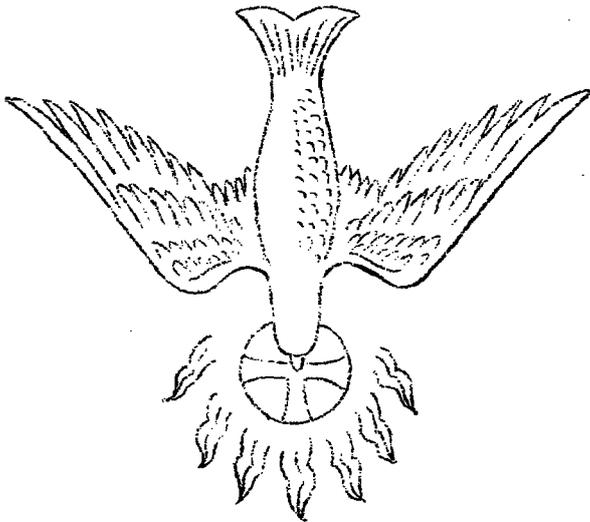


2516

TEMPTATIONS
THAT ESPECIALLY CONFRONT
THE ORTHODOX

MARTIN GALSTAD



"QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT"

2516

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There is a long story behind this theme. When I was a little boy my father on a few occasions evinced a noticeable shudder at things that were done by clergymen of the conservative Lutheran Church. On one occasion we boys were admiring the strong sermon of that Sunday morning, but Father turned away sadly with the remark that the Gospel ought also to have been preached, at least toward the end. Besides, I had personal knowledge of degradation in the clergy so deep that the thought of it is painful to this day. Then when a brother in college came home with a quotation from one of the ancient church fathers to the effect that there would hardly be many preachers in heaven---I was in a spiritual fix! He also had a quotation from Shakespeare that drove home the point.

There is much more to the story. I left a Lutheran College because of the low moral tone of my associates and the insensitivity of my class advisor when I went to him for help. It would be indelicate to say much about what I met while at the seminary --- except that I wish I had a copy of the letter I wrote in 1934 when I made a prophecy regarding, should I say, our present fellowship. It later was my lot to help save some remnants where bitterly orthodox clergymen had been saying and doing the right things in a horribly wrong way.

Now that materials sufficient for a book have been condensed to less than a page, I need hardly plead that I have long had ample reasons for being concerned with this topic. Over the years I would find a brother pastor here and there who was perturbed about the temptations into which we of the orthodox persuasion were falling, particularly with respect to the manner and method of our testimony. And to me it was heartening to meet kindred spirits who also felt that we might be more effective if we would but search and try our ways. We must not ignore what our opponents say about us; we will be wise to weigh

their criticism.

It developed after some years of trying that our theme was admitted to the status of a conference essay. I say "our" because a senior pastor was given the topic, and he accepted it on my promise to collaborate. After writing an introduction, he placed it on my desk for consideration. Shortly thereafter he passed from the present life, so unfortunately we do not have his thinking to guide us.

* * *

On July 28, 1938, I said this in a pastoral conference devotional:

"Is there not a danger that we have become quite satisfied with the definitive and the scholastic to the exclusion of the meditative and the mystical (I had been reading Luther on the unio mystica at the time) --I mean the 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, (and) temperance' of Galatians 5, and the 'I in them' of the Sacerdotal Prayer, John 17, 26. Is there not danger that we may become satisfied with clear mental processes and principles (doctrines), with an attendant carelessness as to the bringing of their fruits to the surface in our lives? Thomas Carlyle once said, 'It is a sad but sure truth that every time you speak of a fine purpose, especially with eloquence and to the admiration of bystanders, there is less chance of your ever making a fact of it in your poor life.' Let us tremble at the danger that lies in that deep psychological truth. In an unconscious way we are tempted to let our mental processes climb over the boundary line into the field of memory of things we imagine we have performed; there they find a comfortable seat, and remain there, much to our admiration of their excellence; but we forget that they are sneak thieves who stole in there without going the round-about way through our words and deeds.

