

LUTHER AND THE CANON OF THE MASS

Among the many reasons for which the name of Luther is remembered and venerated, that of 'Liturgiologist' rarely figures; as a liturgiologist the Wittenberg Reformer has gone unnoticed, it being the common opinion that his work in this field was ultra-conservative and clumsy. Such a sympathetic exponent of his liturgical work as Brilioth referred to Luther's use of a 'pruning-knife',¹ and both he and Reed preferred to see Luther's positive contribution in terms of music rather than of a reformed mass.² Even the more recent examination of Luther's doctrine of worship by Vajta has only excused conservatism on account of love of the neighbour.³

It is the purpose of this paper to examine and explain as simply as possible Luther's treatment of the Canon of the Mass, in an attempt to show that it was not a pruning-knife with which the reformer worked, but the Gospel.

The traditional text of the Canon of the Mass with which the Reformers were acquainted had been fairly uniform since about A.D. 700, though the details of development to that date remain obscure. The earliest evidence for the structure of the Canon or Eucharistic Prayer at Rome is found in Justin Martyr's *First Apology* and the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus. It seems to have remained fluid up to the time of Gregory the Great and it may be presumed that it originally possessed a long beginning, with Creation and Christological passages which has since disappeared; perhaps the oldest proper prefaces preserve some phrases of what was said on the oldest feasts, as an inset in the wider Christological passage.⁴ The text given by St. Ambrose in *De Sacramentis IV* appears to be a parallel to contemporary Roman usage. The interpolation of the *Sanctus* with its introduction at the beginning of the prayer took place under Jerusalem influence, probably at some point during the fifth century. If the *Sanctus* is regarded as an interpolation, then *Te igitur* will be seen to carry on the thought of the preface. The sequence is *Vere dignum et iustum est . . . tibi gratias agere . . . Te igitur . . . supplices rogamus . . . uti accepta habeas . . . haec dona*. Sacrifice is here conceived in accordance with the Irenaeon tradition.⁵ The lists of Apostles, Saints and Martyrs, together with *Memento Domine* and *Memento etiam* (once recited by the deacon) seem to have entered during this time. By A.D. 700 the Canon seems to have reached its traditional form, only receiving minor alterations at the hands of Alcuin of York.⁶ Since 1474 it had been printed in paragraphs, marked with initial letters, and divided by rubrics. It was thought to begin after

the preface and *Sanctus* with *Te igitur*, and the prayers *Communicantes*, *Hanc igitur*, *supplices te*, *Memento etiam* and *Nobis quoque* had a conclusion, *Per (eundem) Christum Dominum nostrum*; and to this was added *Amen* in every case except the last.⁷ It was in this form that it was known to the Reformers.

Medieval commentators such as Biel and Langforde, as well as the Reformers themselves, had little or no idea of the origin of the Canon or of its inherent meaning. With the popular understanding of the sacrifice of the mass for living and dead, and the doctrine of transubstantiation, the Canon was associated exclusively with these. For example, Langforde in *Meditations for Ghostly Exercise in the Time of the Mass*, advised:

So lyke wyse dispose yow to say with the prest Sanctus: Sanctus: Sanctus worshepyng hys blyssyd commyng and presence ther on the Auter after the consecratyon.⁸

Langforde went on to explain that the Canon began after the *Sanctus* and after the priest had kissed the crucifix on the missal and continued until 'the sacring be done'.⁹ A bell was rung at the *Sanctus* to call attention to the offering of the sacrifice and to the approaching miracle of change in the elements. The high point was reached after the Words of Institution (those 'fyne wordes' says Myrc, 'that no man but a prest shulde rede') at the elevation. Again the sacring bell was rung, incense swung and tapers raised. This is illustrated by plate 3 in *The Booke of Common Prayer. Its Making and Revisions 1549-1661*, by E. C. Ratcliff: It is a woodcut which illustrates the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and of the mass as a propitiatory sacrifice; and the genuflecting priest is seen to be holding in his hands, not the host, but the figure of Christ, who with hands joined and lifted is supplicating the Father, visible in the opened heaven above.¹⁰

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Canon of the Mass should have been one of the foremost targets of the Reformers' attacks. Most, if not all, of the Reformation Fathers could assent to Thomas Becon's description: 'It is a hotch-potch . . . it is a very beggars cloak, cobbled, clouted and patched with a multitude of popish rags.'¹¹ Zwingli, in *De Canone Epicheiresis*, replaced the Canon with four latin prayers; in his rite of 1525, it had entirely disappeared. Similarly, Bucer gradually modified and reconstructed the Canon, his final forms being taken over by Calvin. And Archbishop Cranmer in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, transposed the Canon with remarkable skill.

