista," 1615, p. 300.) 2) The potential mission-material of the modern pastor—whether it at one time belonged to a sectarian church or not—has to some extent come under the influence of Calvin's theological system. Calvinism has affected the thought-life of the American people to a greater extent than is commonly admitted.²⁾ The Lutheran pastor should be acquainted with the viewpoints of the people whom he hopes to win for Christ. The purpose of this article, then, is to show the wide cleavage between Lutheranism on the one hand and Romanism and Calvinism on the other.

I.

Both the Papacy and Calvinism are enthusiastic³⁾ and rationalistic, while the formal principle of Lutheranism is sola Scriptura.

2) Ph. Schaff: "Calvin belongs to the small number of men who have exerted a molding influence . . . not only upon the Church, but indirectly also upon the political, moral, and social life. . . . He may be called in some sense the spiritual father of New England and the American Republic. Calvinism, in its various modifications and applications, was the controlling agent in the early history of our leading colonies." (*Creeds of Christendom*, I, 445, n.) Tschackert: "*Der Hauptinhalt seiner [Calvins] gesamten Theologie ist in seiner 'Institutio' niedergelegt. Einzigartig in der Reformationsgeschichte durch ihre innere Kraft, hat sie auf Jahrhunderte das theologische Denken der reformierten Kirche beherrscht und uebt ihren Einfluss noch heute aus.*" (L. c., 390.) Carl Zollmann, in *American Church Law*, shows that "Christianity has been declared to be the power which directs the operation of our judicial system" and that "the spirit of Christianity has infused itself into, and has humanized, our law." (Quoted in *C. T. M.*, IV, 251.) Consult Webster's Dictionary s. v. faith, hope, reprobation, etc., showing Calvinistic influence on the English language.

3) Enthusiasm (ἐν θῆσι) is the state where one is possessed of his god and has become the tool and mouthpiece of the supposed deity. Lutheran dogmaticians use this term to describe the dream "that God draws men without all means, without hearing the divine Word, and the like." (*Trigl.*, 910, § 80; 138, §§ 63. 64.) "Enthusiasm" and "enthusiastic" are used throughout this article in the sense of *Schwaermerei* and *schwaermerisch*.

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1) Rome is *enthusiastic* and *rationalistic*. Lutherans say: *Sola Scriptura!* Rome retorts: *Sola Roma! Solus Papa! Roma locuta, causa finita.* Rome's enthusiasm is evident. The Smalcald Articles say: "The Papacy is nothing but sheer enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart, and whatsoever he decides and commands within his Church is spirit and right, even though it is above, and contrary to, Scripture and the spoken word." (Trigl., 495, § 4.) In spite of the oft-repeated claim in recent years that they hold the Bible in high regard, the Romanists have not receded from their historic antagonism to the Word of God, but place their "traditions," i. e., their enthusiastic dreams, above the Bible. (Cf. *Popular Symbolics*, 1934, § 219.) In the final analysis not the Word of God, but the "traditions of the fathers," i. e., "doctrines of men," are the *formal principle* of Roman theology. Why do Romanists "hold the Bible in high regard"? Because it is the only norm of faith? Father Hull of the Paulist Press and Catholic Truth Society says: Catholics "regard the Bible as a treasure of unique value, first, because of the vivid pictures of Christ's life and character; secondly, because of the right spiritual suggestiveness of its writings; thirdly, as a precious storehouse of dogmatic and moral instruction; fourthly, as an historic witness of the claims of the Catholic Church. Still Catholics consider that the Bible was never intended for the sole and adequate rule of faith, partly because it was not a sufficiently exhaustive account of all of Christ's teaching, partly because its expressions of doctrine are often ambiguous and require authoritative interpretation." (Weber, *Religions and Philosophies in the U. S.*, p. 57.) In the interest of its formal principle Rome has perverted the doctrine of the Church, teaching that the *essence* of the Church is the *teaching office*. Wilmers: "Christ founded the Church by creating an office and authority." (*Kurzgefasstes Handbuch d. kath. Rel.*, 83. 89.) Father Hull: "The Church's *essential constitution* [italics our own] lay in the existence of that teaching body authorized and guaranteed by Christ. . . . And it is natural to suppose that the Church should always continue to exist according to its original constitution." (Weber, *l. c.*, 59.) The teaching office had been considered infallible long before 1870. Appealing to 1 Tim. 5, 16, the Douay Bible in its footnotes claims that the Church of the living God, i. e., the teaching office, "can never uphold error nor bring corruption, superstition, or idolatry." Although Rome claimed infallibility for the "teaching office," it was only too apparent that councils had erred. Rome also feared that a minority of bishops might "apprehend the truth more correctly" than a majority, and therefore the voice of the teaching office is now confined to the Pope.

