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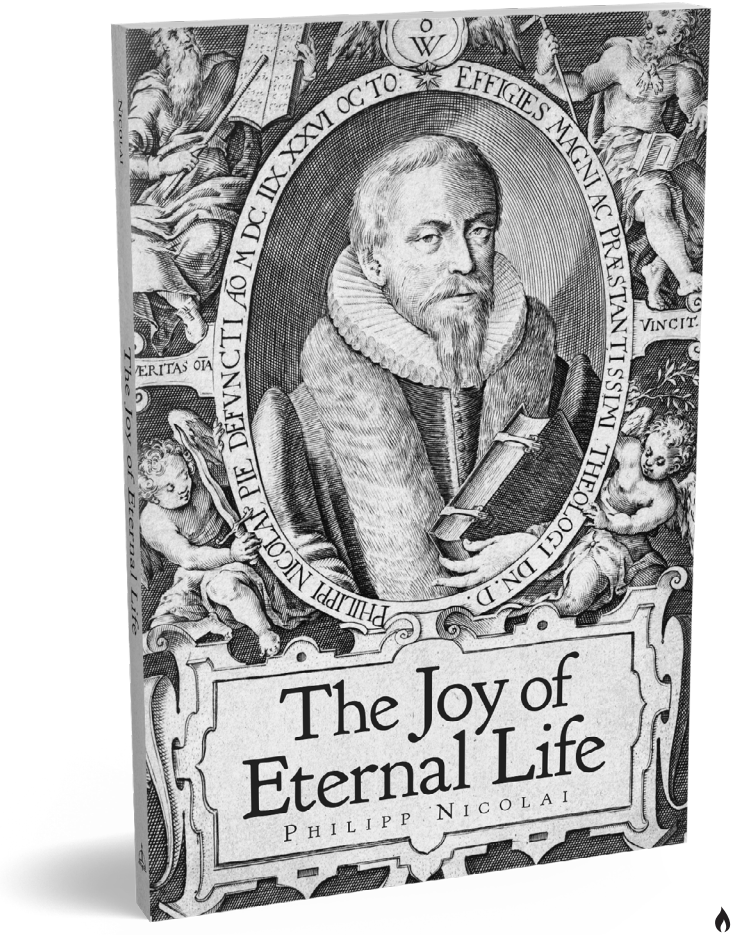

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Hermann Sasse's View of the Office of the Ministry Up to World War II

Matthew C. Harrison

Hermann Sasse once recounted a story while teaching a church history course at Concordia Theological Seminary in the 1960s. The story illustrated the complex plight of the church of the Old Prussian Union and much of German Lutheranism prior to the First World War. "When I was drafted [during World War I], the Catholics were separated from the Lutherans by a Silesian officer. There were some left. 'What are you?' [the officer asked.] 'An atheist,' [came the reply]. 'So, you believe nothing? You are a Protestant!'"[1]

AC IV is the gospel heart of the Christian faith, and AC V locates the delivery (*Solchen Glauben zuerlangen; Ut hanc fidem consequamur* [To obtain such faith; That we may obtain this faith]) of the gifts named in AC IV (*vergebung der sunde und gerechtickeit, die vor Gott gilt* [forgiveness of sins and righteousness which avails before God]) in word and sacrament.[2] This would seem a simple matter, but it is by no means self-evident. Sasse became convinced that from Kant to Ritschl to von Harnack, the German Lutheran Church (particularly within the Union) had been on the wrong path, lost the saving dogma of the church, and reduced the faith to ethics and the gospel to law. Adolf von Harnack, the quintessential scholar at the quintessential liberal German university (Berlin), viewed the salvific facts of AC IV (and also AC III) as a Greek/Pauline mixture of an earlier religion, based on Jesus and his teaching, already itself an admixture as presented in the Gospels. Harnack opined: "The origin of a series of the most important Christian customs and ideas is involved in an obscurity which in all probability will never be cleared up."[3] Harnack goes on to notate a number of such difficult questions: "When and where did baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit arise, and how did it make its way in Christendom? When and how did the belief in the birth of Jesus from a Virgin gain acceptance in Christendom? How old is the triad: Apostles, Prophets and Teachers? When were baptism and the Lord's Supper grouped together? How old are the first three Gospels?"[4] Says Harnack: "To all these questions and many

[1] Otto F. Stahlke, "Class Notes," [n.d.], given to Matthew C. Harrison.

[2] *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche: Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930*, 11th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992). All translations from the German are the author's.

[3] Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 1:132.

[4] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 1:133.

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more of equal importance there is no sure answer. But the greatest problem is presented by Christology."[5] Harnack's historicism rendered Christ unsure, and with the fall of Christology, also Baptism, sacrament, and office all became unsure, "never" to "be cleared up."[6]

If the biblical and mandate texts of the Small Catechism were myth, then so were AC IV and V. Indeed, all dogma had become meaningless. And yet, the personal and professional course of Sasse's life soon began to influence his conception of theology and dogma, and thus also his view of the preaching office.

World War I

The major turning point for Sasse was World War I. "What did this mean for theology? The students who went into the battlefields of the First World War with Harnack's theology, lost this theology. You can perhaps live on this in happy times, but you can't die with it, and so, the liberal theology and the optimistic view of man died in the catastrophe of the First World War."[7]

Sasse served as a chaplain in the war. Decades later, after being feted in the *Springfielder* of Concordia Theological Seminary, Sasse wrote to Heino Kadai: "Yesterday I received the copy of the *Springfielder* with your congratulatory article. At first sight I felt a little as I felt when, coming down with five men out of 120 from Paschendale on the 7th of November 1917 (the day of the Bolshewist [*sic*] Revolution in Prussia) my sergeant major greeted me with the words, 'But we have buried you yesterday with military honors.'"[8] The quip does not obscure the death and devastation experienced. Sasse's regiment was almost entirely wiped out.

