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## The Means of Grace.

With Special Reference to Modernism.

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(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

## Dr. Luther's Warning against Sedition.

(Concluded.)

17. If you, however, say, What, then, are we to do if the government is not minded to take the initiative? Shall we tolerate it still longer and strengthen their insolent effrontery? Answer: No, you should do nothing of the kind. Three things you should do regarding this situation. First: You should realize your transgression, which God's stern righteousness has visited upon you by means of such antichristian reign, as St. Paul declares, 2 Thess. 2, 11. 12: "God shall send them strong delusion and rule, because they received not the love of truth that they might be saved." We alone are to blame for everything that the Pope and his followers perpetrated upon our property, our bodies, and our souls. Therefore you must first confess your sin and put it off before you would get rid of the punishment and plague; otherwise you will kick against the pricks, and the stone which you are casting upward will fall upon your head.

18. Secondly: You must humbly pray against the papal rule, as Ps. 10 does and teaches, saying vv. 12ff: "Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Thine hand; forget not the humble. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for Thou beholdest mischief and spite to requite it with Thy hand. The poor committeth himself unto Thee; Thou art the Helper of the fatherless. Break Thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man; seek out his wickedness till Thou find none," etc.

19. Thirdly: Suffer your mouth to be a mouth of the spirit of Christ, of whom St. Paul says above, 2 Thess. 2, 8: "Our Lord Jesus shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth." This we do if we boldly continue as we have begun, orally and in writing driving home to the people the Pope's and the papists' knavery and deception, until he, openly exposed the world over, is detected and put to shame. For one must first consume him with words; the mouth of Christ must do it. Thus he will be forced from the hearts of men and his lies exposed and despised. Moreover, when he has been removed from the heart, so that his claims are no longer respected, then he is already destroyed. In this way we can give him blows more telling than with a hundred riots. By violence we shall deprive him of nothing, yea, rather strengthen him, as has been the experience of many. But with the light of the truth, if one contrasts him with Christ and his doctrine with the Gospel, then he falls and is undone without any toil and moil. Witness my record: Have I not wrested from the Pope, the bishops, priests, and monks by mere words, without a stroke of the sword, more than all emperors and kings and princes have wrested from him in the past with all their power? Why? Because Daniel, chap. 8, 25, declares: "This king shall be broken without hand," and St. Paul, 2 Thess. 2, 8: "He shall be consumed by the mouth of Christ." Now I and every one who speaks Christ's Word can freely boast that his mouth is the mouth of Christ. I am positively certain that my word is not my own, but Christ's Word; accordingly, my mouth also must be His whose Word it speaks.

20. Therefore you should not desire a physical riot. Christ Himself has already begun one with His mouth, which will be altogether too severe for the Pope; let us follow and continue in it. What is now in progress in the world is not our work. It is not possible that a mere man should begin and carry forward such a movement independently. It has also progressed thus far without my deliberation and counsel; moreover, without my counsel it shall succeed, and the gates of hell shall not hinder it. Another man is at the wheel; Him the papists do not see and so blame us; but they shall assuredly realize it. The devil has trembled long before these years and has smelled a rat from afar, has also published many prophecies against it, some of which point to me, so that I am often astonished at his great craftiness. Many a time he would only too gladly have killed me. At present he would be delighted to have a physical riot develop, so that this spiritual riot might be confounded and prevented. But, God willing, it will not and shall

not help him. "Without hand and by the mouth only shall he be broken"; nothing can prevent this.

21. See, then, that you further, and assist in furthering, the cause of the Gospel; teach, speak, write, and preach that human laws avail nothing; restrain and advise that no one become a priest, monk, or nun and that whoever has entered the order may walk out; give no more money for bulls, candles, bells, tablets, churches, but declare that a Christian life consists in faith and love; and let us continue this two years more, and you will then see where Pope, bishops, cardinals, priest, monk, nun, bells, tower, mass, vigils, cossacks, cowls, pates, rule, statutes, and all the trappings and trumpery of papal power will remain; it will all vanish like smoke.

