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The Genius of Lutheran Corporate Worship

By WALTER E. BUSZIN

I

IN her services of corporate worship the Christian Church presents the eternal verities of God's holy and infallible Word, exhorts to high regard for Christian doctrine and to the application of Biblical teaching, receives the benefits of the blessed Sacraments, and enjoys a fellowship which has its roots in the very Gospel of Christ Jesus. Bearing in mind the character of these momentous objectives of ecclesiastical worship and taking into consideration, too, the words of warning expressed in Holy Writ itself (Eccl. 5:1), the devout and intelligent Christian attaches to his corporate worship activities thoughts of sanctity and consecration, which are created, indeed, through the work of the Holy Spirit. The very objectives of Christian corporate worship help impel the Christian to regard the Church as the *holy* Christian Church. In her services of worship man appears before the very throne of the one God, who is truly holy and who demanded of his children already in Old Testament times: "Ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44).

However, in Christian services of worship men are reminded not only of the holiness of God and of the Christian's duties as a saint, but also of the father-son relationship which exists between God and His children. This relationship has been established, of course, through the atoning work of Jesus Christ and is stressed with great emphasis in the ideal and typical Lutheran service of worship, which shies away from legalism and imperialistic ecclesiasticism as from a vicious beast or viper. Many have rightly insisted that Roman Catholic worship, as practiced in the Roman Mass and indulging heavily in the use of types and symbols, is in many ways so unevangelical and anti-Christian that it is related even to paganism; they rightly claim, too, that Rome's worship practices conform more to the ideals of the Old Testament than to those of the New. Likewise has the opinion been voiced repeatedly that

much Reformed worship, with its strong Calvinistic insistence upon the holiness and sovereignty of God and its frequent neglect and underemphasis of the father-son relationship between God and His children, is closely related to the ideals of the Old Testament and is not expressive of the ideals of the New Covenant. High Anglicanism, too, like Rome, relates itself to Old Testament ideologies rather than to those of the New through its excessive ritualism and ceremonialism, which, often unintentionally, detract from the simple, foolish, and seemingly unimpressive Gospel.

Attempts have repeatedly been made to effect a compromise between Roman Catholic worship practices and those of the Lutheran Church, between Anglican practices and Lutheran, between Reformed and Protestant practices and Lutheran. While the attempts have produced some good results, too often the resultant consequences have been distressingly chaotic and hybrid; not infrequently has this been due to the fact that one cannot establish a compromise between Law and Gospel, nor between certain ideals of the Old Covenant and those of the New. Confusion and disorder are too often the result, worship life loses its virility and strength, and non-assertive neutrality replaces positive and heroic confessionalism. If Lutheran worship is to be equated with Roman Catholic, Anglican, Reformed, and Protestant worship, then care must first be taken that the Gospel of Christ Jesus does not lose its strength and savor, that the worship services be truly Christocentric and confessional, that all liturgical worship practices be evangelical to the core and true to the spirit of the Era of Fulfillment, and that, as was advocated already by Martin Luther, the arts be used more effectively and consistently in the service of the Gospel. When these requirements are not met, we create not merely an empty shell, but a shell which is wormy and dangerously cancerous.

By the miraculous working of the Holy Ghost there exist elements of religion and worship which are shared by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Protestants, and Lutherans. Rome by no means rejects the Gospel in its entirety. A perusal of devotional and liturgical literature written and published by Roman Catholics today as well as in the past will convince even the skeptical reader that Rome at times uses and applies the Gospel beautifully and effectively; however, while on one page one may find the Gospel in its truth

and purity, on the very next page one frequently finds the rankest kind of heresy and idolatry. Here, too, Rome exposes herself to practices which degraded the Church in Old Testament times, where the development of certain man-made traditions as well as the idolatry often practiced by the people incited the patriarchs and prophets to righteous indignation. Much devotional literature written by Anglicans, Protestants, and Calvinists is beautifully evangelical in spirit and expression; however, much is also purely moralistic, syncretistic, and Biblically unsound. Mixing thus truth with error and the good with the bad has naturally affected the public worship life of those involved and at times militates strenuously not only against the confessional writings of the Anglicans and Calvinists in particular, but likewise against their liturgies and liturgical practice. In this respect Rome is, perhaps, more consistent, for the errors taught and proclaimed by Romanists are usually to be found also in the edicts and liturgies of Rome.