Along with his experiences in World War I, Sasse also found himself in the middle of a Luther Renaissance during the Reformation anniversary of 1917. Concerning the seminal influence of Karl Holl and the Luther Renaissance he epitomized, Sasse wrote:

> We who had been students of Holl suddenly began to realize that the Lutheran Reformation meant something also for modern mankind. "Man is nothing, and nothing is left to us but to despair of ourselves and hope in Christ." This word of Luther's became important to our generation. We began to study

[5] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 1:133.

[6] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 1:133.

[7] Hermann Sasse, "The Impact of Bultmannism on American Lutheranism, with Special Reference to His Demythologization of the New Testament," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 5 (June 1965): 5.

[8] Hermann Sasse to Heino Kadai, August 29, 1965, Sasse-Jungkuntz Correspondence, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

> Luther, the Confessions, and the Bible.[9] Pindar and Sophocles had vanished from our lives, but one book had remained, our Greek New Testament.[10]

The Real-World Vantage of the Office Shaped Sasse

At the age of 25 Sasse was examined *pro ministerio* (for the ministry) and passed. General Superintendent Kessler of the Church of the Old Prussian Union ordained him at St. Matthew's, Berlin. Sasse then served as an assistant at Advent Church, Berlin, and at Templin. His first pastorate (1920–1921) was at Oranienburg, a parish of 10,000 with about a hundred in church on a Sunday. Later he was appointed pastor of St. Mary's in Berlin and also served as "welfare pastor" of Berlin (1928–1933).

The pastoral challenges for Sasse were real and intense. He wrote:

> I remember one night when I had to search for a lost sheep of my flock. He had lost all his money in gambling and tried to drown in the river. I found him in the morning in a ward of one of the big hospitals of East Berlin where the suicides and attempted suicides were collected. I have never again, not even in the Bowery of New York, seen such misery, where the curses of the unsuccessful suicides mingled with the hellish noise of those who had destroyed their voices by taking poisonous acids. Now I had to face all the problems of a parish pastor, including the financial problems with which the church is confronted since the days of the apostles in Jerusalem.[11]

Such pastoral realities required a "Theology of Facts" (Vilmar), not myths.[12]

Hartford Seminary and the American Visit (1925–1926)

Sasse completed his STM degree at Hartford Theological Seminary. He carefully chronicled his impressions of the American cultural and ecclesiastical scene in his *Amerikanisches Kirchentum* ("American Christianity and the Church"). "This churchliness of life [in the U.S.] has a downside to be sure: the secularization of the church. . . . Why should the church not offer what a secular club offers? And these things progressively force their way into religious life itself. Worship [*Gottesdienst*] has been, as we say, 'developed.' There must always be something new, and everything must be effective: lighting effect, musical effect, an effective

[9] Sasse, "The Impact of Bultmannism," 5.

[10] Hermann Sasse, "Reminiscences of an Elderly Student" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 2.

[11] Sasse, "Reminiscences," 3.

[12] August Vilmar, *Die Theologie der Tatsachen wider die Theologie der Rhetorik: Bekenntnis und Abwehr* (Marburg: Bertelsmann, 1857); English translation by Roy Harrisville, *The Theology of Facts versus The Theology of Rhetoric: Confession and Defense* (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy, 2008).

liturgy." Great men of America achieve their business goals. "Other chapters show Jesus as the master salesman or sportsman. If Jesus were living today, he would, in principle, affirm American civilization. . . . Thus, we have the basis for the practical church program of the American: the realization of democratic society through the work of the church."[13]

Sasse was convinced that in this American milieu, where the Protestants were compromised by the secular-sacred mismash of the Social Gospel Movement (which distorted the Office of the Ministry), and the Roman Catholics by Marian dogmas (i.e. the false dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary, promulgated without the slightest biblical warrant), only the Lutherans were in a position to pose the question of truth unto repentance.

Sasse later wrote that it was in the U.S. where he read the Lutheran Confessions and Wilhelm Löhe's *Three Books about the Church* and became a convinced confessional Lutheran. "Personally I must confess that it was in America that I first learned to fully appreciate what it means to be loyal to the Lutheran Confessions; but for what I learned from the Lutheran theologians and church bodies in the United States, I probably could never have written this book."[14]

Faith and Order—Lausanne

Sasse had entered the ecumenical movement in a large way through his doctor father, Adolf Deissmann. Ronald R. Feuerhahn has demonstrated that Sasse was the most active continental theologian in the Faith and Order Movement prior to World War II. Sasse held positions on the Continuation Committee, Executive Committee, and Committee of Reference.[15] Sasse was chosen to be the editor of the official German Report of the Lausanne Conference (1927).[16] That document provided numerous reports on lectures and discussions of "*Das geistliche Amt der Kirche*" (the sacred office of the church), dealing with ecumenically pressing questions: Who ordains? What of bishops? Church order? Grades of the one office?[17]

In the wake of Lausanne, several essays flowed from Sasse's pen, which are of fundamental significance for his understanding of the office. In his essay "Kyrios"

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[13] Hermann Sasse, *Amerikanisches Kirchentum* (Berlin-Dahlem: Wichern-Verlag, 1927), 31–32.

[14] Hermann Sasse, *Here We Stand: Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1946), x.

[15] Ronald R. Feuerhahn, "Hermann Sasse as an Ecumenical Churchman" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1991; rev. 1994), 15.

[16] Hermann Sasse, ed., "Geschichte der Weltkonferenz" in *Die Weltkonferenz für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung. Deutscher Amtlicher Bericht über die Welkirchenkonferenz zu Lausanne 3.–21. August 1927* (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1929), 72ff.

[17] Sasse, *Die Weltkonferenz*, 432ff.

