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# Gnosis in the Church Today

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## I.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

THE TITLE OF THIS PAPER suggests our using the two disciplines, historical theology and theology proper. To spare ourselves long historical debate I have switched the assigned title from "Gnosticism in the Church Today" to "Gnosis in the Church Today." Still, I should like to say a word about historical Gnosticism.

Some recent historical studies separate the gnosis elements from the second-century Gnosticism. One of the basic problems in the study of Gnosticism is that while there is general agreement that there was such a phenomenon as historical Gnosticism, which bloomed in the second century A.D., there is no general agreement concerning its origins or, for that matter, its boundaries.

From April 13 to 18, 1966, a group of recognized scholars assembled as the Colloquium of Messina in Italy to discuss this very topic, and published their essays in *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo*.<sup>1</sup> To date, this volume seems the most nearly comprehensive introduction to the problem. The breadth of Gnosticism can easily be detected in the divisions of the topics at the colloquium. "The Definition and the Origins of Gnosticism"; "Gnosticism and Egypt"; "Gnosticism: Iran and Mesopotamia"; "Gnosticism and Greece"; "Gnosticism in Alexandria"; "Gnosticism and Qumran"; "Gnosticism and Christianity"; and "Gnosticism and Buddhism: A Problem in Comparisons."<sup>2</sup>

There seems to be a kind of general agreement that gnosis resulted from the decline of the ancient religions. Rather than being an original, creative religion, gnosis is a parasite movement that attached itself to established religion and used its forms. In a general sort of way we are interested in Christian gnosis, i.e., gnosis which expressed its religious thought in Christian rather than Jewish, Egyptian, Persian, or Hellenistic symbols.

The argument of which came first, Christianity or established Gnosticism seems at first blush to be a kind of chicken—or—egg debate. Reitzenstein, Bultmann, and Kretschmar give the priority to Gnosticism and thus see certain elements of Gnosticism in the New Testament. Schlier sees Christianity and Gnosticism as historical twins. Rudolph, Bianchi, and now the young Japanese-American scholar, Edwin Yamauchi, sees Christianity as a parent of Gnosticism.<sup>3</sup> R. McL. Wilson in his essay, "Gnosis, Gnosticism and the New Testament,"<sup>4</sup> also presents a convincing argument for the last option. He shows that Gnosticism is dependent on Christianity and uses New Testament words, filling them with new meanings. This is precisely one of the problems which the church has had to face today, filling Biblical words with new philosophical

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meanings. I should like to settle on Wilson's definition of Gnosticism, at least the second century brand. "This second-century Gnosticism is not simply a deviation *within* Christianity, but the amalgamation of Christian ideas with ideas drawn from other sources."<sup>5</sup> Basically it is a syncretistic movement bringing or merging together worlds of thought whose origins, and hence presuppositions, are foreign to each other.

Before we proceed with the topic proper, we must answer another question, the question of whether it is really confessional to identify gnosis elements in the church today, roughly 1700 years since the time of historical Christian Gnosticism. I believe that on this point we have a clear mandate from the Lutheran Confessions, especially the Augustana. We fail to be confessional if we understand the *damnamus* sections as being mere historical strictures on heretics long dead and buried. The chances of an Arian or Eunomian announcing himself as such are slim. In passing the doctrinal condemnation on erring teachers in the past, sixteenth-century Lutherans intended to identify themselves with what they understood to be the catholic and orthodox church and at the same time to alert Christians to the appearance of similar heresies in their own time.<sup>6</sup> The Lutheran Confessions require of each of us to make his own deductions and applications. In the case of the radical left wing of the Reformation, this group is specifically identified and condemned as the new Samosatenes, though its members might never have heard of Paul of Samosata.