22. But if we do not teach this nor spread such truth among the people, so that such stuff may be torn out of their hearts, then the Pope will likely remain with us, even though we begin a thousand riots against him. Behold what has been accomplished in this one year, since we have advanced and written such truth! How the cover has become too short and narrow for the papists. The stationaries complain that they must simply die of starvation. What will happen if this mouth of Christ will thresh with His spirit for two more years? Such play the devil would fain hinder by physical riot. But let us be wise, thank God for His holy Word, and cheerfully offer our mouths for this blessed riot.

23. Exposed is the papists' ignorance; exposed is their hypocrisy; exposed is their false lying in their laws and orders; exposed is their false tyranny of the ban. In short, exposed is everything wherewith they have hitherto bewitched, terrorized, and seduced the world. One sees that it has been nothing but jugglery. There remains nothing more about them to be feared than only a little prop of secular power. But because the luster is gone and they must protect themselves exclusively by force, it is not possible that they can exist for any length of time. And what the mouth of Christ spares, that "His coming shall destroy," as St. Paul says, 2 Thess. 2, 8. Therefore let us cheerfully continue, faithfully driving home the Word, driving out the man-made laws; thus Christ is slaying the Papacy through us. It is already singing, "Eli, Eli"; it has been stricken. Soon we will hear, *Expiravit*, that is, it gave up its ghost.

24. But in this campaign I must again admonish some for inflicting a great defection and defamation upon the holy Gospel. There are several who, when they have read a page or two or heard a sermon, immediately launch forth and do nothing more than

override and condemn them with their activity as not being evangelical, regardless of the fact that there are at times plain, simple-minded folk who would readily learn the truth if it were told them. This also I have taught no one, and St. Paul has strictly forbidden it. They do it only because they wish to know something novel and be considered genuinely Lutheran. But they wantonly abuse the holy Gospel. By such a procedure you will never drive the Gospel into the hearts; you will rather deter them, and you will have to render a grave account for having thus driven them away from the truth.

25. Not so, thou fool. Listen and let me tell you: First I pray you to desist from using my name and not to call yourself Lutheran, but Christian. What is Luther? For the doctrine is not mine, nor have I been crucified for any one. St. Paul, 1 Cor. 3, 4, 5, would not suffer the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christians. How can I, poor, corruptible mortal that I am, permit that the children of Christ should be called by my worthless name? Not so, dear friends; let us banish partisan names and be called Christians, whose doctrine we have. It is quite proper for the papists to have a partisan name. Because they are not content with Christ's doctrine and name, they wish to be papal also; so let them be papal because the Pope is their master. I am not, and do not want to be, any one's master. In agreement with the Church I confess the one common doctrine of Christ, who alone is our Master. Matt. 23, 8.

26. Secondly: If you wish to use the Gospel in a Christian manner, you must regard the person with whom you are speaking. There are two classes. In the first place, some are hardened in heart, who will not hear and, in addition, seduce and poison others with their lying mouths, such as the Pope, Eck, Emser, some of our bishops, priests, and monks. With these you should not deal at all, but act in accordance with the declaration of Christ, Matt. 7, 6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you." Let them remain dogs and swine; at all events, love's labor is lost with them. Sirach, too, says, chap. 32, 6: "Where there is no hearing, pour not out words." But if you see that these liars are also pouring their lies and poison into other people, then you should boldly oppose them and contend against them, even as Paul opposed Elymas with hard, sharp words, Acts 13, 10, 11, and as Christ called the Pharisees a generation of vipers, Matt. 23, 33. This you should not do for their sakes, —

for they heed it not, — but for the benefit of those whom they poison. Thus St. Paul commands Titus, chap. 1, 10, 11, to rebuke sharply such vain talkers and deceivers of souls.