(1928), Sasse claims that the New Testament witnesses to the divinity of Christ, but asserts that only by starting from the dogma of the divinity of the Holy Spirit may the church "escape from the cloud of 'religious historical hypotheses'. . . [to] a new understanding of the resurrection, and so also a new Christology."[18] And that would be a high Christology of the ancient church, "a living Christ, to whom his church prays, and who is in the church's midst; that this Christ is not an intermediate being, but *vere deus [truly God]*."[19]

In "Ubi Christus, Ibi Ecclesia" [where Christ is, there is the church] (1929), Sasse poses Nietzsche as one of those "men whose lives embody the fate of an entire epoch. . . . His desperate destitution and loneliness is the loneliness of the modern man. To be sure, there still burns in his soul the desire for God. Indeed, he cries as Friedrich Nietzsche for the unknown God, and he consecrates to him solemn altars in the deepest depths of his heart. But the voice of the living God he no longer hears."[20] How does the church respond to such accusations? Repentance.

> First our mouths are dumb, then he [the Lord] speaks. If we with our wisdom and our power are at an end, then he speaks his great Word to us: "Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age!" [Matt 28:20]. With these words he once sent his apostles into the world, to tasks which humanly speaking were impossible, to destinations which they knew not. And they joyously went the unknown way. They knew that his forgiveness, his peace, his power were with them. "Behold, I am with you always"—this is the mystery of the church. For upon what does the church rest? No not on our faith, not on the holiness of our lives—then it would have long since dwindled out of history—but solely on Christ the Lord. *Ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia* [Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans 8:2].[21]

In "Church and Churches" (1930; in a Festschrift for Wilhelm Zoellner), Sasse confronts the challenge of divided Christianity, and the Office of the Ministry already figures large. "To understand the church, one must begin with Christology and never sociology because there is one living Christ, there is only one church. *Ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia*."[22] "Where does this church become visible?" The question, writes Sasse, "does not mean for us, Where do we find the people who belong to this church? But rather, Where do we find Christ?"[23] Sasse quotes AC V, "*Nam per*

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[18] Sasse, "Kyrios," *Theology* 17, no. 100 (October 1928): 223–229. Cf. Sasse, *The Lonely Way*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001, 2002), 1:61–67.

[19] Sasse, "Kyrios," 1:66.

[20] Sasse, "Kyrios," 1:69–70.

[21] Sasse, "Kyrios," 1:71.

[22] Hermann Sasse, "*Kirche und Kirchen: Über den Glaubenssatz von der Einheit der Kirche*" in *Credo Ecclesiam: Festgabe . . . Wilhelm Zoellner*, ed. Hans Eherenberg et al. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1930), 295–317. Cf. Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 1:82.

[23] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 1:83.

verbum et sacramenta tamquam per instrumenta donatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in iis, qui audiunt evangelium. [For through the word and sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God in those who hear the gospel.] . . . Thus, Article V of the Augustana speaks against the churchless mysticism of *Schwärmertum [Enthusiasm]*." It was clear for Sasse that a concrete, classical New Testament Christology was the only remedy for theologies that saw in the New Testament only a "beautiful religious experience, pious sentiment, and useful ethics. Such persons will not understand this quest for the one truth."[24]

In "The Social Doctrine of the Augsburg Confession" (1930),[25] Sasse provides definite dogmatic commentary regarding the office by explicating AC XVI (and AC XXVIII) on the two realms, church and state.

> Thus the two governments, the spiritual and the secular, should not be confused and mixed together. For the spiritual power has its command to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. It should not become an office foreign and contrary to its nature. It should not enthrone and remove kings, should not do away with secular obedience, should not prescribe laws for secular power and secular affairs, as Christ said: "My kingdom is not of this world [AC XXVIII 12–14]."[26]

Sasse notes several attempts to "Christianize the world" including the "heresy of the 'Social Gospel' in the Anglican world," the heresy of the "Christian state in Germany," and Rome's attempt to "ecclesiasticize the world."[27] All are born of fanaticism, blur the teaching of Christ, and "lead to precisely the same result with a secularization of Christendom."[28] "The authority of the church or bishops gives eternal goods and is exercised alone through the preaching office" (AC XXVIII 10).

1931 Referat

At the end of May 1931, Sasse presented a paper at the "Second Study Week of the German Committee for Faith and Order of the Churches (Lausanne)" in Soest.[29]

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[24] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 1:86.

[25] Hermann Sasse, "The Social Doctrine of the Augsburg Confession and Its Significance for the Present" (1930), in *Lonely Way*, 1:89–100.

[26] Hermann Sasse, "The Social Doctrine of the Augsburg Confession and Its Significance for the Present," 94.

[27] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 1:96.

[28] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 1:96.

[29] Ronald R. Feuerhahn, *Hermann Sasse, A Bibliography* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1995), no. 31-01: "Die Frage des kirchl. Amts. Einzelne, ungenaue Notizen von der Soester Arbeitswoche. Mittw. D. 27. Mai 31, vorm. Referat Sasse, Vervielfältigung, 6 S." A previous meeting of this committee is referenced in Feuerhahn, No. 044, "Die Kirche im Neuen Testament."

This appears to be the first specific paper he prepared on the question of the Office of the Ministry. It was in the context of an ecumenical discussion "between Lutheran, Reformed and Free Church Theologians." While the six-page paper is not thus far available, we do have notes from the presentation.[30]

Sasse opened his essay by stating that the question of the ecclesiastical office is the point at which the differences between the churches cannot be blurred because such differences lead to practical consequences. The question of the office is a controversy affecting English-speaking Christianity, and the Germans (of the various churches gathered) must not be spectators. It may be that one last great decision is being rendered between evangelical Christianity and Catholicism on the question of the office. The question confronting German Christianity is this: "Are we agreed on a doctrine of the office? . . . And if we are agreed on a doctrine of the office, do we have agreement in practice?"[31] The doctrine of the office is a dogmatic question, and no dogmatics is complete without a doctrine of the office.

