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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *wei-*  
*den*, also dass er die Schafe unter-  
weise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen  
sein, sondern auch daneben den Woel-  
fen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht  
angreifen und mit falscher Lehre ver-  
fuehren und Irrtum einfuehren.

*Luther*

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute  
mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn  
die gute Predigt. — *Apologie, Art. 24*

If the trumpet give an uncertain  
sound, who shall prepare himself to  
the battle? — 1 Cor. 14:8

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ARCHIV

## Liberal Theology and the Reformed Churches

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The characteristic elements of the thought world during the past 75 years may be reduced to two outstanding and significant movements: science and democracy. Man placed an almost absolute faith in the omniscience of science. Science became a cult. The empirical method of science was considered the only means by which truth could be discovered and judged. The "scientific" method attempted to displace revelation; it branded the Scriptural theology as metaphysics and relegated it to the museums; it tended to eliminate the idea of God from human thought and to make man self-sufficient; its astronomical and biological theories questioned the geocentric and anthropocentric view of our universe and challenged Scripture, which assigns to man the central position in God's creation; it reduced the universe to a set of mechanical laws and thereby ruled divine creation and providence out of existence. Hand in hand with the cult of science went the cult of democracy. Science, so called, held that man's biological and psychological progress is a basic law of nature; that man is destined to go upward and onward, for as man progresses biologically and intellectually, he will conquer the forces of his environment which have impeded his upward reach, and ultimately he will attain a relatively high standard of social, economic, and religious ethics. The sociologist, however, was disturbed to find that the human race was progressing too slowly toward the projected social and ethical ideal, and blamed the capitalistic system for impeding mankind's progress. He believed that the hope of society's social and ethical redemption rested upon a complete reconstruction of the social order. The student of sociology envisioned a society which, liberated from the fangs of capitalism and power politics, would build the economic and political power on industrial democracy. Democracy became the fetish. God was "democratized," the ethical standard was made conformable to a democratic society,<sup>1)</sup> democracy was apotheosized. Instead of recognizing the anti-Scriptural and even antireligious character of these two ideologies, many theologians, especially within the Congregational churches, adopted the scientific method in theology and as a result accepted the principles of the higher critics, evolutionists, and religious empiricists.<sup>2)</sup> But this left them

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1) Marxian Communism held that the Decalog was the ancient plutocracy's instrument to exert by threats its undisputed lordship over the proletariat. The Sixth Commandment was "invented" by the sheik to protect his harem, and the Seventh to protect the property obtained by exploiting the poor people. — Knudson, A. C., *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought*, 1924, chapter I, offers an analysis of the dominant world views during the years 1875—1920.

2) This matter was discussed in the October issue of this magazine.

only a system of denials and negations, and these liberal theologians felt the need of a positive message. This they found in the new social "sciences." After having accepted the scientific method as the *principium cognoscendi*, the majority of liberal theologians made "democracy" the burden of their message.<sup>3)</sup>

But how was it possible that Modernism with its denial of the fundamental truths of Christianity and its social gospel message gained such a foothold in the denominations whose historic background was genuinely Christian? The immediate answer is, of course, that all Reformed bodies have inherited the Zwinglian enthusiasm. This, however, is not the complete answer. Each of the Reformed denominations has a distinctive characteristic which made it particularly vulnerable to the onslaughts of Liberalism and made it susceptible to the social gospel message.<sup>4)</sup>

### The Protestant Episcopal Church

One characteristic of Anglicanism and Episcopalianism is latitudinarianism, as is evident from the fact that some of its members are High Church (Romanizing tendencies), others Broad Church (toleration of divergent theological views), and still others Low Church (conservatism in theology and ritual). The Anglican Church "is at once the most authoritative and the least disciplined of all Protestant Churches."<sup>5)</sup> This is brought to light very forcibly in the Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine Appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1922, entitled *Doctrine in the Church of England*. This report not only lists the contradictory views held by Anglicans on such important doctrines

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3) Hopkins, C. H., *The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism*, traces the social and economic factors which led to acceptance of the social gospel. Heinz-Horst Schrey, a keen German scholar, analyzes the American theological scene and groups the social gospel exponents as follows: 1. The radical school, which is ready to unite with any group to destroy capitalism. This is the school of W. Rauschenbusch. (In his book *Christianizing the Social Order*, p. 330, Rauschenbusch says: "In his contest against the priests of Baal, at Mount Carmel, Elijah proposed the test: 'The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.' Chas. H. Spurgeon christianized the text: 'The God that answereth by orphanages, let him be God.' In our present conflict between God and Mammon we shall finally have to socialize it: 'The God that answereth by low food prices, let him be God.'") 2. The idealistic school, which considers the church the educational institution to lead men to a social utopia, represented by Shailer Mathews. 3. The realistic school, which believes that social justice tempered by love is attainable only if God intervenes. The dialectical theologians, chiefly Niebuhr, represent this view. *Theologische Rundschau*, 1938, Feb., pp. 23—52.

4) "Changes in Theology" (four articles), *American Journal of Theology*, X, 1906. — E. C. Vanderlaan, *Fundamentalism and Modernism*, 1925. This is a well-selected collection of articles written by both Fundamentalists and Modernists.

5) *Anglican Theological Review*, April, 1940, p. 143.

as the Virgin Birth, the Scriptures, man, but grants them equal rights in the Church of England.<sup>6)</sup> The Protestant Episcopal Church occupies the same latitudinarian position as their English coreligionists, for its Department of Religious Education recommends this volume as setting forth the Episcopalian theological position. The late Theo. Will says that in the modern Babel the religious seeker will find in the Episcopal Church among other things faith (toleration of schools of thought which are at variance with each other) and the right to worship God according to the dictates of the individual's conscience.<sup>7)</sup> Prof. W. Norman Pittenger of the (Episcopalian) General Theological Seminary in New York in an article "What Is Disturbing the Episcopalians?" is not disturbed over the fact that "from Anglo-Catholicism to Evangelicalism, the Episcopal Church seems to cover almost all types of Christian expression." But he is disturbed over the questions whether or not the Episcopal Church can adjust itself to the new "catholicism" (unionism) of the current ecumenical movement, and will permit those deviations and divergences from the central tradition (the apostolic succession) which will be fruitful and contributory to its own richness and development.<sup>8)</sup> It is a pity indeed that the church body of such outstanding Bible-believing scholars as Westcott, Hort, Lightfoot, Edersheim, Church, is committed to the principle which not only allows but encourages divergent theological views. Doctrinal discipline is impossible in the Anglican or Episcopalian bodies. Is it any wonder, then, that crass Liberalism is not only tolerated but given equal right with orthodox Christianity? From the Kantian idealist Coleridge, a contemporary of Schleiermacher and exponent of his theology, down to Dean Inge and Archbishop Temple Liberalism has demanded "house right" in the Anglican Church under the nondescript term of Broad Churchism. From Charles Briggs, who fifty years ago after his suspension from the Presbyterian Church because of his espousal of higher criticism joined the Episcopal Church, down to the present leaders in the Episcopal Church Liberal Theology is rampant, and nothing can be done to silence the liberals. And with the introduction of Liberalism came the preaching of the social gospel. One can readily understand that in England, where Church and State are so closely allied, the social program of Modernism would find

