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## The Means of Grace.

With Special Reference to Modernism.

By PROF. P. E. KRETZMANN, Ph. D., D. D.

(Continued.)

### 3.

Closely connected with the doctrine of the essence of the means of grace is that of their outward form and use. The essential difference in the viewpoint will readily appear if we remember that the Word of God (specifically the Gospel), Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are, according to Scriptural testimony, actually the bearers of God's grace; they offer, they convey, they seal, to the believer the benefit of Christ's vicarious atonement.

Some strange notions have appeared from time to time, even where there is no evidence of Modernism in the full sense of the word. Thus a recent writer says of the effect of the Reformation: "With the passage of time and the waning of the first enthusiasm the same thing happened to the Bible which had happened to the Sacrament. It became separated from the life of faith. Protestants came to think of the Bible just as the Roman Catholics had thought of the Sacrament, as something wholly mysterious and exceptional." (Brown, *Beliefs that Matter*, 216.) What he refers to is the same thing that has often been included in the accusation made against Protestants, and particularly Lutherans, that they were making the Bible a "paper pope," looking upon it in a perfectly blind and mechanical manner. It is the same charge which has been brought along similar lines when men have accused the Lutheran Church of teaching a "mechanical theory" of inspiration. But this is not the case, as well they know, and we resent and reject the insinuation as a deliberate misrepresentation. We hold what the Bible teaches, also with regard to the external form of the Bible as a means of grace.

For that reason we defend the validity of *the Gospel as a means of grace* in every form of presentation. It is true of the Gospel proclamation. The Lord tells His disciples: "Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved." Mark 16, 15, 16. And again: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24, 47. It is true of the *written Word*. The Apostle John writes: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." John 20, 31. And again the same apostle writes: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. . . . And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." 1 John 3, 4. The Gospel is a means of grace when spoken *in the form of the absolution from sins*, declaring that sins are forgiven. The Lord tells His disciples: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," John 20, 23, thereby indicating that the pronouncement of the grace of God to individuals is valid. The same is true of the Gospel as kept and moved in the heart. We are told that Mary kept all the sayings "concerning this Child" and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2, 19; cp. v. 51. And in Rom. 10, 8 we are told that the Word of faith is nigh unto us, "in thy mouth, and in thy heart," which shows that every one who ponders upon some statement of Gospel truth has in such statement the divine assurance of the forgiveness of his sins. Even a *picture* or some other *symbol* expressive of the Gospel and conveying some truth contained therein will have the power to work faith in the heart, not, of course, in any magical and mechanical way, but by virtue of the Gospel fact portrayed. Luther writes: "Thus I also believe that the good God preserved many of our forefathers in the great darkness of the Papacy. For in the midst of that great blindness and darkness so much remained that the crucifix was held before the eyes of the dying and that some laymen repeated to him, 'Look upon Jesus, who died for you on the cross.'" (Sermon on the Gospel of the 25th Sunday after Trin. XIII, 2575; cp. VIII, 183; XI, 528; XXII, 471.)

This we hold over against certain teachers who have maintained that the Gospel as a means of grace is confined to the proclamation of the Word, the Spirit being present only in this form. Quite naturally the personal element is here brought into play, as though the power of the Word depended, at least to some extent, on the person proclaiming it. However, though teachers of this type point to Rom. 10, 17 as a supposed confirmation of their position, we can freely use the arguments advanced by Gerhard: "If it is stated Rom. 10, 17: 'Faith cometh by hearing,' this is not to be understood in an exclusive sense, so that the hearing of the proclaimed Word is placed in contrast to the reading of the written

Word, but in an inclusive sense, that God effects faith and salvation not only through the Word which is heard, but also through that which is read, since it is one and the same Word, no matter whether it is preached and heard or written and read. For that reason, John fittingly says of the written evangelical history and therefore of the whole Scripture, the Old and the New Testament: "These are written that you may believe," John 20, 31, and: "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full," 1 John 1, 4. Therefore spiritual joy, and consequently also salvation, may be drawn from the written Word of God if it is but put to use by reading and meditating." (Quoted in Pieper's *Christl. Dogmatik*, III, 125 f.)