This coarse enthusiasm is defended by Roman apologetes by the enthusiastic assertion that the Holy Spirit never intended the New Testament to be the norm of faith and morals, that Christ Himself did not write, and that He sent His apostles to *preach*, not to write. Bellarmine (1542—1620) states that the New Testament epistles were written to meet certain local conditions. Andrada, the official interpreter of the decrees of the Council of Trent, stated that the New Testament books were only "notes" to aid the apostles' memory. On the basis of Jer. 31, 33 he argues that the chief difference between the Old and New Testaments consists in this, that the Old was written on stone and paper while the New was written almost entirely into the heart of the Church, i. e., the teaching office. The Council of Trent definitely fixed Roman doctrine by decreeing: "The truth and the discipline are contained in the written books and the *unwritten traditions*." (Sess. IV.) ⁴ This is indeed "sheer enthusiasm."

Rome, however, is enthusiastic even when it uses the Scripture. The Pope approaches the Bible with preconceived notions, and he has employed every possible safeguard, so that "no one shall presume to interpret the Scriptures contrary to that sense which Holy Mother Church — whose it is to judge the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures — hath held and doth hold." (Council of Trent, Sess. IV.) In the eyes of the Romanist the Bible is a lump of modeling-clay, "*eine waechserne Nase*," as Chemnitz says. A Catholic professor of interpretation must repeatedly take a solemn vow that he will explain the Bible only in the sense of the Church, i. e., the Pope, and the laity is permitted to read only such editions of the Vulgate as have been approved. The footnotes in the Douay Version (1582—1609) are the papistically darkened glasses through which the papists are permitted to read God's

4) The traditions are "unwritten" so far as they were not written by the apostles. By traditions the Romanists understand the records of the church councils, any suitable inscription, the sentences of the "fathers," private letters, etc. E. Preuss, *Die Unbefleckte Empfaengnis*, shows that forged letters and documents advocating the doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception were planted in an unfrequented cloister and then "accidentally found" (84 ff.). Thus any error can finally be elevated from a *pia sententia* to an official doctrine, e. g., the assumption of Mary, when sufficient traditions have been found in support of the error. Of course, the Pope will await the proper moment; for "the policy of the Church is to be cautious and slow in taking novel views, such as tend to shock and alarm the simple-minded, until such views have been firmly established by evidence." (Father Hull, l. c., 60.) How unreliable the bases are on which the infallibility of the Pope is buildied is proved by Janus, *Der Papst und das Konzil*, 1869, *passim*. The so-called "decretals of Isidore," about 845, are proved to be spurious, pp. 100 ff. The classic on this entire topic still is Chemnitz's *Examen Trid. Conc.*, Preuss ed., Berlin, 1861, pp. 1—99. This locus was translated into German by C. A. Frank, St. Louis, 1875.