I trust that there is agreement among us that Gnosticism or gnosis is an amalgamation of heresies, not to be tolerated in the church. If we should need any convincing on this point, we should be reminded of Augustana I where the Valentinians, second-century Gnostics are condemned first in the list of heretics.<sup>7</sup>

Besides providing a confessional apology for a topic which compares historical and contemporary phenomena, I must say that we are not the first to establish such parallels. Albright refers to Toynbee, Tillich, and Schweitzer as modern Gnostics. Milton D. Hunnèx in an article in *Christianity Today* saw in religionless Christianity a new form of Gnosticism.<sup>8</sup> Simply to search for similarities or parallels between current religious phenomena and past historical religious movements does not guarantee that our search will meet with success; but it is certainly a permissible task, from both confessional and scholarly viewpoints, to look for a pattern of gnosis in current religious phenomena. Only our evidence will be able to pronounce this venture successful.<sup>9</sup>

## II.

### WHAT DEFINITION OF THE GNOSIS IS TO BE USED?

One section of *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo* is devoted specifically to the problem of definition.<sup>10</sup> Among the six contributing authors there is not one English-speaking writer. Conveniently, the most helpful chapter in the six was written by a Dutchman, who favored us by writing in our native tongue.<sup>11</sup> Th. P. Van Baaren organized a seminar working-group at the University of Groningen

with the expressed purpose of defining "gnosis." A very cautious man, he writes, "Gnosticism as such is an organic historic complex that cannot be satisfactorily analyzed simply by resolving it into its elements." Rather than standing despairingly on the edge of a definitionless abyss, Van Baaren, to nail Gnosticism down, singles in on the gnosis and offers what he calls "a shorter or longer list of characteristics of this religious complex, open to corrections and additions."<sup>12</sup> It is this list, "open to corrections and additions," of course, that will serve as our standard and pattern in looking at current problems in the church today.

Here in brief, are eight elements of the gnosis upon which comment will be made: (1) gnosis as revelation; (2) gnosis as secret; (3) the rejection or allegorization of the Old Testament and the allegorization of the New Testament; (4) God as transcendent and present in aeons; (5) the distinction between *gnosis* and *pistis*; (6) asceticism and antinomianism or libertinism; (7) differentiating between the Heavenly Savior and the human shape of Jesus of Nazareth; and (8) Christ as Revealer.

### III.

(1) "*Gnosis considered as knowledge is not primarily intellectual, but is based upon revelation and is necessary for the attainment of full salvation.*" The distinction between revelational and intellectual religion should be made clear. Revelational religion makes the supernatural revelation the basis or the criterion of truth. Essentially revelational religion is a form of mysticism. Christianity is the proclamation of a supernatural revelation, but it is not a revelational religion because its yardstick of truth is history, especially the historical event of the resurrection, and not revelation. Intellectual religion is what we call historical religion. It involves the intellect and the senses, of hearing, seeing, and touching in the apprehending of religious or revelational truth in the manner described in I John 1:1f. The comprehension of personal salvation is revelational in the sense that it worked by a revelation of God. Compare Matthew 16:17. However, direct naked revelation is not the evidence of itself.

It is not difficult to detect here a similarity between the gnosis and the anti-intellectual thrust of neo-orthodoxy in our time.<sup>13</sup> Barth, a chief proponent of the school of neo-orthodoxy, offered the church a theology of revelation in which intellectual knowledge, what is known through history, was subsumed under the category of the encounter, the moment of revelation. Among some disciples, like Baillie, the revelation can be so independent of the specific Christian message that it no longer needs the historic Christian phenomena.<sup>14</sup>

Neo-orthodoxy, especially the Barthian strain, received a hearty welcome in some Missouri Synod circles because the herald of neo-orthodoxy was heard as the war cry against Rationalism.<sup>15</sup> However, neo-orthodoxy was not just anti-rationalistic, it was non-rational in the sense of non-intellectual and non-historical. It was an attempt to sidestep the really tough historical questions of the nineteenth-

century historical quest for Jesus. Neo-orthodoxy fell into Spinoza's trap of separating theology and secular knowledge into unrelated spheres.