The same fact is emphasized by Luther in his exposition of 1 John 5, 13: "Lest any one deceive us, John again says against the enthusiasts that he was writing this: 'These things have I written unto you.' With them the letter is a dead thing on paper. But John says: 'I have written unto you,' since it was to serve the purpose that the letter was to be a means by which one may come to faith and eternal life. For thus says John in chapter 20 of his gospel: 'These are written that you might have faith through his name.' . . . For this reason it is necessary above all things to hear or read the Word which the Holy Ghost uses as an instrument. When one reads the Word, the Holy Ghost is there, and in this manner it is impossible to hear or read the Scripture without benefit." (IX, 1514 f.)

Another type of false teaching which sets aside the Gospel as a means of grace by disregarding its natural form is that which *retains certain terms* of orthodox teaching, but *denies its substance*. Thus we find the terms "inspiration" and "means of grace" in most books which are in any way concerned with the subject of the Bible and its teaching. If one does not examine books of this kind very closely, one is apt to think that the false enthusiasm of the last hundred years had retained at least the fundamentals of Christian faith. And we hear occasional voices even within the Lutheran Church urging us to give men of this type the benefit of the doubt, since they mean well and explain Scriptures according to their lights. But all the good intentions of Micah, Judg. 17 and 18, did not prevent him from becoming an idolater in the eyes of Jehovah, and all the prating of the false prophets about the "Word of the Lord" in the days of Jeremiah did not save them from the Lord's denunciation and punishment. This point will be taken up in detail in the next section.

Still more dangerous is a type of teaching which has been in the Church for centuries and is likewise working havoc in the field of Modernism, as we shall see. It is a movement which does not deny the validity of the Gospel as a means of grace, but at the same time invalidates this power by using other means to bring about spiritual life in the congregation. It speaks with great and glowing words of the Gospel and its life-giving message and then proceeds to insist that the way must be prepared for the Gospel-message by the natural approach, one more in keeping with the normal development of human beings. We find the influence of this type of teaching in lessons of worship on the basis of God's power in nature or in moral lessons taken from the pages of history or in deductions from the study of economics. Now, it is true that the providence of God is active in all the phenomena of nature and that it is possible to teach many a lesson from the great book which He has placed before the eyes of all men for them to study and to heed. But a contemplation of God's works cannot in itself take the place of the Gospel as a means of grace, as little as can the Natural Law in the hearts of men. No man can come to Christ and become sure of his salvation by admiring a sunset or by spending a day in "God's great out-of-doors," as the "blue domers" are in the habit of asserting. Jesus plainly states: "The *words* that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6, 63. (Dangers of modern-worship program in Sunday-schools and day-schools, etc.)

This point is so important for the work of the Church to-day that we cannot refrain from quoting a few points from Pieper's *Christl. Dogmatik*, III, 157 ff. Luther knew that every "personal connection with God" which is not brought about by way of the means of grace is a dream and rests upon self-deception. We read in the Smalcald Articles: "And in those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one except through or with the preceding outward Word, in order that we may thus be protected against the enthusiasts, *i. e.*, spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word and accordingly judge Scripture, or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure, as Muenzer did and many still do at the present day, who wish to be acute judges between the Spirit and the letter and yet know not what they say or declare. For indeed the Papacy also is nothing but sheer enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all rights exist in the shrine of his heart and whatever he decides and commands within his Church is spirit and right, even though it is above and contrary to Scripture

and the spoken Word. — All this is the old devil and old serpent, who also converted Adam and Eve into enthusiasts and led them from the outward Word of God to spiritualizing and self-conceit. . . . Just as also our enthusiasts (at the present day) condemn the outward Word, and nevertheless they themselves are not silent, but they fill the world with their pratings and writings, as though, indeed, the Spirit could not come through the writings and spoken word of the apostles, but (first) through their writings and words He must come. Why (then) do not they also omit their own sermons and writings until the Spirit Himself come to men, without their writings and before them, as they boast that He has come into them without the preaching of the Scriptures?" (*Trigl.*, 495.)