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6) See our review of this volume in C. T. M., X, p. 556 f.

7) *The Episcopal Church*, pp. 38—44, 139.

8) *Christian Century*, May 10, 1944, p. 586ff. The recently consecrated bishop of the Washington Diocese, Angus Dun, himself a liberal social gospelite, discusses the latitudinarianism of his Church in an article with the significant title: "The Ambiguous Episcopal Church." *Christendom*, winter issue, 1941, pp. 3—13.

ready acceptance if such a program would agree with the policies of the State. At present the social gospel message is being urged in England by Wm. Temple, Primate of the English Church.<sup>9)</sup> One would, however, suspect that owing to their traditions and environment the majority of Episcopalians, while embracing Liberalism, would not be greatly interested in the program of the social gospel. Nevertheless the Episcopal Church together with Congregationalists assumed the leadership in initiating a social-service program, though, of course, not without protest.<sup>10)</sup>

### The Baptist Churches

"It is a distinct principle with Baptists that they acknowledge no human founder, recognize no human authority, and subscribe to no human creed. For all these things, Baptists of every name and order go back to the New Testament."<sup>11)</sup> In Baptist theology "the right of private judgment is the crown jewel of humanity," and "absolute liberty of conscience under Christ has always been a distinguishing tenet of Baptists. Since every member of the Church is a member of Christ, he has the right to interpret Christ's will for himself."<sup>12)</sup> This principle has become a two-edged sword.

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9) The archbishop's two books, *The Hope of a New World* (1937) and *Christianity and the Social Order* (1942), and his six-point program for the full development of individual personality (published as a full-page advertisement by Pan-American Clippers in *Time*, Nov. 9, 1942) clearly indicate his leanings toward the social gospel and explain why he was severely criticized for "meddling in the affairs of Caesar," as reported in *Christian Century*, Nov. 10, 1942, p. 1431.

10) Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 287ff. The plot of the *Inside of the Cup*, a tendential novel by Winston Churchill, turns on the efforts of an Episcopal rector to put the social gospel into practice. — F. C. Grant, a prominent Episcopalian and professor at the liberal (Presbyterian) Union Seminary, espouses the social gospel. "The Kingdom of God is not in heaven, but God's reign in this present world. The central Christian conviction is essentially social, and the work of the Church must be secular. Christians must enter politics and business." *The Living Church*, March 12, 1941. Grant believes that Jesus viewed the Kingdom of God as a theocracy in which men's lives will be changed to conform to the principles of the Golden Rule. *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, p. 130f. Bishop Geo. St. Tucker, as president of the Federal Council of Churches, must support the social gospel program of this federation.

11) *Census of Religious Bodies*, 1936, II, p. 83.

12) A. H. Strong, *Christ in Creation and Ethical Nomism*, pp. 252, 257. The belief that every individual soul must be granted the right and the competence to judge all religious questions and must be unfettered by credal formulations is a result in a large measure of the early Baptists' reaction against the hierarchical and authoritarian regime of the Church of England. Wm. Rogers' principles of independency were not only social and political, but religious as well, and these principles gave point and emphasis to Baptist theology in America. "Ecclesiastical democracy" is

The conservative Baptists are in danger of ecclesiastical atomism, the liberal Baptists of complete doctrinal indifference. In their loyalty to the Baptist principle the former group will interpret Scriptures literalistically, and the latter will view Scriptures only as a record of man's religious experiences.<sup>13)</sup> At any rate, the Baptist principle has permitted Liberalism to enter Baptist churches without in any way denying the central principle of Baptist theology. This is true especially among the Baptist churches of the Northern Baptist Convention, where Modernism was spearheaded by the theological departments of Colgate and Chicago Universities. At Colgate the new theology was advocated primarily by Wm. N. Clarke and Walter Rauschenbusch, the former systematizing the new theology and the latter popularizing the social gospel.<sup>14)</sup>

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the watchword of Baptists. G. B. Foster, the archliberal professor of the University of Chicago, writes: "Strictly speaking, there can be no heresy, technically so called, in the Baptist denomination, for the reason that there is no creed subscription; no creed subscription for the reason that there is no formal creed; no formal creed for the reason that Baptist churches, unlike the hybrid of ecclesiastical Protestantism, hold to the right of private judgment, of freedom of conscience, and of freedom of thought and speech. It is not that creed is a matter of indifference to religion from the Baptist point of view; it is that the right of the individual to form his own creed is inalienable and that this right which was exercised by Baptists in the past, resulting in a certain set of beliefs, carries therewith the right today of either accepting, or modifying, or replacing those past beliefs." *Finality of the Christian Religion*, XIII f. But even such a conservative Baptist theologian as the late Dr. Geo. Truett in his presidential address before the Baptist convention stated that every human soul must be granted the competence under God to interpret the New Testament and that no thing extraneous, as sacrament or priest, dare come between the individual and his God. *Watchman-Examiner*, Aug. 10, 1939. The following books are suggested for those who wish to obtain a clear understanding of the Baptists' central principle: J. Ernst, *Roger Williams, the New England Firebrand*; A. Newman, *History of Baptist Churches*; W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*; H. H. Stratton, *Baptists, Their Message and Mission*; O. Wallace, *What Baptists Believe*; also an article by A. H. Newman, "Recent Changes in Theology of Baptists," *American Journal of Religion*, X, pp. 587-609.