For Luther's treatment of the Canon we turn naturally to his liturgical treatise, the *Formula Missae*, 1523, and the *Deutsche Messe*,

1526.¹² In the *Formula Missae*, Luther reveals his ideas of the growth and development of the mass. It was divinely instituted by Christ and observed by the apostles, simply and without addition. The early Fathers added one or two psalms, said in a subdued voice before blessing the bread and wine. Then *Kyrie eleison* was added. The Epistles and Gospels were always necessary. Later were added the *Introit*, the *Gloria in excelsis*, *Graduals*, *Alleluia*, the *Creed*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei* and the *Communio*; none of these could be censured. The Canon, however, was an exception; it could only be compared with an image of Baal.

In the suggested reformed mass in the *Formula Missae*, we find the following in place of the traditional Canon:

- (i) *Sursum Corda* and preface, to 'through Christ our Lord'.
- (ii) The Words of Institution, intoned.
- (iii) The *Sanctus* and *Benedictus* with the elevation of the bread and the cup.

A very similar structure was recommended in the *Deutsche Messe*:

- (i) An exhortation, in place of the *Sursum Corda* and preface.
- (ii) The Office and Consecration: the Words of Institution; the bread may be administered during the German *Sanctus*, or a hymn, before the words over the cup.
- (iii) The elevation during the German *Sanctus*.

Modern critics, using the methods of comparative liturgical study, have pointed out the weaknesses of Luther's treatment; the Eucharistic prayer contains no specific prayer of consecration, thanksgiving or intercession, assurance of redemption or any type of self-offering through Christ.¹³ But even taking into account that Luther did not have the results of modern scholarship at his fingertips, and that he was a pioneer, his treatment strikes us as strange. Firstly, his method of dealing with the abuses of the Canon was not by modification, but by drastic curtailment. And secondly, he retained the elevation. The latter was abolished by all the serious Reformers, the 1549 Book of Common Prayer even containing a rubric forbidding the practice. What then is the explanation for Luther's treatment of the Canon?

It might be argued that Luther's handling of the Canon reflects two things; his conservative nature which was against any major recasting of the Liturgy, and that he was not a liturgiologist in the sense that Cranmer was, and had little interest in liturgical revision. Certainly Luther was not an 'enthusiast' who swept away everything in his path. Nor does he seem to have been particularly interested in Liturgy. A superficial reading of his liturgical work gives the impression of his being singularly inarticulate in this field. The historian V. H. H. Green commented that in general whereas

Erasmus used a rapier, Luther employed a cudgel; his treatment of the Canon might well appear to be the work of a cudgel, for only a mutilated torso is left. But as Gordon Rupp pointed out, Luther was not the loud-mouthed, beer-swilling German, nor an angry young man; how easy it is to miss the warm gentle eyes and the small neat handwriting. He was a skilful and forceful theologian, and one of the greatest hymn writers of the Church, and therefore, one would have thought, no more inarticulate at writing liturgy than, for instance, was Bucer. His writings reveal, in fact, that his treatment of the Canon was not due to a conservative nature, nor lack of interest, but was thoroughly theological.

I. The Abolition of the Canon

The most striking feature of the *Formula Missae* and the *Deutsche Messe* is the complete annihilation of the prayers of the Canon. But for Luther this was unavoidable.