Dr. Pieper goes on, in establishing the truth of Luther's words: "The situation is this: In the kingdom of nature, God indeed is everywhere active in the world. The universe has its existence in Him. And as far as man in particular is concerned, God is the efficient cause of the natural life of all men in all zones of the earth. God gives to every one life and breath. In Him all men live and move and have their being. God also everywhere and to all men gives the goods which pertain to the natural life. He gives to all men rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. *But the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake and faith in the forgiveness of sins*, the regeneration to spiritual life, and all the spiritual treasures therewith connected God gives to men *only* through the means of grace ordained by Him, through the Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments. . . . Therefore everything that men regard as a working of the Holy Spirit without the Word and outside of the Word is a *non-ens*, imagined and self-made. What one has or imagines to have without the means of grace is not the product of the Holy Spirit, but that of man, 'man-made.'"

With regard to the outward form of the Word of God, the Gospel, as a means of grace, we must finally remember that *sermons* are included in the category, inasmuch as and in so far as they are actually based upon the Word of God and offer the truth of the Gospel. This does not mean that a sermon must consist merely of quotations from the Bible; for such a procedure might under circumstances be very ineffective. But the man who speaks or teaches in the name of Jesus, as a minister or teacher of the Church, should speak as the oracles of God, 1 Pet. 4, 11, proclaiming nothing that is not in full harmony with the revealed Truth. The same is true of *hymns and prayers* used anywhere in the Church. They

are the bearers of the grace and the Spirit of God in the measure in which they present the Word of God, teach the great truths of salvation. The sects have effectual preaching and singing in the measure in which they proclaim Lutheran doctrine, that is, pure Bible truth. A Presbyterian preacher will save no one by his peculiar Calvinistic doctrine of predestination; a Baptist will bring no one into heaven by his strange teaching of the necessity of immersion; a Methodist will not be a guide to eternal bliss while he prates about perfect sanctification. But all three, and others as well, will be true ministers of Christ if they teach justification by faith alone, if they consistently set forth the vicarious atonement of Christ and the propitiation through His blood. (Danger of unionism; poison in water.)

But just as we reject all errors with regard to the outward form of the Gospel as a means of grace and warn every one against the danger of false enthusiasm, so we consistently uphold the form of the Sacraments against every encroachment of falsehood. We are conscious, during every step of the way, that the doctrine of the means of grace is fundamental and that the highest form of Christian liberty is that which moves within the scope of God's revelation. Our confession states (Apology, Art. XIII: Of the Number and Use of the Sacraments; *Trigl.*, 309): "Just as the Word enters the ear in order to strike our heart, so the rite itself strikes the eye in order to move the heart. The effect of the Word and of the rite is the same, as it has been well said by Augustine that a Sacrament is a visible word, because the rite is received by the eyes and is, as it were, a picture of the Word, signifying the same thing as the Word. Therefore the effect of both is the same."

With regard to the *outward form and practise of Baptism* we have particularly two strange notions to contend with, as has been the case for four centuries. We have those who deny the validity of child baptism as it has certainly been practised in the Christian Church since the second century and, by inference, since the time of the apostles. But what objections are brought forward against the baptism of infants? It is said that we have no command in Scriptures to baptize children. But have we a direct command to baptize women? Have we a direct command to baptize young people? Christ says: "Baptize all nations." Matt. 28, 19. If nations include women and young people, they surely include children as well; for where else shall we place the children? — The objection is made that children cannot believe, and Baptism requires faith. But we challenge the statement. In Matt. 18, 6 Jesus says of the little

ones, the little children of whom the Lord placed a sample before His disciples for greater emphasis, that they believe in Him. And of Timothy, Paul states that he knew the way to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus since the time when he was an infant in arms. 2 Tim. 3, 15.

Another objection, made chiefly by the Baptists and the Campbellites, is this, that the only form of baptism which is valid is that by immersion, and they have made this point a divisive feature from the time of the establishment of their denominations. But the Bible clearly shows that the word here concerned means every form of application of water. Mark 7, 4; Luke 11, 38. (Cp. Walther, *Pastorale*, 115 f.)