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Word.⁵⁾ That is "sheer enthusiasm." It is largely the enthusiastic spirit which has prompted Rome to recognize only the Vulgate, inclusive of the Apocryphal Books. This enthusiastic device is necessary to maintain the superstitious belief concerning Mary (Gen. 3, 17), the doctrine that matrimony is a sacrament (Eph. 5, 32), the arrogant assumption of withholding the cup from the laity (1 Cor. 4, 1: *Dispensatores sumus*), the expiatory power of good works (Tob. 4, 11 f.), the intercession of the angels and saints (Tob. 12, 12), the intercessory prayers for the dead (2 Macc. 12, 44 ff.), etc. No wonder, then, that Cardinal Newman claims that the unauthorized Protestant Bibles are the stronghold of heresy. (See Froude, *Council of Trent*, 56.)

Rome's enthusiasm manifests itself also in the doctrine of the means of grace. Rome refuses to recognize the Word as a *means* of grace. According to Trent only the Sacraments are the vehicles of grace, "through which all true justice either begins or, being begun, is increased or, being lost, is repaired." (Sess. VII.) This evidently denies the collative and effective power to the Word. In Roman text-books of dogmatics and in the popular catechisms the Gospel is not treated among the means of grace. Melancthon reminds his readers in the Apology that in many countries there was no preaching whatsoever except during Lent. (*Trigl.*, 326, 42.) The Council of Trent yielded to the demand for sermons by instructing the bishops to make provisions for preaching services. (Sess. XXIV, chap. IV.) But to the present day the faithful are under *obligation* to attend the Mass, while they are only *encouraged* to attend the preaching services. (Cf. W. Walther, *Symbolik*, 90.) If Rome considered the Word a means of grace, it would surely have rescinded the infamous bull *Unigenitus* (1713), which was directed against the Jansenist father Quesnel and expressly condemned the proposition that the reading of the Bible must be free to all. The unrestricted reading of the Bible is still considered a dangerous practise. (Wilmers, I, 212. Cf. *Pop. Symb.*, 154 ff.) Neither does Rome consider the Sacraments means of *grace*. Rome does not accept the Scriptural definition of the word *grace* as the

5) The Douay Version comments on Rom. 3, 28 as follows: Only the faith which embraces hope, love, repentance, and the use of the Sacraments will save. The works which are excluded from justification are the works done according to the law of nature or that of Moses. The pontifical Confutation (the Romanists' answer to the Augustana, reprinted in Luther, St. Louis, XVI, 1026 ff.) is a fair sample of Rome's misuse of the Scriptures. Melancthon's Apology takes occasion to answer Rome's allegorical and enthusiastic misuse of God's Word. A good sample of Rome's exegetical methods was quoted in *Harper's Magazine*, May, 1933, p. 426: the parable of the Sower is made to teach that wedlock brings fruit thirtyfold, but maidenhood an hundredfold. "By how many degrees does the marrying maiden fall downward?"

favor of God, but defines it as a quality, a virtue, which is infused into man whereby he is able to do good and justify himself. The Sacraments are said to convey this "justifying grace" *ex opere operato*, "without a good disposition on the part of the one using it, i. e., without faith in Christ." (*Trigl.*, 259, 25; 312, 18.) This is all "sheer enthusiasm."

Enthusiasm engenders *rationalism*, and *vice versa*. The Pope shows his rationalistic tendencies not only by the scholastic arguments in support of enthusiastic doctrines,⁶⁾ but chiefly by developing a theological system that appeals to human reason. The material principle of Roman theology, the doctrine of work-righteousness, "is a doctrine of reason; . . . and because it is according to reason and is altogether occupied with outward works, can be understood." (*Apology, Trigl.*, 203, 167 f.) Reason cannot comprehend the depth of human corruption (cf. *Smalc. Art.*; *Trigl.*, 476, 3), but it can understand Rome's attempt to view sin as individual transgressions and its philosophical distinction between venial and mortal sins. It can comprehend Rome's teaching that God looks upon an individual sin as merely an infraction of a particular commandment and not a transgression of the whole Law and that in the case of mortal sins a satisfaction, or punishment, commensurate with the transgression must be imposed. Human reason is highly flattered by Rome's doctrine that man is able to render a satisfactory atonement for the individual sins. Even the dream of purgatory is not repulsive to the reason of natural man. It seems "reasonable" to believe that God will give man an opportunity after death to atone for his sins, and therefore we need not be surprised that we find the doctrine of purgatory in its essential phases in the writings of pagan philosophers, particularly Plato. (Cf. Chemnitz, l. c., 603 f.) Rome's system is rationalistic, that is, pagan. (W. Walther, l. c., 166 ff.) — Fully recognizing the enthusiastic and rationalistic tendencies of Rome, Luther said in his farewell words at Smalcald, when he was at the point of death: "*Deus vos impleat odio papae!*" And in the Smalcald Articles he had written: "Just as little as we can worship the devil as Lord and God, can we endure his apostle, the Pope. For to lie and to kill and to destroy body and soul eternally, that is wherein his papal government really consists." (*Trigl.*, 475, § 14. Cf. also Luther, *St. L.*, XIX, 1247.)