"...We with our orthodox Christianity are in danger of becoming like a cup of good coffee in which the sugar remains lying at the bottom. It needs

to be stirred up; not in the way of the holiness preacher, but in the way of Jesus, of Paul, and of Luther and Walther, yes of every practical Christian of whom it can be said as it was said of Abraham of old, he is a 'friend of God.' It can be seen and tasted. His Christianity flavors his daily life."

In his recent book on heresies and the travails of religious liberty, Roland H. Bainton says, "We tremble for ourselves lest we too be engulfed, and even more lest in the effort to extricate ourselves we succumb to the very methods that we abhor." The Travail of Religious Liberty, p. 14. Toward the end of his book the same author writes: "The noblest achievement of the Western world has been the conduct of controversy without acrimony, of strife without bitterness, of criticism without loss of respect. But when men do not operate within the same framework, this becomes impossible. Only those who believe in universal right, in integrity, law, and humanity, if not in the Christian God, are in a position to clash on higher levels and retain personal friendship as did Roger Williams with most of his opponents. But if one side makes the will of a party into an absolute, and for it will lie and assassinate, then for the other side to fight according to the rules is very difficult. The more the contestants are locked, the greater becomes the danger that the rules will be scrapped on both sides..... The very effort to control the unscrupulous foe leads to unscrupulousness."

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"We must realize that when we defend the cause of conservatism, when we resist the trend toward liberalism, we are in constant danger of a reaction in the opposite direction, of falling into a state of rigorism and legalism that is just as wrong as the errors that we oppose. Let us not close our minds against this possibility.. For such a false attitude can exist only at the expense of the true spirit of the Gospel. Let us have eyes for the dangers that lie in the one extreme as well as the other." (E. Reim in Opening Address, Theological Seminary, Thiensville,

Sept. 14, 1954; Quartalschrift, Oct., 1954, pg. 235)

Our temptation is to lose our balance. We are tempted to forget that "every solution, however wise and necessary, carries within itself the possibility of some new abuse." Bainton, p. 254. "Even that which is imperative in any given situation opens the way to abuses of another sort." Idem. He that standeth must take heed lest he fall. Believing that good works are not necessary to salvation, it is easy to think they are not necessary. Believing that they are necessary, it is easy to rely on them for salvation. Having humility, it is so easy to be proud of it. It would be easy to preach a sermon on the dangers of being a Christian; we are to work it out with fear and trembling, are we not? An English divine once remarked about a preacher who lived so ill that it was a pity he ever entered the pulpit, but once in the pulpit, he preached so well that it was a pity he ever got out. Every shade of liberalism has its own extremes to which it runs; but our concern is not with that. Our concern is with avoiding the perversions that especially beset us.

The first requirement is an alertness to the fact that perversions lie in wait to corrupt every situation or position. Aristotle pointed this out when he showed that tyranny is the perversion of monarchy and that oligarchy is the perversion of aristocracy. Too much courage leads to foolhardiness, and too little leads to cowardice. Better than either is the happy meeden agan, the golden mean. Moses was meek above all men; therefore he was strong. Being strong, he only gained strength by being meek. When we are weak, we are strong; but there is a weakness that runs into despair even as there is a strength that leads us to tempt God and lose His protection. Take an analogy from politics, to show that every situation is open to abuse. Both in Britain and in America steps were taken by liberals to protect the people

against too much power of sovereigns, presidents, governments. Now true liberals are those who must protect the people against too much paternal government of their own making. So also Luther fought the tyranny of the pope, but the fanaticism of the peasant revolts grieved him fully as much. St. Paul fought valiantly for our liberty in Christ, but he has just as many words against the perversion of this liberty.

Historically the Church has run into perversions from time to time. The "orthodox" at times committed sin to make heretics good. The story of persecution is the story of the actions of those who belonged to the established Church. There is no more terrible thing than an entrenched ecclesiasticism. And it is a sad but sure fact that defection from a commonly accepted course or practice or profession is generally more intolerable than is a failure to live up to it. Partisan belonging is more tangible and more easily made important than is religious rectitude. "Place and nation" is an easier rallying ground than is the plain of truth.