Martin Luther took over much from Roman Catholic liturgical literature and from the Roman Mass when he prepared particularly his *Formula Missae* in 1523. Not only his profound theological acumen, but also his remarkable understanding of ecumenicity and all its ramifications helped make him one of the very few really great men of the Christian Church. There was nothing sectarian about Luther's thinking; he never surrendered his regard for the Christian Church as the *Una Sancta*; his controversies with the Pope, Erasmus, Zwingli, Calvin, Carlstadt, Muenzer, Henry VIII, and many others failed to weaken his faith in the ecumenical character of the Church. Without his understanding and appreciation of true ecumenicity, but also without his basic and profound understanding of the difference between Law and Gospel, Luther would never have been able to prepare his *Formula Missae* as well as his *Deutsche Messe*. He showed his understanding of the Gospel while removing Rome's liturgical chaff from the wheat, and it took an evangelical mind and spirit to appreciate fully the intrinsic value of the great liturgical and hymnological heritage of pre-Reformation days, to purify it, saturate it with the chaste, unadulterated Gospel, and to perpetuate as well as encourage its use. His *Deutsche Messe* of 1526 in particular is indeed an evangelical Mass, because Luther here showed due regard for the doctrine of

the universal priesthood, an inseparable companion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Roman Mass is hardly representative of New Testament worship, not only because it is sacrificial, strongly symbolic, and in large measure legalistic in character, but also because it is hierarchical and ignores a doctrine which, though it existed already in Old Testament times (cp. Ex. 19:5-6), is nevertheless commonly thought of as a distinctive doctrine of the New Testament era. This doctrine may be attached much more easily to the body than to the shadow and bespeaks better the work of atonement which has been wrought rather than one which must yet be wrought. By ignoring the doctrine of the universal priesthood in her liturgical life and activities, Rome again clings to the Old Testament rather than to the New and, in addition, brushes aside a most precious evangelical doctrine of the New Testament era. Ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism may hardly be regarded as wholesome fruits of the Gospel, particularly when applied with vigor in the liturgical worship life of a people.

By wholly rejecting the liturgy of the Roman Mass as he did, John Calvin showed clearly that he had no conception of the Church as the *Una Sancta*. He was not ecumenically minded. But he was basically also not evangelical and for that reason did not hesitate to throw out the child with the bath. Precious elements of liturgical worship life and experience were hurled to the winds with hatred and aversion. An important reason was that they had been used and misused by Rome. Calvin did have high regard for the doctrine of the universal priesthood, but his use of this precious doctrine was weakened substantially by the fact that he was not truly evangelical and did not understand the father-son relationship between God and His children. God was to him the holy Sovereign of the universe more so than the loving and long-suffering Father of the sinful mortals He had adopted as His children.

Particularly in its worship life much of Protestantism shares the antipathies of Calvin and Zwingli against Rome and her liturgical heritage. However, Protestantism, which may today be distinguished as well from Calvinism as from Lutheranism, goes even farther than did John Calvin and Huldreich Zwingli. Many Protestant groups clearly manifest the radical and even the iconoclastic proclivities of Carlstadt and Muenzer. Calvin, as is well known, was a

man of order and discipline; his disciplinary propensities often left little room for evangelical spirit and practice. His worship services, however, though very different from the more elaborate and ceremonial Roman Mass, were orderly, liturgical, dignified. He stressed simplicity so strongly that the arts could not flourish under his regime; but in his corporate worship activities he did have a sense of propriety which was a natural and logical outgrowth of his insistence upon constant regard for the sovereignty of God. Much Protestantism of today differs from Calvinism in that many of its branches lack his sense of propriety, discipline, and order in their activities of corporate worship. As a result, though a marked change is today rapidly taking place also among the Calvinists, much of Protestantism is still extremely anti-liturgical; it sees no value particularly in fixed liturgies of any sort, regarding them as cold forms rather than as expressions of worship, consecration, and devotion.