In this connection it is necessary also to call attention to the strange statements concerning the use of the baptismal formula. A great many people have been filled with anxiety because the words of institution speak of baptizing "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," while we are told that in apostolic times certain people were baptized "in the name of Jesus." But the situation is simply this: While the apostles baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, they, by that token, baptized in the name of Jesus, and in reliance upon His redemption. As for us, we use the words of Christ's institution and do not experiment.

This is also our position with regard to *the Lord's Supper*. Instead of joining the bold spirits of all times who experimented with the elements of the Eucharist by using all kinds of substitutes, we use bread and wine, thereby avoiding all possibilities of mistakes, especially since we have no authority to bring an element of doubt into the Sacrament. (Cp. Pieper, *l. c.*, III, 413.) We likewise refuse to join those who would connect certain physical effects with the bodily eating and drinking in the Sacrament. A favorite expression of such teachers is that which speaks of the "planting of the resurrection body." This would then have to be regarded as a mechanical or magical effect, without any basis in the Word of God. Over against such speculations we hold: "As certain as it is that Christ in the Lord's Supper gives us not merely symbols of His body and blood, but the body and blood itself, so certain it also is that He names as the purpose of this miraculous gift, not any particular physical effect, but only the assurance and testimony that God, for the sake of the body which was given and the blood which was shed, is gracious to those who eat and drink as believers."

## 4.

Our chief objection to Modernism is that it clothes the doctrine of the devil in the livery of an angel of light. It is far easier to fight falsehood if it openly proclaims itself as such than when it assumes the label of a higher revelation of truth. For that reason the doctrine of the means of grace as found in Scripture was set forth with some attention to detail and as opposed to errors of various kinds. On the basis of what was said in the earlier part of this essay we are bound to conclude that it is the function of the means of grace to transfer and to bestow the objective justification by and through faith and thus to produce spiritual life in the hearts of men.

Even with regard to this plain and Scriptural definition of the means of grace we find that Modernists have left the sound truth of the Bible and substituted one of emotional appeal. A means of grace, in the opinion of the Modernist, is something by which he lifts himself to the level of the divine, by which he is filled with Christlike qualities. The grace of which he speaks is a quality in himself, which is simply suggested and nourished by constant contact with the historical Christ. But according to the Bible the significance of a means of grace consists in this, that the redemption wrought by Christ is brought to the attention of sinful human beings, who by their own reason and strength cannot believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him, so that the faith wrought by this message may apprehend the fact of the vicarious atonement and put its trust in the salvation offered in and by the Word. Of course, there will follow a subjective certainty on the part of the believer; in fact, one of the strongest evidences for the truth of Scriptures, to a believer, is that quiet certainty brought into his heart by the Gospel-message. But this is a consequence of the act of God in working faith; it does not exist apart from the objective revelation contained in the Gospel. It can never precede the teaching of the actual Gospel-message.

A careful study of Modernist literature quickly shows that all the men affiliated with that movement reject the objective fact of the divine origin of the Bible in the sense of its being inspired or God-breathed and therefore inerrant. J. F. Clarke writes in his book *Common Sense in Religion*: "The curious fact in regard to this theory of verbal inspiration is that the Bible itself makes no such claim. . . . Inspiration means the descent of some higher truth into the soul by vital processes, not merely logical or

mechanical." (Pp. 87. 90.) To all Modernists, inspiration is merely a form of glorified excitement or enthusiasm, such as may well be felt by any person under the stress of some powerful emotion. If this culminates in some sort of religious expression, then it is declared to be divine. In G. B. Smith's *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology* we find the following passage: "No longer do we feel it necessary to insist on the complete passivity of the human writers of the Biblical books [this being a nasty lunge at the so-called mechanical inspiration of the Bible], so that it may be possible to assert that the Bible has a totally different origin from other writings. More and more we are seeking to bring the Biblical writers within the circle of normal human experience and to picture them as subject to the same fears and hopes as other men of their day. . . . The Bible is valued to-day because of its actual power to quicken our religious and moral ideals rather than because of any particular theory concerning its origin." (P. 217.) Another author of the same type, William De Witt Hyde, in his book *Social Theology*, has a most enthusiastic section on inspiration, in which he constantly uses the phraseology of orthodox belief in the Gospel as a means of grace. But instead of finding a clear and unequivocal statement that the Bible is the Word of God, verbally inspired, we find the passage: "Reverent appreciation of the Bible as our ultimate literary expression of the life of the Spirit does not compel one to accept blindly, or to interpret literally, every narrative or statement it contains. Here, as in all ancient history and literature, criticism has a great sifting process to perform. And the more searching and thoroughly this is done, the more valuable and reliable will the book become." (P. 192.) After we human beings, then, with our finite and inadequate minds, have put the Bible through a sifting process, eliminating what does not suit our enlightened reason, we may accept what one has sarcastically called "the remains."