6) To convince the people that Mary is worthy of the highest honors, the sermons on the festival of Mary's Assumption usually portray how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost gave Mary one half of their combined glory, so that she now possesses more glory (one half) than the individual persons in the Trinity (one-sixth). (W. Walther, l. c., 126. *Pop. Symb.*, Index, s. v. Rationalism.)

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2) Reformed theology claims that it is more consistent in its Biblical interpretation and more loyal to Scripture than Lutheranism. Calvin states: "Nothing ought to be admitted in the Church as the Word of God but what is contained in the writings of the prophets and apostles . . . and that it behooves ministers strictly to adhere to the doctrine to which God has made all subject" (*Institutes*, IV, VIII, 8. 9.) Calvin stated on his death-bed that he never knowingly twisted a single passage of Scripture. He is indeed considered an outstanding exegete (cf. C. T. M., IV, 257; Hengstenberg, *Christol. d. a. T.*, quotes him very often); the Calvinistic confessions express their high regard for the Scriptures; yet Calvinistic theology is largely enthusiastic and rationalistic. In this point Calvinism manifests a marked similarity to Rome, while it differs fundamentally from Lutheranism. (Pieper, *Dogm.*, I, 25; III, 373; Philippi, *Symb.*, 418.)

Rome's enthusiasm manifests itself in the dogma that the "teaching office" fixes the Scriptural canon. Calvin vigorously condemns Rome's claim that the Scriptures must be accepted on human authority. (*Institutes*, I, VII, 1.) Paradoxical as it may appear, Calvin virtually makes the same enthusiastic claim as Rome by assigning to an "inner spirit" the office of fixing the sacred canon. In Rome the Bible is accepted as God's Word by authority of the "Church," in Geneva by the individual believer's subjective conviction.

True, Calvin states that the Bible must be accepted solely because the Spirit testifies to its truth. "Only in the Scriptures has the Lord been pleased to preserve His truth. . . . The same Spirit who spake by the mouths of the prophets should penetrate into our hearts to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely entrusted to them." (*Institutes*, I, IX, 1.) According to Calvin the "testimony of the Spirit" confirms the divine character of the Bible in all its parts. On the basis of 1 Cor. 2, 4. 5 a Lutheran would at once subscribe to Calvin's statement if it were not apparent that Calvin's "testimony of the Spirit" is a subjective conviction wrought immediate. Like Zwingli (cf. *Fidei Ratio*; Luther, St. Louis, XX, 1557) Calvin distinguishes between an external and an inner word. (Cf. *Institutes*, III, XXI, 7; III, XXIV, 8.) He admonishes us to hear the minister, but adds the significant statement "as a proof of our obedience. . . . The power of God is not confined to external means." (IV, I, 5.) Again: "The Word does not impart any benefit unless it is accompanied by the Holy Spirit to open our mind and heart and render us capable of receiving its testimony." (IV, XIV, 17.) Thus Calvin's "testimony of the Spirit" is not the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* wrought through the very words of Scripture and through it alone