Though extreme in character, revivalistic services and the Gospel hymn of today are typical outgrowths of this extreme type of Protestant spirit. They give very little, if any, thought to liturgical propriety, decorum, tradition, and practice. Those who believe in liturgical worship consider this a disregard of the holiness and majesty of God and as a manifestation of disrespect and bad taste. Revivalistic Protestantism is believed to overstress the father-son relationship, converting the worship liberties of the universal priesthood into unbridled emotional license. Revivalism is frequently a violent reaction against ritualistic extremism, liturgical austerity, and formalistic frigidity. As a result, much revivalism is basically anti-pathetic and negative; it is usually intolerant, highly prejudiced, subjective, and lacking in understanding with regard to the aims and objectives of the liturgical worship life. Not only can the arts, good hymnody, and sound liturgical practice not flourish among the revivalistically inclined, but also theology and doctrine are too often hamstrung by their subjective and highly sensitized emotionalism. The attitude of these people toward the Church as an institution, toward the office and call of the holy ministry, and toward high educational and cultural standards is too often negative and antagonistic. It is likely that for such reasons Luther so often mentioned the *Schwarmgeister* (fanatics, bigots, enthusiasts) to-

gether with the papists and the heretics, putting them all under the same condemnation, since all are too often fundamentally unevangelical, narrow, and legalistic in their approach to corporate and ecclesiastical worship. By manifesting no interest in the liturgical traditions, in the musical and hymnological heritage and in the great cultural heritage of the *Una Sancta*, they become not only typically but even extremely sectarian in their worship life. It is interesting to note that while many Gospel hymns are Biblically and doctrinally sound, others again are primarily ecstatic, appealing to such primitive instincts in man as are expressed in strongly punctuated rhythms, melodic sensuousness, and in stirring and unremitting refrains. The basic fault of revivalism is, of course, that it depends strongly upon emotionalism and certain outward effects to do the work which can be performed only by the Holy Spirit. As a result, we are not astonished when those who have practiced revivalism inform us that the important word "faith," used so often in present-day Gospel hymns, is not understood by many who are taken captive by the emotionalism of the Gospel hymns they sing and by the highstrung type of sermons they hear. It is not surprising, therefore, that the so-called Gospel hymn of our day often defeats its own purpose; it is too anthropocentric and not as Christocentric as some want to believe. Those who refuse to adopt and apply revivalistic practices insist that it is better and also more in keeping with Biblical tradition and evangelical practice to appeal to the heart and to Christian understanding of people than to their emotions and sentiments, which fluctuate and are too often ill-controlled and unstable. They insist rightly, we believe, that if our appeal is to the heart, the emotions will be well taken care of. Extreme and unbalanced emotionalism too often becomes an end in itself. It is well to remember, too, that sin proceeds from the heart, and it is the heart, not our emotions, which harbors the Christian faith.¹

¹ In Kittel's monumental *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Behm defines and describes the human heart (*kardia*) as follows: "Mittelpunkt des inneren Lebens des Menschen, wo alle seelischen und geistigen Kraefte und Funktionen ihren Sitz oder Ursprung haben. . . . Quellort der Gedanken und Erwaegungen . . . Sitz des Willens, die Quelle der Entschluesse . . . die eine zentrale Stelle im Menschen, an die Gott sich wendet, in der das religioese Leben wurzelt, die die sitliche Haltung bestimmt." (Stuttgart, 1938, III, pp. 614—615.)