A hallmark of revelation theology is that the revelational content is the proof and evidence of its own revelation. Mormonism, Mohammedanism, and Buddhism are revelational religions. Revelational religion, Christian or non-Christian, is, by defining its own boundaries, safe from investigative scrutiny, but at the same time there is no convincing reason that someone else should accept the validity of one revelational religion over against another one. For example, in neo-orthodoxy, everyone has to have his own encounter to verify for himself the truth that the encounter is indeed the moment of revelation. Revelational religion is always subjectivistic. The revelation is totally immune from any outside or objective historical investigation of its revelation. Only those who have the revelation can verify it.<sup>16</sup>

This type of revelational theology has appeared in Lutheran theology in other forms besides the generous transfusion of Barthianism. The charismatic movement is clearly revelational. The moment of truth is not found in the careful, arduous study of the Holy Scriptures but in a new birth in the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup> The person who receives the Holy Spirit anew becomes superior in theological acumen to the scholar of the Bible who has not had the benefit of the enlightening rebirth. At its heart, the charismatic movement is anti-intellectual.

At other points, moreover, in the history of Lutheranism, the argument of the *internum testimonium spiritus sancti* has sometimes been offered as the proof for the truthfulness of Christianity.<sup>18</sup> Here the charge of revelational Christianity must be applied. I am not speaking to question of the individual acceptance of Jesus as the Lord, Christ, etc.—this, as St. Paul says, can only be worked by the Holy Spirit—but to the question of the existence of God, the moral law, and the life of Jesus, especially His miracles and resurrection. These are truths comprehensible without any revelation.<sup>19</sup> Their meanings, however, are revelational.

In the "The Church's One Foundation" revelational religion clearly replaces an intellectual one. The "The Church's One Foundation" belongs to the category of revelational religions as it offers faith as the answer to the question "How do I know the Gospel is true?"<sup>20</sup> Thus, in responding to the truth-question, history is substituted for faith. A contrary position is offered by John's Gospel where the Scriptures provide the historical linkage between the history of Jesus and the Church today.<sup>21</sup> The "The Church's One Foundation" makes the Gospel the basis for its own authority. Here revelation becomes the evidence for itself.<sup>22</sup>

(2) "Gnosticism claims to have a revelation of its own which is essentially secret." Without much difficulty, many have seen gnosis in the lodges, especially the Free Masons and the Rosicrucians.<sup>23</sup> This characterization could apply to any nominal Christian group gathered in conventicles reserved for the religious élite.

This charge applies to the charismatic movement where private prayer meetings provide the divine spiritual illumination not available in the regular services of the church open to all.

(3) "*The Old Testament is usually rejected with more or less force. If not fully rejected it is interpreted allegorically. The same method of exegesis is as a rule chosen for the New Testament.*" The gnosis heremeneutic of allegorizing history is a natural concomitant of the dualistic world-view which separated matter and spirit. History, which deals with things once created, would have to be allegorically adjusted in gnosis thought because the world's creation, the basis of history, was itself an evil act. Among some in the Missouri Synod the act of an historical creation as outlined in Genesis 1 and 2 is frequently considered an opinion intellectually unacceptable. Subsequent Biblical history has also in some cases been treated as allegory to avoid the embarrassment of history.

In the Missouri Synod, we have experienced, not a *de lege*, but a *de facto* rejection of the Old Testament. Any approach that substitutes allegory for history in the Old Testament is *de facto* a rejection of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is basically history, the history of God's people and of God's faithfulness to His promise. Where an allegorical operation transforms Old Testament history into allegory, the Old Testament loses its essential character and, hence, no longer serves its original purpose and therefore becomes eventually useless.

President J. A. O. Preus has been speaking to these and related issues in recent editions of the *Lutheran Witness* in the series of articles entitled "With One Voice." Famous, in our circles, are the assertions that Genesis 1-11 and the book of Jonah are allegory. In general, any type of redactional criticism that relegates history to the level of adiaforon is allegorizing.

