

# ***Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns: Our Own Arts and Practices as an Outgrowth of the Law***

By: John Philipp Koehler

[Reprinted from the Proceedings of the Thirty-fifth Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, August 5-12, 1959]

## **Introduction**

Professor Koehler's essay of a generation back entitled "*Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns*" has been scheduled for presentation here, obviously from the consideration that our present generation may profit, shall we say may yet profit, from attending these weighty words out of the past. They are weighty words. Published in the *Quartalschrift*, October 1914 to July 1915, as an expansion of a previously delivered conference address and gotten into print for perusal in the study, they are not light reading... (Note: The translation presented before the convention by the undersigned having been in part his own effort at rewriting Professor Koehler's article into English, and in part an adaptation of a translation by Rev. Alex Hillmer, the version given in these Proceedings, with Rev. Hillmer's consent, is altogether the translation done by Rev. Hillmer, as published in Faith-Life, Volumes XXV and XXVI.<sup>1</sup>)

The following study grew out of a remark made at a larger mixed conference. It had been said that in our own circles much legalism held sway, that therein lay the cause for the stasis and decline in all fields of church life, that, for that reason, genuine repentance by all of us was called for before a change for the better might be expected. The term "*Gesetzlich Wesen*" was not generally understood. Some thought does not that term mean that one wishes to be saved by works, which can not be so unreservedly said of our circles. Others were of the opinion it might refer to the striving after sanctification but this surely could not be so described and made light of. Very few, likely, understood in what sense the expression was used, namely, as a description of one aspect of all our acts in thought, word, and deed, gained from a careful, all-around observation of life and, especially, from the study of history.

For that reason a paper on "*Gesetzlich Wesen*" was assigned. And, in order to avoid irrelevant details, indeed, in order not to weaken the intended effect of the above remark as a call to repentance, we have narrowed the theme of this work to: "*Gesetzlich Wesen* in our own midst."

We preface our detailed study with four statements that are to be enlarged upon and clarified:

1. *Gesetzlich Wesen* among Christians consists in their taking the motivations and the forms of their actions from the law instead of letting them flow freely out of the gospel. This proceeds out of our flesh, which injects this trait into every act of the Christian and externalizes it.
2. In the Lutheran churches this characteristic manifests itself first of all and primarily in the noisy self-satisfied to-do about pure doctrine. Paralleling this is a clamorous insistence on sanctification that exerts itself especially in church-government regulations. As a reaction, a fussy insistence of sanctification develops that, as among the pietists, rebels against all external discipline both in doctrine and in daily life, but nevertheless makes it legalistic presence felt just as energetically by a consciousness of greater piety.

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<sup>1</sup> *Faith-Life*, issued by The Protestant Conference, P.O. Box B, Mosinee, Wisconsin.

3. When this condition, during the course of the development of the life of the church, assumes control in one new field after the other like a weed pest and becomes the natural state in each field, then the decline sets in, the decline which also shows itself outwardly in our taking over many virus infected and beggarly elements from the sectarian churches.
4. An earnest that we do not ultimately set our stiff neck against the wooing work of the Gospel, is our faithful accord in the stalwart acknowledgment of this condition. This desired end is brought about, however, by our again becoming absorbed more deeply in and by the Gospel and clinging to it more tenaciously—until it bless us. Which blessing will consist in our again cultivating many cardinal truths of the gospel: truths that are to be found not only in Scriptures but also primarily in Luther's writings but because of one-sided doctrinal discussion were crowded from the center of our vision. In this way the spirit of our Christians would again find objects to challenge its interest after the old battles, by themselves incapable of furthering new thoughts, had deadened and dulled its powers.

The first statement suggests that the difference between law and gospel must be thoroughly understood before we can define *Gesetzlich Wesen*. As soon as this difference is clearly established, the following three statements are a natural sequence:

1. The essential 'being' of a Christian flows out of the gospel.
2. A Christian as such receives the motivation and forms of his actions from the gospel and not from the law.
3. These consist and are built up of faith, love, and hope, Through these, every manifestation of a Christian's life is determined. On the other hand, the motivations and forms that natural man derives from the law are: suspicion, selfishness, fear. These natural man also injects into every manifestation of his life as a Christian; and in so far as this is the case or expresses itself in the Christian we speak of *Gesetzlich Wesen*.

### **What is the Difference between the Law and the Gospel?**

The law is the eternal holy will of God as it is revealed, for instance, in the Ten Commandments. The content of the law is love to God and to fellow man. But now when we speak of the law, we think of it in the sense that Paul speaks of it in his letters to the Romans and to the Galatians, when he says the law has been done away with. There Paul does not have in mind the eternal content of the law, founded in God's essence, but the manner in which this law opposes man in life ever since he fell into sin.

The law or the will of God opposes sin by demands, threats, and condemnation. This the law does not only over against sin as an abstract idea, but it takes a concrete personal position over against sinful man. It is not only the case that man in his present sinful nature has a wrong conception of the will of God and now ascribes to it the characteristic of demanding, threatening, and condemning; no, more, the will of God, God himself, takes an attitude in his will over against sinful man, different from what he had in just this will toward man while he was yet in a state of innocence. This different attitude is what is described in the three expressions above.

The will of God already existed in eternity. But where there was no sin opposing it, there also was no occasion to speak of demands, threats, condemning. Thus also not over against original man in the state of innocence. For that reason the remark concerning the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden is not to be understood as though God had wanted to coerce man. No, there the point was to warn against danger. Even for the Christian as such, as *pneuma*, spirit, the eternal will of God exists, but not in the form of demands, threats, condemnation. From these the righteous are free. To be sure, the eternal

will of God remains; but God's children, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, enter into the will of God with their will, and joy in it and are glad.

The sinner, on the other hand, God wishes to coerce with His demands, threats, and condemnation. That is a harsh manner of dealing with natural man who perceives nothing of the spirit of God. The law wishes to thrust man down into the dust and with pure force bring him to the knowledge of his sin. God cannot deal any other way with natural man. His root-being, sin, is suspicion, selfishness, fear, as is shown in Moses' great and typical delineation in the epic story of the fall of man. Where God's law steps up against such demeanor, it is impossible for anything new and God-pleasing to grow forth; for man still conceives of the will of God, which never was such formerly in his state of innocence, as something demanding, threatening, condemning. At the same time, it is not in the nature of the law to create anything, rather it takes on the characteristics as shown above. Therefore it is impossible that the law of God should call forth love toward God or fellow man. For that reason it does not lie in the law's sphere as we now, with Paul, speak of law to generate such new God-pleasing natural activity. To crush and kill is all the law can and desires to do.

Through and out of all this, sin becomes altogether sinful, as Paul shows in detail Romans 5:20; 7:5, 9, 11, 13. Not only do the attempts to keep the law reveal the above mentioned characteristics of sin: suspicion, selfishness, fear, but even sin itself takes occasion through the law, and the result is often outbreaks of sin in course acts of shame. Even when in complete despair the will of man collapses through the devastating work of the law, sin continues in force with the above named characteristics. This is not by accident but lies within the sphere of the law and so is a part of its aim, as also of the intent of God. That is not to be understood as though God himself were the originator of sin and insofar man were not to be blamed. In regard to the latter Paul says that sin took occasion by the commandment, in regard to the former, that is the purpose of God to bring man to the knowledge of sin. The way to that is that sin abound, that it reign unto death.

The way the law works here is intimately related with the judgment of the hardening of the heart; which is not to be understood as though God occasionally hardens the heart of an especially corrupt man—putting it that way would surely give rise to a rash of self-righteous feelings. Rather the hardening of man's heart is the result of the law of God constantly in action against those who resist the working of the Holy Spirit and its urgings in the gospel—for every Christian at all times an ever-present warning against his old Adam.

It is not sound theology if we seek to soften the harshness of this presentation and thereby the intent of the Bible passages on which it is based, God's law is not child's play. To be sure, this presentation leaves our human reason with much that is hard to understand. But then the law is not primarily given for our intellectual comprehension, rather it speaks to our conscience. And our conscience says God is right also in this matter.

In order that, finally, sin be revealed as sin, and that man despair of his own righteousness as also of his ability to achieve it, which is God's main purpose in the law, this law must now also be so preached that it brings about its set purpose.

The Gospel, on the other hand, is something entirely different with respect to what it is, what it aims at, how it brings it about, what it achieves, and the manner in which one uses it. It heralds the wonderful good news that God in Christ has forgiven our sin and therewith given and guaranteed to us salvation, life, and all blessedness. The gospel does not demand, nor does it give directions or orders that something be done; no, it heralds that something has been done. It does not threaten, it imparts precious promises. It does not condemn, it gives gifts. It does not kill, on the contrary, it creates faith, which is new life. This, therefore, takes on the nature of the gospel, not of the law. It is confidence, love, assuring hope, the exact opposite of what the sinner offers the law: suspicion, selfishness, fear.

This is most clearly evident in the Christian's inner relation to the law. With respect to this new spiritual life the holy will of God loses this character of the law in the form of demands, threats, condemnation. That does not mean alone that the Christian by the Holy Spirit's influence reacts differently to it in his basic approach; no, the will of God, God himself, takes a different attitude toward him. God does not demand of him. Still less does he threaten or condemn. Paul expresses that in this way: The law is taken away, the law does not apply to the righteous. In all of this, however, the will of God remains in effect before as well as after, but it does not bear down on him like the burden of a foreign will; rather it assumes the form, both in the intent of God and in conception of the Christian in so far as he is such, of the will of the tender father, into which the child lovingly gives himself, having his pleasure in it, living, moving, and having his being in it out of the gospel promises, out of faith. For now the child of God knows and understands that its lack of confidence, yes, its fear in regard to the will of God was born out of selfishness. Now it perceives with an inner sense that it is in the will of God, in that which He shows in His will as being the paths of righteousness, that our life is a life of joyous blessedness.

And now the Christian has a much deeper respect for the holy will of God than he had before. This respect is deeper not only in degree but in the whole makeup and nature. For to say the least, it is not the respect of a slave, legalistic and forced, but the respect of a child. In line with this respect the Christian will, of course, speak of law and will use such expressions to cover it as have been formed in the course of the development of human language; but there is no resemblance to what the unbeliever means when he uses the same terms and expressions.

Therefore, when Paul evinces this same respect that a Christian has for the law, when Luther speaks thereof with the same forms of expression as found in the law; one must not without thought confuse this with the way the legalist speaks of these matters, but carefully determine out of the inner connection in what sense the words are to be understood. In the same way one will not point the finger at Christians who, in their mutual appreciation of an attitude toward the will of God as it is born out of a joyous faith, now call this will of God law. Indeed, Scripture does so too. In the above discussion the word law, as a description of the legalistic conception and approach, is specifically reserved for the sake of distinction, and that is precisely Paul's practice.

The gospel, however, is not the complement of the law that followed after the law had first failed; no, it is the original great truth of the peculiar essence and being of God, which is divine love.

Scriptures, in order well to emphasize this thought, reveal to us that even before the foundations of the earth were formed, God has chosen us to His own in fellowship with the sinner's for His sake. Moreover Paul says that all things have been created by, through, and to Him, the Savior of sinners, and in Him they move and have their being, Col. 1:14-17, When we approach these truths with our calculating reason, in order to master them by defining and ordering in logical sequence, then our container won't contain them all, the whole is more than its parts, But then this is no field for abstract speculation, for one-sidedly intellectual penetration, but for trusting faith. That is the reason why this speculation brings forth only unsatisfying results as shown in the Calvinist presentation, that the world was created for sin, that grace might shine forth more gloriously. In the same way, to weaken the powerful portrayal that places God's love for sinners before the laying of the foundation of the world, weaken it by catering or bowing in any way to our reason, or to allow the creation of the world in Christ as the Son of God, but not in Christ the Savior from sin, all this leaves one with a decidedly empty feeling. That does not do justice to the expression Paul the apostle uses and besides reduces the impress of the spontaneous originality of the eternal gospel. Out of these expressions we take what Faith can well grasp, namely, that the love of God for us poor sinners for Christ's sake is what God really is made of. The rest, which we cannot understand, we do not let trouble us.

Indeed, this is also in innermost harmony with the eternal holy will of God as shown to be in God before the fall, as it is testified to by the Holy Spirit in the faithful heart of the believer, and as it will remain in joyous worlds to come as the expression of the holy purity of God, which in truth, is what is summed up in the concept love.

If we at this point again let pass in review what was said of the law in its opposition against us sinners then the contrast between it and the gospel will become yet sharper. The law is something altogether different from the gospel, different and of lesser import. It cannot create anything new which might satisfy it; indeed, it cannot even create the really right, deep, and noble understanding of God's will. This the gospel does however. It alone makes; a Christian what he is, namely, a Christian. And out of this fountain alone the right Christian life further freely flows. And thus the gospel must also be preached.

### **And Now Wherein Does This *Gesetzlich Wesen* Consist?**

There is a tendency in a Christian's being to be motivated in his actions by the law as it was just described over against sin, namely by its demands, threats, and condemnations. In such cases the Christian is moved to obedience of God's will partly by the demands of God's law. He feels the will of God as a foreign will bearing down on him, of course to act counter to it, he does not have the courage, but his actions do not flow out of a blessed confidence in God; the old suspicion remains alive. The Christian lets the threatenings of the law move him to obedience, so that selfishness in the form of desire for reward remains a driving force in his actions. The Christian lets the curses of the law drive him, so that fear lies at the roots of his activities. And this he does not only where he uses the law as the point of departure for his own actions, but also where he tries to force it on others as the source of their obedience.

This is ugly deformity, for it is not in harmony with the nature of his new life, which would assuredly take its incentive to action out of the gospel. This new life, planted by the gospel is faith, love, hope. Faith follows the ways of God freely, confidently, well shod on the paths of the Father. Love is drawn by the will of God, not as though pushed by an irksome foreign force, but in consonance with its own new inner life as a Christian, loving, wishing, and inwardly striving for that which God desires. Hope is opposed to the fear that strives by its activities to fend danger and disaster thought to be portended of the Lord; it presses forward to apprehend, yes to be apprehended by God, who as the loving Father is the goal of all its yearnings, This is the makeup of the new life of the gospel not only with respect to the Christian's relation to God, but also in the man-to-man interrelations with his fellow Christian. The guiding force of all his actions funnels through trust, love, patience.