(cf. Pieper, *Dogm.*, I, 372 ff.), but it is a subjective feeling that the Bible is God's Word. On the basis of this it seems that the following statement of Calvin does not contain Scripture truth, but enthusiasm: "The Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary that the same Spirit who spake by the prophets should penetrate into our hearts. . . . They who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit feel an entire acquiescence in the Scriptures. . . . It is such a persuasion as cannot be produced but by a revelation from heaven." (*Institutes*, I, IX, 1.) Thus it follows that the Calvinist like the Romanist accepts the Bible as God's Word on human authority. And that is "sheer enthusiasm."⁷

Calvin's enthusiasm (*Schwaermerei*) is evident furthermore in his approach to, and use of, the Scriptures. Like Rome he approaches the Bible with preconceived notions. It is quite apparent from the *Institutes* that the doctrine of justification was not Calvin's material principle. On the contrary, we meet with a one-sided emphasis of the doctrine that everything must be done for the glorification of God. The *Geneva Catechism*, published by Calvin in 1545, treats the chief parts from the basic conception that it is man's duty throughout his life to glorify God. In the *Institutes* Calvin's basic principle becomes evident particularly in the treatise on the Church, which comprises about one half of the entire *Institutes*. According to Calvin the outstanding function of the ministry is to interpret the will of God in such a manner that the glory of God will be reflected in the lives of men. (IV, I, 5.) In order that the laws and commandments of the Bible may be fulfilled by men to the glory of God (II, VIII, 51), Calvin demands of men that they "honor the Church" (IV, I, 7), obey the ruling officers (IV, III, 3), and accept the interpretation of the pastors (4). His theocratic form of church government in Geneva manifests clearly that he approached the Bible with the thought that all of its injunction must be fulfilled literally. Calvin does not admit

7) Tschackert states very correctly: "*Im Gegensatz zur katholischen Anschauung, dass die Bibel ihre Autoritaet erst der Kirche verdanke, lehrt Calvin ein UNMITTELBARES inneres goettliches Zeugnis, welches uns eine ueber alle menschlichen Schluesse erhabene Gewissheit von der Autoritaet der Heiligen Schrift gibt.*" (*Entstehung d. luth. u. ref. Kirchenlehre*, 391.) — The Barthians, moderate Calvinists, are more consistent than Calvin. They believe that "the Word of the Bible is the Word of God to us only in so far as God's Spirit opens our ears, so that we can hear His voice in the words of the apostles." (E. Brunner, *The Word and the World*, 89.) The Barthian believes that only that message is the infallible Word which the Holy Spirit brings home to the believer. This leads to "vast subjectivity, in which each man decides for himself just what portion of Scripture has authority for him." (Rolston, *A Conservative Looks to Barth and Brunner*, 1933, 70–101.)

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a real difference between the Old and the New Testament; there is, so he claims, a difference as to administration, but not as to the content. (II, X, 2.) He does not believe that the Mosaic Law has been fully abrogated, but that only its power of binding the consciences has been removed by Christ. (II, VII, 15.) Somehow the Ceremonial Law, e. g., Deut. 22, 5, must be observed also in the New Testament, the "Second" and the "Fourth" Commandment must be kept by Christians today, and the injunctions concerning the punishment of heretics must be fulfilled literally today, etc.⁸⁾ Approaching the Bible with such preconceived notions, more specifically with a deep-seated legalistic attitude, is "sheer enthusiasm," *Schwaermerei*. Rome places the traditions of the Fathers above Scripture; Calvin, his literalistic interpretations. In Rome the Pontiff usurps the power to expound the Bible and to give minute instructions concerning "faith and morals"; in Geneva the Roman Pontiff has been supplanted by a "paper pope."⁹⁾

Rome's error that the Sacraments are efficacious *ex opere operato* and the concomitant error that the Gospel does not convey the divine "grace" deny the Scriptural truth that the Gospel and the Sacraments are means of *grace*. Calvin condemns both errors and admonishes men to use the Word diligently and to approach the Sacraments in faith. Nevertheless he also denies that the Word and the Sacraments are the *means* of grace. (Cf. *Popular Symbolics*, p. 4.) True, he states that preaching is the ordinary economy which God employs in converting man (IV, XVI, 19); further-