The key to Luther's handling of the Canon is Justification by Faith. God's justice is that he has forgiven us, though we have done nothing to deserve it; this forgiveness is sealed in the one complete sacrifice of Christ on the cross. What is required from us is faith. The Lord's Supper is a testament, or promise, of this forgiveness. There is the Testator – Christ; the heirs – Christians, the testament – the Words of Institution; and the seal or token – the bread and wine. In his early work, *Treatise on New Testament*,¹⁴ 1519, Luther admitted that the words offertory and sacrifice might legitimately be used of the mass, but only because of the food which was gathered and the prayer in which God was thanked and the food blessed, and not because of the sacrament which was above all a testament. Any good work or offering to God which was connected with petition for forgiveness was untenable, because this would imply that Christ's single sacrifice was not altogether complete for redemption. In fact, any such offering would be tantamount to re-sacrificing Christ, by trying to gain that which had already been gained by Christ.

It was from this standpoint that Luther approached the Canon of the Mass. His attack on the mass as a sacrifice was answered by his opponents with reference to the Canon. This explains Luther's suspicions which were already apparent in the '*Babylonian Captivity of the Church*', 1520:

Now there is yet a second stumbling block that must be removed, and this is much greater and the most dangerous of all, it is the common belief that the mass is a sacrifice, which is offered to God. Even the words of the Canon seem to imply this, when they speak of 'these gifts, these presents, these holy sacrifices', and further on 'this offering'. Prayer is also made, in so many words, 'that the

sacrifice of Abel', etc. Hence Christ is termed 'the sacrifice of the altar.'

Over against this, Luther insisted, must be set the words and example of Christ, which showed that the mass was a promise or testament. However, his suspicions grew; in his work of the following year, *Misuse of the Mass*, he emphasized that according to Scripture, there are only two sacrifices, the sacrifice of the cross (Heb. 10:10) and the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15). But his opponents 'throw up' the secret mass, which they called the Canon.

In it there are the words: 'these gifts, holy and unspotted sacrifices,' and further on: 'a holy offering, a pure offering and an unspotted offering, etc.'

But clearly, Luther now saw this to be an affront to the Gospel and Christ.

If they say: The words in the Canon are clear and manifest and need no glosses, then we in return also say: The words of the gospel are clear and plain and need no glosses . . . we say that the Canon, because it is a human word and work, shall yield to the gospel and give place to the Holy Spirit . . . Because the Canon was invited to the marriage feast and sat down in a place of honour, it shall now get up with shame and give place to Christ, its master, and sit in the lowest place, as it should properly have done in the beginning.

Stronger language is contained in *Receiving both kinds*, 1522:

The second step is for the priests who celebrate mass to avoid every word in the Canon and the collects which refer to sacrifice. . . . It simply must and shall be done away with, no matter who takes offence.

It emerges that for Luther, the Canon is a serious problem. It is in fact something which is incompatible with the Gospel and has in fact taken the place of the Gospel. Barth wrote of the mass that it is a religious masterpiece, the highwater mark in the development of the history of religion.¹⁵ With reference to the Canon, Luther could have agreed; religion, in so far as it is man's attempt to claim something from God, is contrary to the gospel. For Luther it was a question of Yahweh or Baal, the Gospel or the Canon. Thus we can understand why Luther in the *Formula Missae* emptied his wrath on the Canon. He saw it as the key to sacerdotalism, ecclesiastical avarice, votive masses and money-making. It was a 'mangled and abominable thing gathered from much filth and scum'. It was simply deleted.

Any further doubts about the Canon were removed by his analysis

of 1525, *The Abomination of the Secret Mass*, which may be summarized as follows:

- (1) *Te igitur*. The priest asks God to regard the wafer as so precious. Shall a little bread and wine be offered to God for him to accept on behalf of all Christendom? When these words are said, 'we offer thee this on behalf of the whole world and beseech thee that thou wilt deign to be pleased with it', it is equivalent to blaspheming and saying to God publicly before the whole world 'we have to help Christendom with bread and wine; it is a barefaced lie when you say that the blood of your son alone is sufficient'.
- (2) *Memento Domine*. Here the priest includes 'those who are here present', that they are supposed to offer with him the plain bread and wine, and he says the same thing also about those who have faith. For what purpose are these offerings made? 'For the redemption of their souls, etc.' It is the same as saying 'Those whom Christ has redeemed with his blood, that is christians, are not redeemed and are not christians but we will make ourselves christians and redeem ourselves with a piece of bread and a drink of wine'.
- (3) *Communicantes*. Christ instituted his body and blood as a remembrance of him and as a means of fellowship. This fool of a Canon makes of it a remembrance and fellowship of the departed saints, and makes them mediators. Christ alone is the mediator.
- (4) *Hanc igitur*. Again the priest offers bread and wine for Christendom.
- (5) *Quam oblationem*. The foolish Canon does not know itself what it is saying. It quotes from Paul's letter that the sacrifice is to become reasonable but not until it has become the body and blood of Christ. Then too it is to become accredited and blessed. It will surely please God to pray to him to give heed to this petition and thereby for the first time be gracious to his son and bless him and make him acceptable – when it is really through him that we are blessed and sanctified.
- (6) *Qui pridie et Simili modo*. The words have departed from the scriptural versions and the laity are refused the chalice.
- (7) *Unde et memores*. The priest offers up once again the Lord Christ, who offered himself only once.
- (8) *Supra quae*. A blasphemy – God is asked to be pleased with the sacrifice of his son! Christ's blood is supposed to sanctify and reconcile, but the Canon tries to do this itself instead. It is an insult to parallel Christ's offering with Abel and Abraham because he fulfils theirs. And it is not true

that Melchizedek sacrificed bread and wine.

- (9) *Supplices te*. Now redemption is gained simply through prayer.
- (10) *Memento etiam*. This part is worth money. If the dead repose in the sleep of peace, why does the Canon pray that they might rest in peace.
- (11) *Nobis quoque*. Here the Canon wants the faithful to receive a portion with the saints, when in fact they receive a portion with Christ.
- (12) *Per ipsum*. It speaks of 'many' but only the priest in fact communicates.

In this analysis, it is clear that Luther is attacking and mocking the logic of the phraseology of the Canon. But underneath this, there is deeper issue; Luther believed the Gospel to be a declaration of the love and forgiveness of God – of what God had done for us. The Canon, however, is preoccupied with what we are doing for God. It was precisely this that meant that the Canon was incompatible with the doctrine of Justification. However much it was the intention of the Canon to enter into what Christ had done, it seemed to attempt redemption in its own right. Nor was it a matter of simply altering a word here or there. There was no chance of it reappearing in the *Deutsche Messe*; in the latter there is no mention of it, for it had indeed 'simply been done away with', no matter who took offence.

II. Luther's Reformed Canon

When compared with the old Canon, Luther's new Office (a title he uses elsewhere for the Canon) and Consecration appear to be merely a remnant of the old Canon; the *Sursum Corda* and preface (*Formula Missae* only), the Words of Institutions intoned (*Qui pridie* and *Simili modo*) and the elevation during the *Sanctus* (a mere appendage). However, this new Canon or Office was in fact far from being a remnant; its origin is not to be sought in the old Canon, but in Luther's writings on the Lord's Supper. His Reformed Canon represents none other than a quintessence of the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

(i) The *Sursum Corda* and preface. In the *Formula Missae*, Luther retained the *Sursum Corda* and preface, which is to us the classical introduction to the Eucharistic prayer. However, as mentioned already, from the printed texts of the period, and from Langforde's meditations, it is clear that the Canon was regarded as beginning with *Te igitur*, and thus the *Sursum corda* and preface were not considered to be part of it. This partly accounts for its retention in 1523. The mention of angels and archangels was deleted since its natural connection with the *Sanctus* was broken.

The *Sanctus*, which was sung by the choir, was also considered not to be part of the Canon, but as merely an anthem leading into it, accompanied by the sacring bell. Luther found a more fitting place for this anthem, with *Benedictus*, after the Words of Institution (see below).

In the *Deutsche Messe* the *Sursum corda* and preface disappeared, being replaced by an exhortation. We may conjecture that in the *Formula Missae*, Luther regarded them as an exhortation to the worshippers to lift their minds to the account of the institution rather than to the thanksgiving of the heavenly host, who were banished. This could be more effectively achieved by direct exhortation. Thus we find in the *Deutsche Messe* the admonition that 'ye look upon the Testament of Christ in true faith above all having confident assurance in your hearts in the words by which Christ grants us His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins'.

(ii) The Words of Institution. Common to both the *Formula Missae* and the *Deutsche Messe* are the Words of Institution which were in fact to be intoned.