The question of the permissibility of substituting allegory for history under the slogan of exegetical freedom must be examined. Like many slogans, the slogan of exegetical freedom is chanted by the mobs, in this case the academic theologians, without any thorough examination of its meaning.<sup>21</sup> In regard to the understanding of any document, there is no truly absolute exegetical freedom. Every honest scholar of literature attempts to understand it in the sense which its author intended. This principle applies equally to the Bible and any other literature. There is no exegetical freedom to treat analogy as history or to treat history as analogy. The Bible is clear in presenting analogy as analogy and history as history. Where history, especially in the New Testament, is dissolved into allegory, not only does Christianity lose its historical character but the incarnation itself totters on the brink of dissolution. This point in the theological continuum, indeed, has been reached, not only by the second-century Gnostics, but also by influential New Testament scholars, including Lutherans, in our time. The failure of the interpreter to recognize history as history and analogy as analogy is a literary transgression for which the penalty of a literary defrocking must be carried out without mercy. Where cold fact and analogy are merged so that these distinctions are fused into one kind of discourse,

language, which exists only to communicate, no longer communicates. Like saltless salt, confused language should be trodden under foot. Meaningless language or language with two meanings that are materially contradictory is no language. This unwelcomed inheritance has been bequeathed to our generation by the neo-orthodox school.

(4) *"God is conceived as transcendent . . . God is conceived as beyond the comprehension of human thought . . . God's transcendence may be qualified by the appearance of various beings intermediate between God and the Cosmos, usually called aeons. These beings are as a rule conceived as divine emanations."*

Van Baaren's description of the gnosis theory of a transcendent God is applicable without too much readjustment to Karl Barth and Paul Tillich. In Barthian theology, the only recognizable emanation of the transcendent God is Christ.<sup>25</sup> However, in the case of Paul Tillich, the Christomonistic revelation is universalized. For Tillich most everything is capable of becoming a bearer of revelation.<sup>26</sup> Given the right revelatory situation or constellation, the transcendent God can reveal Himself. In this Tillichian theology, God is there and not there at the same time. In His immanence God is transcendent. In the gnosis concept, God is removed as a kind of "Wholly Other," but He is present in multiple situations through the emanations. It is doubtful whether Tillichian thought is any less fanciful than crass Gnosticism with its multiple aeons. Both gnosis and modern approaches are destructive of the historical claim of Christianity, which makes for itself an exclusive claim in the area of revelation. The contemporary emanation theology of Paul Tillich can eventually result in universalism or atheism—and has!

(5) *"Gnosticism makes a clear difference between pistis and gnosis."* This characteristic of gnosis, offered by Van Baaren, must be treated together with the gnostic anthropology. *"Human beings are divided into three classes, according to whether they have gnosis or not. The pneumatics, who possess full gnosis, are by nature admitted to full salvation. Those who have only pistis, may at least attain a certain degree of salvation. Those who are fully taken up with the material world have no chance of salvation at all."* Gnosis is the Greek word for knowledge and *pistis* the word for faith. However, the gnostic meaning of these words are just the opposite. In Gnosticism, "faith," *pistis*, was intellectual "knowledge," *gnosis* was esoteric.

The "Church's One Foundation" divides the church into two categories reminiscent of gnostic categories of "pneumatics" and those who have faith only, the people who operate with the intellect. There is bound to be confusion because the terms "knowledge" and "faith" mean exactly the opposite of what the words seem to suggest.

The sub-standard class in the gnosis, those who have faith only, i.e., those who have only an intellectual awareness, is parallel to those whom the "Church's One Foundation" censures for being guilty of near idolatry because they say, "I believe whatever the Bible says." The "Church's One Foundation" states that such a

procedure of believing whatever the Bible says will not guarantee advancement to the higher step "of finding the grace of God in Christ." The adopters of the "Church's One Foundation" might consider themselves among those who have reached the level "of finding the grace of God in Christ." The Gospel is simply because it is the Gospel or because of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit becomes the principle of factual or historical verification. In the "Church's One Foundation" Spirit-proof is substituted for historical proof as it is conveyed by the apostolic and prophetic writings.

The same type of general criticism can be levelled with even less need for explanation at the charismatic movement. The same gnostic designation, "pneumatic," can be applied to those who have had this unique experience with the Holy Spirit, which other Christians, the ordinary people, have not had.