Concluding the introduction, Sasse asserts that "Luther is always secondary to the Augustana,"[32] meaning of course that not all of Luther's views on the office were taken into the public confession of the church.[33] Consistent with what would remain a longstanding conviction that the Lutheran dogma of the church and office are unfinished, Sasse asserts that "the Lutheran Confessions say something valuable, but it is only a beginning because there was still a lack of experience."[34] The following notes briefly summarize five points in Sasse's paper.

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[30] These notes are available in the Sasse Archives, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

[31] Sasse, "Referat," 1931, unpublished, unpaginated copy in possession of the author.

[32] Sasse, "Referat."

[33] Here Sasse refrains from following Löhe completely. In the controversy over the *Amt* (office) with the Missourians, Löhe granted that there were passages of the Confessions which expressed Luther's views on priesthood and office, but there are others which express a different view. "*Beide [Walther and Löhe] das Amt für iure divino. Beide sind sich also über Ansicht an Dogma des Amtes einig. Nur über die Begründung des Dogmas besteht Streit. Aber das ist ein Theologumenon. Löhe kann nicht anders. Er gibt, dass bedeutenden Dogmatiker sich Luthers Ansicht in diesem Punkte aneigneten. Aber es gab manche Lehrer, die diese individuell lutherische Lehre nicht hatten. Er weiss, dass Luthers Lehre sich in den lutherischen Symbolen an einigen Stellen durchsetzte. Andere Stellen aber sprechen dagegen. Sollten sie alle für Walther sprechen, so sind es doch solche, die in ihrem Zusammenhang keine symbolische Geltung beanspruchen können. Kurz: Die Kirche als solche war in der Sache nicht so fertig, dass man die widerstrebende Partei verworfen hätte*." Siegfried Hebart, *Wilhelm Löhes Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1939), 237. Cf. Wilhelm Löhe in *Kirchlichen Mittheilungen aus und über Nord Amerika* (1853, no. 7).

[34] Sasse, "Referat."

1. In his "To the Christian Nobility" (1520), Luther refers to 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6.[35] The priesthood was first introduced in connection with the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.[36]

Against enthusiasm: Regarding AC V, there is still no theological concept of the church in which the Quakers are included; I hope God has another one![37]

2. The office can never be derived [*abgeleitet werden*] from the general priesthood of believers, but only from the apostolate, the first proclamation and celebration of Baptism and the Sacrament. That is why it is important to understand the nature of the apostolate.[38]

3. "Apostle" appears in the New Testament with a double meaning: a) "messenger." For example, Barnabas is called an apostle along with Paul (Acts 14:14). See also Romans 16:7; and b) The strictly theological usage of the apostolate, in Acts and also in Paul regarding his office [*Amt*].[39]

4. The essence of prophecy is the struggle between error and truth. Truth, the awareness of being an office bearer, the speaking on behalf of another. Outside the biblical prophets, Sasse sees only Zarathustra and Mohammed as prophets.[40] In the New Testament, prophecy has become a discrete church

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[35] "*Dem nach so werden wir allesampt durch die tauff zu priestern geweyhet, wie sanct Peter i Peter ii sagt*" (Martin Luther, "*An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des Christlichen standes besserung*" (1520), in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Schriften*], 73 vols. [Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–2009], vol. 6:407.22 [hereafter WA]). There appears to be no reference to Revelation 1:6, yet Luther makes his famous and important distinction in his explication of the office with respect to 1 Peter 2:9. "*Szo folget auf dissem, das leye, priester, fursten, bischoff, und wie sie sagen, geistlich und weltlich, keynen andern unterscheyd ym grund warlich haben, den das ampts odder wercks halben, unnd nit des stands halbenn, dan sie sein alle geystlichs stands, warhafftig preister, bischoff und bepste*" (WA 6:408.25–29). That is, Luther asserts that all Christians are priests and have the same "Stand" but not the same "Amt." They have the same "standing" before God but not the same office in church and life.

[36] That is, the theologically freighted custom of calling the occupant of the office "priest" in the ancient church, as the Supper was increasingly defined as a sacrifice performed.

[37] This is a reference to the *damnamus* ("we condemn") in AC V. Quakers reject the sacraments and claim direct revelation from God apart from word and sacrament.

[38] This theme is very significant for Löhe. Cf. Wilhelm Löhe, "Aphorismen" (1849) in *Gesammelte Werke, Wilhelm Löhe*, ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951–1986), 5/1:262ff., 265ff., et passim.

[39] Löhe, "Aphorismen," 5/1:286.

[40] It is not entirely clear exactly what Sasse is getting at. But he has in mind Luther's description of "fanaticism" as the "strength of all heresy, especially of that of the Papacy and Mahomet" [SA III.VIII 5.9], quoted in Sasse, "Union and Confession," in *Lonely Way* 1.278. Regarding " Montanus, Mani and Muhammad" Sasse says, "All the great heresies of ancient . . . and modern times," "go beyond the Scriptures, goes beyond Christ… and thus is no revelation." Sasse, "The Church and the Word of God" in The *Lonely Way* 1.158. Such false prophets occur throughout history. Apostles, however, only appear in the church, and of course, only in the apostolic era.

office.[41] It's different with Christ! The prophets are spread over the entire history of the world, but the apostles in the church. Apostolic succession is a fiction, but this truth is expressed in it: The present church is identical with the apostolic one; the apostolic confession is still here![42] The apostolic office is superior to prophecy, to the horror of the fanatics.[43]