Look at the temptations to which we are put. See how we are tempted to sacrifice the truth in order to maintain the party. How anxious we are to be leaders rather than prophets! The leader changes the nuances to win followers; he will choke down something he ought to say lest he discourage someone who is almost persuaded to follow him. The prophet will be forthright, for he knows in advance that he will be cut down for it. The leader is tempted to be sticky with the honey of sweetness and light --diplomacy and tact fairly ooze from him until you could wish that he would apply his oversocialized activity to the selling of Fuller brushes. The prophet is tempted to be clipped and sharp, --let the chips fall were they may. One man is silent on lodgery and can't resist the invitation to be baccalaureate speaker --but what a missionary! --he knows every person in church by name and he makes them feel welcome after the services! The other is a great theologian and pulls no punches

in the pulpit —but he doesn't get out to see the people, is not a missionary, and confesses to the congregation that he just can't make calls. Oh, for the sweet reasonableness of God's Christian gentleman, who can do the one and not neglect the other!

Right now our great temptation, perhaps, is that we do not follow through our confessions and professions. The temptation is to talk boldly until the crisis is at hand, then fail to follow through. Experience has shown that it is risky to predict performance on the basis of words. "The day will declare it." "A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not." Matthew 21:28-30

If someone catch us at this failure to act according to our word, we are quick to point to the "utter purity" of our mental attitude. The study of the "utter" is interesting; it turns out not always to be purity --yet very "utter." The devil started it by changing "Thou shalt not eat" to "Thou shalt not touch." Note the psychological gymnastics in this: The pharisees scrupulously tithed their mint and anise and cummin. Jesus made their doing of it look foolish when it was done to cover up the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith. Matt. 23:23. "The Talmud tells of the ass of a Rabbi which had been so well trained as to refuse corn of which the tithes had not been taken." Vincent, in Robertson, Word Pictures, in loco cit. There is strong indication that in the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus was contrasting the Word of God with "what hath been said by them of old time" ---not with what God had said, but with what had been said by the rabbis to cover up their own defection and did they ever talk big! The Talmud is the record of the additions men have made to the Law by an age-long set of men who departed from justice, from mercy, and from walking humbly with God. Micah 6,8 Isn't this the behavior of the little boy who was scolded by his

mother for pilfering a piece of cake just before dinner; "Then you'll never let me have anything to eat!" The temptation is to sharpen the Law's demands to make excuse for not keeping it. The "utter" can go pretty far.

The extreme should warn us lest we be tempted to move even a little in that direction. If the opponents of orthodoxy have pointed out this tendency in what they call "splinter groups," is there perhaps not enough truth in it to alert us to the danger? Have the requirements of orthodoxy in a parish sometimes been made so great that it has seemed almost useless to try to win others to it? Have not unnecessary inhibitions at times taken all heart and spirit out of people?

Bars should not be let down, but they should be upheld with dignity. The world will hate us, but let us make sure that it is for Christ's sake. Let it not be for our failure to walk among men as did Abraham of old, as friends of God. Let them not call us self-satisfied, cold, aloof, supercilious, and worse. Can't we compel them to say, "These men have done nothing amiss"? The sacred Proverb stands: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16:7 Whence is the high correlation between being "orthodox" and having insensitive personalities? We prefer people who are orthodox because they have to be -- are bound by the Word.

One wonders wherein lies the quirk by which one who disagrees, so easily becomes disagreeable; and by which one who speaks the Law so readily conveys the impression that he, of course, would never be guilty! Is it lack of insight that makes people sometimes think that it is the loud crash of the hammer which cracks the shell of the erring sinner? It is not the tornado or lightning that breaks the rocks into sand and soil; it is oftener the quiet expansion of frost which is not so much as heard on a cold quiet night.