(6) *"The essentially dualistic world-view leads as a rule to an extremely ascetic system or ethics, but in some cases we find an 'Umwertung aller Werte' expressed in complete libertinism."* From my own seminary days in the late 1950's I know that sexual asceticism has been espoused in our circles as a religiously valuable way of life. Articles on the subject were offered in the student publication of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, at the time. However it is the other extreme of libertinism, at least in a theoretical sense, that represents the current danger in the church. Rather than use the term libertinism as suggested by Van Baaren, the term antinomianism as suggested by Edwin M. Yamauchi might be the more discreet.<sup>28</sup> We are interested here in establishing a theoretical parallel, not in offering specific examples of antinomian behavior. E. Conze states the gnostic morality as well as anyone: "The exalted spiritual condition generated in the perfect by the power of full understanding must of necessity cause a certain disdain for the puny demands of conventional morality. In consequence some Gnostic sects taught that once a man has gained salvation, he is free to disregard moral obligations."<sup>29</sup> Since Paul Tillich has been frequently recognized as a latter-day proponent of the gnosis, it might not be inappropriate to call attention to his wife's exposé of Tillich's extracurricular activities in *Paulus*, her biography of her husband.

Lutheranism, however, has been misunderstood from the very beginning as also being antinomian. Augustana XX was a defense of the Lutheran position that good works were commanded by God. Article VI of the Formula of Concord goes over the same ground, but more carefully.

One of the concerns of the Missouri Synod's New Orleans Convention was the denial of the use of the law in the life of the Christian. The suspicions were confirmed in the first article of the first issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*, a journal published in St. Louis. Traugott H. Rehwaldt in "Is The Law A Guide For Good Works?" seems to provide a clearly negative answer to this question when he concludes, "We have tried to point out in this paper that the bald statement that the Law serves as a guide and



norm for the good works of the Christian strikes a note that is not in harmony with FC VI and with Luther's other writings."<sup>30</sup> Is the "Gospel" morality with its basic antinomianism only gnosis?

In "Theses on Law and the Gospel,"<sup>31</sup> I spoke to this entire issue and will not repeat what I said there. However, I believe that the denial of the Law in the life of the Christian *qua* Christian is intimately connected with a general approach to the Bible, especially the Old Testament, whereby the Law is regarded as an inferior product of God. The position that the Law is the inferior product of God is not far removed from the historic gnostic position that the Law is the product of the inferior God of the Old Testament, i.e., the Demiurge.

(7) *"In connection with the basic dualism there is a strong tendency to differentiate between the Heavenly Savior and the human shape of Jesus of Nazareth. This has led to varying solutions of which docetism is the most prominent one."* The dualism of gnosis, which involved a separation between world and spirit, necessarily resulted in a shelving of any real kind of incarnation.<sup>32</sup> A spirit of dualism has been introduced into a contemporary Christianity since at least the time of Immanuel Kant. This dualism of theology and history is paralled to the gnostic dualism of spirit and world and has been basic to New Testament studies in our time. Elert sees a practical denial of the incarnation in the Calvinistic interpretation of the Lord's Supper.<sup>33</sup>

Essentially, the division between theology and history is only a modern form of Nestorianism which so separates divine and human elements that incarnational theology becomes impossible. With such a dualistic philosophy, Christianity cannot survive as historic Christianity, though it might survive as a kind of philosophy. Ontological dualism is not a simple heresy in the sense that only one concept or area of Christian truth is touched. Ontological dualism spells the death of Christianity. The words, "And the word was made flesh," lose their foundation. The lifeblood of contemporary New Testament studies has been the search for the historical Jesus divorced from the Christ of faith. History and faith operate separately.<sup>34</sup> This Christological dualism has been expressed in many ways, but it is the basic philosophical presupposition for most current studies of the four Gospels. To separate the Christ of the church's faith from the Jesus of history is the most easily recognizable and blatant form of the gnosis in the church today. It is even conveniently reminiscent of the gnosis slogan of "the Heavenly Savior and the human shape of Jesus of Nazareth."