Where is the office [*Amt*] that is the continuation of the apostolic office? The Reformed have the position regarding the constitution of the church such that they say in the New Testament there are binding rules for the church's present constitution. So also Catholicism. The Lutheran Church claims that the New Testament contains no doctrine on the constitution of the church. Many types of church constitutions have been read into the New Testament. You can also do that. That is certainly a result of the great diversity in ancient Christianity. AC XXVIII presupposes that the episcopate [*Bischofsamt*] is preserved through the Pastoral Office [*Pfarramt*]. There "*Pastores*" [pastors] and "*episcopi*" [bishops] are used synonymously. This, too, is the meaning of apostolic succession, that the office which keeps doctrine pure is maintained.[44]

5. The church of Christ appears a) in the *congregatio sanctorum [assembly of saints]*; b) in the ministry *docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta [of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments]*. (The famous question about the chicken and the egg!) The official is not a functionary by order of the congregation [*Functionär u. Beauftragter der Gemeinde*].

The office is a divine institution.

The apostles never conferred [*übertrugen*] their Christ-given authority [*Vollmacht*] to a congregation [*Gemeinde*]. When they conferred it, they did it

[41] Löhe, "Aphorismen," 5/1:275.

[42] "Allein so gewiss und wahr es ist, dass die heilige Kirche von den Aposteln gegründet, so gewiss ist es im Gegenteil auch, dass man aus dieser Auslegung des Wortes wenig Ruhm nehmen kann, wenn nicht zugleich jene andere Auslegung, auf der Apostel Lehre ruhend' hinzugenommen wird. Was würde es helfen, wenn die Kirche von den Aposteln gegründet wäre, ohne ihr Wort mehr zu haben?'" Wilhelm Löhe, "Drei Bücher von der Kirche," in *Gesammelte Werke*, 5/1:98–99.

[43] Löhe, "Aphorismen," 5/1:275.

[44] Cf. Hermann Sasse, "Successio Apostolica" in *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 2:425–449.

> from person to person.[45] We have been [trying to] create living congregations now for fifty years, but have only founded societies [*Vereine*]![46]

Sasse concluded with this assertion: "There is a symphony of congregation and ministerium, and in both the church of Christ comes into the world." Discussion ensued. The question was raised, "How is the Lutheran view of the office distinguished dogmatically from all other views? For instance, that of the Lutheran and Reformed?" Though the notes do not name Sasse as the source of the response, it appears that he replied:

> For Luther, the proclamation of the Gospel belongs to the essence of the church, and thus the rest of God's Word is not on the same level [*gleichgeordnet*]. The Law is completely subordinate to the Gospel. The office is established as the gift of God to his humanity, and this office has nothing [to give] beyond the Gospel (proclamation of the Word, Sacrament, Power of the Keys). To the contrary, for the Reformed, the office is founded upon the regulations [*Anordnungen*] of the New Testament.[47]

Kirchliches Jahrbuch (1932)

In the same issue of the yearbook for the Protestant churches of Germany, in which Sasse famously and pointedly rejected the Aryan Paragraph of the Nazi Party platform, he noted the practical confusion caused by errant views of the office. In the environs of National Socialism's emerging infatuation with ideas of "leadership," under the section titled, "The Crisis of Religion and the Proclamation of the Church," Sasse stated:

> Religious Superiority, Religious Virtuosity, Religious Leadership—from what kind of world do these ideas come? Certainly not out of the world of the New Testament and the Reformation! In the church of the Gospel, one knows nothing of superior personalities to whose leadership the uneducated entrust

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[45] Sasse channels Löhe here. "*Wie stand nun Löhe zum Streit dieser beiden Richtungen [i.e., the American controversy on the office between Grabau and the Missourians]? In seinem im Jahre 1849 erschienenen Aphorismen über die neutestamentlichen Ämter hatte er seine Anschauungen über das Verhältnis von Amt und Gemeinde zum erstenmal zusammengefasst. Er betonte vor allem, dass das Amt nicht eine Übertragung gemeindlicher Rechte und Machtvollkommenheit, sondern göttliche Stiftung sei und sich selbst von Person zu Person fortpflanze. Es ist ein Beruf innerhalb des geistlichen Priestertums, von diesem aber streng zu unterscheiden. Wer zum Amte ordiniert ist, ist kein Laie mehr. Nicht die Gemeinde beruft zum Amt—sie kann allenfalls Wünche äussern—sondern das Amt selbst*." Hebart, *Löhes Lehre*, 231. See Löhe, "Aphorismen," *Gesammelte Werke*, 5/1:262.

[46] The entire section is taken from Sasse's "Referat." The notes are not terribly clear here. Sasse appears to be asserting that a deficient view of the office in the founding of new congregations has rendered these churches more clubs or societies than real deliverers of the gospel gifts.

[47] Sasse, "Referat."

> themselves. But one knows something about a pastoral ministry instituted by the Lord of the Church, to which the care of other people's souls is entrusted. Human needs, experiences and qualities are not the reason the office exists, but rather the institution, the institution of the office by Christ. Wherever this is forgotten, where the inner legitimacy of the office is based on the qualities of the personality, the office is destroyed.[48]

The Office of Teacher in the Ancient Church (1933, 1946)

Sasse prepared his inaugural lecture for the occasion of his joining the theological faculty of Erlangen University in 1933. Because of his public criticism of the NSDAP (Nazi Party) in 1932, his move to Erlangen from Berlin was delayed, and he suffered consequences. "Erlangen called me to a chair for church history in 1933. Political difficulties arose. I had been the first to fight the program of the NSDAP. So I got only the salary of a country pastor, though I fulfilled the duties of a full professor with seminars."[49] His paper, "The Office of Teacher in the Ancient Church," was finally delivered May 11, 1946, and he was granted a full professorship and paid accordingly.