From all this we see that legalism confounds the natural course of the new life. Thus the actions flowing out of a legalistic attitude clothe themselves in definite general external forms which are born under such confusion. Whereas the activities growing out of faith, love, hope, quelling forth from a real, true, and living fountain, are for that reason original, forthright, naive and natural, real and true; the doings of legalism on the other hand appear as mechanical, shallow, proceeding, from ulterior and mixed motives, opportunistic, makeshift, spurious and untrue. Legalism ignores the only truly real fountain of Christian life, and turns to the law which never was intended by God as a fountain of new life. On the one hand it puts the law in the place of the Gospel and on the other it confuses both law and the gospel so that neither law nor the gospel remains. It turns law into opposite, to a means for creating life. The result is that not only the life flowing the reform does not achieve the righteousness before God, but also the intended effect of the law, the quenching and destroying of the old Adam, is not realized. Likewise, legalism turns the gospel into its opposite. Having ignored the fact that the gospel, like a spring bubbling forth water, is the source of the new life, the legalist takes the technique he has

developed in his legalistic relation with the law and transfers this same character to his treatment of the gospel, he seeks to strike a deal with the gospel, to pay his dues to it, and succeeds only in making a law out of the gospel, similar to that he has fashioned for himself out of the law of God. Inasmuch he thereby also loses the effect of the saving health of the gospel and contributes to the decline of the new life. But what we are concerned with are the forms in which life now develops. The law crushes, and the gospel following thereupon lifts up on high and so makes humble and content. The legalist is either down and out or sitting on top of the world, despairing or cocksure, while at the same time having his hope in Christ; both wrong. Such a reaction does not agree with what the law and the gospel are to bring about in the heart of man. Something artificial, yea, untrue, springs forth in man, and this trait disports itself in the characteristics of all legalistic dealings. It is external, mechanical, not ringing true, mixed with ulterior motives, a makeshift for the moment.

### **Whence is this Confusion of the Law and Gospel by the Christian?**

It flows forth from his sinful flesh. We are still flesh and blood. This need not be proved by Scripture, just the reminder that in essence this flesh is not to be looked upon as weakened in any way. The flesh of the Christian is the same flesh as that of the unregenerate, but with this reservation that it does not have the same free course as with those who are not born again. The spirit wrestles for the upper hand against the flesh, and where the spirit is not quenched in his work the flesh more and more is put under and drowned. But insofar as it is there, it is of the same nature as in the unregenerate. For that reason it needs the preaching of the law and does not call for the preaching of the gospel, just as on the other hand we are not to offer the Spirit the preaching of the law, but wholly and alone the gospel. Because in the Christian there is flesh with the Spirit, for that reason an element of sin insinuates itself in every manifestation of life, in his faith, love, and hope. The course of Christian life flows along in stumbling, falling, rising again. To the extent that the ardor of the first love dims, the strength of the old Adam rises again, whose nature as opposed to the gospel is always legalistic. As long as this battle between spirit and flesh consists in individual attacks the realization of the contrast between spirit and flesh is keen, and one will not speak of legalism. But the farther the Christian's life departs from the freshness of its youth, the weaker it becomes in all its expressions. Thrust and counter thrust of battle against sin lose their punch, they become perfunctory, they peter out. In the grip of this general relaxing and recession, life more and more takes on the forms of the, old Adam, legalism; and that is what we call *Gesetzlich Wesen*. Faith-life still remains there too, but the arts and practices born of law crowd in and color the acts of faith in such a way that the Christian because of his lack of vigor is not always aware of the contradiction. He has his faith by force, by force of opinion or established circumstance. He makes of faith a condition, and ere he is aware all his gospel conceptions join as handmaids with the children of the law.

What thus transpires in the life of the individual Christian also takes place in the life of the congregation as the sum of the individual lives. But with this difference: In the development of the individual life there are as many differences as there are individuals, but in the group life, there is a certain constant and regular step tending to decline.

Here legalism is most readily observed and portrayed. Which brings us closer to our actual subject: The arts and practices as they have grown out of the law in our own midst.

This conception of law and Gospel and the proper life flowing from it is not a monopoly of the Lutheran church as such: rather it is the proper basic gospel-attitude common to all who trust in their Lord Jesus. It simply cannot be otherwise. Faith is created by the Holy Spirit. He creates the unity of the spirit. That has to do with the most inward reaches of the soul. Externally of course it is possible that, due to various other influences, a difference may arise in the intellectual doctrinal conception, which

ends in the break-up into separate faith groups. Indeed, there will be differences in doctrinal conceptions even within individual faith groups. For in truth not that is the conception of doctrine that, written or spoken, is spoken, crystallized in the external form or sound thereof, but what is conceived in the innermost being in heart and soul and inclinations. For that reason, even now, there is, not one single truly spiritually unified faith group, no synod, no congregation. Fact of the matter is, there never did exist an outward unity of the church, not even in the old Catholic church. On the other hand, the inner unity, of the Spirit in faith still exists today. All true believers whom the Lord knows, not only in general agree in this that the Lord is their Savior, but in a way which again only the Lord knows, also in their attitude to law and Gospel, an attitude created by that faith. This may also be gathered from observation.

It is not Lutherans alone that in the written and spoken word correctly express themselves with regard to the above facts. Indeed, even with such who theoretically have legalistic leanings one may note that at heart they are truly evangelical Christians. That again does not go for Lutherans only.

Now, however, when the doctrinal position is the point under consideration and we see in the Lutheran church how this attitude toward the truths of Scripture originally blossomed forth in Luther, and how in the historical development in the Lutheran church it repeatedly turns the erring steps back as they wander from the right track, we may rightly say the Lutheran church here has the correct teaching. This is then not said in order to thank God that we are not like others, but as a witness to the Lord's Gospel to the praise of the glory of His grace, of which we have been made partakers. But if we look at the Lutheran church as it appears from without with all its shortcomings and compare it with the other part of the protestant church, Calvinism, then it becomes evident that both have this in common that legalism becomes a hindrance to the Gospel, but in a different way. One may say that legalism appears oftener and more consistently among Calvinists than among Lutherans for the reason that the typical differences between the two shows itself in this that the Lutheran Church emphasizes justification and faith; the Reformed Church, sanctification and love. As a consequence there develops among Lutherans an "evangelical consciousness" over against the Reformed. And now it is important to understand how in spite of this "evangelical consciousness," or perhaps by means of it, the legalism of the old Adam grows apace among Lutherans. We say by means of it, for there is an evangelical consciousness that really is none because it exists in the head only and thus operates in such a legalistic manner as though there were no such thing as the gospel. That will become clear as we go on.

On account of the Lutheran emphasis on justification and faith it is natural in our midst that exposition of doctrine takes pre-eminence for the sake of the heralding of the gospel; whereas the Reformed put their main effort into the development of the external life in church government and social welfare. We lay greater stress on doctrine, purity of doctrine. Legalism obtrudes itself here in the form of harping on orthodoxy (*Pochen auf Rechtgläubigkeit*). Hereby is meant the insistence on the 'right faith' where the emphasis has shifted from 'faith' to 'right.' The reader will please note that thereby one has been committed to what immediately follows. Such insistence on orthodoxy is primarily intellectual, and in the nature of a challenge calling to account, and with an admixture of satisfaction with one's, rectitude. This noisy ado about orthodoxy flourishes on petty parochialism which is opposed to the ecumenical spirit. For that reason it clings to the lees of the letter instead of living in the facts. The end result is traditionalism, which has lost the spirit of language, the spirit of the gospel. There you have legalism, which opposes the gospel and shows that the insistence on orthodoxy during the course of a doctrinal controversy has forsaken the basis of the gospel.

It goes without saying that the gospel must be kept pure; for without the truth of the gospel, without a true appreciation of the gospel, one cannot have faith, one cannot come to faith. But to keep the gospel pure is not of immediate interest to the heralding of the gospel, that is of secondary interest.

Evangelical proclamation primarily aims for faith. Faith is what it wishes to bring about. But that concerns the inner emotions. To the heart the appeal is made. The words then become a heralding of the wonderful, evangelical truths, a heralding of the evangel, a wooing with the words of truth. Only secondarily then the evangelical proclamation presses for purity of the gospel when the message has been misapprehended. But this still remains lauding and heralding the Gospel. And there is no justification whatsoever for a clamorous fuss (*Pochen*). For such an explanatory study can be so couched that the correction continues in the character of a joyous telling of the good news. Indeed, that is the only way, that is, by evangelical proclamation, that the arm of the Lord is revealed and faith is created.

The endeavor to keep the gospel in its purity may channel into preachment unto sanctification, when for instance, the occasion arises to exhort in the interest, of purity of doctrine over against the sinful bent toward error. When rightly done, however, this preachment unto sanctification too flows out of the gospel. It does not become insistence, an exacting, but remains a solicitous suing and wooing. It may turn into a warning, still, however, as pressing suit of the wooing work of the gospel; for it is assumed, is it not, in the contest for the form of sound words, that we have to do with such who are the faithful in Jesus Christ. Exhortation, concerned with furthering the new life in a positive manner, here too addresses itself to the spirit, not to the flesh. Now to the spirit you do not come with the law with its exactions, threats, condemnations, but only with the gospel.

In a doctrinal controversy it will occasionally become necessary to preach the law to the Christian because of his old Adam. Then of course threats and demands have their place. However, it must be clearly kept in mind that this then no more is a setting forth for the mutual understanding of doctrine, that one now is not trying to engender new life, the new life which is in the acceptance of the word of truth; but rather that one is confronted with sin, on which judgment is to be pronounced. The speaking of this truth, too, must be in love, and so that the other party will not miss it. Of such a nature, for instance, was Luther's ultimatum in Marburg when he found no basic understanding for the gospel content of his position on the sacraments. It is not superfluous to make the remark that the main point is not externally to keep clearly separate these different ways of speaking: law, gospel, encouragement flowing out of the gospel. That would be but external. The mixing of law and gospel does not consist in covering both in the same paragraph or even in the same sentence, but that our conception of, and inner heart's attitude toward each is confused. He who has this, straight within, can externally permit himself the greatest freedom. The Lord Jesus always has these things intermingled in his talks.

In the doctrinal controversy however, because the works of the flesh enter in, there shows itself a kind of legalism which not only now and then expresses itself in threats and condemnations, in dogmatic obstinacy and self-righteous spirit, and in traditionalism, but also penetrates the whole thinking, perceiving, and experiencing to such an extent that disputations desire to be right and consequent traditionalism becomes apparent in every speech, discussion, and argumentation without the speaker consciously intending it so. These activities in their entirety may be summed up in the two words, intellectualism and a lack of ecumenical spirit. These two are dependent one on the other. Actually, they likely appear together: historically, intellectualism develops first.

By intellectualism I mean this that in the discussion on the words of life the interests of reason and the intellect crowd into the background the interests of the believing heart. Herewith three factors are intimately related, which I at this time wish to mention together. (1) The main emphasis is placed on the intellectual understanding instead of on the conquest of the innermost heart. (2) One wrestles with words and hangs on the horns thereof instead of abiding in living issues. (3) Out of the language of Scripture, above all the good news of Salvation, a new law is laboriously fashioned, for which intellectual assent is demanded.



That the words of the Way, the Scriptures, or any passage of Scripture be understood by the listener is always taken for granted in evangelical proclamation to the extent that for the proclaiming no more is needed than the correct and clear presentation for the act of understanding. From the dusty battle, however, over the form of doctrine a manner prevails for which unconsciously this is the major moment that the doctrine be understood. That marks the beginning of the counterfeit. It is possible intellectually to get a picture of the form of the gospel, like unto the hollow skinshell from which the snake has slipped and as silently slithered away; yea more, by extended exercise, or by deeper intellectual penetration into the particulars and contextual relationships of the gospel one may come to a measure of knowledge and perception, to a fine critical sense, for the gospel, so that the slightest false note of the next man is immediately detected. But that is still not yet faith and trust, but may very well be the furious sound of the form-words of the intellect. On the other hand, it may very well be that without benefit of deeper intellectual penetration into the dogma, a deep-welling, powerful faith-life exists, that may break out into uncommonly thoughtful and effective speech and corresponding action, as no dialectician can hope to formulate, nor any intellectual acumen clearly describe. That is the child characteristic of faith. And it occurs in common people.

Where, contrary-wise, the intellectualizing tendency obtains, it makes its presence felt in connection with the portrayal of the gospel truths in this wise that it cares more for clarity than for the gospel. Faith wishes to hear gospel truths and history; the intellect thirsts for comprehensive thought complexes, clearly presented. The proper evangelical presentation, therefore, will bring the wonderful facts of God's love and mercy. That becomes a heralding, a wondering heralding, appealing to faith and overcoming doubt through the facts of God's grace and love.

Intellectualism, a lusty logomachete, having his quiver full of them, gets tangled up with words. These his words must be understood, by force if necessary, by force of the proof of grammatical or logical stringency. Certainly it is necessary that one understands the language of the gospel, and to that intent it is also necessary to mark the grammatical and logical relationships. But the assent one wishes for one's message is not to be achieved through purely formal language discussion, but through the wonderful deeds of the gospel. As soon as the formal part of the discussion comes to the foreground it is already off on a false key. Now the flesh sits in too. The sharp intellectual approach is wrong to start with. This leads to hairsplitting, which on the one hand insists on the word, on the letter, in such a way that it becomes an empty shell, therefore incapable of convincing; on the other hand, the danger arises that one becomes so lost in the maze of details of the logical consistency of the doctrinal system, that the Bible's story of facts fails to receive its proper due.

As an example of being caught in the letter that killeth, the following may serve: 2 Tim. 3:16, "All scripture given by the inspiration of God is profitable, etc." was often explained from the Greek text to mean: "The whole scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." Then it was further added that such was the correct understanding of Luther's translation. Thereby it was believed that the divine origin of Scripture had been firmly established. Whoever understands Greek will readily see with the help of dictionary, grammar, and context, that the correct and unmistakable translation must read: "If Scripture is God inspired, then it is also profitable," or "Every God-inspired Scripture is also profitable" To such who are not familiar with the Greek it must become evident that Luther's translation does not wish to offer the first above-expressed thought, but the second.