13) The Baptists are currently disturbed over the demand of some conservatives that the missionaries under the jurisdiction of the Board of the American Baptist Mission Society sign a credal statement professing their faith in the fundamental doctrines of Scriptures, which some of these foreign missionaries have denied. This was a major issue at the recent convention of the Baptists. But the Board's position was upheld, namely, "that authoritative creeds are the beginning of the reign of ecclesiasticism and dogmatism, sound the death knell of individual religious freedom, and lead to intellectual dishonesty because individual religious concepts are never static for those who search the Scriptures with open mind." *Watchman-Examiner*, Sept. 10, 1943; March 23, April 6, Aug. 10, 1944. *Christian Century*, March 29, 1944.

14) Clarke's important writings, *Outline of Christian Theology*, 1898, and *The Christian Doctrine of God*, 1909, used by many liberal theological seminaries as textbooks. — Rauschenbusch's theology was discussed in the July issue of C. T. M.

Clarke's theology is a synthesis of the various forms of the new German theology. As a disciple of Schleiermacher he believed that all religious knowledge is gained by experience. As a Ritschlian he held that Jesus spurned metaphysical speculations about God and presented only such thoughts of God as agreed with the thought patterns of His age. As an adherent of the Troeltschian History of Religions School he espoused the theory of evolution in religion. He found the sources of Christian doctrine not only in the Old Testament, but also among the primitive and pagan thoughts of men; the Old Testament contained both lofty ethical conceptions and primitive notions. Jesus discarded the latter and imparted a better knowledge of God than any other by accommodating His revelation of God to the thought patterns of His age; the early Church expressed its needs of God in the concept of the Trinity, a term which, however, does not satisfy the needs of modern man; in fact, the concept of God is not as yet final.<sup>15)</sup> Clarke attempted to bridge the chasm which lies between the Calvinistic sovereignty of God and Liberalism's theory of divine immanence. In this attempt he arrives at a definition of God which makes of God hardly any more than the forces active in the world and which asks man to "trust in a beneficent steadiness of operation in the world."<sup>16)</sup> Clarke is very largely responsible for robbing many young Baptist theologians of their traditional faith in the all-sufficiency and inerrancy of the Bible. He supplanted revelation by human philosophy.

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15) *The Christian Doctrine of God*, pp. 11, 46, 52, 240, 323.

16) *Op. cit.*, p. 334. — "A truth so central as the immanence of the transcendent God cannot fail to dictate throughout the entire field of doctrine. By its own nature it presses in to the definitions that belong alike to theology and to the common thoughts of men. Where it is not influential today, it is certain to be tomorrow. In view of it, creation was not a work of days, undertaken, performed, and finished, followed by cessation and rest. Creation is the productive outflow of the divine energy, normal to God, limitless in time, conditioned only by his nature and will. Providence is not a series of interpositions in which God's world is touched and retouched by his special power in order to better the work of the general method. Providence is the perpetual governance of the indwelling Lord and Friend, no part of whose world is ever without his presence and care. Revelation is not a special work in a special field, mediated by messengers, attended by attesting miracles, limited to a certain time, completed and not to be renewed. Revelation equally includes the continuous, infinitely varied and endless manifestation of the transcendent God through his indwelling, and all more special expressions of himself that he may make. Salvation is not an exceptional gift of grace from afar, but the characteristic working-out of the eternal divinity of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of the ideal of existence." *Op. cit.*, p. 342.

The University of Chicago, founded by Baptists, endowed by a Baptist, controlled by Baptists, became the hotbed of Liberal Theology in the Middle West, and in far greater measure than Colgate became responsible for Modernism in the Northern Baptist Convention. W. R. Rainey Harper (first president and Semitic scholar), J. M. Powis Smith (Old Testament), G. B. Smith and G. B. Foster (systematic theology, *i. e.*, philosophy), S. J. Case (New Testament), and E. A. Haydon (history) were the men who were largely responsible for tearing down the old faith, while Shailer Mathews is regarded as the man who attempted to build the social gospel upon the ruins caused by higher criticism, evolutionism, and empiricism. "Social Christianity" became Mathews' watchword.<sup>17)</sup> His theology was Ritschlian, both in its approach and in its message. Mathews employed the empirical method and by this method found that the term God is merely man's symbol to define the "personality-evolving force in the universe." "God" is the activity which creates our environment and our personality, the cosmic processes which reinforce and create personal relations.<sup>18)</sup> But Mathews was not interested so much in a metaphysical nor even in a practical definition of God, but solely in obtaining close co-operation between churches, classes, nations, and races, so that society can really become God's workshop. He found "the heart of the social gospel in the teachings of Jesus as to fatherliness of God, the brotherhood of man, and the supreme value of personality."<sup>19)</sup> When men co-operate with each other and make it possible for every individual to develop his inherent potentiality to the highest degree, then they are co-operating with God (*i. e.*, the personality-evolving force) and are establishing the Kingdom of God. This theology appeals to man's reason, because it is on the level of reason. But it did irreparable damage to the faith of thousands in the Baptist churches. Thus the history of anti-

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17) Among his many writings we list *Faith of Modernism*, 1924, and *Atonement and the Social Process*, 1930.

18) "Like a vast parabola, the personality-evolving activities of the cosmos touch our little circle of experience. We know not whence they come or whither they go, but we cannot evade them. We set up relations with them similar to those which we set up with persons. And thus we derive new strength and courage and moral motive for facing the tasks of life and building up a world order in which personal relations will be more perfectly adjusted and human life happier." *Growth of the Idea of God*, p. 230, quoted in Wieman and Meland, *American Philosophies of Religion*, p. 289. It appears as though Mathews was a Humanist, but he may best be classified as an empirical theist. He takes sharp issue with Humanism in his contribution to Wm. King, ed., *Humanism, Another Battle Line*, ch. V, "Can We Have Religion Without God?" Cf. Aubrey's evaluation of Mathews in *Journal of Religion*, 1942, pp. 341—345.