On the basis of what has been said, one can easily draw conclusions as to what happens when attempts are made to blend conflicting and diametrically opposed philosophies of worship in the corporate service of worship. One cannot blend a revivalistic service with the Roman Mass, just as one cannot merge the Roman Mass with Calvin's liturgy. But one cannot readily merge the content and spirit of these with a genuinely Lutheran liturgy and worship either. Though, happily, they may share certain qualities, they are, nevertheless, so basically and fundamentally different from each other that merging them into a new unit produces only a hybrid. A liturgy should clearly and unmistakably bespeak the spirit as well as the philosophy of worship of the Church it represents; when this is not done, the liturgy is weak and insipid. In other words, a Church's liturgy must be confessional and distinctive in spirit and expression; that this may be the case without ignoring fundamental and intrinsically valid principles of ecumenicity and without becoming sectarian may be seen from Luther's *Deutsche Messe* of 1526.

II

In the 19th century attempts were made to subject the Lutheran liturgy to Roman standards. These attempts persist to our own day. Efforts have been directed towards Gregorianizing the Lutheran service from beginning to end. Efforts have likewise been directed toward determining the propriety and suitability of Lutheran choral music on the basis of the standards set forth by the Council of Trent, which decreed that the unquestionably great music of Giovanni Pierluigi de Palestrina (1525—1594) is to serve as a model for all choral music used in the Roman Mass. One of the foremost antidotes offered in Germany against such insistence was the *Handbuch der deutschen evangelischen Kirchenmusik*,² a voluminous opus which began to make its appearance in the early 1930's. This notable publication studiously shies away from the Roman heritage and finally makes available much excellent worship material of the Lutheran Church in the areas of chant, choir music, hymns, and organ music. In the literary field, works like Salomo Kuemmerle's *Encyklopaedie der evangelischen Kirchenmusik*,

² Edited by Konrad Ameln, Christhard Mahrenholz, and others; Goettingen.

Guetersloh, 1881, and, in more recent times, Friedrich Blume's *Die evangelische Kirchenmusik*, Potsdam, 1931, as well as books, pamphlets, and articles by Julius Smend, Daniel von der Heydt, and Arnold Schering, are among the outstanding *oeuvres* by musicologists and liturgiologists who, addressing Lutherans, in a scholarly and wholesome manner justify and encourage the preference and use of materials prepared expressly for the *Lutheran* service of worship, since such materials bespeak the genius of Lutheran corporate worship.

While it is true that much excellent Lutheran chant and choral music has a great deal in common with the chant and choral music of Rome, differing thus from Calvinistic and Protestant materials and thus setting forth Lutheranism's ecumenical spirit, the truth stands that much Lutheran choral music in particular is quite different from the music of a Palestrina. We need but call attention to the fact that many compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach and other Lutheran masters of his day and preceding days are radically different from the music of Rome's pre-eminent master composer. Granted that some of Bach's choral and organ music is better suited for the church concert than for the church service, the fact remains that there is a spirit of true evangelical freedom in the music of J. S. Bach and many other Lutheran masters which is not found in the works of the Roman masters. That the Roman Catholic Church, through the decrees of the Council of Trent, has not been able to suppress her great Venetian (e. g., Antonio and Giovanni Gabrieli) and Viennese (e. g., Joseph Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert) and other (e. g., Mozart, Liszt, Bruckner) masters and compel them to write in the Palestrina idiom is indeed significant and certainly not uninteresting to the evangelical Lutherans who realize that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Official decrees which restrict and hamper the development of the arts used in our worship life have never been imposed upon the Lutheran Church at large and likely never will be unless the Lutheran Church ceases to be an evangelical Church. The lack of spontaneity found in Gregorian plainchant, declared by Rome to be her official chant music, is mentioned by not a few in order to illustrate the legalistic submissiveness imposed by Rome upon her servants and members. While there is danger of going too far in making such claims, the