At first sight this appears to be the remnant of the Canon and might suggest a medieval (Cyprianic and Ambrosian also) idea of consecration by recitation of the words, and such an idea might further be confirmed by Luther's doctrine of the presence, commonly termed 'consubstantiation'. But this is an oversimplification.

Firstly, the words which Luther provided were not simply the *Qui pridie* and *Simili modo*. Luther was very critical of the words in the Canon; *Qui pridie* had left out 'which is given for you' and had added, among others, the little word '*enim*', and the *Simili modo* spoke of all drinking whereas the cup was denied to the laity. In the *Formula Missae* Luther emended the text accordingly, and in the *Deutsche Messe*, simply used the words of Scripture in I Cor. 11.

The importance of the words for Luther is not to be questioned. In *The Adoration of the Sacrament* 1523, addressed to the Waldensians, he stated plainly that the chief and foremost thing in the sacrament was the words of Christ, Take and eat, etc., for everything depended on those words. Against the fanatics he emphasized that the word 'is' did not mean signify but meant that Christ was really present in his word, and in the *Babylonian Captivity* he likened the presence to that of fire in red-hot iron. Luther used the doctrine of ubiquity and Ockham's definition of being to maintain that in the Eucharistic elements the presence of God is to be apprehended.¹⁶ His stand against Zwingli at Marburg is well known.

But although Luther insisted on the presence in the elements, and the importance of the words, he showed no interest in setting out his doctrine in systematic detail, which suggests that his interest in the words was for other reasons.

In the *Formula Missae* Luther accepted the mass as a sacrament, Eucharist, Lord's Supper, Lord's Memorial, or communion, or any pious name except 'sacrifice'. But as we have seen, his own preference was Testament. It was a Testament or promise of God's forgiveness, the promise of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of the cross for all men. In the *Babylonian Captivity* he wrote:

According to its substance, therefore, the mass is nothing but the aforesaid words of Christ: 'Take and eat, etc.' as if he were saying: 'Behold, O sinful and condemned man, out of the pure and unmerited love with which I love you, and by the will of the Father of mercies apart from any merit or desire of yours, I promise you in these words, the forgiveness of all your sins and life everlasting. And that you may be absolutely certain of this irrevocable promise of mine, I shall give my body and pour out my blood, confirming this promise by my very death, and leaving you my body and blood as a sign and memorial of this same promise. As often as you partake of them, remember me, proclaim and praise my love and bounty toward you, and give thanks.'

Elsewhere Luther claimed that these words constitute the mass: 'grasp and thoroughly ponder the words of Christ by which he performed and instituted the mass and commanded us to perform it. For therein lies the whole mass, its nature, work, profit, and benefit. Without the words nothing is derived from the mass' (*Treatise on New Testament*). The reason was that the Words of Institution were in fact the Gospel in a nutshell; they are a summary of the promise of the Gospel. 'For if you ask: what is the gospel? you can give no better answer than these words of the New Testament, namely, that Christ gave his body and poured out his blood for the forgiveness of sins. . . . Therefore, these words, as a short summary of the whole Gospel are to be taught and instilled into every christian's heart . . . ' (*The Misuse of the Mass*). If then these words were the Gospel in a nutshell, then they must be proclaimed; instead of a silent canon, the words of Institution were intoned. As far as Luther was concerned, he was replacing the Canon with the Gospel itself. And in the Gospel it is God who does something for us, and offers it to us. Here then is not a remnant of a Canon offering something to God, but the Gospel offering Christ and his forgiveness to us.

(iii) The *Elevation* and *Sanctus*. In the light of medieval emphasis on the elevation as the 'high spot' in the mass, and its immediate abolition by most reformers, Luther's retention of the *Elevation* may seem an anachronism. But from his writings, it seems that Luther did in fact 'demythologise' it and put it to a new use.

Luther was fully aware of the dangers of the *Elevation*. In the *Misuse of the Mass* he argued that it was the *Elevation* that had

influenced his opponents to call the mass a sacrifice. It would make no difference to the service if it was omitted because it was a human invention. In the *Babylonian Captivity* he had explained it as either a survival of a Hebrew rite of lifting up what was received with thanksgiving and returning it to God, or else an admonition to provoke faith in the Testament. His suspicion of its possible implications is evident in the *Formula Missae* where the reason for it being retained is chiefly on account of the infirm who might be greatly offended by a sudden change in the rite.