8) The literalistic interpretation of the Bible by Calvin is treated by W. Walther, *Lehrbuch der Symbolik*, 217. 224. 277; G. Harkness, *Calvin, the Man and His Ethic*, 1931, pp. 63—65; Nik. Paulus, *Protestantismus und Toleranz im 16. Jahrhundert*, 1911, pp. 228—275. Rudelbach, in *Reformation, Luthertum und Union*, pp. 205 ff., shows that Calvin makes no distinction between the Old and the New Testament by quoting Calvin to the effect that Baptism has taken the place of Circumcision, that the Lord's Supper has been instituted in the place of the Passover, etc.—Literalism is largely responsible for the division in the Reformed Church, one group holding that the episcopal, another, that the congregational, and another, that the presbyterian form of government belongs to the *esse* of the Church. Literalism is very largely responsible for the legalistic attitude which the majority of Reformed churches have taken concerning the Sabbath, tithing, the cultus, etc., or for the ludicrous interpretations of many Scripture-passages in the interest of a millennium. A literalistic interpretation of Matt. 10, 27 prompted the people of Zurich to preach from the roofs; of Acts 2, 46 motivates the Plymouth Brethren never to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a church; of Matt. 19, 21 moves the Metropolitan Church Association to forbid its ministers to accept a regular salary.

9) "For the Roman imperialism Calvin simply substitutes a Scriptural imperialism. The Bible Church is the ultimate and final authority over the regenerate man. . . . This is simply Roman Catholicism without the name Roman." (T. C. Hall, *History of Ethics within Organized Christianity*, 1910, 519 f.)

more, that the authoritative preaching office, or the Church, the Sacraments, and the civil government have been appointed by God as external means of grace or aids. (IV, I, 1.) But he does not wish to be understood as though he taught that the Word and the Sacraments are the appointed means whereby (*per*) the Holy Spirit is given. That Calvin entertains the Zwinglian view concerning the Word and the Sacraments is evident from two Calvinian premises. 1) The error of a double election compels Calvin to separate the Spirit from the outward Word. Calvin makes a definite distinction between the Word when preached to the reprobate, i. e., "the external call without the internal efficacy of grace" (III, XXI, 7), and "the special call, . . . when, by the inward illumination of His Spirit, God causes the Word to sink into their [the elects'] heart." (III, XXIV, 8.) Again: "When the apostle makes hearing the source of faith, he only describes the ordinary economy, . . . but does not preclude His [God's] employment of any other method, which He has certainly employed in the calling of many to whom He has given the true knowledge of Himself in an internal manner, by the illumination of His Spirit without the intervention of any preaching." (IV, XVI, 19.) 2) A definite trend of mysticism and asceticism is noticeable in Calvin's theology. He does not believe that a direct relation between the corporeal and the spiritual, between the finite and the infinite, between the human and the divine, is possible. This view becomes apparent not only in his denial of the personal union of Christ, not only in his ascetic views concerning our bodies, our entire life, the Christians' temporal possession, but also in his denial of the Scriptural doctrine concerning the means of grace. According to Calvin the Spirit of God cannot work upon our spirits through creatures; the deep chasm between the infinite God and finite man cannot be bridged by means. Joachim Westphal was correct when he showed clearly during the Crypto-Calvinistic controversy that in spite of his Melanchthonian terminology Calvin was not a Lutheran, but a Zwinglian in the doctrine of the Sacraments. (Cf. *Trigl.*, Hist. Introd., 181.) When Calvin speaks of the Sacraments as signs or pledges of God's grace, he does not think of them as the "visible Word," but as the "seal of a diploma," as aids which God has appointed in compassion on our weakness. According to Calvin the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are not the means through which faith is engendered, "as though there were a secret power annexed and attached to the Sacraments, . . . whereas the only office assigned to them by God is to testify and confirm His benevolence towards us." The Word and the Sacraments do not create faith, but presuppose faith, "just as the mouth of the vessel must be open if it is to receive the oil." The majestic God does not