Those exegetes did not become aware of the flaw in their exegesis because in the first place they thought they could not get along without a clear word of God which expresses in so many words the doctrine of the divinity of Scriptures. That is intellectualism. Then further, Luther, of course, must be right. That is traditionalism. It is surely not our intent to ridicule the earnestness with which a sober Christian holds fast to the once-fashioned form of the fathers. But that is not the whole of it. Being so

bent on documenting the doctrine of the divine origin of Scripture in just so many double-weighted words, we fail to see that what Calab is carrying is the goodness of the Lord and push aside the fresh and fragrant fact of the text, which all the more impressively establishes the divinity of Scripture in that being taken for granted it is not stated in so many words but its happy consequences are made to live before our eyes. That I call being caught in the letter.

In the first place that is a bit of untruthfulness more prevalent than commonly thought. The untruthfulness is not of evil intent since actually it is in defense of a truth of God in which one wholeheartedly trusts. A less stalwart spirit is readily talked into believing that such lawyer's handling of evidence really can do no harm. And it is no trick at all, if, as is often the case in a fresh and original new approach, many men of integrity do not at once master all the intellectual implications (so that eye and hand, heart and mouth agree.)

But if beyond that, the oft grossly misunderstood slogan of the commentators, the wording of the text must decide, is brought up as the big gun to silence the less versatile opponent, then we're all washed up and can only heap higher the windbag bulwarks behind which we hide. And what is the fruit of our victory, so called? And even if the opponent can't puzzle out the maze we have built, the outcome is not always as successful as with Wilfred the Anglo-Saxon representative of Rome over against the Celtic Bishop Colman at the court of Oswy of Northumbria 644 AD. (The king asks if it is true that Jesus said to Peter: Thou art Peter, etc. When Colman could not deny it, the king followed the Romanist in order not to be locked out of the kingdom of heaven. He too was lost in the letter), rather, the other's inner doubt remains together with the feeling that he was right after all.

An example of emphasizing the system of logical consistency is shown in the election controversy where Calvin pictured election and the rejection of the rebellious both as flowing out of the sovereignty of God; or where the Lutherans on their part invented the term *intuitu fidei* (election in view of one's faith) to circumvent the determinism of the Calvinists. Both procedures go beyond what is given in Scripture in that they yield thought complexes foreign to Scripture. What is of moment here is that intellectual interests alone bring forth this presentation and thereby seek to coerce. Now compare the times and conditions where these interpretations arose and still arise to recognize that the spiritual makeup lying at the roots of such efforts is correctly characterized as intellectualism and legalism.

On the other hand the opponents' improper language is rolled into review instead of taking as the point of departure his probable sound intent, or his difficulty in finding the right expression, or that his manner of expression merely is different from mine, so that my limited faculties did not at once understand him. If this then goes to such extremes that the speaker is further held up to disparaging ridicule, then it is clearly demonstrated what spirit's child is holding forth. I do not wish to come to the defense of the touchiness that takes umbrage at the most casual remark. A man of temperament may on occasion make a whimsical remark, which is not to be pounced upon and summarily turned to his discredit. What we are at here is to try to understand from the innermost impulses the nature of the different approaches to the records of the great deeds of God, lest they become a strange thing to our fingertips. The above described procedure is a thing of evil not only because, overshooting its mark, it misses its aim completely and is found wanting just in this point of the mastery of logical acumen, and, because of its personal attacks, hinders the friendly advances of the other side and the acceptance of the defended position, thus making the other side obstinate; no, it is of itself evil in that, instead of living in the content of the gospel and heralding that joyfully to trusting faith as something to be desired, and thereby winning its confidence, it clings to the external address, to the sound of form-words and dead letters, acts the legalist by muzzling the bite of life by fragmentation and closed compartments through the discipline of academic exercises, and makes of the hope of so great salvation a lawyer's code.

To be sure that is something else again that one wishes to make Scripture and, especially the gospel, into another law, for which intellectual acceptance is demanded. For this procedure it is characteristic that the statement concerning the divine origin of Scriptures is placed at the head of theology. When one has established the divine origin of Scripture out of its various attributes, or established the character of its attributes through the listing of the various passages covering its divinity, then one has what is called the formal principle of theology. Thereupon the naked word, torn out of its contextual relationship, is to have the same legal import as an established court decision has for the lawyer. In other words, to make of the marvelous miracle of Scripture with the wonderful works to usward as its content, make of it a codex of immutable decrees that must be bowed to, that is the doing of a legalist, akin to the handicraft of the Missouri muleskinner. In intellectualism the legalist too must move and have his being. Do not misunderstand me now to detract from the trustworthiness of Scripture. I am speaking against a way of dealing with the word of God that I call legalistic. Properly it were done as follows: First and foremost stands, thy sins are forgiven thee. This has been called the material principle of theology; “whereas, the divine origin of Scripture is spoken of as the formal principle. That this does not put apples of gold in a picture of silver is needless to say. Melanchthon coined these terms out of his cross-grained view of theology, whose spirit was caught in a legalistic and intellectual emphasis. The main point is faith in the forgiveness of sins. The intellect simply serves to receive the thought so that the content of faith may be appropriated, the hope of our calling. This faith is the work of the Holy Spirit through the word of pardon for our sins. It is created by the shepherd’s toiling love that gives His life for the sheep, not by logical stringency, With this same faith I then, as a result, treasure what Scripture says of its own birth and growth by the Father. In this manner it goes on into everything that Scripture has to say. But the divine origin of Scripture is not subject to argument with an unbeliever.

That belongs in the sanctuary. This pearl is not to be profaned. Nor would it be of any use to the unbeliever. He cannot trust in this. The darkened eyes of his understanding, and his accusing and excusing thoughts keep him from sensing that he is walking in the darkness of his own conceit in legalism and intellectualism. Him I would acquaint with the engulfing power of sin and the doom impending over it, with the indication that God alone can save therefrom. Not only can but has, has taken away the sin of the world and nailed it to His cross, teaching us to call Him Father with delight. And now on the basis, of this our newborn common faith, we would enter all avenues of Scripture, and every new factor would be evaluated in the light of this evangelical truth, indeed illuminated and made acceptable in complete relationship to the glorious truth that before the foundation of the world He has made us acceptable in the, beloved. For the gospel, because it is gospel, is a faithful saying and therefore worthy of all acceptance, 1 Tim. 1: 15; which one loves without conscious thought and therefore trusts implicitly. And all our dealings with it should be in that spirit.

The counterpart is the Calvinist-Zwinglian manner. They have the formal principle, and a formal principle it is indeed. The intellect with its logical stringency is the decisive factor. That this sharpness showed a featheredge when Zwingli with his “This represents my body” instead of “this is my body, “ not out of deference to the word but out of fondness for his power of reasoning, departed from the sharp logic of grammar study and smuggled a thought into the text that was given neither by it not the context, but rather rejected by both, that fact need not hinder our establishing a relationship between intellectualism and legalism. That is an ever-recurring paradox of human life as shown too in the saying: *Allzu scharf macht schartig*, which may be translated: Too-sharp a wedge but turns its edge. One need only follow the whole Calvinistic manner through a summary of its history, to have it made clear that with them a doctrinal discussion is on the same level with a purely mathematical proposition, whose

Q.E.D. demands acceptance or creates divisions; and, because of the prevalent bent toward individual freedom, generally the latter.

Entirely different was Luther's manner at Marburg, where he had written his Savior's words, "This is my body," on the table before him and refused to be moved therefrom. That was not a dogmatic insistence on the word in its wooden form. That would be switching to the swingletree of the law to move the gospel load. Luther, with his penetrating pen, had long previously exhaustively and with fine understanding of language given forth his views on the Lord's Supper. And Zwingli no less had demonstrated his full-blown and fundamental rationalism and radicalism, not only in his writings but also in the Swiss position toward the rationalistic Anabaptists, Luther had a fine sense for this. To prove the spirits was a peculiar gift of his, and that right potent and pungent, too. Since all efforts to bring all facets and factors of the word of God into play for faith proved futile over against Zwingli's position, Luther's action took the form of an ultimatum. Over against insistent falsity there is finally no alternative. Inner truthfulness demands this. But then it ceases to be a doctrinal discussion and becomes a preaching of the law.

An interesting example of intellectualism versus gospel portrayal is the expression "analogy of faith" with the various changes the term has undergone during the course of history. None of these conceptions has its foundation in the Epistle to the Romans. That was on different occasions established some years ago in the *Quartalschrift*.

Luther does, not make much of the expression, Where it does appear we note that it flows out of Luther's proper method of exegesis, which is grounded in the faith of the exegete. When his heart is attuned to that over which the hills danced for joy, and the angels desired to hear, then he knows what the gospel is about. That will also help the intellectual understanding of the gospel, and the law, too, thereby leading to an ever deeper understanding of Scripture. In the course of the last election controversy the doctrine of justification was called the analogy of faith. That is approximately on the level with Luther's conception. Where such views are expressed not primarily in the interest of formal arrangement but with the evangelical proclamation at heart they work in the interest of a great truth; namely, that which was defended over against the above-described intellectualism. Although it remains to be said that this application of analogy of faith is not borne out by what Paul says in Romans 12:6.

Contrariwise the other conceptions, as they were used during the course of the doctrinal controversy, serve solely the interests of intellectualism. Even the expression used on our side, that the clear Scriptures themselves are the analogy, suffer from the same mistake. It is, true that out of Scripture alone can anything be known concerning Salvation—or Him who shall feed His flock like a shepherd, who shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills, in a balance.—But thus carelessly cast into the midst of the then current methodological discussion, the expression is fully removed from the interests of the heralding of the gospel and serves only the external thought that proof in a doctrinal controversy must be taken from the Bible. And still more is that the case with the other conceptions that give forth the analogy of faith as being certain fundamental doctrines, or a summarizing extract of Scripture, or Scripture-as-a-complete-unit to serve as the last link in an unbroken chain of external evidence. There it is plainly evident that the attempt of logic to understand, that is, purely intellectual interests gave birth to such presentation.

Part and parcel of this Zwinglian, that is, intellectual, legalism, is the cavalier connivance at differences in doctrine and weak-kneed readiness to make common cause with the opponents in other church matters. That is also in order. For if our treasure chest contains nought but manmade opinions,

there is not much point in creating divisions by fighting over it. On the other hand, if legalism takes over in a Lutheran theological discussion the exact opposite, a lack of ecumenical spirit.

The expression true visible church, which, wrong though it is, finally could be correctly understood, has much to do with this lack of ecumenical spirit. Now the ecumenical spirit, a heart for the whole household of God, for the other sheep, not a part of the immediate fold, flows immediately out of the Gospel. If it is true that there is one holy Christian Church, the communion of the saints, among whom rules the unity of the Spirit, that is, the same mind that was in their Lord, and the faith in Him, the head, who fills all in each one, then it cannot be otherwise, the faith of one is drawn to the faith of the other. But this ecumenical spirit then does not consist in having a doctrine covering the invisible church. That, too, is a gift of the Lord. But we make of it something external if it does not go any farther, if that is all there is to it. But the ecumenical spirit surely does not consist either in the lack of character that overlooks the differences, which finally must lead to separation if one wishes to remain truthful. That is also external and superficial.

Under ecumenicity of the evangelical proclamation I understand this that one nourishes the appreciation for the one true invisible Church, the communion of those who trust in the Lord Jesus, as against the political machinations of the different concrete church groups of this world that claim they are the one true visible church. True ecumenical spirit is something within one, peculiar to the individual through the Holy Ghost.

It consists in my rejoicing that another; whether from Jerusalem or Samaria, on the road to Damascus or at Athens, has come to faith in the Lord Jesus, who, having begun the good work in both, will have each of us grow to the fullness of His stature, set and poised for every task, as which task the sound of the other's lusty ax calls me to his side for common salutary effort in truth that holds in subjection my reason which is reluctant to allow that his strokes make up in might what they may lack in measure. Thus I acknowledge my Savior and His salvation and practice my profession too.

If I at any time meet up with someone that believes on the Lord Jesus, then the very fact of his faith and that, through his faith, he has become a child of God, member of the body of Christ, becomes the main thing and warms the very heart. To this I will give expression by emphasizing those things that unite us in faith, and not open up with reproach and criticism on those things that still divided us. Intellectualism and the lack of the ecumenical sense, each conditioning the other, on the other hand express themselves predominantly in judgment and condemnation, thus showing the character of the works of the law. It goes without saying, however, that evangelical sense does not sacrifice truthfulness. Therefore, criticism will not be ruled out, but it will be colored by the Gospel. Is it necessary to go into detail to show what is meant by this? Instead of that let me relate two examples.

When Moody was in St. Louis the end of the seventies and proclaimed the gospel of grace in a wonderfully fine manner, Walther, in the classroom, could not refrain from paying him recognition in the friendliest fashion, without then toning this down with reservation in respect to his errors. One could feel that Moody was very dear to Walther. That won my heart at that time for the gospel of Walther and Moody, whereas the silly veneration, often carried on the cuff for Walther and always in opposition to someone else, often spoiled the joy in his presentation. In regard to Moody I should like to remark here that will serve to clarify the following example. In his daily sermons Moody often touched on the truths of election by grace. Not that he mentioned it by name, but rather such a situation was being enlarged upon in which Scripture speaks of the gracious election message of comfort and cheer. There Moody, every time I heard him, produced the same images in the thoughts of his hearers that we wish to awaken with the good news that God has taken us to His bosom, before the foundations of the earth were laid, so that one had to say Moody had the right stand in his views on election. However, at the end of his stay, in order, as he said, to unfold the full purpose of God, he *ex professo* held a sermon on election shot

through with the crassest Calvinism. An example how the intellectual position and the heart's inner attitude may be poles apart.