If the objection should here be raised that the quotations made till now are from books which are more than ten years old and that the exponents of Modernism have since returned to their right senses, we shall quote from books of leaders of Modernism, all of which have appeared since 1923, one of them bearing the date 1928. Nolan R. Best, editor of the *Continent*, a Liberal Presbyterian, has written a book on *Inspiration*, in which chapter VIII treats of "The Mirage of Inerrancy." In this chapter he writes: "The power of the Bible, its worth, its right to speak to human souls, its conveyance of the message from God, do not depend on inerrancy and

are not vacated when the student of the Scriptures abandons the effort to show that the Bible is a book of no mistakes." (P. 69.) And again: "If God had ever intended to stake the reputation or the authority of the Bible on a superhuman accuracy in minor and incidental facts, He would certainly have taken care to make that extraordinary exactness an unmistakable phenomenon. There is no evidential value for inspiration to be drawn from the sort of inerrancy which to a cursory reader is so little manifest that he thinks he sees quite the opposite — the same kind of harmless inexactitude that he would expect in all story-telling and history-writing by average honest men." (P. 77.) Note the phrase "he thinks he sees," which is very characteristic of Modernism. They are invariably long on thinking, or rather, on speculating, but proportionately short on knowing.

One of the foremost Modernists is Harry Emerson Fosdick, Professor of Practical Theology in Union Theological Seminary, New York, whose book *The Modern Use of the Bible* first appeared in 1924. We quote from the reprint of July, 1927. In the first lecture, entitled "The New Approach to the Bible," we find the following passage: "We used to think that God created the world by fiat on the instant [!], and then, learning that the world evolves, many were tempted to cry out that God did not create it at all. We now know that changing one's idea of a process does not in itself alter one's philosophy of origins. So we used to think of inspiration as a procedure which produced a book guaranteed in all its parts against error and containing from beginning to end a unanimous system of truth. No well-instructed mind, I think, can hold that now. [?] Our idea of the nature of the process has changed. . . . Our ideas of the method of inspiration have changed; verbal dictation, inerrant manuscripts, uniformity of doctrine between 1000 B. C. and 70 A. D. — all such ideas have become incredible in the face of facts." (P. 30 f.) Again, in the lecture on "Miracle and Law" the author says: "Folk who insist on that kind of literal inerrancy in ancient documents are not Fundamentalists at all; they are incidentalists. Joshua making the sun stand still may be poetry, and the story of Jonah and the great fish may be parable; the miraculous aspects of the plagues in Egypt and the magic fall of Jericho's walls may be legendary heightenings of historical events; the amazing tales of Elijah and Elisha may be largely folk-lore; and, in the New Testament, finding a coin in a fish's mouth to pay the Temple tax or walking on water or blasting a tree with a curse, may be just such stories as always have

been associated with an era of outstanding personalities and creative spiritual power. Certainly I find some of the miracle-narratives of Scripture historically incredible." (P. 163 f.) The last statement is at least frank and unmistakable, showing us exactly with what kind of a person we are here dealing. The same author criticizes the very idea of desiring an infallible and inerrant guide. In the lecture on "Jesus the Messiah" he says: "Men who are in earnest about doing the will of God must know what that will is, and they want a book to tell them in definitive terms. When, therefore, the New Testament was added to the Old and the whole book was bound up into unity by a theory of inerrant inspiration, Christians used the whole book as the Jews had used part of it; it was the divine oracle to tell men how to live. . . . This has been one of the major uses of Scripture in Christian history. Ecclesiastical bodies, from the Roman Church citing a text for its justification to Protestant communities claiming the support of Scripture for their diverse politics and practises, have employed the Bible as though it were a book of canon law to define the procedure and organization of Christian churches forever." (P. 237.) And the man who makes these ambiguous and misleading statements is a professor of theology!