Did Nathan storm and threaten when he most effectively spoke the Word to David after the affair with Bathsheba? He told a little story about an

imaginary neighbor; and I often wondered if it was more than barely audible when Nathan managed to say, "Thou art the man." A challenging tone of speech might have led to speedy liquidation of Nathan, for the mighty David was a bloody man when he was riled, but he was touched by the quiet truth. Jesus melted Peter into salty tears of repentance with a look. We could do well with a tear in our eye when we must reprove a brother. I myself witnessed once the most embarrassing discomfiture of a defender of the Common Confession when he heard the irenic secretary of our union committee quietly testify to the truth. The official was so taken aback that he could hardly find the threads of his arguments --he was so upset by this quiet speaker that he gasped how good it was to see this Wisconsin committee member speak as a very "man of God." Tears and pleadings are the tones of the Gospel; the woes of Matthew 23 and the sharp denunciations of the prophets are words of judgment.

Now we turn over the coin. Where once the orthodox spoke boldly, and perhaps too boldly, as when the Gospel has been preached with a clenched fist --there comes the time when they are tempted not to say the final word with firmness when it ought to be spoken. It is a temptation to us, is it not? Have we fallen for the temptation to speak boldly when the consequences are not imminent, perhaps not even apparent; and then turned dumb when we must and ought to speak? It is easy to fall under the condemnation of the Homeric line, "Thou dog in forehead, but in heart a deer." Is it easier to be firm and final when the crisis is upon us, if we have not talked too much before? We are only asking.

Is it not tempting to use religion as a tool of punishment, as a sadistic outlet for something within, against which people are helpless; to use it somewhat as the unhappy maladjusted teacher does who dominates his little sphere some six-seven hours per day; or like the preacher who from time to time mercilessly manhandles his automobile, driving like Jehu? Well, it isn't so funny to see someone emphasize pure doctrine with a curl of the lip and close

sermons with a whining amen and slamming the Bible upon the pulpit! Likewise, is not communion sometimes used as a club? What is this but a persecuting attitude? It is easy to sit back and denounce; twice as hard to go and win someone with meekness and fear as Nathan. Do we sometimes desire to score a point more than to win a soul?

Roland Bainton once more: "Nor is persecuting religion to be regarded as insincere. Dostoevsky misrepresented the Spanish Inquisitor when he portrayed him as cynically ready to burn even Christ should He return. The Torquemadas were not cynics, but passionately sincere fanatics. All of which should make abundantly plain that virtues are not without their vices. A concern for truth can end in inhumanity and love itself can be perverted to cruelty. This, too, is obvious: that Christianity as such cannot be regarded as the panacea for all the ills of the world. It all depends on what kind of Christianity. And whatever else may be added, this certainly is an appalling reflection: that the barbarities practiced in modern times to ensure conformity to the program of a party are but refinements of the methods employed by those who invoked the name of Christ." The Travail of Religious Liberty, p. 52f.

"Nothing, it would appear, more induces cruelty than a sense of righteousness. Cruel acts performed for a noble cause--such as the salvation of humanity--permit the perpetrators to have it both ways: to satisfy their unconscious sadistic natures and salve their consciences.

"No wars are so brutal as religious wars, such as the Thirty Years war of the 16th century, or the last two world wars to make the world safe for democracy, or the four freedoms, or end the exploitation of man by man, and thus one way or another usher in the millenium." Dorothy Thompson, in syndicated newspaper column.

Latourette writes this of C. F. W. Walther in his new A History of Christianity: "Characterized by an extraordinary combination of organizing ability, a genius for friendship, magnetic charm with audiences

large and small, generous hospitality...a skill in vigorous polemics, and a self denial which was content with frugal living... he exerted a continuous and pervasive influence." P. 1245

Our plea is for watchfulness that we do not get in the way of our own testimony, that our manner and tone do not justify anyone's not listening. We need not sound desperate nor make as though we are on the defensive. Our words shall judge the world! Somewhere I read that a contemporary called Luther's voice sweet, melodious, and winning. He could also thunder at the right time! We are not probing orthodoxy, but its perversions.