27. In the second place, there are some who have previously not heard more about this and would surely learn if they would be informed; or they are too weak easily to grasp it. These should not be bullied and browbeaten, but be taught kindly and gently and shown the why and wherefore, and if they cannot comprehend it immediately, be patient with them for a while. Of this Paul speaks Rom. 14, 1: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye." Likewise St. Peter, in his first epistle, chap. 3, 15: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Here you see that we should give instruction in regard to our faith with gentleness and fear of God if some one desires it or stands in need of it.

28. If you merely wish to display your great skill before these people, suddenly sallying forth and claiming that they do not pray properly, fast, and observe the Mass, and you mean to eat meat, eggs, and what not on Friday, without, however, stating the reason for this with meekness and fear, then such a simple heart cannot but consider you a proud, impudent, and perverse person, which in fact you are, and he concludes that one should not pray and do no good, that the Mass is nothing, and so forth. Such error and offense you have caused, and you are to blame. And so it happens that they misjudge and speak ill of the holy Gospel and think that you have been taught atrocious things. Of what benefit to you, then, is that you have given offense to your neighbor and are hindering the Gospel? You have indulged your wantonness. And they will say, Oh, I will abide in my faith, and close their hearts against the divine truth.

29. If you would, however, with fear and meekness, as St. Peter teaches, show the reason for your belief and action and say: Dear man, fasting, eating eggs, meat, and fish is a matter upon which salvation does not depend, it may be done for better or for worse, or omitted, faith alone saves, etc., whatever should be said here; likewise, the Mass might be good if it were observed properly, etc., — then they would come and hear and ultimately learn what you know. But now that you are so impudent, exalting yourself because you know something they do not know, acting like the Pharisee in the Gospel, Luke 18, 11, and permitting their ignorance of what you know to be the cause of your arrogance, you are subject to the judgment of St. Paul, Rom. 14, 15: "*Jam non secundum caritatem*

*ambulas*," "Thou walkest not charitably"; you despise your neighbor, whom you ought to serve with fear and meekness.

30. Let me give you an illustration. If an enemy of your brother had tied a rope around the neck of your brother, so that he would be in danger of being strangled, and you fool would become incensed over the rope and the enemy, and, running up to him, would vehemently pull the rope toward you, or would stab at it with a knife, you would surely strangle your brother or stab him and do more harm than the rope and the enemy. On the contrary, if you want to help him, you must act in this manner: You may punish or beat the enemy as severely as you please; but the rope you must handle gently and with fear until you have removed it from his neck, lest you strangle your brother.

31. In like manner you may attack the liars, the hardened tyrants, severely and act contrary to their doctrine and work, for they will not hear. The simple-hearted, however, who are dangerously bound by them with the cords of such doctrine, you must treat differently altogether; with fear and meekness you must loose man-made doctrine, give argument and reason, and thus in time set them free also. That is what St. Paul did when, in defiance of all the Jews, he would not have Titus be circumcised, Gal. 2, 3, and yet circumcised Timothy. Behold, even so you must treat the dogs and swine differently from men and the wolves and lions differently from the weak sheep. With the wolves you cannot be too severe; with the weak sheep you cannot be too gentle. We certainly must at this time conduct ourselves not otherwise than as if we lived among the heathen, because we live among the papists; aye, they are easily sevenfold heathen. Therefore we should, as St. Peter teaches, 1 Pet. 2, 12, "have our conversation honest among the Gentiles that they may not truthfully speak against us as evil-doers," as they would be delighted to do. They very much delight in hearing you glory in this doctrine and yet are offensive to such as are weak, so that they may decry the entire doctrine as offensive and harmful; for by any other method they cannot detract from it and must confess that it is true.

32. *God grant unto us all that we may live as we teach*, that we translate our words into deeds. There are many among us who say, "Lord, Lord," and praise the doctrine, but the deed, the obedience, is not forthcoming. Let this suffice for the present as a renewed admonition to beware of riot and offense lest the holy Word of God be profaned by us. Amen.

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