(8) Another characteristic of the gnosis was to consider Christ's essential work as revelatory rather than atoning. *"In most systems Christ is regarded as the great point of reversal in the cosmic process. As evil has come into existence by the fall of a former aeon, so Christ ushers in salvation because he proclaims the unknown God, the good God who had remained a stranger until that moment."*

Several points can be made here. Neo-orthodoxy is basically a

religion of revelation, not of atonement in the sense of death for sins or justice. Gnosis and neo-orthodoxy emphasize Christ as the Revealer. Even the historical event of the cross receives its meaning because it is the highest moment of revelation, not because of interaction between God and Jesus. Tillich saw the cross as the proclamation of Christ's Easter victory.<sup>35</sup> The theology of hope also sees the cross as the moment when God reveals His association with the downtrodden and distressed.<sup>36</sup> In all these systems, Christ and the cross find their ultimate value as revelation, not as atonement. At best, atonement is merged or submerged into revelation.

The older liberalism of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth also saw Jesus as the great Revealer of God from an ethical viewpoint, not as the agent of an atonement. Jesus teaches us how to live. Going back further in the nineteenth century to Schleiermacher, Jesus was viewed, not as the agent of atonement, but as the Revealer of the ultimate God-Consciousness.<sup>37</sup> All of these views have something in common. They must regard the Old Testament as an inferior revelation or no revelation at all. The inferior salvation in the Old Testament resulted from the inferior revelation. *Gnosis* means knowledge, and for the gnosis Jesus must appear as the ultimate Revealer of divine knowledge.

#### IV

#### CONCLUSION

Some might call gnosis simply a overemphasis on certain concepts or readjustment in the meaning of certain terms. But this fact makes gnosis the most dangerous kind of movement in any age—second, seventeenth, or twentieth century. It appears as only slight readjustment, but the slight readjustment destroys Christianity under the pretense that gnosis itself is Christianity.

The current movement within the Missouri Synod, by substituting *sola fide* and *sola gratia* for the *sola Scriptura* as the source of doctrine, is essentially gnostic in approach. *Sola gratia* and *sola fide* replace the *sola scriptura* in the determination of the truth. By eliminating the *sola Scriptura*, and here the *sola* must be emphasized, as the one and only principle of determining what is truth, and by substituting the *sola gratia* and *sola fide* as the criteria of the truth, Christianity becomes a revelational religion, not only to the exclusion of being an intellectual or historical religion, but also to the exclusion of being the religion of the atonement.

For Lutheranism, however, the cognitive issue, the determination of the truth is answered by *sola Scriptura*, not *sola fide* and *sola gratia*. The soteriological issues of how salvation was acquired and how it is personally appropriated are answered by *sola gratia* and *sola fide*.

Where *sola gratia* and *sola fide* are transferred to another sphere in order to serve as answers to the cognitive question, then the soteriological questions have no answer. What is more dangerous is that where the soteriological questions are not answered with *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, all other possible answers must necessarily be wrong. The net result of depriving the soteriological questions of the an-

swers of *sola fide* and *sola gratia* is that the new answer will be *operibus*, a religion of works.