Who said that our vices often stem from our virtues? "Men fired with what they believe to be devotion to the will of God as seen in Christ have been nerved to prolonged and mortal combat, not only with non-Christians, but also with one another." Latour-ette, 881. It was as much the great warmth of Peter's heart that got him into that jamb Thursday night as it was his weakness. Those who stand must take heed lest they fall. If they are not affaid of falling, they are neither good theologians nor good Christians. Every position and situation has a way open to abuse. The grace of God itself suffests a way to abuse it. Every good thing can be misused. Men can readily become proud of their humility. A new car is a good thing, but don't drive it so fast you kill yourself. Live in a glass house, but don't throw stones. Paradise was a grand place, but there was one thing not to do. We do have orthodox Christian faith; a great danger is not to be aware that we have special temptations therewith.

One of the greatest temptations is to become passive and to neglect the activism that is Scriptural. Sometimes our opponents must call our attention to this perversion. "Kierkegard insisted that true Christianity demands decision and action, a commitment which abandons the role of the spectator." Latourette, p. 1141. Perversion of Kierkegard's point, in turn, is found in the Arminian movement, the Reformed and the holiness sects --also in Lutheranism that trims

doctrinal definitude so that its much activity might be seen of men.

Can we not have the blessed balance of doing the one and not neglecting the other? The Bible speaks encouragingly on this point. We need not go to the Reformed Fundamentalists or to Unitarian great men like Horace Mann for inspiration. The Gospels with their Jesus "who went about doing good" (Acts 10,38) and the apostles with their many directives (as I Corinthians 13) are our source of power. There is no better summary than Micah 6, 8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Lutheran imbalance in this matter is pointed out in someone's remark that Lutherans are the best fed and the least exercised of all Christians on earth. F. Pieper was once quoted as musing, "Why is it that so many others have too much of that of which we have too little?" The answer can hardly be that we have too much of that of which they don't have enough!

Our own thinking has suggested one possible explanation and solution. Both lie in the area of method. Has our habit of dealing in abstractions dulled the stimulating facts of the naked Word of God? Generalizations do not have the flavor and appeal of the facts from which they are made. The objection might be that bread and cakes are better than the ingredients from which they are made, but our rejoinder is that bread and cakes are not the abstraction of their elements but the happy eating of things well put together.

Just so, Christian living is the happy working out of a blessed eternal living made of the bread of life broken unto us in the revelation of God to us, in the Word. Unless we go through the process of finding its ingredients ourselves, of digging for the treasures, of thrilling to their discovery, of being edified and inspired by their direct action upon us, of being enlightened by the sometimes electrifying

contacts made in studying the Scriptures first-hand --unless we have gone through the process ourselves there is something second-hand about our profession. Think here of the people in our parishes and in our schools. It is so easy for them to say as did the Roman Catholic who did not know what he believed, but he emphatically believed what the Church believes! Pastors have been known to be at a loss to explain the errors of the Boy Scout religion, but they have defended their stand by saying that the Synod is against it. The parent who keeps his boy out of Scouts only because the pastor doesn't like it is really practicing Boy Scout religion by that very act --he is doing a good turn. Neither has gone through the process of coming to personal conviction. And what merit is there to any other sort of confession or conviction?

But to preach and teach the findings, the generalizations, the abstractions of earlier Christians is the temptation to which we fear that we of the orthodox persuasion are put. To succumb to it is fatal in the end. "Let it be our one concern to make sure that our loyalty is not to human tradition, but to God Himself and to what He would teach us. Here we need not cast about in uncertainty and doubt...." *Quartalschrift*, Oct. 1954, p. 235 Is it possible to have vigorous, informed, and committed Christianity that is not born of knowledge of the naked Word, of struggle, of prayer, yes, of agony and perhaps even of near despair at times --of decision, of surrender (those are good words!), of having come to grips individually with the facts as they stand in the revealed Word?

We have an analogy in education. Students may memorize what the books say and what the teacher tells them in chemistry, biology, English, or whatever -- but they do not really become learners unless they dig for themselves and do for themselves. How do we manage to kill the curiosity and the zeal to know which children have from home before they come to school?! Are we not tempted to give them the generalizations, the conclusions, the confessions, the

the creeds, the intellectualizations of others also in the Church? A few hardy souls dig for themselves and they keep the teacher up front jittery with their questions and understanding and answers. Is it not with your parishioners who ask questions that you feel that there is really Christianity astir? When active minds whet one upon the other, there is learning going on, also strengthening, stablishing, and settling. I got much of my most useful theology from two brilliant women in a parish one time who sent me home every time I called with more questions to study than I picked up anywhere else. One of them used to read Luther when she had to stay home alone evenings; she felt so safe then, she said.