fact remains that a Lutheran service of worship, thoroughly saturated with the spirit of Gregorian chant and restricting its choral music to works written in the Palestrina idiom, lacks the freshness and freedom of spirit and expression Lutheranism desires to employ in its services of corporate worship. This freshness, we believe, is a characteristic of the Gospel we preach, and Lutheranism is here quite consistent in its evangelical approach to the problem involved. Gregorian chant, which Lutheranism prefers to use only moderately, is today known to be related to Jewish chant of Old Testament times, and Rome, in whose worship service the Gregorian atmosphere definitely prevails, here again identifies herself with the Old Testament rather than with the New. Lutheranism, on the other hand, prefers to "sing unto the Lord a new song" (Ps. 96:1) and, though still making wide use of Old Testament texts, seeks to identify herself with the Gospel of the New Covenant rather than with the heritage and spirit of the Old. To return again to J. S. Bach, one finds in his music not only a decided preference for New Testament texts, but likewise³ a diligent use of pericopic texts and related chorale stanzas. On almost every page are to be found references to the very teachings stressed in the New Testament Scriptures: sin, grace, forgiveness, God's Word, eschatology, life eternal. Bach is known as the great singer of the Gospel; he is most certainly the greatest singer of Lutheran theology the world has yet known, and one may easily trace his musical and theological lineage directly back to Martin Luther, whose writings he read assiduously and with great enjoyment. Not a few claim that Johann Sebastian Bach is the foremost interpreter of the principles and teachings set forth by Martin Luther. This would not be the case if Bach had not set the Gospel to music with the same power, understanding, and success with which Luther preached it from his pulpit. People who think of Lutheran worship in terms of Roman Catholic practices and ideologies readily become impatient and indignant when they hear music by Johann Sebastian Bach presented in a service of worship. This is significant, but not at all surprising; Bach sang a new song, but Rome and her satellites and admirers prefer the old.

³ Notably in his hundreds of church cantatas.

There are those who desire to fuse Anglican practices and principles of worship, as well as Anglican chant and church music, with Lutheran worship. The problem here involved is more difficult than with Rome, Calvinism, and American Protestantism. Attention might be called to the fact that the early Anglican Church received help from Lutheranism in formulating and preparing its liturgies. Anglicanism does not sidetrack the doctrine of the universal priesthood as readily as does Rome, nor may Anglicanism easily be accused of legalism, as may Calvinism and Rome. Anglicanism fosters low-church activities as well as high-church practices and is tolerant toward both extremes. In some of its high-church communions it is indeed not far removed from Rome, practicing Mariolatry and praying for the dead in its requiem masses. Ceremonialism plays an important part in some of its worship services, and there is at times much pomp and ritualism, which reminds one not only of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church, but likewise of Old Testament standards; this applies also to its use of vestments and other externals. George Frederick Handel, Bach's great contemporary, though originally a Lutheran, became a typical Anglican after taking up residence in England. An examination of his choral works soon reveals a conspicuous lack of Christian confessionality and a decided preference for Old Testament texts. Much of his music, including the choruses from his great oratorios, fits as perfectly into the typical Anglican service of worship as the works of the Lutheran masters fit into the ideal Lutheran worship service. There is within Anglicanism itself a reaction against much that this branch of the Christian Church has practiced, taught, and believed. Not a few Anglicans make light of the teachings of their Church with regard to the Apostolic Succession claimed for its clergy; others insist upon wider acceptance of Scriptural truths expressed in Anglican liturgies, and still others want more regard shown the doctrine of the universal priesthood and its liturgical implications. From a liturgical point of view there is some dissatisfaction among Anglicans with regard to the order and content of Anglican liturgies. Massey Hamilton Shepherd, in his book *The Living Liturgy* (Oxford, 1946), even advocated that Anglicans change some of their liturgical practice and follow the example of the Lutherans. We are reliably informed that Mr. Shepherd's