The offices of "apostles, prophets and teachers" are referenced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:28: "God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers."[50] The *Didache* was discovered in 1873, and since then its reference to these offices had been much debated. Sasse maintained that these three offices were not local but trans-local in the early church.[51] The apostles, in the strict sense of the word, died, and the office died with them. The office of prophet suffered shipwreck with the rise of the several ancient charismatic heresies (Montanism, etc.), "and their functions, too, passed over to the bishops."[52] The office of teacher was also essentially assumed by the office of bishop.

Sasse's paper is compelling and worth careful study, but we reference it only for the sake of its more or less incidental references to the Office of the Ministry.

> The congregation is able to call men into every other office [besides apostles, prophets, teachers]. She selects the presbyters. . . . She chooses the *prohistamenoi* [those who preside] from the rank of presbyters—the 'ruling' presbyters, with whom the care of the congregations lies. . . . The congregation

[48] Hermann Sasse, "*Die 'Krisis der Religion' und die Verkündigung der Kirche*," in *Kirchliches Jahrbuch* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1932), 24. Cf. Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, vol. 1: Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions: 1918–1934 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 122.

[49] Hermann Sasse to Tom Hardt, June 18, 1958, as cited in Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:197.

[50] All Scripture quotations are the author's translation.

[51] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:200.

[52] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:204.

> calls men into the college of ruling presbyters, or bishops, as they are called at the start of the Pauline mission. . . . Certainly the laying on of hands belongs to the installation into such offices which bestows the *Pneuma*, the Holy Spirit, and with him the gifts of the office [*Amtscharisma*]. But the initiative lay in the calling through men.[53]

"Two important ideas connected with the office of the ancient Christian teacher are explained by this connection: the ideas of tradition and succession."[54] Paul follows the rabbinic tradition. "I have first of all handed over to you [*paredoka*] what I also have received [*parelabon*], that Christ was put to death for our transgressions according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:1–3). "*Parelabon-paredoka:* these are the technical terms of the Oriental tradition."[55] For the modern West, truth stands at the end of the process of inquiry. "It is not the origin but the end of the inquiry."[56] The modern world rejects this principle of tradition, so it does not understand the New Testament. At the end of his life, Paul "urged his spiritual sons Timothy and Titus to truly hold fast the *paradoka*, the doctrine handed down"[57] (2 Thess 2:15). In the New Testament, the *paradosis*, the tradition of pure teaching, is handed down from "one generation to another, from teacher to student."[58]

> There is also the practice of handing over an office through the laying on of hands, as Paul did with his spiritual son, Timothy. He followed the way of the rabbis, who ordained their students through the laying on of hands. In the church of the New Testament, the laying on of hands is no empty gesture. Through it and in it the Holy Spirit comes with his gifts to the man. God can bestow upon the man in this way the charisma of teaching.[59]

But Sasse also asserts that there simply is no idea of a line of succession in the New Testament, such as is later found in 1 Clement.[60]

The congregation calls to the office. The laying on of hands imparts gifts for carrying out the office. The sacred duty of the office is to receive the tradition (the true apostolic teaching) and to pass on this received "tradition." There is no sacred succession, person to person, but only a succession of true teaching.

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[53] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:199.
[54] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:206.
[55] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:207.
[56] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:207.
[57] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:207.
[58] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:209.
[59] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:209.
[60] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:209.

The Lutheran Doctrine of the Office of the Ministry (1943–1944)

As we have seen above, Sasse took up the issue of the office particularly at times he defined as "crises"—in the wake of World War I, in the period of the nascent ecumenical movement and its challenges, in the practical work of social pastor in Berlin, and in the period during the rise of the Nazi Party. In the "horror of these apocalyptic times" of World War II, Sasse penned his most extensive treatment of the office to date.[61] This extreme crisis had elevated interest in the questions of the church and the Office of the Ministry, and so issues of church and office were of burning practical concern.

> And indeed we shall, in this hour, take up that part of ecclesiology which most directly concerns us servants of the church: the doctrine of the ecclesiastical office. For everything which we today can be, say, and do in the service of the church is completely dependent upon how we understand our office. My task is to speak on the *Lutheran* doctrine of the office of the ministry [*geistlichen Amt*].[62]

The bibliography of Sasse demonstrates a rising and persistent interest in the question of the Prussian Union and its far-reaching and detrimental consequences for the church. He was hoping that repeated missed opportunities to re-create a constitution for the churches in Germany would give way to a constitution which honored the Lutheran Confessions and their requirement for a Lutheran constitution for a Lutheran Church. This was certainly in his mind as he went about defining the Lutheran teaching on the office in the first section of his essay.

To understand the Lutheran doctrine, one must first realize its uniqueness in comparison to all other confessions. All others find in the New Testament an "*ordo quo Dominus ecclesiam suam gubernari voluit* [order by which God intended his church to be governed]" (Gallican Confession XXIX). "That is to say, all other confessions know of a constitution of the church established by Christ and commanded by God in the New Testament."[63] This the Lutheran Confessions reject. It is a confusion of law and gospel. It is to require—no matter what form of governance allegedly found in the New Testament—what God leaves free. The New Testament is concerned with good order, to be sure (1 Cor 14:33), and the church orders of the sixteenth century show how seriously the Lutherans took this matter. Attempts to find one mandated church order in the New Testament have simply amounted to "lifting one of its statements from among the various ones found there

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[61] Hermann Sasse, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Office of the Ministry" in *Lonely Way*, 2:117ff.

[62] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:120.