The other example occurred while I was out west some years back and met up with many members of other faith groups. There I chanced upon a pious elderly lady, a Presbyterian. She had fine Christian views and since she could put them across and defend them too, we often ended up in a penetrating theological discussion. Thus we came, too, to speak on election. I marveled to find that she, a Calvinist, held precisely our position, which she expressed in simple trusting confidence. Instead of encouraging this attitude, my immaturity betrayed me into calling forth her opposition by reminding her of Calvin's actual stand and her disagreement therewith. Now she called to mind how she had learned it, and the harmony was out the window; nor could I thereafter budge her from the Calvinist doctrine of election. My intellectualism had conjured up her traditionalism. To this day I could give myself a crack on the mouth because, upon reflection, it is clear as it was shortly then already, that intellectualism, a mind bound up in the law, and the desire to be in the right and not resting till the other is shown up as having been in the wrong, spoiled my ecumenical sense, which I likely had.

Since the Reformation the ecumenical sense has been lost to some extent through the breaking up of the external church into many groups. This stands in intimate relation to the setting up of the confessional writings as the doctrinal source. The exact formulation of the doctrine was an historical necessity, as it was established step by step over against misunderstanding and errors. The confessional writings and their origination are not to blame for that. The manner too in which these writings come into being reveals the right spirit. They are confessions of faith, preachments of the gospel. They also appear in the book of concord as the confessions of the one holy Christian church. So too the rejection of the false teachers, rather their errors, is not to be censured; for that is not born out of a censorious spirit, but in order that the antithesis be brought into clear focus. But in the course of time legalism crept into the way the confessional writings were used and so spoiled the Christian's consciousness of the one Church.

What is meant here is the party spirit that stresses the external crowd of confessionalists over against the other. When our doctrinal discussions are carried on in such a tone that we are out to show the other: you are wrong, your position is incorrect, ours is correct; when correcting holds the spotlight and the regard for the growth of the unifying bond of faith is crowded into the dim background, then, by all orthodoxy in gospel matters, there is present an intermingling of law and gospel, the arts of the legalist. The dogged insistence on the correct dogma finally causes the doctrinal controversy to degenerate into a quarrel over the externals of self interest, that slights the interests of faith, the ecumenical church, but guards the advantages of the external crowd and its cronies. All levels operate a With the mechanical means of the thought processes borrowed from the spirit-stifling doctors of the law instead of working and wooing for faith in the Savior by means of the wonderful fact and factors of the Gospel, which never was meant to be mastered by the sharpness of man's mind. Then it is only natural too that the Scriptures have been demoted to second place. Even though it is established that the Scriptures are the *norma normans*, the ruling standard, we actually make the confessional writings, or even the writings of the fathers the effective norm; and Scripture, dressed in its *dicta probantia*, the individual proof texts, must serve in the role of curtain boy, shifting the scenes and dimming the lights for the *norma normata*, the standard that is ruled, corrected, established.

It is understood that I am not talking about the external labors of the dogmatician but the inner attitude of the arts and practices of legalism that creeps into the mind of some and at certain times. When the dogmatician arrays the doctrines in a book, he cannot give exhaustive exegetical discussions. The natural result there is short references to the Scriptures. But when in the inner recesses of the mind of the teacher, in his manner of working; and granted no design of disrespect against the Scriptures on

his part, his position to Scriptures as over against his party's doctrine is so off-balanced that the Scripture must serve to force his party's doctrine into the foreground, then we not only have the legalistic doings shown in the lack of ecumenical spirit, but the legalism of the intellectualist in addition. Scripture passages torn from their context, or, like a worn dime, having lost their distinctive impress, now must serve as citations from a codex of decrees. The purely intellectual understanding steps to the fore. Still more is this the case when the interpretation of the text has not been won directly from Scripture by the author himself, through personal experience, but rather has been copied for generations from one book to another, That generates legalism. Or it is turned about, and historically that is the rule: intellectualism and lack of ecumenical spirit engender traditionalism.

Traditionalism is the way of thinking where tradition, the form of teaching inherited from the fathers, is decisive, This way of thinking obtains not only among Catholics, where tradition often runs counter to Scripture; but also among Lutherans. This expression is not meant to describe the falsity of the tradition, but the tendency to trust human teachers and their interpretations rather than Scripture, immediately and without reservation.

There is surely no inner need for this in the Scriptures as though they were hard to understand, as the Romanists contended. On the contrary, the human interpretations of Holy Writ, in toto, because of their learnedness are much more difficult to understand than the childlike simplicity of the Scriptures. Rather, this tendency is a sign and a result of the lack of inner freedom, which may spring from varied causes. If one by nature is given to leaning on authorities, that will also reveal itself, as described above in his theological activities. That is not great harm then either where the Holy Spirit is free to work. Such a Christian will not fail to study the Scriptures. And even if he has been accustomed to be guided by others, even such a one, when all help fails in time of need, will develop a spiritual freedom and independence that neither he nor others dreamed of, clinging alone to Scriptures and living therefrom. Nevertheless, this force of habit to lean on human authorities will remain main a danger both for him and for the church.

Otherwise, however this unhealthy tendency is nurtured by the neglect of Scripture study, and when that starts its cancerous growth, vision perishes and lack of freedom takes over; and there you have traditionalism. That this is legalism is indicated by the root, *Unfreiheit*. In an earlier article of the *Quartalschrift* I called it *Geistesstarre*, spiritual paralysis. When we visualize the figure in this expression, the *Gesetzlichkeit*, the rigidity, becomes apparent. (*Gesetzlich*, the root of which is related to our English 'set,' set in one's ways: *Starre*, whose root is also in our word 'stereopticon,' through which we thrilled to look at still-life pictures when we were young, and there is the word 'stereotype.' Our souls are congealed, as concrete is set in it its forms.) This rigidity is more apparent in the above-described way of working, which is the natural result of the inner attitude. Now compare, if you will, wherever in history this way of working obtains and see if the following is not also found.

Namely, in inner association with this manner develop two factors which reveal still more sharply that it is born of the law. In the first place, the pride in one's own rectitude, in this case then the rectitude of one's own faith, finds expression. That occurs, for instance in sermons where at jubilees or other like occasions, chief reference is made to what our groups, individual men among us, or the jubilarians, have all accomplished. It goes without saying among us that we then bring in: to God alone be all glory. But the developments are not thus presented, rather one praises man, one compares men and their doings with other men; but one does not show up that and how this is not their doing, and the after-thought: God alone be honor, limps along behind. The speakers in the individual case naturally do not wish to push the grace of God into the background, but a tinge of the feeling of one's own worth, either unconsciously innate, or acquired by training of the past, hinders the glorious message of God's

grace, which so naturally would have pre-eminence at such times, from finding noble and exalted expression.

We have here the same occurrence to which we already drew attention earlier in regard to poetry in our midst. I quote to the point from the *Quartalschrift*, July, Vol. 11, p. 160: "The American synodical life suffers from a sore weakness; that is its partisanship. In such an atmosphere no truly great art can arise. That is evidenced especially by the poesy of our American Lutheran poets. If it centers about the gospel, or nature, or even the general thoughts of life, their art is genuine, original, and true. As soon as it centers on synod, or individual persons or happenings in synodical life, the poet never rises to true artistic power. Then he really has no great truth of all-inclusive import to proclaim, but unbeknownst to himself has come under the spell of his party's politics, which opposes open vision and great creative power." This very same thing occurs in sermons, articles for publication, and other writings. Here belong the constant allusions to one's own synod and its leaders as though there were no other Christians. That is not blameworthy, to emphasize the grace of God experienced in smaller circles, but it is blameworthy not to behold it from a higher watch than petty partisanship. What is in point here is that one recognizes the relationship with intellectualism and legalistic arts and practices.

The other factor which parallels or rather mutually conditions the legalistic, anti-ecumenical activities, is that the knowledge of the gospel gift of eternal life through the forgiveness of sins leaves much to be desired among us. Closer attention will reveal that, by all right evangelical intention, the gospel is shortchanged without many of us having the slightest inkling of its happening. Many sermons, granted all proper orientation in dogmatics, have an entirely wrong tone. As when, for instance there is arrayed before a congregation a list of all a Christian has to believe in order to be saved. There man's act of believing is made the object of our faith, and it naturally degenerates into a purely intellectual act, that establishes agreement with the visible situation. Or when, so to speak, the mathematics of the doctrine of the Trinity are presented as an object of faith. True, the tri-unity of our God is a truth revealed by Scripture. But, torn out of its context, it is not an evangelical truth. That was frequently the failing of the old Greek fathers to involve the interests of the intellect in the trinitarian and christological controversies. That was no fruitful gospel penetration. With Athanasius and Leo the Great this turned the scale that they presented the truths in direct relation to the rudiments of redemption. That alone is the object of our faith. And where that is in the foreground one will not fall upon the idea of making even the act of believing the basis of our trust.

Of like nature are the confessional addresses after the pattern: How a right confessional address prepares for proper partaking of the Lord's Supper; where, in the whole setup of the sermon, the attention is centered entirely on the sinner and his doings not only in the first part, and even there improperly, but above all in the second and third part, instead of on the Lord's gift of grace that is offered him there. And especially in the paranetic part of the sermon much is sinned in this regard. These are not isolated instances, but rather, if I may depend on the judgment of colleagues who have a sound critical sense, this stamp is clearly impressed on an extended literature.

Another way in which the reaction complexes born of the law (*das gesetzliche Wesen*) are operative besides the above-shown insistence on orthodoxy is the insistence on sanctification. There is of course no question as to the need for the encouragement of sanctification, but this is not to be confused with a clamorous fuss. To this end a study of sanctification would be helpful.

What is sanctification? This question is not superfluous, for its answer will reveal how we deal with the concepts of law and gospel. The task of the Holy Spirit (that living waters flow from our being as from a fountain) may be conceived for the grasp of the mind as follows: (1) In an all-embracing sense, the entire work of the Holy Ghost, which he accomplishes through the word of God, including the law's preachment unto death. (2) The common general conception, as it is contained in the heading to



the Third Article, from calling to preserving, with the gospel as the means. (3) The specific conception as the third part of the overall work of the Holy Ghost, where sanctification is set alongside of enlightenment. There the word used to represent the work of more and more freeing from sin also the external life of him who has been justified by faith, This is the subject under discussion now, specifically from the point of view of the Holy Ghost calling man to sanctification, to put to usury the pounds entrusted to him, the powers of the spirit given him through faith.

Sanctification is given in one and the same breath with faith. It is impossible to emphasize this too strongly, In the effort to keep justification in the foreground we often fail in the emphasis of sanctification in various ways. We hesitate lest we fall into the Reformed manner of speaking, where sanctification is considered the important thing and justification but means to an end. One must be careful and not condemn such procedure offhand. It all depends on how it is meant. But because such manner of speaking is current among those who make so much of the Christian's doing that they in the end completely lose sight of the mighty works of a gracious God, we readily fall into the other extreme, and thus slight sanctification.

The reason for that is intellectualism, which considers justification and sanctification mere concepts. There one can separate them and picture faith as the root. But they are not mere concepts, rather they are events, actualities. There the one is contained in the other. There is no sanctification without justification, there are no works without faith; but also, conversely, there is no faith without works, no justification and faith without sanctification. The pure and holy God's creation has been destroyed by sin and the devil. The whole gospel concerns itself with its restoration, as a completed fact. Christ suffered and died in order to bring us also this gift; he broke the power of sin and saved us from its thralldom. The Holy Spirit creates in us the new life in and out of God, through faith, a life pure and holy. The Christian, who recognizes the pardoning of his guilt as a release from a loathsome, hateful burden cannot help but hate sin. True, the old Adam seeks to trouble him in that and beclouds the issue as though this were only a lucky release from the threat of death, but trust in the Lord Jesus who gave His life for us takes a different attitude. Faith cannot but love the Savior and therefore find sin hateful. For that reason redemption, justification, and sanctification are closely related.

So then, how does sanctification come about? The Holy Spirit through the glad tidings of full pardon for our sins creates in man this new life, which has the two sides described above, the receptivity of faith and the activity of love, But that is like unto a tiny bud that is now to grow forth. The Christian is not solely of this new life. Sin is still there. For this, Scripture has various expressions which in a way retain their figurative meaning. It speaks of flesh and spirit, of the old external and the new inward man. This is a wonderful revelation, which we should not think to master psychologically. Even though these are things that transpire within our bosom, their wondersomeness transports us far beyond the dialectic realm. Only as through a glass darkly, therefore, can we speak of these things, that error may be avoided; not as though we clarified anything for human understanding.

Thus, right off, we say, the individual who has come to faith is one personality, not two. When we speak of flesh we mean the whole man, the personality which, by reason of its faith, is also called Christian. When we speak of spirit, then that is again the same personality. And yet spirit and flesh are entirely different from one another. For Pelagius and his followers the matter is very simple. He, on occasion, as the unbeliever does also, speaks of two souls in his breast. But he, we remember, has an inborn virtue whose powers develop further through education. That of course is nonsense, but natural man can make head and tail out of that. Whereas, the scriptural presentation of spirit and flesh remains to the believer too an unfathomable marvel. Flesh is the native state and life, in bondage to the devil and to sin. Spirit is newly created of the Holy Ghost. The spirit has not perchance evolved out of the flesh, rather it is the new life, God-created. It is the life of the Holy Ghost, yea, the Holy Ghost himself in us;

and yet again not as though man's personality were thereby destroyed. That would lead us into pantheism. My concern is to hold to Scripture's threefold use of the word *pneuma*: (1) God as spirit. (2) One part of the threefold division of natural man: body, soul, spirit. (3) The inner part of the Christian that the Holy Spirit has taken over and in which He carries on His activities, as opposed to the flesh. Of this latter we speak in sanctification as it is now under consideration.

That the turning of one's back upon sin is here taken for granted follows out of Scripture's presentation of the opposition between spirit and flesh and the continual combat between them. But the question arises, is encouragement of sanctification necessary and, if so, to which of the two is it addressed, to the flesh or to the spirit?

One could be of the opinion that the spirit is not in need of encouragement unto sanctification, for does not the Holy Spirit himself create all this new life? Then to be sure both to will and to do in this battle against sin, against the flesh, is given at the same time. But we know also that we do not at once attain to the full stature and accoutrement of the man of God; the new life must grow. The Holy Spirit does not mechanically create something new; rather the elemental life of the spirit enters into the nature of human life, where a fresh, challenging spark, dynamic with the word of God, though small at first, yet with all elements contained in itself, is to grow and mature to full vigor, in the thick of lusty labor and dusty battle, as the Child Jesus also increased in wisdom, etc. In the case, of Jesus that was not sanctification in our sense of the word. But it is a parallel which shows how the spiritual in man can progress, grow and abound.