It will hardly do just to sit back and wish for more Aquilas and Priscillas in the churches. It were better to ask if we have fallen into some practices that are common to those who have inherited a good confession. Have we fallen into satisfaction that we have Abrahams as our fathers, forgetting that people have to wrestle as did Jacob on the banks of the Jabbok to keep the faith and to grow in it? Joseph didn't coast into the kingdom, and it wasn't exactly a picnic for Paul. Wasn't Luther so excited about the faith because he had to dig it out for himself? The way to heaven isn't by the comforts of a pullman coach; Billy Sunday used to say that if you think so, you had better not be surprised if you find yourself in the dead of night on a siding with a hot-box! But it isn't so funny! We wonder whence we can get back the Spirit. The best way I have found to get people interested and sparked into committed devotion to our cause is by original study of the bare Bible; and if testimonies are in order, I want to say that I have tried it and found it to work.

We firmly believe that talking about these things can be a catharsis for ourselves. We would like to add the suggestion that in our orthodox Church we are tempted to make certain wrong reactions. We should be glad that we are required at times to restate our faith in meekness and in fear. There are seven

remarkable confessions of faith in Christ recorded in the New Testament, and more. Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Mk 16,16). Nathaniel, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel." (John 1,49). The woman of Samaria: "A man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John 4,29). Peter: "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6,69) Martha: "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." (John 11,27). Thomas: "My Lord and my God." (John 20,28). The Ethiopian eunuch: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8,37). Suppose each congregation had to declare its faith from time to time! Suppose it had to write its own creed, say, every ten years! There would be more merit to that than in having one delegate represent some twenty churches and vote on the Common Confession. Do we react with our own confession when questions of faith are asked? That would make us sweat, but there might be some merit in that method of making known what we believe.

Perhaps it is not an idle dream. For it is a temptation of the orthodox to think that orthodoxy is accepted by a vote. We ought to do more work at the grass-roots. We are tempted to look upon the Church as a Church of the clergy, to find our faith confessed by "utter purity" there. The orthodox faith must dwell in the hearts of Christians; they should require that the message of their shepherds be the true voice.

Writing of the decadent period in Germany, Hurst says in his History of Rationalism, p. 84: "It was very evident that the Lutheran Church would require a long period for self-purification, if indeed she could achieve it at all. The shorter and more effectual way would be to operate individually upon the popular mind. And does not the entire history of the Church prove that reform has originated from no concerted action of the body needing reformation, but from the solemn conviction and persevering efforts of some single mind, which, working first alone, has afterward won to its assistance many others?" Then

he quotes the opponents: "But we would rather see the whole matter done in a perfectly systematic and legitimate way." Idem, p.85 Make your own application to our times.

The matter of method is well put in Brubacher's A History of the Problems of Education, p. 213f. "Ever since the social culture had been reduced to written symbols and ever since education had taken the social shortcut of vicarious learning through the written or printed word rather than through direct experience, one of the most persistent aberrations of education had been that the oncoming generation had often memorized the literary form of their social culture without always comprehending its actual meaning. Of this difficulty reformers of nearly every century had been aware. Yet, though many had urged that comprehension and memorization go hand in hand, little or nothing had been done to mark out the steps in facilitating understanding. Few teachers realized, as Pestalozzi so clearly did, that 'When a third person, to whom the matter is clear, puts words into my mouth with which he makes it clear to people in his own condition, it is not on that account clear to me, but it is and will remain his clear thing, not mine, inasmuch as the words of another cannot be for me what they are to him --the exact expression of his own idea, which is to him perfectly clear.'

"The only way to correct this misunderstanding between teacher and pupil, according to Pestalozzi, was for the teacher to commence with sense impressions of the object of the lesson. Only after time for these impressions to take effect had elapsed should the teacher proceed to the naming of the object. Once named, the object could be studied as to its form, that is, its various qualities could be discussed and compared..... In this way language and observation or experience are always so closely linked that education should henceforth be well on its way to eliminating forever memoriter without comprehension.