19) *Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, Mathews and Smith, s. v. Social Gospel.



credalism in the Baptist churches is a shocking example of the ultimate fate of churches which reject creeds and refuse to practice doctrinal discipline. Many Fundamentalist Baptists are seriously concerned about the inevitable consequence of their basic principle.<sup>20)</sup>

### The Methodist Church

Methodist theology is the very antithesis of Calvinism.<sup>21)</sup> It is true, of course, that the formal principle of Methodism resembles that of Calvinism, since both stem from Zwinglian rationalism and enthusiasm. In the Preface to his *Collected Works*, Wesley expresses the hope that he has written what "is agreeable to Scripture, reason, and Christian antiquity." In addition to the Scriptures, reason, "going hand in hand with religion," and Christian experience, especially that of the ante-Nicene Fathers, are therefore Wesley's source of religious knowledge.<sup>22)</sup> And in this respect Calvinistic and Methodist theology are agreed. But since Calvinistic theology is theocentric, while Methodist theology is anthropocentric, the material principles of the two systems are the very opposites. The sovereignty of God, as the material principle of Calvinism, implies as its correlative the total inability of man to do anything good in the realms of "common" and of "special" grace. The true Calvinist therefore repudiates the very principles on which the entire social gospel is based, viz., man's capacity for self-salvation. The consistent Calvinist cannot conceive of an improvement in society unless the sovereign God interferes with his irresistible "grace." This is undoubtedly the reason why not a few fundamental and consistent Calvinists are ardent advocates of premillennialism. Before the Calvinist can subscribe to the underlying principles of the social gospel he must discard the material principle of Calvinism. His formal principle, rationalism, will permit him to do this very thing. In Methodist theology, however, the material principle actually prepares the ground for the message of the social gospel. In assuming the leadership in the rise and development of the social gospel, Methodists have remained loyal to the theological principles of the founder of Methodism. A study of Wesley's theology will explain how it was possible that the movement which did so much for evangelical Christianity, which gave

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20) Contributors to the Baptist weekly, the *Watchman-Examiner*, again and again call attention to the anomalous situation that ministerial candidates profess to accept the New Testament and deny the plain teaching of it. Issues of May 23, 1940, p. 570; Oct. 21, 1943, p. 1006.

21) See Five Points of Calvinism, *Popular Symbolics*, p. 228 ff.

22) Umphrey Lee, *John Wesley and Modern Religion*, p. 132 ff.

to the Church many of its cherished hymns, actually eventuated in the social gospel.<sup>23)</sup>

Wesley's theology may be summarized as teaching a fourfold salvation: universal, free, full, and sure salvation.<sup>24)</sup> Wesley's "universal salvation" implies not only that Christ procured salvation for all men, but that this salvation is actually offered to all, even to those who never hear the Gospel. In support of this "universality of opportunity" Wesley, Fletcher, and other early Methodists adopted a modification of the Origenian view of God's threefold kingdom. They held that the Father's dispensation embraces all men, since all are able to know God from their conscience; the Kingdom of Christ is restricted to those who actually hear the Gospel; and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit is still further restricted to those who have an experimental knowledge of Christ. Since according to Rom. 5:18 condemnation came upon all, so also justification must actually come upon all. Forgetting that God deals with man through the means of grace, Wesley held that man's responsibility will be measured by his ability and opportunity; that everyone will be saved unless he deliberately rejects grace and transgresses willfully a *known* law; that the heathen actually accept the "Gospel" when they live up to the measure of light bestowed upon them; that in case "Christian" perfection is unattainable, a relative perfection is sufficient.<sup>25)</sup> This explains the notorious

23) U. Lee, *op. cit.*, is in our opinion the best study on Wesley's theological development. The following additional writings are suggested: Arn. Lunn, *John Wesley*; F. J. McConnell, *John Wesley*; Maximin Piette, *John Wesley in Evolution of Protestantism* (A Roman Catholic's evaluation); J. Mudge, *Heart Religion as Described by Wesley*; N. R. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology*, ch. XI; the centennial issue of the *Christian Advocate*, May 19, 1938; J. L. Neve, *Churches and Sects*, pp. 378—423; P. Kern, *Methodism Has a Message*.

24) H. P. Sloan puts it thus: Methodism has four characteristics: 1. Justification by faith alone. (Sloan explains: Unity with God is the genius of religion; faith unites us with Christ and becomes the spring of oneness with the Infinite); 2. True freedom of human personality; 3. The doctrine of the pure heart; 4. The witness of the Spirit. *Christian Advocate*, May 19, 1938, p. 473. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, I, p. 897 ff., contrasts Methodism with Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism on three points: universal, full, and sure salvation.

25) From Wesley's Journal: "I read today part of the meditations of Marcus Antonius. . . . I doubt but what this is one of those many who shall come from the East and the West and sit down with Abraham." Quoted in Robert Southey, *Life of John Wesley*, II, p. 89, footnote. This is, of course, Pelagianism. So is this: "A mystic who denies justification by faith may be saved. But if so, what becomes of *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* (justification by faith)? If so, is it not high time for us to reject bombast and words half a yard long and to return to the plain words: 'He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him?'" *Journal*, quoted by Lee, *op. cit.*, 161. This is still the view of Methodism, for the well-known Methodist theologian F. H. Rall, winner of the Bross Prize (\$15,000) for his *Christianity*, answers the

indifference to doctrine prevalent among Methodists. Wesley spoke most disparagingly of men who seriously debated theological questions.<sup>26)</sup> Professor Sheldon of Boston University said that "the genius of Methodism makes dogma subordinate to life,"<sup>27)</sup> and Bishop Rowe says: "To put it epigrammatically, the distinguishing doctrine of Methodism is that it has no distinguishing doctrine."<sup>28)</sup> Fortunately, Wesley's burning love for the Savior did not permit him to make the inevitable deductions of his theory concerning universal salvation. But when it is properly analyzed, it is apparent that there is a difference only in degree between Methodist theology and Modernism. The same verdict must be passed on Wesley's second basic principle, "free salvation." Wesley did not understand this term to mean that salvation is offered freely, but rather that man by his free will is able to decide for or against the Gospel. The Arminians' and Wesley's emphasis on free will was a reaction against the Calvinistic doctrine of the irresistibility of grace. However, it must be noted that Wesley's Arminianism is essentially Pelagian, for he denies the *total* depravity of man, views original sin as not actually sin, and ascribes spiritual powers to man which are quickened by God's "preventing grace," so that man can proceed from lower to higher levels of the "Christian" life.<sup>29)</sup> A modernistic Methodist will have little difficulty in recon-

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question: Is Christ the Savior or a savior? by stating that there always has been some knowledge of God available to men, that John 15:22-24 is only "a paradoxical way of putting the truth that men are judged by the light they have and the use they make of it," and that according to Matt. 25 many who had never known Christ will enter the Kingdom. *Christian Advocate*, December 17, 1942, p. 26.