[63] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, *2:120.*

and then subordinating all others to it . . . . But they are all finally contrived."[64] The church is the new Israel, but Jesus is no new Moses. The various forms of church government are finally "human traditions or rites and ceremonies instituted by men" (AC VII 3). The forms of constitution (episcopal, consistorial, presbyterial, congregational) may be of the *bene esse* (well-being) of the church, not the *esse (being)*. And so FC Ep X 3 applies the following: "In God's Word they are neither commanded nor forbidden. They are rather established only for the sake of the wellbeing of the church and good order." Also FC Ep X 4: "The community of God at every place and every time . . . has the authority to change such ceremonies as may be most useful and edifying for the community of God."

In the second part of his essay, Sasse defines the office. AC V, Sasse asserts, speaks of the delivery of the divine gift of the gospel. AC XIV ("No one shall preach or teach unless rightly called") and AC XXVIII ("Power of Bishops") present the Lutheran teaching of the constitution of the church, which is counterpart to that of other churches' teaching on church order. "To obtain such faith, God has instituted the preaching office to give Gospel and Sacraments." "Such faith" is defined by the previous article, AC IV. Thus, the doctrine of the office and the gospel belong together, "that we may obtain such faith" (AC V). The Office of the Ministry is "inseparably connected to the doctrine of justification," and "God willed that justifying faith be awakened by the oral preaching of the Gospel."[65]

The task of the office is defined by AC V 1: it is "the ministry of teaching the Gospel." This is the proper task. The *officium alienum* (alien office) is the preaching of the law. "We bearers of the office of the ministry cannot take the preaching of the divine Law seriously enough in a time when people not only transgress this Law, but also despise, ridicule and trample it under foot."[66] The more seriously we take the law, the more we recognize it is not the highest thing commanded of us. "The Gospel is this and nothing else: that in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness of sins, in him alone and nowhere else in the world, but also truly in him. A sermon that does not say that, a sermon in which this real Gospel is not mentioned, would not be a Christian sermon."[67]

The office is also the "ministry of administering the sacraments [*ministerium porrigendi sacramenta*]" (AC V 1). "The two are inseparable."[68] In the period of Rationalism, when the gospel was no longer heard in the sermon, it was still heard in the words of institution, 'given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' Even

[64] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:122.
[65] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:124–125.
[66] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:125.
[67] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, *2:125.*
[68] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:126.

in the Canon of the Mass, it says, "God does not value merit but is an abundant giver of grace."[69]

Proclamation and sacraments belong together. Where the sacraments are denied or omitted, the proclamation of the gospel is turned into law. A mission that would preach the gospel and omit the sacraments "would never result in a church, but rather a most short-lived society for the cultivation of a Christian worldview. The proclamation of the Gospel would die away like a voice in the wind if those who came to faith were not baptized and the baptized did not celebrate the Lord's Supper. Why this is, we do not know. No sociology is able to explain it because the fellowship of the body of Christ, constituted by Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is beyond the understanding of sociology. We only know that this is the case and that the miracle of the church, which is inaccessible to reason, is bound up together with the miracles of Baptism and the Lord's Supper."[70]

There is only one *ministerium ecclesiasticum (ecclesial ministry).* The Apology notes that there are grades of the one office (*gradus in ecclesia*) (Ap XIV). "There are pastors, superintendents, bishop and archbishops," Sasse says, but they are by human right, not by divine right, "as is the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* itself."[71] Other offices may be established to unburden the pastor. Deacons may be established for the work of love, but they do not take part in church government proper in the sense of the Lutheran Confessions. Luther and our Confessions understand by church government "the exercise of the functions peculiar to the office of the ministry: 'an authority and command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to dispense and administer the Sacraments (AC XXVIII 5).'"[72]

As for the other administrative and governing functions of the church, church law "is no manifestation of the church of Christ."[73] These things much exist because the church is at the same time "an association of external things and rights" (Ap VII/VIII 5).[74]

In the third part of his essay, Sasse asks the question, Whence the office? How does it come about in this world? Luther had a two-sided battle. One was anti-Roman, the other anti-fanaticism. His fight against Rome was directed against the false notion of "priest." He did this especially in *To the Christian Nobility of the*

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[69] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:126.

[70] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:127.

[71] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:128. Cf. Tr 60–67.

[72] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:129.

[73] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, *2:129.*

[74] In Hermann Sasse, "Non-Obligatory Proposal toward the Spiritual Leadership of the Church," *Lonely Way*, 1:244, Sasse nuances this point: "All external matters of the church serve the proclamation of the Word." Original found in Hermann Sasse, "*Unverbindlicher Vorschlag zur Geistlichen Leitung der Kirche*," in *Lutherische Kirche* 17.3 (February 1, 1935): 39ff. Feuerhahn no. 35-01.

German Nation. (See above in Sasse's 1931 "Referat.") Here Sasse provides a quote from Luther from *The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests* (1533). The Holy Spirit has "in the New Testament diligently prevented the name *sacerdos*, priest or cleric, from being given even to an apostle or to several other offices. But it is solely the name of the baptized or of Christians as a hereditary name into which one is born through Baptism." For none of us is born an apostle, preacher, teacher, or pastor through Baptism, but we are all born simply as priests and clerics."[75]

On the other hand, Luther opposed the fanatics, including his former colleague Karlstadt, because they completely abolished the Office of the Ministry. The "sneak preachers" forced themselves into congregations without a call and presumed to preach the word of God. So Luther demanded "proof of call and command to preach, or immediately enjoin silence . . . for where the office is involved . . . one cannot hold an office without command or call."[76]

Sasse asks another question: "What is the call for Luther? How does the *vocatio* [call] happen?"[77] He answers that it is not "a bestowal of priestly ordination."[78] The call happens when a congregation (*Gemeinde*) of Christians, all priests by virtue of Baptism, call one to carry out in their midst what all in principle are "entitled" (*berichtigt*) to do. Sasse affirms Luther's view, noting how firmly he proceeded with this advice in *To the Christian Nobility* regarding whether a small group of Christians could in principle choose one among themselves to serve as pastor, compared to Thomas More's reticence on the same question. Sasse notes that "it will always remain the criterion for a concept of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and of the ministry, whether or not one agrees with Luther here that in the case of necessity the congregation can appoint its own office bearer."[79] Sasse knows of no Lutheran theologians, not even Vilmar, who have denied this possibility.[80]

Luther was no congregationalist, notes Sasse. The emergency examples Luther provides are indeed cases of the perceived action of a local congregation. But in the case of the advice to the Bohemians (*De instituendis*), Luther grants the right to the

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[75] Martin Luther, *Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe (1533)* WA 38:230.13–18; Martin Luther, *The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests* (1533): vol. 38, p. 188, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE.