In addition, the Christian has the flesh still with him, which is continually bent on subduing the activities of the spirit. For that reason this new creation of the spirit is in need of enlivening and strengthening; and this occurs, aside from the message of the gospel, through the proper encouragement of sanctification. The encouragement of sanctification therefore follows out of these two existing conditions; out of the nature of spirit and faith, which is opposed to sin, and out of the fact that the spirit of man stands in need of help and strengthening.

In view of this it is immediately clear of what nature the encouragement to sanctification is. It does not address itself to the flesh but to the spirit. We are not to reform the flesh but to drown and mortify it. We are not to unfold or evolve the new life out of the powers inherent in natural man, but rather as the Holy Ghost created the first germ of new life, so the additional work on this new life is an on-and-on creating of the Holy Spirit, by the same means as in the beginning. For that reason we cannot speak here of the law-preaching that demands, threatens, and condemns. The encouragement unto sanctification is to quicken the spirit, it should therefore tend to help and confirm. Only the Gospel can do that.

But since we are speaking of sanctification, of turning our backs upon sin, of our struggle against sin, the encouragement to sanctification deals with just those things that are spoken of in God's condemning law, too, of the things into which God wishes to lead our footsteps, and of the things He wishes us to avoid. But what a change in the manner of speaking of it! There the words are pitted against human self will; here they presuppose the willingness of the child of God. There unregenerate man, or the old Adam in the Christian, too, senses the will of God as a foreign will, the will of a mighty, threatening task master, under whose burden he is to labor. Here we speak to the believing Christian of the will of the Father, our Savior, in whom we delight because only His paths lead to saving health. There the preaching wishes to break the stubborn will of man: here it wishes through doctrine and exhortation to help the weak will along. There the preaching knows nothing of the gospel; here it is always intimately connected with the gospel. Not only is it prompted by the gospel, but also the presentation of the will of God thereby takes on a tone that has no similarity to that of the law.

No demanding (Do this!) no threatening (Do that or else!); no condemning (Now, see what you did!): rather a coaxing, a refreshing of the spirit, a picturing and unfolding of the good yet to come, and always all bound up in the Gospel. Indeed, what am I saying? It is actually speech of an entirely different nature, that treats of things entirely different from the things of which that law speaks.

Included in this address and approach is also the factor of respectful childlike fear as well as the humble consciousness of our own insufficiency. That is not something born of the law, although it revolves about the things with which the law is concerned. But a humble spirit and childlike fear are fruits of the Gospel.

And now, if anyone is of the opinion that this presentation, which accepts in all its validity the Apostle's word that no law is given to the righteous, robs the Christian life of the feeling of responsibility, let him consider that the childlike fear and humility created by the Gospel is a sturdier plant than slavish fear and despair. Indeed, the acknowledgment of God's majesty and sovereignty is alone given through this Gospel-born attitude of soul and not through anything that could possibly flow out of the law. Therefore this address, which we call gospel-encouragement (*evangelische Ermahnung*), has in addition to the stimulating joyousness of faith, also the characteristic of soberness that is far removed from any frivolousness.

This address is not the gospel of the mighty deeds of God, but rather it speaks to us of God's will concerning our actions. But neither is it law that demands, threatens, condemns, and presses us sorely; rather it proceeds out of the gospel. For that reason it hastens to point to the connection between God's will and the gospel. Not only does it picture how the grace of God has redeemed us by the blood of Christ, but also how this grace proceeds to create all promised good in us and to free us from the filth of sin. So this address lets the impulse to creative doing flow from the gospel. That is not the preaching of the law, but the gospel of sanctification (*evangelische Ermahnung*), which is always a part of evangelical preaching, just as the Holy Ghost always creates love with the first stirring of faith, and as we see a fine example of such speech in the Sermon on the Mount.

The same is true of the effect of such address. The Holy Spirit does not first bring man to faith, and then, after the work of justification is done, begin His work on sanctification. What a wooden way of looking at it that is. This is life we are talking about, and the miracle of its growth. What the Holy Spirit creates is life, not just a single act divorced from the whole of life. Therefore not faith without love. Therefore also not afterward love alone as a work proceeding out of a faith, about which we need now no more be concerned. Rather the Holy Spirit is always active in the life which is now in the Christian, in all respects and to the full extent as at the beginning.

Justification is always complete and yet it goes on continually. And equally, faith is continually engaged in grasping salvation. That is a continuous act or an endless row of many acts, depending upon how we become conscious of it in different situations. That too is a part of sanctification, according as one views it, although this certain that faith, in justification, does not come into consideration as a: doing on our part. The term used to describe faith, in justification, is mere *passiva*, purely passive. Really no one can understand that either, for there is no agreement between the subject and the predicate. But we speak thus in order to emphasize the all-exclusiveness of grace in justification.

Then we say also, faith comes first and love is its fruit. That is another pet phrase that we readily understand, though it does not cover everything. Faith without love. there is no such thing, even in the abstract. Faith itself is already love. Could man bring forth the two of himself, even then the following of the one after the other would be impossible. But now, as a creation of the Holy Spirit, it is still more unthinkable. So faith and love, enlightenment, the new birth, conversion, and sanctification always in one breath (the breath of life, Deut. 30:19-20) and in this way that as a holy seed or bud it is planted in the heart of man and as such must needs grow. That is why we must preach sanctification. And this then

effects the whole man in his deepest likes and dislikes, molds his meditations, and inclines his heart in all he thinks and says and does.

Sanctification does not flit about in fancy work, or specialize in extra credit work, such as monastic vows or prohibition. These are manufactured articles. But sanctification is life. That is why it permeates the whole man and concerns itself with the simple daily duties of each one's particular calling, as Luther so wonderfully pointed this out again. Therefore you always find it where the Gospel is at home. One cannot preach that at all without directly or indirectly also preaching sanctification. That is the preaching I call evangelical encouragement (*evangelische Ermahnung*); and I wish especially to emphasize that it is a fresh, joyous, glorious address.

In the Formula of Concord this matter is covered under the heading of "The third use of the law." There, however, is included the law-preaching that addresses itself to the old Adam of the Christian. That is here excluded. For that reason I do not call this emphasis on sanctification law-preaching but encouragement, and in order to emphasize the main feature in this approach, I call it evangelical encouragement (or, the Gospel of sanctification. Tr.).

*Ermahnung* (admonition) has otherwise among us come to mean "to remind the other of his sins." And since that of course is to be carried on with loving intent, it was called, evangelical admonition. My portrayal consequently has met with considerable opposition. But whoever approaches with the will and readiness to understand what I am trying to say, will find, too, that such use of the word not only corresponds better to the idiom of the German language but also with the situation that is to be portrayed, than the customary terminology: and that something has been clarified that is not immediately clear in the term third use of the law.

Something entirely different is the boasting insistence on the form and letter (*Pochen*) of sanctification. Of this there are two kinds. The one appears in connection with the insistence (*Pochen*) on orthodoxy; the other is opposed to it. Whoever is at home in church history will know that the former flourished in the period of orthodoxy; whereas, the latter arose under pietism. This smug insistence in the form of sanctification, in both cases, is a natural outgrowth of the prevailing background of each. They appear at all times and in all phases of the external church body. They were there in the old Catholic church with her sects and schisms before the Reformation, and they repeat to the present day also in the Lutheran church. Indeed, through their opposition, they here show their real nature which both have in spite of their different characteristics, namely: legalistic arts and practices.

This legalism is revealed in three characteristics: (1) It has no time for the Gospel as motivating force, but seeks to create through demands and threats. (2) It mixes into the content of these demands foreign elements, which are not part of the will of God but are products of the individual's own "conscience." (3) The consciousness of one's own rectitude obtrudes itself in it.

With the insistence on orthodoxy the Gospel of sanctification is degraded into a sweatshop of the law. This occurs in a two-fold fashion. Either the preachment unto sanctification is held to a portrayal of the relationship between faith and works, or it seeks its force and power in the church's various regulatory measures, as, for example, excommunication. In the first instance the portrayal may be correct. Indeed, to avoid the appearance of legalism, one may give decorous homage to the doctrine of the adiaphora. But the strength has gone out of this preachment, because the full-throated ado about the form of right faith has enthroned the law and drawn to itself all inner participation, so that a certain indifference in regard to sanctification has developed.

Nor can it be otherwise. Where there is only an academic knowledge, an intellectual understanding, there is still not faith-life (*Glaubensleben*). But where the faith-life is missing, there legalism (*gesetzlich Wesen*) rules. And this legalism reveals itself in the above-described manner as

being satisfied with the intellectual approval it has found. This preachment refers to works as the necessary fruits of faith, with the never-failing remark that of course such works are not meritorious.

And thus the wheel of the orthodox dogma comes full circle. Yes, if, on top of that, it is made clear in the doctrine of adiaphora that forces and conditions flowing out of the creative act of God are not subject to the moral law; that we are to allow no one to judge us in regard to these matters; and when one has this clear into the smallest detail—then the thought readily comes that we have solved the equation, our good deed is done.

Thus we have acquitted ourselves as a gospel representative, without any fear or trembling. And that's the end of it, in the life of the individual Christian where he is concerned about his personal sanctification, and also in the life of the pastor in his watch over the flock. The hard work of trying to understand the thoughts has completely monopolized our inner participation. Beyond this it is not put into practice, not in the case of the individual Christian, nor does the work (*Seelsorge*) of the pastor point to that goal. The result in that case is a certain indifference regarding sanctification.

This in itself is already operating with the law. Purely intellectual understanding is built on the laws of unchanging logical relationships. It concerns itself with purely formal mental operations and thus, in so far, not with spirit and life, with the real nature of that which God desires. This understanding is purely mechanical addition and subtraction. There is something not genuine and somewhat of the lie in the mental preoccupation with the terminology of sanctification without faith's travail in patient experience and hope. Therefore, it is not strange that self-discipline wanes in the simple affairs of daily life. And where this is missing, the effect of its loss will be felt in the preaching, and will also assert itself in the life of the hearers.

Language is akin to the life of the spirit that gave birth to it. The Gospel of sanctification is always a part of the Gospel message. Who ever is a herald calling man to faithful acceptance of the forgiveness also proclaims the Gospel of sanctification to call away from the servitude of sin to a godly life. The one interest can not be divorced from the other and the voice of both is heard in the sermon. Where the former interest is slighted in the clamorous ado about orthodoxy, or in so much as it is, the latter suffers equally. The sermon has these three elements: the word of God, the confession of the hearers, the experience of the pastor. The mantle of the preacher unto sanctification is specially heavy for the student and the young pastor because the ripe experience is still lacking. And now where the whole intellectualizing tendency is prejudicial to the interests of experience, because of its complete disregard, all the less can anything worth while be expected. Therefore, it has been observed at certain periods of doctrinal controversy that sanctification is neglected not only in the way the controversy is carried on but also in the congregational life. That is a result of legalism. What other could the fruitage be than a loveless attitude, when the preaching of sanctification consisted solely in the abuse of those on the other side of the doctrinal fence.

Closely related to this are the various measures taken in church government. At this stage the concern is not the fostering 'of sanctification in its little daily expressions, as is the case with true Gospel preaching; rather these measures involve notorious cases, where the good name of the church or the congregation is called into question; cases of church discipline, as they are often improperly called. The mere fact that these cases thus arise is a sign of legalism. All the more this becomes clear when we consider how these cases are handled. The ousting, the excommunication, is the aim to be attained. For that reason the procedure is: also called ban-procedure (*Bannverfahren*) by people under the impression that the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 18, had prescribed a definite external form in which church discipline is to be carried out.

In Matthew 18 the Lord quite evidently sets the salvation of the sinner as the aim to be attained. The looking upon him as a heathen and a publican is simply substantiation of the fact of the sinner's

unrepentance, the end that can no longer be avoided. The form through which this law preaching is effected varies, and is determined by time, place, and circumstance. Therefore, indeed, to assume at all that the Lord, in Matthew 18, has commanded an external form of church discipline, offends against the Gospel in general, and especially against the wording of the text as well. That by such lack of Gospel tact every single step of the procedure in question is steeped in the arts and practices of the law, goes without saying.

Now there is another carping insistence on sanctification, which is opposed to the harping on orthodoxy, and by its opposition, dumps the child with the bath water. That is pietism. Because lovelessness too often had the upper hand in the harping insistence on orthodoxy, the pietists turned away from the struggle for correct doctrine in so far-as correct doctrine on the whole became, somewhat indifferent to them. In as much as they deserted the dialectic work of doctrine, sentimentality grew up among them, accompanied by this legalistic attitude. The orthodoxists have arrayed a huge list of their shortcomings, with Latin names, which will be familiar to the reader. But these things aside, we wish to refer to the characteristics of legalism which fairly jump at you from the orthodox list of objections. Our objection may be summed up as already noted: The impulse is taken from the law Instead of the Gospel; the individual scruples of conscience are made the common censor; the awareness of one's own rectitude is very keen. How this expresses itself and how it is inherent in the nature of the circumstances is what we have under consideration here.

To turn one's back on the problems of a firm foundation in the word of truth already smacks of legalism. For the struggle to enter into the ownership of the faith of the fathers centers in our retaining the Go Gospel truth. Whoever thinks this a bagatelle thinks lightly of the Gospel or else, thinks highly of himself for staying away from the "offensive" doctrinal battles. Thus self-righteousness and lack of deep Gospel sense are the main-springs of this tendency. Naturally, only hollow, superficial, mechanical, opportunistic, and selfish riding of the law could proceed out of such legalistic attitude.