### FOOTNOTES

1. Ugo Bianchi, ed., *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13-18 Aprile 1966* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967).
2. *Ibid.*, pp. vii-x.
3. Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973).
4. R. McL. Wilson, "Gnosis, Gnosticism and the New Testament," Bianchi, pp. 511-28.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 512.
6. Cf. Hans-Werner Gensichen, *We Condemn: How Luther and 16th-Century Lutheranism Condemned False Doctrine*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).
7. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, sixth edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967) p. 51n.
8. *Christianity Today*, X, 335-7.
9. Some might question the validity of this kind of research paper. In this kind of a matter no one is looking to establish a one-for-one equation. History never repeats itself that exactly. The differences between the second century and the current time must be maintained. The reader is referred to the various subjects handled at the Colloquy of Messina to see that the comparison which is attempted here is legitimate research. Certainly the topic "Gnosis in the Church Today" seems as appropriate and more capable of a satisfactory completion than the topic "Gnosticism and Buddhism: A Problem in Comparison." Bianchi, pp. 651-87.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-226.
11. Th. B. van Baaren, "Towards a definition of Gnosticism," Branchi, pp. 174-80.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
13. The reaction to the anti-intellectual or anti-historical bias of Barthian neo-orthodoxy can be seen particularly in the theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg, for whom history alone is the mode of revelation.
14. John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 137. Here is an example: "The Sphinx in the Egyptian desert is the true representation of Deity."
15. A thorough study of the introduction of neo-orthodoxy into Missouri Synod theology must still be made. Neo-orthodoxy offered in its program several elements that were part of the Missouri Synod theology. (1) Both recognized a common opponent in eighteenth-century Rationalism and in nineteenth-century theology under the influence of Schleiermacher. (2) Both operated under the banner of "Word theology." What Missouri Synod theology and neo-orthodoxy meant by this was entirely different. In addition, the term "neo-orthodox" was very close to the term "orthodox," so frequently used by the Missouri Synod theologians.
16. Let it be repeated that the theology of hope is the reaction of its representatives against the revelational theology of neo-orthodoxy. Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *Hope and Planning*, trans. Margaret Clarkson (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1971), pp. 13-15.
17. One former Missouri Synod pastor relates in a pamphlet his original charismatic experience in which he was overcome by the Holy Spirit in preparing his sermon. He set his Bible aside and let himself be filled with the Spirit. In charismatic Bible study groups, prayer is offered requesting enlightenment of the participants, whose actual Biblical knowledge is admittedly minimal or faulty.
18. In true Lutheran theology the internal testimony of the Spirit is equated with faith and is the result of the Spirit's working in the Scriptures as the record of what God has done in Jesus Christ. The internal testimony

- of the Spirit is not substituted for the historical evidences of Christianity. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), I, p. 120. In Schleiermacher's theology faith does become the basis of the truth.
19. Cf. Romans 1 and 2; Acts 17:22-23.
  20. Cf. my "The Church's One Foundation," *The Springfielder*, XXXVIII (December 1974), p. 220.
  21. John 20:30f.
  22. Cf. my "The Law-Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod," *The Springfielder*, XXXVI (December 1972), pp. 156-71.
  23. *Christianity Today*, op. cit.
  24. All slogans, regardless of origin, should be given a total reappraisal occasionally to see whether they have become dogmaticisms that do not even have internal unity. The British scholar James Barr did much to dispel the unnatural chasm between Greek and Hebrew thought forms that had become the dogmaticisms of many students of theology. In Missouri Synod circles, "Gospel" frequently denotes an ill-defined or undefined dogmaticism. In the 1960's some suggested a moratorium on the word "God." Could we perhaps make the same suggestion for the word Gospel? This second suggestion will meet with as little success as did the first.
  25. Sebastian A. Matczak, *Karl Barth on God* (New York: St. Paul Publications, 1962) pp. 79-87.
  26. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), I, p. 118.
  27. *Missouri in Perspective*, I, pp. 221-2.
  28. Edwin Yamauchi, *Gnostic Ethics and Mandaean Origins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 25-8.
  29. E. Conze, "Gnosticism and Buddhism," Bianchi, p. 659.
  30. *Currents in Theology and Mission*, I, p. 9.
  31. *The Springfielder*, XXXVII (June 1973), pp. 53-63.
  32. The Colloquy of Messina spoke to the several understandings of dualism. Three types were delineated: anti-cosmic, Zoroastrian, and metaphysical. Bianchi, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.
  33. Werner Elert, *The Lord's Supper Today*, trans. Martin Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), pp. 36-7.
  34. Pannenberg among contemporary theologians attempts to correct this current dualism by substituting history as a monistic principle of understanding reality. Johannes B. Metz has a similar understanding.
  35. Tillich, II, pp. 158-9.
  36. Moltmann, p. 106.
  37. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), pp. 461-3.