book helped bring about that its author is to this day very much in demand as a lecturer in Anglican churches of America and England. Lutherans at times rather naively take over what Anglicans discard from their own Anglican heritage and, on the other hand, Lutherans often discard what Anglicans adopt. Thus Anglicans today reject many hymns, much choral and liturgical music written by men like Dykes, Barnby, Monk, and others of the 19th century and adopt music by the Lutheran masters. In their hymnals may be found not a few chorales. Anglican church music, like that of the Lutheran Church, descended to its lowest standards in the 19th century, and much Anglican worship material from this century does not deserve to be used in a good Lutheran service of worship of our day any more than it is to be used in the Anglican church service of today. The Anglican Church, like the Lutheran Church, produced its greatest choral and chant music in the 16th, 17th, and early 18th centuries. The liturgical revival, which began in England some years ago and which is today making itself felt also in America, has been advocating better liturgical standards, a greater use of better hymnody, a return to the works of the masters of former centuries, and the composition of better church music in our own day. While many texts used in contemporary Anglican church music are from the Bible, from the great liturgies, and from Christian hymnody, many others, unfortunately, are neither confessional nor evangelical. The Victorian standards and styles of the 19th century are today, however, *passé* and no longer enjoy their former widespread popularity.

III

America is to a very great extent Calvinistic and Protestant. It is not at all surprising to note, therefore, that Lutherans are constantly exposed to Calvinistic thoughts and ideals. Many Lutherans see no danger in such developments. Those who are afflicted with catholicophobia will rarely admit that Calvinism has made more perilous inroads into Lutheran worship life in America than has Roman Catholicism. While living in Calvinistic Coethen, Bach, the Lutheran, repeatedly warned Maria Magdalena, his faithful and loving wife, against Calvinism, thus describing the contents of his *Clavier-Buechlein vor Anna Magdalena Bachin* as "*anti Cal-*

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vinismus—*item anti Melancholicus.*" The remark shows that Bach was not only aware of the cheerless, unevangelical character of genuine Calvinism, but also that he was fully aware of what Luther meant when, in 1529, he told the Reformed theologians at Marburg: "Ihr habt einen anderen Geist als wir,"—"You are of a different spirit than we." Not a few Reformed principles and practices of worship, though based in part on the doctrine of the universal priesthood, blend no better with Lutheran worship activities than do much of Lutheran and Reformed theologies. As stated previously, Calvinistic worship has torn itself away from the great historical expressions of Christian worship of pre-Reformation days and has thus become sectarian. Although the Reformed bodies have disavowed many of Calvin's austere principles and practices of corporate worship, the sectarian spirit persists among them to the present day. Strangely enough, though very unionistically inclined, the Reformed have little or no understanding of true ecumenicity. This same Calvinistic spirit is strong among many Lutherans. We find among such Lutherans an antipathetic attitude against sound liturgical practice, undue emphasis on stark simplicity, and a disdainful attitude towards great and genuine church art. These attitudes by no means bespeak the spirit of unadulterated Lutheranism. They are basically unevangelical and at times "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." There are indeed good reasons to believe that much catholicophobia has been injected into Lutheranism by anti-ecumenical Calvinistic sources.

Much of what has been said of the Reformed may, of course, be said also of other Protestant groups. However, as already stated, while the Calvinists still insist upon decency and order, some Protestant groups employ means to worship God which are not only anthropocentric in character, but which plainly and flagrantly militate against all good taste. The church building is to them a meeting house rather than a sanctuary. While Lutherans today are not building churches of the meeting-house type, some are trying to introduce revivalism and the Gospel hymn into the Lutheran concept and spirit of worship. Had this been done a generation ago, it would have been easier to understand; however, that it is being done today indicates clearly that those involved are not taking into serious consideration the great damage that has

been done to the corporate worship services of others who have introduced revivalistic practices in the past, nor do they seem to be aware of the fact that the tendencies of our day are away from such practices. Among the Methodists, for example, who at one time advocated and fostered revivalistic practices, we today observe pronounced tendencies and practices which lead away from revivalism to a more decent and liturgical type of ecclesiastical worship. Cognizance is likewise not taken of the rapidly rising musical standards of the past two decades, also within the Church, and of the needs of the youth of our day. We again call attention to the oft quoted words of Martin Luther, who wrote:

I am not of the opinion that because of the Gospel all *arts* should be rejected violently and vanish, *as is desired by the heterodox*, but I desire that all arts, particularly music, be employed in the service of Him who has given and created them. I pray, therefore, that every pious Christian would approve of what I have said and, if God has endowed him with the necessary talents and ability, help further the cause. *Unfortunately the world has become lax toward the real needs of its youth and has forgotten to train and educate its sons and daughters along the proper lines. The welfare of our youth should be our chief concern.* (St. Louis Ed. of Luther's Works, X:1422 ff. Tr. by W. E. B.)