And that expressed itself in saddling all weight on doing instead of, on doctrine. Not so much faith, (this was mainly taken as credence however) but rather love. But this love then consisted principally in "lovingly" overlooking the errors of the others. But otherwise there flourished an unbearably legalistic schoolmasterish prying and spying, in which the own peculiar scruples were made the standard of life for the associates. So and so should not go to dances, to the theatre, play *Schafskopf*, drink beer, and so on and on. Naturally we are not advocating excesses. In themselves the reproaches of the pietists were often rightly made. But we are now concerned about the spirit that gave them birth. This spirit did not flow out of the joy of the gospel but rather consisted in the fallen countenance over the others' joyfulness. This insistence on the right life shifted the emphasis from "life" to "right." "Not life with its spontaneity was created by the message of promise, but rather through fault-finding the external forms of life were pressed into set patterns. That was not truly real life, but rather the movements of waxen manikins, even where it was of honorable intent. Monotonous demand on demand is thus the first characteristic of this pietistic insistence on sanctification.

Now the standard according to which these demands are gauged is not the word of God nor yet His law, rather the scruples of conscience of him who makes the demands. Of course the pietists did not want this, they thought they were using the word of God as the standard. But because of the excess of their emotional enthusiasm they were unable objectively to sense the spirit of Scripture; they rather injected their own supposedly pious feelings into Scripture. Yet in their sour-apple disposition they were not content with the Holy will of God, which we poor sinners can't measure up to in the first place, and really had to put teeth into it with their special demands. Now they are in the same trouble as the Romanists. They hit upon superficial, wooden trivialities. Thus these too in every respect show the legalistic traits described in the first paragraph of our article.

There is still the last trait, which accompanies all legalism: self - righteousness. This is implied in the former trait. To set up the own conscience as the standard for others, takes more than a measure of conceit, even if excessive mouthings of humility occasionally flow in an unending stream. So it was with the Pharisees; so it was with all legalistic utterances in the Roman church; so it was with Calvinism and its friends; so it was with the Lutheran pietists of old. So it is with the sectarians. So it is developing within the Lutheran church in our midst even today.

Thus far in the elaboration of the second statement of our discussion, covering the clamorous insistence on orthodoxy and sanctification, we have considered legalism as it expresses itself in the feeling, thinking, and speaking of the individual Christian.

If we now ask, how does legalism arise in an orthodox group, in the church, it would be wrong to imagine that first the doctrinal wranglings with their inclination toward intellectualism and thereupon the reaction of pietism with its insistence on sanctification created legalism, and that it does not come to pass in any other way. True it is that legalism in the doctrinal conceptions of the church appears and develops in the described historical sequence as already in the sixteenth century and the seventeenth, so also in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. But legalism already existed not only before these trends developed but also in another field. With the orthodoxists as with the pietists in the Lutheran church the basic consideration was the attitude to the objective truths of Scripture, as indeed this is the striking distinction between Lutheranism and Calvinism.

However, legalism was at home in the Lutheran church before the intellectualism of the seventeenth century developed, and that in another field, that of organization. Indeed, aside from the personal attitude of the Christian to law and gospel in the simple daily life of the individual congregation, that is the "fertile" spot where the arts and practices of legalism are nurtured and developed to their full vigor. But it was only after the church was transplanted from Europe to the new and entirely different external conditions of life in America that this part of church life began to demand the attention of the Lutheran church as a whole. In Europe the officials from the start did the work of the church that was public or representative of the individuals; and at that, partly due to Luther's influence, in spite of the fact that Luther's inner make-up and otherwise clearly detailed picture of the nature of church and office was really opposed thereto. Then, after Luther's death officialdom gained supreme command and this is the mark it has ever increasingly stamped on German church life to this day. Here in America in this respect the church was faced with entirely new tasks, not only because of the English-American conception of the nature of government, but because the civil government gave no thought whatsoever to the German- Lutheran church, as was the case not only generally among the sectarians, but most especially with the Swedish Lutheran church. There was no way out; something new had to be created.

Already in the eighteenth century this took place as a practical development while Muehlenberg was about his task of organization. But the underlying principles of the pertinent factors were not explored thoroughly, because for that the clarity of Luther's position is necessary, which could not be expected from the predominantly pietistic bent of Muehlenberg's time. This first took place in the middle of the nineteenth century. There we meet up with such names as Grabau, Walther, Loehe, and Hoefling, actively engaged in getting at the root of the matter. The main point was the question of the church and its office of the ministry, how to get one's bearings in and mastery of the new conditions of the nineteenth century and of the new western homeland, especially with reference to the conceptions of the fathers of the seventeenth century. Later, after the fathers of our new church here began to go to their rest the period of business methods begins, which were primarily absorbed from the sectarians. We can learn from the sectarians too. The question is out of what spirit the forms developed that we wish to learn from others, and what the inner attitude is of the learners that accept the new things.

Thus we are led into the midst of the field of the practical endeavors of policy and regulation of church life and it is worth our while there too to uncover the individual expressions of legalistic arts and practices. Our concern is Christian fellowshiping in congregations and synods, the way officials and congregation members comport themselves, the interrelationship of congregations and their synod, the intercourse with those of another faith and with the world without.

We do not have to spend much time proving it is the old Adam also here that causes this legalism to spring forth. That will automatically appear as we see how he takes occasion and invitation at the various external conditions of life exactly as he took advantage of the Christian's varying peculiarities to develop a legalistic way of thinking. As an aid to understanding we remark right here that also in this field the above-noted tendency of riding the goading, galling law passes current, making everything mechanical, external, superficial.

When Christians gather to do what spontaneously flows out of the gospel, namely: to speak of the mighty deeds of the Savior and of faith, then human conditions at once set certain limitations with regard to persons, time, place, and action, limitations of two different natures, official (*amtlich*) or business (*geschaeflich*). As far as the gospel is concerned no forms are needed beyond the word and sacrament. The word—language, as an expression of life, is a form through which the gospel flows. That there is such a form lies in the limitation of human life; for only thus are thoughts conveyed from one to the other. But which form is chosen is a matter of little moment to the gospel as long as truth is revealed. Thus too the sacraments are definite forms, for conveying the gospel; and because-of this fact there are many who would fain have, opposed the thought that in the New Testament the Lord has instituted no set forms for His church as He has in the Old Testament. Yet do we not note with what gravely joyous accents the Lord set what are commonly called the sacraments as an everlasting memorial, thus raising them from the stolid row of man's accomplishments; and besides they are pre-eminently fitted for the faith of the trustingly simple Christian to absorb the content itself in the gracious gift of his Savior without his flattening them out so that they fit the fixed adding machine of his mind. For any other forms and decrees there is no such institution of the Lord; to deduce God's decree from historical happenings and examples out of the life of the apostolic church is ill-advised; and all such matters are covered by the word of the apostle that we should not allow ourselves to be satcheled and shackled to the external scruples of man.

Therefore the conclusion that, since Christ in a certain sense has given us forms in the sacraments, it is possible or probable that He has given us still other forms, is wrong in the theory behind it and in the history covering it: for then the other sacraments would have to be mentioned.

A further external form, which the gospel of itself does not need, but which develops as men live together, is organization, the sum-total of external regulations. The need for external order lies in the organic nature of a group as a community; and the individual steps will develop naturally in the mutual association. They give expression to the spirit dominant in the community unity, and where they arise out of the work of the gospel and inasmuch as that is the case, the Holy Spirit will acknowledge them for its employ, as the Acts of the Apostles give testimony in most every chapter. Thus, for example, not every one can speak at the same time or with the same effectiveness. Therefore the group delegates to individuals delegates the task of teaching and leading in the interest of all. For community action definite place, time, and procedures are appointed to serve as channels for this action. In the formative period of community life individuals see that conditions are regulated. That too is a manner or form of human association, lying in its very nature; because at that time it all develops more or less without set patterns, without one being able, in such external endeavors, to construe concepts of authority.

This faulty demonstration of proof or development of doctrine has appeared again and again when the present problems were under consideration. In the fourth commandment are included our



superiors and, by correct interpretation, the teachers and ministers of the church. But that does not say that we must by all means enter into such relationship that superiors and their subordinates come into being; or, still less, that a certain form of government is indicated. Indeed not even the parent-children relationship is commanded in that sense. Rather all these conditions, the essence of the above forms as manifestations of life, are in embryo inherent in the organic character of human society and to these the Lord applies the eternal thoughts of His holy will, which finds expression in the one word love, when he speaks in the ten commandments, or when Paul, in the New Testament, speaks of the ministry of the bishops or of others. Missing the mark still further is the attempt to prove out of the Old Testament terms—pastor, teacher, etc.—and their use, that God has ordained a specific form, as such, of transmitting the gospel message, the essential feature of which is the official delegating to individuals the rights and duties of the group.

Further, the election by the congregation through the laying on of hands is actually not supported by Scripture; for, wherever the corresponding Greek term occurs, it properly, as Luther translates, means to order, in a very general sense, which ordering more often and more precisely is mentioned of the Apostles than of the congregations. It does not follow, however, that this fact must lead us into Romanist conceptions of authority; rather, on the contrary, the idea that all this is the concern of the congregation is in itself part and parcel of the gospel around which the congregation forms. We find ample expression of this even in the informality which makes it appear as though the Apostles acted in an autocratic way. Thus Scriptures portray the founding of the apostolic church; and thus to this day in all pioneer conditions the same thing occurs without question, as a natural development. The concern here is to preach the gospel and no one thinks of authorities.

Such building of the congregation occurs at once in two fields of church life: the worship of the group as an integral, unit, in a well-ordered use of the word of God, and, secondly, fellowshiping in love and self-discipline for our mutual temporal and spiritual growth. (Translating into words for today; Growth consists in calling one another “from a comfortable gospel, that acts as a soporific and permits unrighteousness to run riot in the church, to the Gospel that is in truth comforting to stricken sinners, and to seek with them an evermore increasing knowledge of our Lord, that we might win Christ and be found in Him, not having our own righteousness but that which is through the faith of Christ, to apprehend that for which, too, we are apprehended of Christ Jesus: forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”) Thus the congregational life takes form. Through external growth and expansion a synod, as we call it, comes into being. To further the welfare of both, congregation and synod, two kinds of external arrangements come into being; those relating to the service in the word (*amtlich*) and those purely operational. Those regulations covering the teaching and the guidance in the word of God carry the authority implicit in the word itself. Those dealing with the outward administration of the physical assets and with the provision of such external services as the care of the sick, have more the character of business-like administration. These are purely human, commonsense forms; as also their importance and the evaluation of their worth is subject to commonsense appraisal.

The Gospel does not make distinctions, rather it makes up for distinctions. Neither does it remove the external form of distinctions that are present. The Gospel is able to teach, to guide, to assist, to perform purely -external menial services and therewith allow the external distinctions to stand, at the same time keenly aware from the fingertips to the innermost emotions that there are no distinctions; because in all these matters the main issue is that sinful man may be saved by the blood of Christ, our Savior. Such view of life and its corresponding exemplification alone impart deep and innermost

intrinsic value and character to all human relationships, inasmuch as it concerns itself with the spirit that creates.

But the flesh, not being able to grasp the things of the spirit, and yet desirous of making a fair showing, injects its essential character and its approach, exemplifying man's selfish reactions that are natural in all such situations. Being at home in forms, which is under emphasis in these regulations, the flesh, because of its legalistic nature, sees only the form, the external form, the fact of the existing order. The content, the Gospel, which is the point at issue in each case, is ignored.

Let us first consider this legalism as it applies to teaching. For the teacher, his being a teacher, which distinguishes him from those who have to listen to him, the mere form itself is more fascinating than the great content of his message would allow. A feeling of superiority attaches to the right to tell another what to do and how to do it. Our pastoral work often largely consists in dispensing doctrine and advice. Too readily the teacher allows himself to be placed on a pedestal, finds pleasure in this superior position, and finally condescendingly talks down, even then when he patronizingly becomes one of the crowd. Most people not only put up with such things, but also even look up to them with respect, which only makes matters worse. A man, generally, passes for as much as he makes of himself. It is no different in the visible church, nor in our own midst.

What a pitfall for the pastor and his work! In the first place, how silly! How flagrantly this offends against the inmost nature of the pastor's true calling! The pastor is not called as a pedant to schoolmaster, but as a herald—the king's messenger. To bring the message of glad tidings lends a lift and a lilt to the bearer too, not as being selfishly puffed up over the personal part played, but humbly, with a song in the heart for the honor of bringing the message that can engender a song in another. Thus we can see how this false approach is related to the earlier-described intellectualism.

Furthermore, what utter lack of humility! What could tend to turn a Christian's stomach more than the unctuous priestcraft put on as a cloak, be it overbearing, condescending, or patronizing. That, aside from sordid service of selfish interests, is what makes of the men pleasing priestery, a blighting popery in miniature. How can anyone in connection with the death and glorification of our Savior stoop to push his person into the foreground, even if it is but in his external conduct!

Finally, how harmful! This forbidden fruit so enervates us that we cannot accomplish what we are here for, namely, by our preaching to unyoke our folk and unfetter the flock of Christ from the constricting frock of our priestcraft so that the children of the highest stand as kings and priests before their Father, in their daily tasks. For our official mannerisms not only spawn and strengthen a scourge of evil growths among our members, such as fawning, awning selfish ambition, and politicking in petty personalities; but also, and that is graver still, we abridge their birthright to live in the Scriptures as their element, not to mention our neglect to encourage and guide their steps therein. What we have begun by our approach to Scriptures as so many dogmas where only the specialist knows his way about, we sharpen by our official mannerisms so that we train our people to say: Bible study is the pastor's business, that's what we hired him for. By the way: Someone has noted that, among the sectarians the Bible is more at home among the people, and, consequently, at least from their standpoint, the people are more at home in the Bible than is the case among Lutherans. That observation, as far as my knowledge goes, hits the mark—though it is a question in what measure. There are many many reasons for this fact, which indicate an entirely different sort of legalism among the sectarians. Calvinism has actually fashioned a "paper Pope" out of the Bible, not Luther. This fits very well with their tendency to favor their reason over against the objective word of God in Bible interpretation. Thus this advantage of the sectarians is in part again lost. The lack of use of the Bible among Lutherans, on the other hand, may in part be accounted for aside from these evil influences. We have the catechism and the hymnbook. These are more important and play a greater role than anything that can be arrayed alongside from any

denomination. Here the church choral plays in too. Because of the sectarian arts and practices grown out of legalism, for example, the dynamic church choral, born out of the depths of Christian folk life and out of its best periods of youthful vigor, has, as it were, trickled out in the sand. For that reason the Bible as a form is held by them in higher esteem than among our folk. But what could have accrued to our advantage has turned to our loss because we took this gem for granted and cherished it not at all. Every thing centered about the sermon and the catechism so that the other simple and elemental aspects of worship were lost from the inner life of the people.