But Luther also saw the *Elevation* as a positive feature giving visual expression to the Testament in the Words of Institution. In his *Treatise on New Testament*, he wrote:

And this is what is meant when the priest elevates the host, by which he addresses us rather than God. It is as if he were saying to us, 'Behold, this is the seal and sign of the testament in which Christ has bequeathed to us the remission of all sins and eternal life.' In agreement with this is also that which is sung by the choir, 'Blessed be he who comes to us in the name of God', whereby we testify how we receive blessings from God, and do not sacrifice or give to God.

In the *Misuse of the Mass* he noted its positive nature:

It may well signify, however, that just as the pledge of the promise of Christ is elevated in order that the people may thereby be inspired to faith, so the word should be preached publicly to the people in order that everyone may hear the testament and see the pledge, and through both be attracted and aroused to faith and strengthened in it.

And it is this positive side of the elevation which was put forward in the *Deutsche Messe* – it signifies that Christ has commanded us to remember him, and we may apprehend by faith how Christ gives us his body and blood. It is in fact a showing forth of the pledge of God's forgiveness. Bard Thompson aptly described it as a pictorial anamnesis.¹⁷

In the *Deutsche Messe* Luther remarked that the *Elevation* went well with the German *Sanctus*. In the *Formula Missae* he had transferred this anthem and the *Benedictus* to after the Words of Institution, and in the *Deutsche Messe* the Latin version was replaced by a German paraphrase. It was the opinion of Brilioth that this was 'without doubt one of the least successful of Luther's suggestions for reform.'¹⁸ But it would seem that Brilioth paid more attention to comparative liturgy than to Luther.

The reason for Luther's repositioning of the *Sanctus* seems to be two-fold. It came at the end of the Words of Institution during the

Elevation as a joyful response to the proclamation of the Gospel, the Testament of forgiveness; it is a thanksgiving, the sacrifice of praise which follows the proclamation of the sacrifice of the cross. But there is also a second reason which is not immediately apparent. The *Sanctus* is taken from Isaiah 6:3, though a different version is found in Rev. 4:8. In the former, Isaiah is in the temple of Jerusalem before the presence of the Lord; in the latter the twenty-four elders in the heavenly city hear the four living creatures singing the *Sanctus*. Since in the Eucharist the *Sanctus* followed the *Sursum corda*, it may be assumed that the worshipper lifted his heart and mind into heaven to hear the *Sanctus* as in Rev. 4:8, a type of 'anacletis'. Certainly Farel and Calvin seem to have interpreted the *Sursum corda* in this way.¹⁹ However, Luther's German paraphrase shows that he preferred to see it as the *Sanctus* of Isaiah. And this is because he saw a distinct parallel in Isa. 6 with the Eucharist. In Isa. 6 the prophet heard the *Sanctus* sung in honour of the holiness of God. Luther commented:

The angels were borne aloft like birds, that is, they served God not with their own endeavors, but with a confession in which they sing the *Trishagion*, that is, the thrice holy, whereby they indicate that all holiness in the whole earth must be described to God alone. All the words are grandly put. They shouted. The truest worship of God is a pure and simple confession, God says: He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honours me. The other things we have, such as gifts, intellect, good habits, our best endeavors, let these be concealed. We must glory in the Word alone and confess that we have received these gifts from God, we do not bring them alone (*Lectures on Isaiah*).

Thus Luther saw the *Sanctus* as a true sacrifice. But Isaiah was overawed by a sense of sin. One of the Seraphim cleansed him by putting a burning coal on his lips and saying 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven'. Then the prophet was sent out as the servant of God. For Luther, the Gospel and the mass were for sinners because both were a declaration of forgiveness. The bread and wine are the tokens or seals of that promise, and they touch the lips of the communicant as a declaration of forgiveness. After communion the christian is sent out as a servant of God. Thus the *Sanctus*, far from being merely an appendage to the Institution is rather a very fitting conclusion to the Testament of forgiveness.