26) "I will not quarrel with you about any mere opinion. Only see that your heart be right toward God; that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ; that you love your neighbor and walk as your Master walked; and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions; I am weary to hear them. My soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me an humble and gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, whosoever they are and whatsoever opinion they are of." Wesley, as quoted by G. T. Rowe, *The Meaning of Methodism*, p. 24.

27) "Changes in Theology Among Methodists," *American Journal of Religion*, X, p. 52.

28) *Op. cit.*, p. 123. This indifference to doctrine accounts for the fact that a relatively large number of Methodist ministers have received little theological training and that the Methodist Church in spite of its numerical strength and two centuries of history has produced few theological scholars. It required only sixteen words to dispose of all doctrinal matters in the merger of 1938 uniting three large Methodist branches. *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, 1944, p. 3. However, it should be noted that the historic Articles of Religion are included in the new manual.

29) *Twenty-Five Articles of Religion*, VII and VIII, Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

ciling Wesley's "free" salvation and his own modernistic concept of man.

"Full salvation" really constitutes the heart of Wesley's theology. Repentance and faith were for Wesley actually only preliminary, while sanctification, entire sanctification, or perfect love, constitute the essence of Christianity.<sup>30)</sup> Wesley's overemphasis of sanctification is no doubt due on the one hand to his reaction against the dead orthodoxy of the Anglican Church, with its many concomitant spiritual and social evils, and on the other to the early training in his parental home at Epworth and the reading of such books as Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*, Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, and William Law's *Christian Perfection*. Wesley's interest centered not so much in the *justified* as in the *sanctified* Christian. "It was not a new doctrine, but new life the first Methodists sought for themselves and others. To realize in the hearts of men the true ideal of Christianity, to maintain its personal experience and to extend it—this was their design."<sup>31)</sup> It is significant that the confessional standard for Methodist preachers is the collection of Wesley's *preached* sermons. Methodism is not concerned with laying a definite theological foundation for Christian life, but rather with fixing a system of rules. The Methodist "discipline" has become a technical term.<sup>32)</sup> The class system was inaugurated to watch the individual and aid him in reaching a relative perfection, i. e., commensurate with man's ability and opportunity. Wesley himself carefully kept a diary, in order to check his "moment by moment growth" in perfection. The modernistic Methodist is therefore following the basic lines of Wesley when he substitutes a gospel of social perfection for Wesley's message of individual perfection. When the modern Methodist minister devotes his pastoral energies toward improving the community and the nation politically and socially, he is a very consistent Methodist indeed. The realm of the original class leader, who was responsible for the spiritual growth of a group of ten mem-

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30) The Aldersgate experience was not Wesley's conversion to Christianity, but an emotional experience in which he felt certain that after years of wrestling he had now conquered inbred sin and was serving the Lord fully and perfectly, i. e., according to the measure of grace bestowed upon him "moment by moment." The most recent among the many studies of Wesley's idea of perfection is W. E. Sangster, *The Path to Perfection*. See especially pp. 77ff. Wesley said: "Repentance is the porch, faith the door, perfection the house of Christianity."

31) Bishop C. C. Seceman, *The Methodist Primer*, p. 29.

32) In the 1944 manual the term discipline is defined: "The official and published statement of the Constitution and law of the Methodist Church, its rules of organization and procedure, the description of administrative agencies and their functions, and the Ritual." *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church*, 1944, p. 597. The discipline was emphasized in the film "One Foot in Heaven."

bers, has been changed to the position of a community leader, who feels that he is responsible for the moral and social growth of all members in his community.<sup>33)</sup> — “Sure” salvation, the fourth point in Wesley’s theology is an integral part of Wesley’s system. Wesley said: “The witness of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God.” The overemphasis on the emotional side of religion, the leanings of Wesley toward Romanticism, the subjectivism of Methodism need not be discussed in detail here, since they are familiar to the reader. While the former emotional revivalism has practically disappeared among a large portion of Methodist churches, the original spirit underlying this subjective and emotional enthusiasm still manifests itself in the empiricism of modernistic Methodists.

Thus both the *principium cognoscendi* and the message of Modernism are in accord with the theological spirit of Arminian Methodism. Modernistic Methodists have turned to Wesley’s “universal and sure salvation” to find support for Modernism’s formal principle. In denying that Scripture is the only source of truth, yes, in questioning the existence of *a priori* truth, they could call on Wesley as their authority. If it were true, as Wesley indicates, that the heathen is capable of salvation by living up to the standard of life which he possesses, then there can be no absolute standard, then there is no need of an absolute body of truth concerning God, His character, His plan of salvation, etc. In fact, all religious truth would be relative, the Bible only the record of man’s religious experiences. Again, by basing the assurance of salvation on a subjective feeling, on Romantic mysticism, Wesley unwittingly anticipated Schleiermacher’s principle that man’s “God-consciousness” is the source of truth.<sup>34)</sup> The inevitable result of this *principium cognoscendi* is evident in the philosophy of religion developed by the leading theologians of the Methodist Boston University, notably the late Wm. P. Bowne, President Emeritus Albert C. Knudson, and Prof. Edgar S. Brighton. Known as Personalists, these men seek to find God by studying human personalities. They hold that the “ultimate reality,” or God, is the only absolute personality. But to find this infinite personality, we examine our own religious experiences, study our own personalities, and finally construct a com-

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33) The Methodist Church office building, a wedge-shaped structure, is directly opposite the Nation’s Capitol. Is that symbolic of the prominent part which Methodists feel obliged to take in molding the character of the American people?