It is tragic that in some of our Sunday schools the youth of our Church is being habituated along revivalistic lines and is exposed not to the fine hymnody and other excellent worship materials of the Christian Church, but to a type of hymnody and worship expression which are becoming outmoded and outclassed and which make their appeal to primitive and sensuous instincts in man. Such practices do not take the future welfare of the Church into serious account. Church history proves that those church bodies have fared best in the long run which have conducted a decent type of worship, a type of worship which takes not only the father-son relationship between God and His people into consideration, but which likewise shows due regard for the holiness and majesty of God. We owe God not only our love, but also our respect; our worship life should indicate this, also while we are still in our youth.

The Lutheran Church will best serve her exalted purpose and objective if she will adhere to the Word of God and likewise make diligent use of the rich and unique liturgical, musical, and hymnological heritage God has given her. The Lutheran Church in

America is not well acquainted with the great heritage she has in the realm of her own worship materials. Our worship life suffers when, Sunday after Sunday, we are exposed to heterogeneous types of worship expression. There cannot but be a conflict when these types, each representing a distinctively different spirit and philosophy of worship, are placed side by side in a service of corporate worship. The clash may not be between the texts employed. The type of chant used, the hymn *tune*, the character (or lack of character) of the *music* of the choral and organ selections may be responsible. A musical setting may in itself be good, but its spirit may be out of alignment with its own text or with other worship music alongside of which it is used. A service of worship must be homogeneous in spirit and expression if it is to be most effective, and there must be apparent in our services of worship a kinship of spirit, style, and expression which courses its way into every part of the service. The moment this fact is ignored, obstacles are thrown into the path of the Holy Spirit, worshipers become confused, and serious problems arise, most of which are based on lack of knowledge, sympathy, and understanding.

The problem which here confronts the Lutheran Church in America confronts also practically every other Christian denomination of our land and time. Revivalists as well as those who foster high-church activities are among the very few who are consistent in their worship practices. Although Luther borrowed heavily from the Roman Catholic heritage and infused particularly into his *Deutsche Messe* much that was new and which had rarely if ever been used in the Roman Mass, yet the services of worship he and his colleagues advocated and introduced were not a patchwork, but a very well-integrated, homogeneous unit. The Lutheran Church started out with the highest liturgical standards, but as the years advanced, the standards declined, so that even in Germany Paul Graff was forced to conclude and write: "*Die Geschichte des lutherischen Gottesdienstes ist die Geschichte seines Verfalls geworden.*"⁴

Here lies a great challenge for the Lutheran Church in America

⁴ *Geschichte der Aufloesung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands.* Paul Graff. Goettingen, 1937, I, p. 15.

today: to integrate better her services of worship and not borrow from every imaginable source, but use, rather, the better means God Himself has given to our Church as her peculiar Lutheran heritage through the course of the four centuries of her existence. These means of worship are evangelical in character, spirit, and expression and are not tainted by influences which are foreign to what Lutheranism really represents and believes. Our heritage can indeed, in a most God-pleasing manner, help unite those who will but use the *entire* Lutheran heritage and not only a part of it. The impact of a homogeneous and well-integrated liturgy and service of worship is great indeed, for all of its parts join forces to serve one objective and do not scatter their efforts, as does a heterogeneous liturgy, with its variety of styles and its spirit of confusion. The standards for Lutheran worship are determined first, of course, by the Word of God, but then also by the rich heritage *our* own Church has been privileged to accumulate through the course of several centuries. If we make diligent use of our own heritage and permit our own heritage to set our standards, then will we also know where to draw the line and what type of materials to use which are not really a part of our own peculiar heritage. Luther's *Deutsche Messe* proves this to us beautifully and effectively — and thus illustrates to us the validity and efficacy of an ecumenical spirit as well as of the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers.

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