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require external means; "for God accomplishes within that which the minister represents by the external act that we may not attribute to a mortal man what God challenges exclusively for Himself." (IV, XIV, 9—11. 17.) When Calvin speaks of the Sacraments as the "visible Word," he has in mind a twofold function, namely, that they seal by an outward sign God's benevolence toward us which is already in our conscience and that they are the visible evidence and public testimony of the believer's piety. (IV, XIV, 1.) There is not a word in Calvin's *Institutes* which can be interpreted as teaching that the Sacraments have collative and effective power. Calvin predicates the institution of Sacraments on the fact that man finds it difficult to understand spiritual things and that "God therefore accommodates Himself to our capacity, condescending to lead us to Himself even by these earthly elements and in the flesh itself presents to us a mirror of spiritual blessings." (IV, XIV, 3.) And this, too, is "sheer enthusiasm." Thus both Rome and Calvinism stand charged with enthusiasm.

Rationalism and enthusiasm go hand in hand. Human reason has painted the Calvinistic picture of God's decreeing the reprobation of one part of mankind; has invented the anti-Scriptural doctrine of irresistible grace and a limited atonement; has denied the personal union of Christ; has developed an anthropology and cosmology which is foreign to the Bible. (Cf. Pieper, *Chr. Dogm.*, III, 377.) Human reason speaks the final word in Calvinism. We find the same situation in Roman theology.

The results of enthusiasm and rationalism are evident in both churches. Enthusiasm develops a theology of doubt. Rome teaches that no one can be certain of his "justification" and of his preservation in faith (unless he has had a special revelation). (*Trid. Conc.*, Sess. VI, chap. IX, and Canons XV, XVI.) Calvinism bases the assurance of salvation on a subjective feeling which finds expression in the Calvinistic axiom "Once in grace, always in grace." Thus neither Rome nor Calvinism has an objective foundation upon which the believer's faith can rest securely. Rationalism leads to work-righteousness, to unionism, to unbelief. And we can find these results in some form both in Romanism and in Calvinism.

3) Wherever Lutheran Scriptural theology has met Catholicism or Calvinism, there has been bitter warfare. The absolute and final authority of the Holy Scriptures was the focal point of Luther's controversy with Rome. That was the trumpet-blast in his first skirmish with Rome when he declared on October 31, 1517: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says." *Sola Scriptura* was the battering-ram which he used in storming the "three walls" of Roman theology. (*An den christlichen Adel*, in 1520.) "Thus it is written," this was the firm ground on which he stood

in the controversy with the Sacramentarians. The difference between Luther and Zwinglians centered not in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but in their attitude over against the Bible. Although the doctrine of the absolute authority of the Scripture was the focal point of Luther's controversies with Romanists and Sacramentarians, yet the Lutheran Confessions do not contain an article which treats this doctrine *ex professo*. This need not disturb us; for "*sola Scriptura*" is like the *motif* of a symphony which recurs in many and beautiful variations throughout the Symbolical Books. "The Scriptures alone" is the formal principle of the Lutheran Church and was duly emphasized by the noble confessors at Augsburg over against Romanists and Enthusiasts down to the authors of, and subscribers to, the Formula of Concord over against the Crypto-Romanists and Crypto-Calvinists. When the Romanists make their preposterous claim that the Pope, the bishops, and the church councils establish doctrines, we answer with our Confessions: "The Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard according to which, as the only touchstone, all dogmas shall and must be discerned." (*Trigl.*, 778, 7; cf. 776, 1; 467, 15; 38, 8.) "I shall not deviate one finger's breadth from the mouth of Him who said, 'This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him,'" thus we silence the rationalizations of Anabaptists, Zwinglians, Schwenkfeldians, Calvinists, etc. True, also the Lutheran's reason wishes to assert itself. But we bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of God's Word, because "everything for which we have . . . certain, clear testimonies in the Scriptures we must simply believe and in no way argue against it." (*Trigl.*, 1033, 53; cf. also 476, 3; 490, 41.) This attitude towards God's revealed Word is manifest particularly in the Formula of Concord, VII. (*Trigl.*, 988, 50; 1008, 106.) Lutherans do not feel called upon to harmonize seeming contradictions in Scripture, but believe, confess, defend, and adhere to, the teachings of the Bible. (*Trigl.*, 1078, 52 ff.) They consider the mysteries of God's Word as opportunities to exercise their faith. (Luther, St. L., XVIII, 1716.)¹⁰⁾