Having considered Luther's own views on the Canon which he rejected and the constituent parts of his reformed Canon, it is possible to make the following conclusions:

(a) Luther's reformed Canon in its most satisfactory form is to be

found in the *Deutsche Messe*. It is sometimes asserted that Luther himself preferred the *Formula Missae*. If this is to be applied to the Canon, it is difficult to explain why Luther did not simply translate that contained in the *Formula Missae* into German. The fact that in the *Deutsche Messe* he bothered to alter it would suggest that it was a revision to make clearer his intentions. The *Deutsche Messe* itself might also explain his preference for the *Formula Missae*; in it Luther emphasised again and again the importance of retaining latin – in the Bible lessons and services – for the sake of the youth. The *Formula Missae* was important because it was in latin, not because of its actual contents.

This new Canon, consisting of the Words of Institution, *Elevation* and the German *Sanctus*, was not a remnant of the old Canon. Such an idea could only arise by simply comparing the reformed Canon with the old Canon. But clearly any such comparison must take into account that between the two Canons stands Luther himself. The fact that elements occur in both may, therefore, be regarded as coincidence. The reformed Canon is a deliberate new composition.

(b) The reason for the new Canon is to be found in Luther's doctrine of Justification by faith and its relation to the command 'Do this in remembrance of me'. The old Canon was in obedience to this command for throughout it spoke in terms of 'We do'. It was a response to God's action in Christ, seeking by faithful repetition and intercession to enter into the sacrifice of Christ. This seems to have been precisely Luther's objection. For Luther the sacrifice of the cross and forgiveness of sins were God's gifts to man which could only be received with thanksgiving. It could not be actively entered into by man, for this would imply that Justification had to be completed by human action, either by imitation or by intercession. 'Do this in remembrance of me' was to proclaim again what God had done for man, and Luther seems to have concluded that the most effective way of doing this was by letting God himself speak in the Words of Institution. Thus Luther's reformed Canon replaced 'We do' with 'He has done', his starting point being *Dominus Dixit*. Instead of trying to participate and enter into the sacrifice of Christ by lifting our hearts to the heavenly altar, we stand in awe with Isaiah as Christ speaks to us on earth, granting us pardon, and therefore taking us up into his sacrifice. In doing this, Luther believed that he had replaced the Canon with the Gospel; the Canon had given up its place to Christ its master. Far from being a conservative and unimaginative liturgiologist, Luther was in fact giving positive liturgical expression to Justification.

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NOTES

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3. V. Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, Philadelphia, 1958.
4. 'The Early Roman Canon Missae', by the late E. C. Ratcliff and A. H. Couratin in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. XX, No. 2, 1969.
5. E. C. Ratcliff, 'Christian Worship and Liturgy', in K. E. Kirk, *The Study of Theology*, 1939, p. 443.
6. G. G. Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, 1968, p. 234 ff.
7. G. G. Willis, *Essays in Early Roman Liturgy*, 1964, p. 121 ff.
8. B. Langforde. 'Meditations for Ghostly Exercise in the Time of the Mass', in *Tracts on the Mass*, ed. J. W. Legg, 1904, Henry Bradshaw Society.
9. Ibid.
10. E. C. Ratcliff, *The Booke of Common Prayer Its Making and Revisions 1549-1661* 1949, p. 22.
11. *Prayers and other pieces of Thomas Becon (Chaplain to Cranmer)*, Parker Society 1844, p. 266.
12. AE. L. Richter, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* Vol. I, Leipzig, 1846. English translation in *Liturgies of the Western Church*, edited by Bard Thompson, New York, 1961.
13. For example, Y. Brilioth, trans. A. G. Hebert, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice, Evangelical and Catholic*, 1930. W. D. Maxwell, *An outline of Christian Worship*, 1936.
14. This and other works referred to are contained in Luther's Works, (American edition), edited by J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann, Vols. 35-38, 1960.
15. Karl Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, 1938, p. 206.
16. For a concise summary, see Brilioth.
17. Bard Thompson, op. cit., p. 104.
18. Brilioth, op. cit., p. 117.
19. For the texts of the 'Reformed' *Sursum corda*, see Bard Thompson.