A penetration into our catechism and the chorals of our church, fine and appreciative and not stilted and stunted by partisan politics, carefully, soberly, consistently, and understandingly presented, would also have brought our people into the realm and under the sway of Scriptures. Aye, there was the rub. But even if that were all in order, we should still be in the same old rut if the unfortunate priestcraft yet continued to flourish. Devotion and a lively application to Scripture, the catechism, and the chorals of the church, require an independent folk, freed, and with deep-diving roots made firm by the Gospel. But this does not harmonize with our exercising lordship over our people, even if it rests only in the external appearances.

A second field in which wrong views tend to make way for the law is (church) government.

For one who governs this becomes the main thing, namely that he does the governing, rather than the building of the kingdom of God. Everyone in the whole earth assesses governing higher than teaching, although the Apostle Paul turns it about. At 1 Tim. 5:17 we read "Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine, for . . . the laborer is worthy of his reward." Three things are expressed here which will seem strange to our accustomed conceptions of office: In the first place, the chief leader in the affairs of a congregation or synod need not be a pastor unto whom has been committed, as his main duty, the public preaching of the Gospel. Rather, it may be business man or a craftsman, for instance, as long as he meets the qualifications Paul, in the well-known Scripture passages, otherwise expects of a bishop. And with the reference to the ability to teach, Paul again does not have ill mind a formal theological training, but rather a practical gift, though naturally based on a deeply-rooted understanding of the Gospel. Such people the Scriptures call rulers. Their task, in contrast to that of the laborer in the word and doctrine, is somewhat more external. It is the external leadership and the careful regulation of the common efforts of the congregation, wherein, for instance, in such primitive conditions, spiritual, care was included. The Apostle otherwise in his directions clearly indicates that the Word of God is the true means with which one governs.

Secondly, Paul, in the passage quoted, places the work in the word and in the doctrine higher than the described activities of the rulers. To be entrusted with the particular special study of Scripture, and with the task of spiritually penetrating into it, to uncover, its teachings, and thus, to use a modern expression, to create intellectual and spiritual values with which the ruler then may operate so that they find orderly expression in life, that is the greater. Why? Because thus the Word of God, the Gospel is brought out in clear relief. The Gospel is the important thing, not the external distinction between a preacher and ruler. Paul does not put this into words in the quoted passage, but that becomes evident from what the Scriptures otherwise keep telling us about the Gospel.

Why Paul in this passage makes the distinction between ruler and preacher is the third point that engages our attention. The Apostle reveals that the conditions obtaining in the church and the world at that time were just as they are today; namely, the more spiritual abilities and activities were accounted worthy of less honor than the more external practical activities. This occurred to such an extent that the preachers often were not correspondingly supplied with the necessities of life. A ruler might well be a businessman as long as he did not engage in dishonorable transactions. For that the preacher had no time

to spare from the pursuit of his studies. But as today, too, whoever stood out in administrative affairs and had the bigger income was also accounted the more worthy of honor.

These outgrowths in the ancient church did not arise out of God's "So be it"; rather are they the natural development of existing forces. To these the Apostle applies the will of God as inscribed on stone tablets and in the fleshly hearts of men as a standard in his message of the Gospel of sanctification (*evangelische Ermahnung*).

The above-described unsound view of things halfway makes sense in worldly affairs where everything is settled by law (*Gewalt*). That makes no sense at all in the church, where everything is based on the Gospel, which enters the world by means of a message, a spiritual activity. And yet there is often very little difference between the visible church and the world. Congregations consider the pastor the one in highest authority. For that reason he is accorded the higher honor in the intercourse of the people, above the schoolteacher, for example. In larger circles too, such as in synod, if one has an office that has to do with administrative functions, and even if it is but handing out the ballot slips, that immediately raises him above his fellow men.

The fruitage of this false view among the officials shows up in a stirring, yet a sterile hustle and bustle, whose secret lies in their delight in presiding and being surrounded by yes men and obedient servants, that is, in promoting their own pet plans and programs and attaining their ends by using the base and sordid motives of others. Administrative orders, intimidation, and wire-pulling are the means that they employ. And externally this is effective no end, with the Poles, and no less with the Pommeranians and all other German folk whose natural shell of reserve is not as readily open as others to the quiet wooing of the Gospel, or the like. Yes, among the English and Yankees too. Very few people, and Christians at that, are aware how they are ruled by others. And I am talking herein about false ruling.

If, for example, one who is in, office, be it pastor, deacon, president, or visitor, even if what the author had in mind or intended were a worthwhile object, if such a one, even in all sincerity, were to use the external superiority over the body in general that accrues by virtue of his office, to push through his opinion or his platform by force or other external means, he would be guilty of misrule, whether he turns the innate loyalty and submissiveness of his people to his account by loudly and forcefully casting the influence of his person in the balance, or capitalizes on their selfish aspirations with charming persuasiveness and a show of friendliness, or operates with Robert's Rules of Order, with the hand-picking of committees, or with the rulings of the Chair, or what have you.

And now, it comes to adding to the flock or keeping the flock intact, those engaged therein, be it pastor or Sunday School superintendent, etc., allow their person to play a larger part than the Gospel they are to represent would admit. This is evident not only in the actions and activities of those so engaged, but in the evaluation usually placed on such activities by both bystanders and participants. I must go back a bit in order to make clear what I have in mind. God has created man a personality. As such he is a separate, complete, and distinct being, and in the nature of a sanctuary that is not to be forcefully pried open and entered, not even for the purpose of converting him. Not even my own child do I wish to coerce or modify in the most delicate motivations of his soul other than what the Gospel wins by impelling free and inner conviction. Not I am to be the determining factor in my child, but the Gospel is to make out of him a free and independent man. Thus even in the relationship between parent and child there remains a facet of personality inviolable for prying penetration or belaboring by the parental personality otherwise. The forceful impress of one's own personality has place only in the matter of external obedience and discipline. How much more incongruous in the relationship among men not bound together by blood ties. These thoughts are not expressed in Scriptures in so many any words, but are inherent in the way the word of God as law and as Gospel is effectively operative. God

forcibly impresses His personality on man, so to say, in the law, which is quick and powerful and annihilates the sinful doings of man. In the Gospel God wins us over through love not by thrusting it upon us but by sacrificing him self in His Son, and through the message creating a new personality in faith and love. That indicates the channels of our conduct in our relations with one another in matters such as these.

The motivating force that causes Paul to rap on the door of the heart of his hearers is his thankfulness toward God and his concern for the fellow-redeemed. There he himself is in the background completely. His person means absolutely nothing, but, by the mercies of the Lord and offering them in his hand, he appears before his hearers. The only determining factor with which he seeks to influence them is the grace in Christ Jesus. A personal wooing appears with Paul, too, Gal. 4: 12-20. But there the personal interests are expressly excluded. The entire thought-complex is to recreate in their soul the memory of their previous joyful spiritual experience and to remove the thought that Paul, in his previous sharpness, did not mean it well with them. The only means at his disposal is Christ and His grace; his only end and aim, that this same Christ take form within them. May I draw attention to the detailed presentation of these thoughts in my interpretation of the Epistle to the Galatians (*Faith-Life*, May, 1950)?

Directly opposed to this it is for the pastor boldly to thrust his person upon the hearer, or affectedly to fawn upon him in order to win him. Herein we find many gradations, ranging from the trills and tremolos of the voice in the manner of the insipid affectation of some singers, the rolling of the eyes, the wise-cracking and catchy expressions and innuendoes, the use of snappy slang and other vulgarities, the distracting gestures, up to the contortions reported of Billy Sunday and his kind. Here too we might mention the overly close familiarity in the personal: association with individuals, for example with women. I well know that there is a difference in temperament, Partly that is a natural, inborn trait, partly it is a corruptible inheritance of the previous generation, or a cultivated mannerism. It is not my intention to set up any regulations, because it is fraught with danger to set up rules covering the boundary between genuineness and artificiality in another. It is too easy again to end up in legalism. These thoughts are merely set up as a guide for the reader as he casts a critical eye upon himself.

Now as regards results, the hankering for which lies at the bottom of most of these endeavors. How successful are they? In the olden days and more recently too I have known many men whose sails were not cut on these "successful" contours, for which reason, furthermore, they remained strictly in the background. But they were at home in the Gospel and loved the folk entrusted to their care. And here they bore simple objective witness to the word of God. That's about all they did in all their days. What this accomplished for the hearer's health was oft not credited to the pastor's account, at least not during his lifetime. Yet a wise-hearted observer would have taken note. Thus many a capable man bears his fruit in the quiet background while the world and also the church, as Oxenstierna remarks, is governed with much stupidity, etc. , for which they even take credit, because they don't see it. It would be a serious mistake on the other hand, however, consistently to assume that the simple folk are unaware of such things.

Here belongs also what in this country is called "mixing" with the people. People mention it as something praiseworthy in a pastor that "he is a good mixer." That expression was coined among sectarians, who wish to come to the help of the Gospel with social endeavors. I am well aware that one can understand this expression in a good sense, and further that shyness and reserve not only hinder a preacher's effectiveness but also may give growing space to the old Adam. But in my opinion mixing is guilty of this in a more positive sense than reserve. In any case we wish every preacher a goodly amount of self-criticism in such matters. The deeper our understanding of the Gospel, as life's element, the more each one will herein find the proper steps to take.

Actual ruling in the church consists in this that the Holy Spirit through the Gospel creates spiritual values, which then find living expression in the group life of the Christians, first of all in the little day by day details and there in careful faithfulness. The major issues, upon which predominantly the church too sets the most value, are also under the direction of the Holy Ghost. But there too the ruling in the church is served by the faithfulness in little things, not flashy nor set to capture the attention of the crowd, but as doing its duty in quietness before God, the sum of which details make a big thing. Generally those imposing things, of whatsoever nature, which should draw the attention of the world to the Gospel, are mostly man's improvisation and finally futile; as, for example the obtrusive newspaper announcements, and articles that wear Esau's solid cloak and yet remind of Jacob, or the mass meetings that lie outside the sphere of the life of the church, and do not spring spontaneously from noble sources, but often are arranged for effort and to smooth the way for ill-disguised ulterior designs.

But what we are concerned about in its broad outlines in this connection is: these things, censured above, are outgrowths of our legalistic inner life. They are all aimed not to let the free grace of God which is witnessed through the Gospel message only, create a new life and doing, but rather to have man as Mr. Fix- it, according to the unsavory maxim: I'll do you a favor, so that you do me a favor, bring things to pass, which, as is but natural in such case, are external, mechanical, not genuine, untrue, and superficial, which will not stand up against sin and the devil and under the judgment in the day of the Lord.

And now as to business matters. The affairs of this earth in time naturally demand that preachers of the Gospel are salaried; churches, schools, parsonages, teacherages are built; higher schools of learning are founded; and periodicals and books are printed. In the first place all these things take money. The latter also bring in money. In addition we have the mission activities, which we divide into foreign mission and home missions, from which latter we also in time expect money. For all of these things administrative personnel are needed and regulations as a guide for the administration.

Legalism puts in a different appearance here from what it does in the official arts and practices dealing with teaching which we previously described. While there the self-centered feeling expresses itself more in an authority complex, here the meritoriousness of works on the one hand and the observance of business procedures on the other are in the foreground. To be sure the craving for authority is evident here too. That, however, is really the case only if officials happen to be pastors at the same time; and one may, in that case, relate this tendency to their accustomed practices as officials in their parishes. Thus we have to do here only with these two new appearances. They both run together, especially in the manner in which money is raised through collections; of course also in the manner in which money, as a freewill offering of love, is dispensed; and finally in the evaluation put on these business matters over against the church's mission: to teach.

Here we do not have to cover the proper motive in giving. That belongs in the above treatment of what is comprehended under teaching. Here the point is more what consideration is given this motive in our dealings with the people. And there we must first of all state that a correct, outline of the doctrine of it does not hold the answer. With the greatest of ease an improper practice can run right alongside, and it is even impossible to make clear to one who is carrying on in these two things simultaneously that you cannot do that. In other words one cannot set up rules for collecting money in the spirit of the Gospel, but we must have a gospel man whose attitude toward mammon distinguishes him before others. He who himself is stingy, who lays great store by money, who does not know from experience how happy (*froehlich*, Greek: hilarious) giving does can never get another to give gladly; for, as was said, this work is not accomplished by easy talk. For that reason it is not a thoroughly dependable procedure for large groups to entrust their collections to a single individual instead of entrusting this to the pastors, or, which would be better still, to the congregations.

In the first place the pastors relinquish a goodly part of their high calling, namely, through the Gospel to strengthen this important part of Christian life in steady contact with their folk. Their calling should mean too much to them to let anyone cripple it for them. By saying they cannot do this work, they reveal a legalistic conception of it or else they are lazy. Indeed, to make people shell out their pockets with threats, or imposition, or by fast talking, is unpleasant. To inwardly rebel against doing that is eminently proper. But that is not collecting in the sense of the Scriptures. Rather herein the pastor should develop his greatest joy, for it is in immediate relationship to his preaching of the Gospel. And when synod operates with the above argument of the unfitness of many pastors, then it is evident that that determining factor is not the upbuilding of the spiritual strength of the congregation, but the size of the sums of money to be drummed up. On the other hand, a single collector can infect an entire synod, and that has its inception with the pastors, who act as carriers. Of course in all this we must keep in mind, if God provides a man with a peculiar gift, the church should feel free to make use of it.