34) Even the neo-orthodox theologian Edwin Lewis of Drew Theological Seminary reveals this approach. See his *The Philosophy of Christian Revelation*. In many ways this book is a check on the modernistic divine immanence theory.

posite human personality, including all that is best in man, and thus arrive at a fairly accurate picture of God. This theory views the universe as a society of selves unified by the will and eminent causality of a Supreme Self, constantly striving upward and onward.<sup>35)</sup>

The Methodist Church was the first denomination officially to adopt the social gospel. This is not surprising, for Wesley's "free salvation" by denying *total* depravity and ascribing to man inherent spiritual powers actually prepares the foundation for the "gospel" of Modernism. Every system which ascribes spiritual powers to the natural man, be it Pelagianism, Semipelagianism, or synergism, will of necessity overemphasize moral transformation and character improvement.<sup>36)</sup> Thus the Methodists were in a strategic position to shape the content of the Modernistic sermon. Wesley's "full salvation" had degenerated to a *social* salvation. While the Methodist Church since the days of Wesley has always taken an active part in rectifying social ills,<sup>37)</sup> it did not conceive of the social gospel as the Church's message until Liberalism had taken hold of American theology, i. e., about 1900. In 1907 the Methodist Federation for Social Service was organized, whose platform was that the Kingdom of God could not come as long as industrial peace, social justice, and political integrity did not prevail.<sup>38)</sup> In 1912 the Methodist Church adopted the Social Creed, a program for the improvement of society in its social, industrial, and political relations.<sup>39)</sup> The Methodist Church as a church body is attempting

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35) Wieman and Meland, *op. cit.*, pp. 132—145, 318—325. Knudson, *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought*, *passim*. E. S. Brightman, *Temporalist View of God*. *Journal of Religion*, XII, p. 544 ff. E. S. Rudisill, "Personalism and Christian Thinking," *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, April, 1941. — Brightman goes so far as to deny that God is the absolute personality and says that "God is still going through His growing pains," for the holy will of the absolute reality is still striving with His "Given," the cause of evil. *Christian Century*, 1939, in the series of thirty-three articles, "How My Mind Has Changed."

36) "It (going to church) gives him a Christian philosophy of life and a religious experience out of which he builds a character of purity and integrity." *Why Go to Church?* p. 53, a tract prepared for the laymen of the former Southern Methodist Church.

37) Early Methodists supported Wilberforce, the emancipation apostle, and Oastler, the crusader against child labor. Methodists have usually been the champions of the social and economic "underdogs." In the United States many leaders in the Anti-Saloon League have been Methodists, notably such men as the late Bishop James Cannon, Jr.

38) C. H. Hopkins, *The Rise of the Social Gospel*, p. 289.

39) The Social Creed of 1912 reads as follows: "We stand for equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life; for the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions; for the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, injuries, and mortality; for the abolition of child labor; for

to render to God the same things its members are obligated as citizens to render to Caesar. The Methodist bishops in their episcopal letter of 1942 admonished their constituency to maintain and increase the "social gains."<sup>40</sup> Harris F. Hall sees in the Kingdom of God the human race ruling itself and the world of Nature.<sup>41</sup> The leading Methodist church paper said that two domestic problems of vast importance would confront the 1944 General Conference, *the labor and the farm problems*, and that "it will be impossible to discuss the kingdom of heaven on earth in 1944 and ignore the issues involved in these two areas."<sup>42</sup> The best-known Methodist of our times is no doubt E. Stanley Jones. According to a reviewer he states in his recent book, *The Christ of the American Road*: "American Christianity must take what it has — the American heritage and characteristics — and make something out of them. We must offer to God the raw materials of our heritage and accomplishments so that together we may produce an American interpretation of the Kingdom of God . . . and make our very land in some real measure a miniature of that Kingdom."<sup>43</sup>

### The Presbyterian Church

Theologically there is little difference between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, and during the early decades of the nineteenth century under the Plan of Union (1801) the two bodies worked together in close harmony. But while the Congregational churches fell an easy prey to Liberalism, the Presbyterian churches presented a solid front against the attempts to liberalize theology. In fact, the Presbyterians practice doctrinal discipline, something that is unheard of among Congregational and the Calvinistic Baptist

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such regulations of the conditions of labor for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community; for the suppression of the 'sweating system'; for the gradual and reasonable reduction of the hours of labor to the lowest practical point, with work for all; and for that degree of leisure for all which is the condition of the highest human life; for a release from employment one day in seven; for a living wage in every industry; for the highest wage that each industry can afford, and for the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised; for the recognition of the Golden Rule and the mind of Christ as the supreme law of society and the sure remedy for all social ills." Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 291. This creed has been elaborated and extended by subsequent General Conventions and is now an integral part of the *Discipline*, pp. 555—558. — Incidentally, the *Discipline* also contains specific instructions for Committees on Public Morals, Temperance, Wartime Prohibition, Conditions of Peace, Church and Economics, pp. 560—577.

40) *Christian Advocate*, 1942, pp. 7, 8.

41) *Op. cit.*, 1942, p. 250.

42) *Op. cit.*, Sept. 9, 1943, pp. 4, 5.

43) *Christian Century*, Oct. 4, 1944, p. 1137.

churches.<sup>44)</sup> This loyalty of the Presbyterians to their confessions for almost 300 years is due in a large measure to their presbyterian form of government. The Presbyterian Church is a constitutional church, i. e., the government is vested in representative courts, or judicatories, viz., the session, the presbytery, the synod, and the general assembly. The members of these courts are the teaching elder as God's messenger and the ruling elders as the congregation's representative. These courts must determine all questions of doctrine and life according to the "constitution" of the Church, the confessions, and the discipline.<sup>45)</sup> Granting to the constituted judicatories the right to require obedience to the laws of Christ and to exclude the "disobedient," the Presbyterian Church rigidly adhered to its "constitution" as long as the respective judicatories remained faithful.<sup>46)</sup> Conversely, however, when Liberal Theology gained the upper hand in the judicatories, especially in the General Assembly, then Liberalism and Modernism controlled virtually the entire denomination. This seems to be an explanation of the fact that Presbyterianism was not disturbed seriously by Modernism until the second decade of the present century, but that within a year's time it became an issue of violent proportions, whereas in other denominations Modernism entered slowly, almost imperceptibly.<sup>47)</sup> The issues in the Fundamental-Modernistic Controversy in the Presbyterian Church revolved in the final analysis not so much about doctrine, but about *church law*. The Modernists won, because they had carefully observed all the niceties and

44) Heresy trials were not uncommon among the Presbyterians, note, e. g., the trials of Albert Barnes, 1832—36; David Swing, 1874; Charles Briggs, 1892; Preserved Smith, 1893. L. A. Loettscher, *Brief History of the Presbyterians*, pp. 66, 67. R. E. Thompson, *History of Presbyterian Churches*, *passim*.