"Obviously, from the foregoing, activity of the pupil is an essential part of learning. Without activity he can hardly get lively sense impressions. It

will behoove the teacher, therefore, not to develop the lesson in the spirit of dogmatic exposition. On the contrary, he will rather conduct the lesson so as to encourage the pupil to exert his own powers. Teaching, instead of creating vicarious experience for pupils, will have to create opportunities for firsthand experience itself. For this same reason Pestalozzi early abandoned emulation as a way of motivating learning. He held that the child should learn to feel pleasure in exercising his own powers for the discovery of truth rather than in comparing himself with others.

"Pestalozzi's lay public did not always see eye to eye with him on his activity program. While he was trying to develop children's potentialities by an exercise of their capacities, the public was anxious about how well the children knew their ABC's. While he was interested in how children were learning to think, feel, and act, they were inquisitive about what the children knew of their catechism."

It is a temptation of the orthodox, who have well-defined and well-stated truth in their hands, to transport people to their intellectual destination; we would do better to help them arrive on their own. We make it easy for them to assent to the truth which we point out; thereafter it is easy for them to go to sleep as they hear us repeat it --every day the clock makes you not hear its ticking, but it is ticking off the time truthfully all the while; you don't even pay attention to its efforts until something goes wrong. But religion that doesn't stir us until something goes wrong with its even hum and working is pretty insipid stuff. Only let us grant that in the orthodox communions we have over the centuries been tempted to go to sleep. We will be thankful, then, for anything that stirs us to see how we are doing.

The mistake is to regret that we are being stirred. Now the Lord is not commiserating when His Apostle Paul together with Barnabas assure us that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14,22. His apostles are there stating a principle by which the Church grows. Wheat simply is not produced in a field that is not plowed

and where the grain is not cut down from time to time. "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." I Cor. 11, 19. We are sad when sickness and a fever agitates the body; but let us be glad that there is life enough left to make a fight for life. Without Arius, who knows how soon the Church would have spoken clearly about the deity of Christ? Renan's Vie de Jesus and Strauss's Leben Jesu were nasty things, worse even than the more recent "quests of the historical Jesus," but if they have reminded us not to neglect Jesus as our Brother, they have done the Church a service. Grisar brought out a scandalous life of Luther, with the result that Koestlin and many others produced their monumental studies, several of them quite definitive. Exercise is the growth of a muscle, and heresy brings forth the truth, even as Toynbee insists that challenge brings forth a civilization. Let us not be tempted to whimper when a stir in the Church sends us back to our books. Recently I was told that a certain preacher didn't know that there is a doctrine of election. And a young minister came to me once for assurance that he did right in not praying with a Presbyterian woman in the hospital because his synod was against unionism, wasn't it. Anything that stirs us to stick with the right tools is a blessing in disguise. The pastor who recommended starting adult classes with Genesis 1 was on the right track. Genesis goes right down the groove of realities.

We will avoid the dangers that beset the orthodox if, when we cross the sure bridge of salvation over the chasm of death, we still cling to it firmly with a fear of falling. The bridge is firm, but we dare not wax fat and careless, kicking up our heels as Jeshurun of old. Deut. 32:15. If any is afraid, let him be assured; if any is assured, let him be afraid that he fall. If we are tempted too much to lean on the formulations of our heads, let us be reminded of the place the Word puts upon the heart; if the heart leads us astray, as surely it can, let it learn to take correction from the head. The temptation to breathe controversy needs to be corrected; the tendency to gush

"sweetness and light" needs correction likewise.
Being battered from pillar to post is not bad when
those obstacles are passages of the Word. Even as
the act of walking is a continued prevention of fall-
ing, so our walk unto the land of eternal day is by
constant watchfulness against the errors that beset
us.

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With this little work we
honor the memory of the Rev.
Justin A. Petersen,
Friend and Christian Gentleman,
Strong and kind,
Who would have helped with it
Had he been spared for us.....

M. G.