A further question is that of the regulations under which this part of church life is carried on. When, how much, for which purpose shall we give? From all sides the gospel spontaneity is disturbed by the old Adam. In the first place, it is questioned whether all order is not legalistic. Giving should be left to every Christian's choice, it should flow freely out of love. But there we place order and unimpeded love into opposite camps, we place them into an opposition in which they are not by nature. We do not have order because of the law; rather it becomes law through the spirit with which we take it in hand. Order serves as a handmaid to the group looked upon as an organic unit; here then as a handmaid to help those who give, so that what free love wishes to do is not dissipated like a gleaming white frost in the sun, and gone with the wind. The bigger the body, the greater the need for order; the greater the opportunities, it is true, for the old Adam; a reason, by the way, why we should not be so set on building big congregations or big synods. Thus where one loudly insists there should be no forms it betokens a clearly marked spirit of legalism, in that he not only stands in the way of freedom to set up orders, but above all in that he boasts of the liberties that love may take.

In the other extreme, of course, order, wherever it is in existence, serves the old man as an occasion to consider it the essential thing. In the main he speaks of order in such a way that not only is the impression created that it is the important thing; but this manner also shows that the spiritual life, out of which such speech flows, has started off on the wrong key. Order then shall have validity because it is the order. That cannot but turn the Gospel into law. Where force rules, this is a natural procedure. But even there we find sensible people, who keep the legalistic character of order in the background, because they wish to accomplish something higher than pure order. Then why can't, in the Christian congregation, a free man of the Gospel so go at his work that the brethren, out of freedom of spirit, out of love, accommodate themselves to all good order as though there were no such thing as order? Naturally, if I look upon the members of my congregation as an obstinate tribe, or as a bunch of youngsters, over which the pastor lords it as a higher being, then nothing sensible can come out of it. The pastor belongs in the congregation, in the midst of the flock, not as a man of base motives in the midst of like-minded, who through mixing and fixing must make an external show; but as a Christian, born of the Gospel, in the midst of Christians born of the same Gospel, who with real ruling creates noble things of worth by means of the Gospel: not mere sums of money but spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. For that we need a joyous fortitude of soul, fragrantly fresh as the morning dew in springtime, which can make the other free and happy too.

For what shall we give? This question seems completely superfluous. For even though in every individual case we ask for individual concrete gifts, it is always taken for granted they are for the kingdom of God. Even a little thought will reveal that the kingdom of God is not the particular external crowd to which the giver happens to belong (rather the being king, the effectual ruling, of the Lord in

the hearts of His believers). We may as well offer a further word right here. As self-evident as this disavowal is, so little is it generally kept in mind. Not only every Christian has a streak of this right ordinary regard for self, but especially those who are supposed to be leaders and teachers. And appearing among them, it, is all the more noticeable. When we allocate money for church expansion, the justification is often quite naively put forward: We must get ahead of the Council, or Ohio, or Iowa, or even Missouri. (I am now talking to Wisconsin. Well do I know the others too.) I am well aware that such words are not to be understood exactly as they sound. At the same time this way of speaking is evidence that in part the vicious understanding too lies behind the words, all protestation to the contrary notwithstanding. Or when, in the founding and maintenance of mission congregations, money, that for the most part has come together from those who have but little of this world's goods, is lightly spent to gratify the whims of a stubborn group, which has left another congregation and is not at the moment able to maintain its own pastor, or of some rich persons, who very well could take care of that on their own. Bullheadedness and greed no one wishes to sponsor, of course; but either ulterior motives, as above, play in, or-and that is the point here-it is difficult for those who are called upon to act to see that is just the Gospel that refrains from offering such assistance. Or if, in building up our institutions, we provide for external greatness and the stir that it creates without concern for the real inner work which surely is properly to receive our main attention. To be sure, the external affairs have to be taken care of too and have by far not progressed as far as becomes crack educational institutions. Yet our main mission, our loyal liegeman service of the Gospel, must be our mastering mission. But in spite of assurances to the contrary, both private and official, that still leaves much to be desired.

In all of these cases the point is that the Gospel does not form the center. Either other interests, opposed to the Gospel, more or less take over determinedly, such as envy and factiousness, or the quest for honor and the desire to cut a figure; or, without thinking, one follows the leader like the stolid, ruminating herd. In each case the Gospel is not the exalting, deep-flowing motivation, which in itself is a treasure, noble and greatly to be desired, and bringing forth fruit in its time; not only insofar as the result swells the heart and is a joy to behold, but also with respect to the manner in which the result is gained. These other methods not only are in the nature of their origin offshoots of law, but they will drag along in their train the procedures already condemned above, in the entire life of the church and will finally engender results that are of no value: life that is mechanical, superficial, external, artificial, as these attributes apply in the individual situation.

Above we spoke of business methods that we have taken over from the sects. Order there was already in the apostolic church, as we know from Scripture, even in the matter of collecting money. So we did not just learn that from the Calvinists. But we have taken over from them some practical procedures. And that was but natural, for since with them the interests in the field of administrative organization and procedure are preponderate, they have thus developed some administrative methods which in themselves are fine worthwhile external forms which we formerly often opposed because of a wrong understanding of what is in harmony with the Gospel. Whoever can still recall those motives, will realize that either these his motives were rooted in the law, or the nature and operation of the new methods were not understood.

However, there were methods that really were objectionable. For instance, where amusements, business interests and such were used to make money. The main thing was to make money, and that with no sense of shame. The world was called in and then plucked and plagued by beggars. Ranks were joined with them according to the usual methods of business and politics. That's the beer-picnics, fairs, bazaars, socials, and entertainments.

The names alone do not reveal what was objectionable about them; one must have seen these methods in action, and yet there too with a difference. To list the individual items judged objectionable



by the opponents again does not make for a thorough judgment. For instance, raffles, wheels of chance, and grab bags were the things made much of in the speeches held opposing them. Even the laws of the state were brought into the fray, since, in the opinion of the opponents, they had been broken. On this side there was, indeed, a seriousness that condemned the, in part, disorderly conduct, but there was also a decided spirit of legalism, which could not immediately separate between the external form and the interpretation and spirit out of which these things were carried on. Which is the reason why many of these things are today continued without embarrassment and at that by individuals who do not have still to establish a reputation with respect to Christian discipline. But this, nevertheless, does not prove that all things are justified, as they have now found their place among us. Wherever they really are innocent amusements and, especially in the cities, serve our people and, above all, our youth, purely as recreation; where the attendant raising of funds is merely the most convenient way of defraying the cost involved without the odor of the usual unsavory money-making schemes—indeed the combining of amusements and the gathering of funds is not in itself to be condemned—where one does not beg from those without and, above all, where, in the effort to serve the church, the Gospel is not switched to a side track for the duration, one should at least be careful in forming judgment on these matters. Yet this remains true to this day: these things, in themselves and because of the multiplicity of arrangements and the ever-present alternative of our people to be just a ditto-machine, do not lend themselves as a particularly happy aid in furthering the understanding of the Gospel. And in so much they belong in our discussion on legalism. In our critical analysis of the life of the church as a whole they are symptoms showing that the fresh and spontaneous life in the Gospel is ailing, that we do not have full confidence that the Gospel is a power of God unto salvation not only at some future time to release us from this planet that is to be destroyed through the glory of his coming to transport us to the mansions in the Father's house, but more, to free us from this present evil world, from sin's thralldom in the mean and niggardly way we view and do the deeds of our daily life. In other words, we do not trust the Gospel, in spite of protestations to the contrary, dogmatically correct as they are, that it alone is sufficient to create for the furtherance of the church not only what is needed but also what is at all of value.

We still have a few words to say with respect to the association with those of another persuasion and those of the world without. With respect to the former, Rome and the sectarians are naturally so far removed from us that our shortcomings are generally sins of omission. However, we are guilty of much legalism over against Lutherans who still can not find the same path with us in harmony of life and teaching in spite of the decisive and evident confession of the Synodical Conference. Just a short reference to what has already been said thereon in the *Quartalschrift* and also is touched upon in the second half of this article. It goes without saying that, because of the truth of the Gospel, we cannot externally cooperate with those who reject vital elements of the doctrine as we are constrained to hold it. But that our cardinal characteristic is the rebuff shows a spirit of legalism, just as in recent times an external importunate pressure for union reveals the same trait. There is an approach which takes not, as it were, the middle road, but operates on a level completely different. That is, to take appreciative note of every manifestation of the Gospel's ability of spirit, to acknowledge it, to stand behind it with word and deed openly, to strengthen and encourage its fuller growth, without automatically turning on the icy water of our superior criticism from operation Isolation. It is necessary to add: We are not born with these qualifications, they must be acquired; and our failings often are not so much the result of evil intent but of force of habit. Nevertheless it behooves us to examine ourselves whether we are not enmeshed in our own legalistic arts, in parochialism, our craving to be always in the right, and self-righteousness. That is in point too in our occasional association with the sectarians and Romanists. It is not remarkable that we too readily step over the line on the one side or the other, since we are unaccustomed to association with strangers because of the naturally predominant particularism in this

free country. However, as soon as the Gospel becomes the central point in all respects and in all our doings, the individual proper approach will quite readily be forthcoming. At the same time that leads to a readier understanding as to where and how a legalistic spirit tends to lead us astray.

In more recent times our struggle against Rome plays a special role. It would lead too far astray here to consider the question exhaustively. This will have to be done in a special article. A brief remark will suffice here. Where this opposition is carried into political agitation I expect, out of my knowledge of history and out of personal experience, that a legalistic attitude, a lack of Gospel understanding, will lie at the root of it. The outcome will be accordingly external, mechanical, superficial. Hidden motives and mental reservations, that is, the cheap motives and methods of worldly politicians soon flourish. It is no service to the church, it is of no service to the state, it serves only to strengthen the antichrist, who is our superior in fanatic conviction and organization, and will put him on top of the heap. Since I have learned more and more to apply the criterion of the Gospel to these things it is clear to me that it can not be otherwise.

It is the same in our association with the world. Formerly our pastors were considerably more, for external reasons, looked upon as outsiders. In the last twenty-five years we have become more involved in the activities of the world especially in politics. Two trends make themselves felt here over against the former clear separation between the world and the church, the attempt is now often made to have them grow together. The other side, then, widens the separation between church and state to such an extent that a separation or division takes place in the individual, who now can swim in both streams. There we arrive at the first-mentioned syncretism. The realization, however, that these realms are clearly divided only in their innermost essence, that the Christian, in accord with the will of God, can't jump this world, yea, rather not only is in this world and, at that, on the same footing with Christian, Jew, Roman, and heathen, but at the same time also stands as the Gospel Christian that he always is, and thus only will he neither flag nor flinch but be a man in time of need—this realization will point to the proper path and will point up too that the other tendencies root in a legalistic spirit. There too then the resultant accomplishment of such fixing is external, superficial, mechanical, hollow, and influenced by selfish mental calculations.

The Third statement: When in the development of the church's life this condition assumes control in one new field after the other like a weed pest and becomes the natural state in each field, then the decline sets in, the decline which also shows itself outwardly in this that we take over many virus – infected and beggarly elements from the sectarian churches.

This statement is simple; and the issue is simple too; that we see and acknowledge that it applies to the conditions prevailing in our midst. The complaint concerning the decline is general among us. Yet that does not make it a purposeful, penitent acknowledgment, rather the plaint itself may be a fruit of the spirit of legalism. It is necessary that we repentantly recognize that the decline is born out of the spirit of legalism, indeed, the legalistic arts and practices are the decline.—Voices are heard in our midst claiming the complaint concerning a decline is pure pessimism. That too is a legalistic technique.—Over against that it is submitted that the above presentation reflects one aspect of conditions prevailing in our midst. Naturally that is to be understood as though we did not have the Gospel nor just cause to magnify the grace of God. Nor as though every period did not have its peculiar weaknesses. Yet there is need to note that our times lack the freshness characteristic of the work of our fathers; and that the weaknesses painted above have these distinctive features: the outbreaks have occurred in ever-increasing fields, and they have become habitual. In many ways we have lost the consciousness of and the critical sense for legalistic arts and practices. For that reason we can't stomach being reproached therewith. There is a vogue among us so open and remarkably current that we actually take it for granted: the lack of interest in doctrine (*Lehrinteresse*) and, as the same time, an imperturbable conviction of one's own rectitude.

Paralleling this appears the inconsistency—closer attention, however, reveals it as a consequence of the described conditions—that we have lost the power to bring the simplest matters to a decisive close. In addition, the assimilation of the frills and froth of the sectarians, the spread and exclusive flourishing of officialdom, of officious manipulation and fixing, and the corresponding methods of nurturing the redeemed of the Lord, the Bride of Christ!

This we must recognize (in sackcloth and ashes) if we wish to escape therefrom, if we are not to resist to the end the wooing work of the Gospel. If we do not repentantly acknowledge these things, we are sunk. In this sense this study is a sharp but necessary preaching of the law. (But how we stand in need of it!)

Now how to help? Let us retreat and recoup our strength in the Gospel, study it more diligently, again and again, and from the beginning, and thus preach it to our people. Let us study the Gospel to answer the new questions, which, in the prevailing conditions, break in on us like the sea. The result of which can and will be that many cardinal truths of the Gospel will again be cultivated; truths lying open not only in Scriptures but especially in Luther's writings, that our occasional doctrinal discussions, through their one-sided emphasis, crowded from the center of our vision. Thus the spirit of our Christians will be introduced into challenging fields where its elasticity may be exercised, having become tired out and weakened by the old battles, which by themselves are incapable of furthering new thoughts. The Gospel brings new vigor, it also brings deeper knowledge of sin, it brings greater joy of faith, it will then too give the power to overcome the decay of spirituality of our time.

We remarked at the start that the reading in translation of Professor Koehler's essay of a generation back was being scheduled by the Conference of Presidents for presentation here, obviously from the consideration and in the hope that our present generation may yet profit from attending these weighty words out of the past. Synod's history through the intervening forty-five years, as any honest self-study of our present generation done in the mirror of Professor Koehler's presentation, cannot but point up the current relevancy and the urgency all the more in our day "for genuine repentance by us all, if any change for the better is to be expected." The way is set clearly before us in Professor Koehler's plea: "*Lassen.Sie uns ins Evangelium gehen, das fleissiger immer wieder and von neuem studieren und so auch unserm Volk predigen.... Das Evangelium bringt, wieder Frische, es bringt auch tiefere Suendenerkenntnis, es bringt groessere Freude des Glaubens und bringt dann auch die Kraft den geistigen Marasmus unsrer Zeit zu ueberwinden.*"