45) *Census Report*, 1936, II, p. 1382. The procedures to be followed in carrying out the "administrative and judicial discipline" are minutely described in the *Constitution* (the 1936 edition numbers 479 pages) and the *Manual* (390 pages). See especially *The Constitution*, p. 339ff.

46) In the early decades of the nineteenth century a serious controversy disturbed American Presbyterians, known as the "New and Old School Controversy." The "New Light" group contended that conversion was more essential to a minister's qualifications than learning. This was interpreted as Arminianism and emotionalism. The Old School, which finally won, remained faithful to the Calvinistic tradition.

47) Of course, the beginnings of Modernism among the Presbyterians may be traced to the work of the Presbyterian Stelzle, who preached to groups of workingmen not to "increase the population of heaven, but to bring heaven down to earth." Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 282; to liberal tendencies of the Presbyterian theological schools Union and Auburn Seminaries and to such theologians as A. C. McGiffert and W. A. Brown. The incipient modernistic spirit is reflected also in the 1903 revision of the Westminster Confession toward a more liberal interpretation of the Calvinistic twofold election. *Popular Symbolics*, p. 245; E. H. Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict*, p. 17ff.



technicalities of Presbyterian law. In discussing the issues of this controversy with Presbyterians who left the Church as well as with those who remained within the Church, the outsider gains the definite impression that loyalty to the presbyterian form of government was the deciding factor in this controversy. This loyalty to a human principle elevated to the position of divine ordinance explains why such staunch Bible believers as Wm. J. Bryan continued to hold important positions in the Presbyterian Church. He wrote a beautiful defense of the "Five Points,"<sup>48)</sup> and though a member of the Committee to examine and report on the Auburn Affirmation, he did not register an official protest against the open denial of the truth.<sup>49)</sup> It seems that the lawyer was dominated by Presbyterian law.

Modernism used the very bulwark of Presbyterian orthodoxy, the Presbyterian Constitution, to break down the walls of Presbyterian confessionalism.<sup>50)</sup> H. E. Fosdick, "associate pastor" of the First Presbyterian Church in New York (though a Baptist), in the famous sermon "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" brought the conflict between Modernism and Fundamentalism to a head in the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.<sup>51)</sup> The Philadelphia Presbytery, under the leadership of Clarence Macartney, following constitutional procedure, overtured the 1923 General Assembly to make the preaching of the New York Presbytery conform to the Presbyterian standards. Though the "inclusivists" (unity in spite of doctrinal differences) elected their candidate for the moderatorship by twenty-four votes over Wm. J. Bryan (purity in doctrine), the General Assembly decided against the New York Presbytery. It furthermore resolved to reaffirm the "Five Points" of 1910, viz., the five "essential doctrines of the Word of God and Presbyterian standards" on Inspiration, the Virgin Birth, the Vicarious Atonement, the resurrection of Christ, and the miracles of Jesus. The liberal element, however, believed itself sufficiently strong to challenge the right of the Assembly to adopt the "Five Points." The New York Presbytery licensed H. P. Van Dusen (now president-elect of Union Seminary) shortly after the convention, though he

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48) Reprinted in Vanderlaan, *op. cit.*, pp. 32—39.

49) Rian, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

50) This chapter of Presbyterian history is described by E. H. Rian, *op. cit.*, and H. M. Griffiths, *The Case for Compromise*. Both authors are Fundamentalists and left the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. S. G. Cole, *History of Fundamentalism*.

51) The opponents of the Liberal Theology, which had already taken firm hold in some denominations during the first decade of the nineteenth century, became known as Fundamentalists, when, beginning in 1909, twelve booklets called *The Fundamentals* were distributed gratis by two laymen to all Protestant ministers. The Fundamentalists were also known as Essentialists.

refused to affirm the Virgin Birth. In December of the same year a large number of Presbyterian ministers issued the Auburn Affirmation. This is an out-and-out liberal document. But the Auburn Affirmationists were able to foist their Liberalism upon the Church under the guise that the General Assembly had transgressed its constitutional rights. The gist of this lengthy document is: 1. The General Assembly had no constitutional right to elevate the five doctrines as special tests for ordination. This right is vested in the presbyteries, and the Assembly cannot act in this matter without concurrence of the respective presbyteries, which, however, it had failed to do in 1923. 2. The "Five Points" are not doctrines taught in Scripture or in the standards, but only theories concerning these facts.<sup>52)</sup> The first point was technically correct. The inclusivists tried to find legal support for their Liberalism in the second point. Following the letter, but not the spirit, of the Constitution, the Modernists were able to maintain their membership in the Presbyterian Church while advocating rank Modernism. Thus the Presbyterian Constitution, intended by its framers to safeguard "orthodoxy," became the lever to open the floodgates and permit the tide of Modernism to submerge Fundamentalism. Princeton, the bulwark of Calvinistic theology under Warfield and Machen, became modernistic under the leadership of Stevenson. Dr. Machen himself, the stalwart champion of Calvinistic orthodoxy, was suspended from the Presbyterian Church, not because of heresy, but because of an infraction of Presbyterian law. He had organized the Independent Board for Missions, because the regular Board was supporting modernistic missionaries. He was ordered to disband his board, which he refused to do, and was suspended for insub-

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52) The salient paragraph in the Affirmation reads as follows: "This opinion of the General Assembly attempts to commit our Church to certain theories concerning the inspiration of the Bible, and the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the Continuing Life and Supernatural Power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We all hold most earnestly to these great facts and doctrines; we all believe from our hearts that the writers of the Bible were inspired of God; that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh; that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and through Him we have redemption; that having died for our sins He rose from the dead and is our ever-living Savior; that in His earthly ministry He wrought many mighty works, and by His vicarious death and unfailing presence He is able to save to the uttermost. Some of us regard the particular theories contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship." Rian, *op. cit.*, 291—297.

ordination, disobedience toward Presbyterian church law. This chapter in recent church history shows clearly that human devices, e. g., the presbyterian form of government with all the proposed safeguards, cannot preserve the Church from error. Only God's Word can effect that.