However, a colleague of his, William Adams Brown, in the year of our Lord 1928, has published a book entitled *Beliefs that Matter*, in which chapter VIII deals with the question "Why We Need the Bible." This man has the following to say on the Bible: "Men long for a final and authoritative revelation, a revelation which will relieve them of all responsibility and will put the whole weight upon God alone; and such a final and authoritative revelation the inerrant Bible seemed to give. But in fact the Bible has not proved to be a book of this kind. The proof of this is not that the scholars find errors in the Bible. It is always possible for an ingenious commentator to explain these errors away. The convincing proof is that the Bible has not done what an infallible book is expected to do. It has not given its message in such a clear and unmistakable form that all Christians have agreed as to its meaning. Scholars who have studied the original text have understood the book differently from readers who have only the English translation. And recourse to the original text has not secured agreement among the scholars. Catholic scholars have differed from Protestant, and Protestants have differed among themselves. The claim of an inerrant book has not united Christians; it has divided them." (P. 217.) Over against the abysmal ignorance dis-

played in some of these statements it is sufficient to place 2 Cor. 2, 16; 3, 14; 4, 3, 4; 2 Pet. 3, 16. The more a person reads in the book of Dr. Brown, the more he is amazed at the lack of information concerning the contents of the Book displayed by the author.

Both of these men, and a host of Modernists with them, speak of an inspiration, but they refuse to accept the inspiration which God Himself teaches and which the holy writers claim for themselves. They thus set aside the certainty of the power of God in the Word and thereby the objective and absolute value of the Gospel as a means of grace. Well has Haldeman, in his review of Fosdick's Book, stated the belief of the author in the following form: "A Bible contradicted by science, unreliable in history, not always moral, and whose shifting thought-forms, whose uncertain 'framework,' make it of avail only as it can be proven by personal experience." (P. 71.) And one is inclined to subscribe most heartily the words of Leander S. Keyser, in his book *The Doctrines of Modernism*, in which he describes the position of Fosdick as follows: "Only those parts of the Bible are to be accepted which tally with man's present 'experience.' There are many things in the Bible which we cannot experience; these we may cast aside as 'outmoded categories' and may still be good Christians if we have had the aforesaid 'experience.' Only the things that the 'modern man' can experience are the 'abiding' realities; all the rest is temporary scaffolding, to be torn down and thrown into the scrap-heap — except, of course, that it must be preserved to show us what 'progress' we have made since Bible times. For each individual it is not the Bible, but 'experience' which is the ultimate authority in religion. . . . When they can throw overboard whatever does not suit them in the Bible and accept only what their proud reason approves, they will naturally think that what they leave of the Bible makes a great book! Is it not the verdict of their own wisdom?" (Pp. 11. 36.)

But if the Modernists do not hesitate to lay blasphemous hands on the Bible itself, denying its inspiration and infallibility and thereby declaring the idea of the Gospel's being a true means of grace an absurdity, we can hardly expect them to leave the Sacraments unattacked. They blandly use the old terms, the traditional orthodox terminology, but they have managed to extract all the worth and power from the Sacraments, leaving nothing but empty husks. This was to be expected, of course, since Modernism grew on the soil of rationalism and Calvinism, and in both cases, reason has been a determining factor in accepting doctrines or in rejecting

them. Therefore we find S. S. Schmucker making concessions, in *An Elementary Course of Biblical Theology*, to reason and false enthusiasm when he says of the Lord's Supper: "That the bread and wine remain in all respects unchanged; that the glorified human nature of Christ is not substantially (essentially) present at all, but only influentially, efficaciously, or virtually, that is, by a special supernatural influence, exerted on all communicants at the time when they receive the bread and wine." It is hard to say from this passage whether Schmucker believed in the real presence; he certainly did not believe in the sacramental union in the Lord's Supper. But his vague and uncertain explanations are mild in comparison with those of the men who have taken God's grace out of both Sacraments and have given them a merely subjective character.