Rome denies the *vis effectiva* of the Word, believing that the Sacraments are efficacious *ex opere operato*; the Sacramentarians deny that the Spirit works either through the Word or the Sacraments. The Lutheran Confessions declare again and again that

10) Luther was assailed by fierce doubts in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and writes: "*Das bekenne ich, wo Dr. Carlstadt oder jemand anders vor fuef Jahren mich haette moecht' berichten, dass im Sakrament nichts denn Brot und Wein waere, der haette mir einen grossen Dienst getan. Ich habe wohl so harte Anfechtung da erlitten und mich GERUNGEN UND GEZWUNGEN, dass ich gerne heraus waere. . . . Aber ich bin gefangen; der Text steht zu gewaltig da und will sich mit Worten nicht lassen aus dem Sinn reissen.*" (St. L., XV, 2050.)

God will not give His Spirit except through the Word, i. e., through the Gospel and the Sacraments, or the "visible" Word. (Cf. *Trigl.*, 494, 4; 606, 91; 732, 7. 8; 1084, 71; etc.) Word and Sacraments are the means whereby both the soul and the body are saved; for whenever the soul is saved, there the body, too, which can and does apprehend the elements, will live forever. (*Trigl.*, 742, 44 ff.; 768, 68. *Luther's Works*, St. L., XX, 831.)

Rome and Calvin approach the Scriptures with a material principle which is not found in the Scriptures, but which is superimposed on them. Because the Lutheran's formal principle is *sola Scriptura*, his material principle must be the doctrine of justification, *sola gratia*. This article permeates Scripture and therefore directs and controls all true theological thinking. Every teaching which is not brought into proper relation with the article of justification is *eo ipso* false. The true theological perspective can be maintained only if theology centers in justification.¹¹⁾ According to the Lutheran Confessions the Gospel is God's gracious revelation to man, offering, containing, conveying to, and working in, him the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. (*Trigl.*, 995, 62; 792, 6; etc.) Luther had been taught to read the Bible in such a manner as to find in the word *righteousness* nothing but his own righteousness, which must be procured through strict observance of his monastic order's regulations. At last the Holy Spirit removed these "Roman" glasses through the Gospel, and Luther learned that only *aliena iustitia* avails in the sight of God. "And now," says Luther (in the preface to the 1545 edition of his works), "I knew that I was born anew and that I had found a wide and open door to paradise itself. Now the dear Holy Scriptures appeared entirely differently to me." (St. L., XIV, 446 f.)

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Sermon Study on 1 John 4, 9—11

Two facts must strike every careful reader of the First Epistle of John. The one is that, in appealing to his readers to practise Christian love, he is not satisfied with a bare demand, a simple exhortation. Each of the three admonitions (chap. 3, 9—11; 3, 10—18; 4, 7—5, 2), as they grow in length, is in increasing measure saturated with indoctrination in the fundamentals of the Christian faith, the doctrines of the Trinity, of the deity of Christ, of the vicarious atonement. Moreover, each one is preceded by, and the

11) Luther: "In meinem Herzen herrscht allein dieser Artikel, naemlich der Glaube an Christum, aus welchem, durch welchen zu welchem bei Tag und bei Nacht alle meine theologischen Gedanken fließen und zurueckfließen." (St. L., IX, 8; Vorrede zum Galaterbrief.)