### The Federal Council of Churches

The statement is frequently made that Modernism with the social gospel is definitely on the decline. It is true that gross Modernism with its humanism and optimism of twenty-five years ago is no longer popular. It is stated that Barthian dialectical theology, often spoken of as Neo-Orthodoxy, has completely discredited Liberalism and that the awful fact of two wars in one generation has taken the wind out of Modernism's sails. But the death of Liberalism has been grossly exaggerated.<sup>53)</sup> The basic elements of Modernism and Liberal Theology still remain in large areas of the theological world. But the point of emphasis has changed. The competence of science to determine religious truths has been successfully challenged; the capacity of man for self-salvation is seriously questioned; in fact, the premises and the findings of Liberalism are being re-studied and re-examined. It is too early to predict the direction in which the Modernists will go.<sup>54)</sup>

That Liberal Theology will be with us for some time to come, seems quite evident as one examines the theology and the program of the Federal Council. While many leading theologians seemingly are floundering theologically, the leadership of the Federal Council

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53) Liberalism still is a vital issue, as is evident from Roberts and Van Dusen, *Liberal Theology*, 1942. Cp. also two anthologies by Thos. S. Kepler, *Contemporary Religious Thought* and *Contemporary Thinking About Jesus*. Five years ago the *Christian Century* published a series of thirty-three statements by prominent theologians: "How My Mind Has Changed." Some had shifted their position, but men like Luccock said that they were Liberals still. The surveys of religious books edited annually by Chas. Macfarland show that Liberalism is still active. Cp. Wm. K. Anderson, *Protestantism; A Symposium*, 1944, a Methodist publication in the liberal tradition. Wieman and Meland, *op. cit.*, will be of value in classifying the present leaders in Liberal Theology. Edwin A. Burt, *Types of Religious Philosophy*, also is an attempt to characterize the leading streams of theological thought.

54) A word of caution is probably in order: The terminology employed by present modernistic theologians is often misleading. In some circles Neo-Supranaturalism means that as of today there are truths above nature, but what is supranatural today may be within the reach of human understanding a century from now. The term revelation is interpreted to denote those religious experiences of man which are the result of divine intervention. The word *cross* is a symbol of divine *agape* vs. human *eros*. Eschatology is the belief that the Kingdom of God through a catastrophe and judgment upon man's sin will be established at some future point in history.

is committed to Liberal Theology.<sup>55)</sup> The same is true concerning the social gospel. The purpose of the Federal Council according to its constitution is the application of the principles of the social gospel.<sup>56)</sup> The program which at present is occupying the Federal Council concerns itself with such peace terms as are in keeping with their modernistic concept of the Kingdom of God. The bases for a just and durable peace, as submitted by the Council's committee under the chairmanship of John Foster Dulles, are political and moral, and are in all essentials along the lines of the social gospel.<sup>57)</sup> Since the influence of the Federal Council seems to go unabated, it is reasonable to assume that Modernism, especially the social gospel, will confront the churches for some time. The American activism seems to find an outlet in this theology. As Lutheran theologians we must be on our guard lest on the one hand we become enamored of this theology and consider it our duty to match the social activities of the Reformed churches, and lest on the other hand in our attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the social gospel we completely ignore the social implications of the Gospel.

The rise of Liberalism and the social gospel in the Reformed churches quite naturally raises the question: Is there something in the genius of Lutheranism which has preserved the Lutheran Church from Modernism? The answer is that by God's grace the *Sola Scriptura* principle of the Lutheran Reformation is taken seriously among Lutherans. This principle of necessity demands a confession of our faith in strict accordance with the Word of God. The formal principle of the Reformed churches leads to doctrinal indifference, yes even to anti-credalism, but the Lutheran formal principle makes creeds an inner necessity for Christians.<sup>58)</sup> The Lutheran Confessions meet this need. The Lutheran Confessions, as the confessions of no other Church, lead directly into the very heart of the Bible, the doctrine of justification. Yes, this doctrine becomes the *leitmotif* of all theology. And where that is the case,

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55) *Presbyterian Guardian*, Doctrinal Complexion of Federal Council, 1944, p. 215ff. The author draws heavily on John A. Hutchinson, *We Are Not Divided*. H. Hinz, *The Federal Council*, a B.D. thesis submitted to the faculty of Concordia Seminary.

56) "To secure a larger combined influence for the churches of Christ in all matters affecting the moral and social condition of the people, so as to promote the application of the law of Christ in every relation of human life." *The Constitution*, Article IV.

57) *The Churches and a Just and Durable Peace* (Christian Century Press) contains the findings of the Delaware Conference in 1942. *Forward Together*, published by the Federal Council, outlines plans for unified action on the part of various agencies in the fields of social service.

58) Krauth, C. P., *The Conservative Reformation*, p. 166f.

there every doctrine, though it may seem of secondary importance, becomes a rich treasure, and there "purity of doctrine becomes such a first," as Krauth says, "that there can be no second." The Lutheran Confessions based on the Scriptures alone contain the clear-cut answer to every "ism" which has plagued or may plague the Church. Traditionalism (acceptance of human authority), enthusiasm (religious experience), Pelagianism (man is capable of self-salvation), rationalism (liberal theology), humanism (improvement of society by education and training), and unionism, all these isms are irrevocably denounced in the Lutheran Confessions. Our solemn obligation is to make these Confessions our own by a whole-hearted subscription to them,<sup>59)</sup> and to pass them on to those who today are floundering theologically. That should be our contribution to true unity, as Sasse points out.<sup>60)</sup>

All of this, however, means that we must study and re-study our Lutheran Confessions. Purity of doctrine demands that we take the confessors' exhortation seriously when they "most earnestly exhort" that the young men preparing for the ministry study the Confessions diligently, so that the pure doctrine be preserved and propagated to our posterity.<sup>61)</sup> And in 1877 Dr. Walther wrote these earnest words: "My dear Lutheran Christians, let us consider the tremendous sacrifices which our fathers brought in order to gain for us this treasure (the confessional writings). What indescribable labors, what numerous prayers, sighs, and tears, what time in study and travel did they sacrifice! Let us under no circumstances be found carelessly squandering this treasure, for which our fathers labored and fought at tremendous sacrifices (*erarbeitet und erkaempft haben*). Let us here in America take a warning from our unfortunate fatherland, which has spurned this treasure."<sup>62)</sup>

F. E. MAYER

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59) See the splendid statement on the *quia* subscription in Schmauck, *The Confessional Principle*, p. 91.

60) *Here We Stand*, pp. 86ff., 180.

61) Triglotta, p. 21.

62) *Der Konkordienformel Kern und Stern*, p. 78f.