Thus Brown writes, in the book referred to above, with regard to the Sacraments, particularly Holy Baptism: "This element of commitment appears most clearly in connection with the Sacrament of Baptism, . . . a commitment so unreserved that any conscious sin imperiled the status of the new convert. . . . In the case of infants, who cannot exercise faith for themselves, the act of consecration which gives the Sacrament its spiritual meaning is performed by their parents. . . . The self-commitment implicit in Baptism and publicly recognized in confirmation is repeated in connection with the Lord's Supper. . . . We respond to God's gift in the Sacrament first of all by thanksgiving, or, in other words, by grateful appreciation of what He is and what He has done. . . . Our gratitude expresses itself in our conduct toward our fellow-men and especially in loving ministry to those who are in need." (P. 261 f.) All of which would have some significance if there were some plain statement regarding sin and grace, that is, sinful man coming to God with the prayer for forgiveness and receiving the assurance of the redemption through the body and blood given and shed for him for the forgiveness of sins. But sin and remission of sin is not associated in the minds of the Modernists. To them the sacramental act which makes the Sacrament a means of grace, by which the proclamation of the redemption is made, has no significance. The Sacrament, either Baptism or the Eucharist, is simply a commitment, a rite of consecration, by which man pledges himself to God, not an act by which, chiefly and essentially, God bestows blessings upon men.

The same error is found in other writings of prominent Modernists. Hyde is anxious to retain all the orthodox expressions,

and yet his presentation is woefully inadequate, since he does not recognize the divine or supernatural element in the Sacraments. He writes: "As Baptism marks the renunciation of self and the world as the determining principles of conduct, the Lord's Supper is the symbol of communion with Christ and His followers as the inspiration of the new life. There is nothing magical or miraculous about this most simple and natural of rites. Christ is present in the elements just as the writer of a letter is present in the writing. The reading of the letter is the reception of the writer's mind and heart. We receive Christ in the bread and wine as we receive a friend when we clasp his hand. . . . Jesus, in instituting the Lord's Supper, has simply made universal the communication of His sacrificial love. He has made the bread and wine forever, and to all who receive it, the symbol and expression of the life He lived and the death He suffered in love to all mankind. Translated by the intelligent and devout recipient into terms of the love and sacrifice it is intended to express, it becomes the bread of life and the wine of love to as many as receive it in this faith." (*L. c.*, 194 f.) And Smith writes: "If Baptism actually makes men conscious of the redeeming power of God, if it actually serves to deepen in the consciousness of the Christian the assurance of God's presence, its right in Christianity is sufficiently vindicated. . . . It is frequently urged that one of the chief benefits of the Eucharist is so to impress the soul with the presence of God in this particular instance that under the inspiration thus gained one may learn to discern the divine presence everywhere." (*L. c.*, 215 f.) This is a typical example of the empty words which the Modernists employ in order to invalidate the Sacraments as means of grace. This will be seen also from a final quotation, taken from Rauschenbusch's *A Theology for the Social Gospel*: "We could imagine a minister and a group of candidates who unite in feeling the evil of the present world order and the promise and claims of the impending Christian world order together using Baptism to express their solemn dedication to the tasks of the kingdom of God and accepting their rights as children of God within that kingdom. . . . In the Lord's Supper we reaffirm our supreme allegiance to our Lord, who taught us to know God as our common Father and to realize that all men are our brethren. In the midst of a world full of divisive selfishness we thereby accept brotherhood as the ruling principle of our life and undertake to put it into practise in our private and public activities. We abjure the selfish use of power and wealth for the exploitation of our fellows. We dedicate our lives

to establishing the kingdom of God and to winning mankind to its laws." (Pp. 200. 206.) Rauschenbusch, like all exponents of the social theology and all his Modernist brethren, has not the faintest conception of the heavenly character of the Sacraments and of the gifts of God's grace offered and sealed to the believers thereby. How different the simple and powerful explanation in Luther's Catechism: "Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's word. . . . It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this. . . . It [the Lord's Supper] is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself"! May God in His mercy preserve us from the destructive powers of Modernism, especially in its denial of the means of grace! *(To be concluded.)*

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