[76] Luther, *Von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern (1532),* WA 30/3.520.36; *Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers* (1532), AE 40:386.

[77] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:132.

[78] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:132.

[79] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:133.

[80] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:133.

entire church of the country.[81] When Luther used the word *Gemeinde*, he by no means simply understands a local congregation. He uses such language for the entire church. It was the Enlightenment and Pietism that pressed the limited meaning, foreign to Luther. Luther sanctioned the royal rights of patronage and did not question the right of bishops or superintendents to ordain.

Luther, asserts Sasse, always maintained that the pastor, called by the local congregation, is at the same time the one who is present in an office established by God. The pastor speaks in the name of the congregation ("our name" in the Letter to the Bohemians),[82] and in the stead of Christ. "Thus the preaching of the pastor, insofar as it is the preaching of the pure Gospel, becomes the Word of God. And the forgiveness which he bestows on the penitent sinner in the absolution, is God's forgiveness."[83]

Sasse asks: Is Luther's view on how the office comes about the view of the Lutheran Confessions? He responds: "By and large it is, with one very characteristic exception. The Lutheran Confessions did not accept Luther's view that the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is the exercise [*Ausübung*] of the general priesthood."[84] Sasse grants that the general priesthood is the presupposition for the Office of the Ministry. According to 1 Timothy 2[85] and Treatise 67, the church has the right to "chose and ordain ministers."[86] But Sasse does not believe that Luther's exegesis of 1 Peter 2:9 ("That you should proclaim the virtues of the one who has called you")

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[81] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:134.

[82] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:135.

[83] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:135.

[84] "It is also certain that recognized Lutheran theologians have maintained that the holy office is not merely the spiritual priesthood in function but a unique vocation within the spiritual priesthood." Trans. from Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke* 2:199–202, in Matthew C. Harrison, *At Home in the House of My Fathers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 114. Löhe maintained that since in the controversy on the office, both sides referred to the Confessions, and "at least one passage is written in the Waltherian (individual Lutheran view)," but the Augsburg Confession presented a different view, that "the doctrine of the Symbols appears to me not to be finished" (115). This, in addition to a handful of issues, moved Löhe to a *quatenus* ("insofar as") subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. See Hebart, *Löhes Lehre*, 393. Löhe also limited the loosing key to the person in the office. The layperson (contra Luther) could comfort and console, but not absolve. Sasse certainly always maintained a *quia* ("because") subscription. See Hermann Sasse, "Quatenus or Quia," in *Lonely Way*, 1:455. I find no statement prior to 1943/1944 and recall no statement in Sasse which limits the ability of a layperson to speak forgiveness in the context of his various vocations.

[85] Sasse likely intended Titus 1:5 here, "appoint elders in every city."

[86] Tr 66–67: "Itaque cum episcopi ordinarii fiunt hostes evangelii aut nolunt impertire ordinationem, ecclesiae retinent ius suum. Nam ubique est ecclesia, ibi est jus administrandi evangelii. Quare necesse est ecclesiam retinere jus vocandi, eligendi et ordinandi ministros." *BSLK*, 491.

and 1 Corinthians 14:31 ("You can indeed all prophesy") proves that "the public proclamation of the gospel belongs to the general priesthood."[87]

Has Sasse sufficiently made the case that the confessions do not follow Luther on this point? The Treatise quotes 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a royal priesthood," as its authority and immediately states,

> These words pertain to the true church, which, since it alone has the priesthood, certainly has the right of choosing and ordaining ministers. The most common custom of the church testifies to this. For in times past the people chose [*eligebat/wählet*] pastors and bishops. Then came the bishop, either of that church or a neighboring one, who confirmed the one elected by the laying on of hands. Ordination was nothing other than such confirmation [*comprobatio/Bestätigung*]. (Tr 69–70)

The Treatise also references a passage about which Luther made much—namely, Matthew 18[88] (especially v. 17, "tell it to the church"; v. 18, "whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven . . . whatever you loose"; and v. 20, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them"). The Treatise states: "Where the true church is, there by necessity is the right of choosing and ordaining ministers: just as in a case of necessity a lay person absolves another, and becomes a minister and pastor of another. . . . Here pertain the words of Christ which testify that the keys of the church are given not only to certain persons: 'Wherever two or three are gathered in my name'" (Tr 67–68).

The Treatise certainly moderates Luther's bold language on the priesthood. But could not Lieberg's summary of Luther's position be said of the Treatise? "The particular office thus appears only as a usage of the power of the function of Word and Sacrament already possessed fundamentally in the universal priesthood."[89]

It is surprising that we have not observed Sasse quoting or explicating any of the traditional "mandate" passages for the Office of the Ministry (i.e., John 20; Matthew 16; Matthew 28) in the breadth of this brief study of his thoughts on the topic prior to 1943/1944. Here he mentions for the first time Matthew 28. "According to Matt 28:20, it [the office] continues until the end of time and is carried

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[87] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:135.

[88] Luther believes the words of Matthew 18:17–20 are addressed "to all absolutely and generally" (WA 12:184.3–4). "The keys belong to the whole church and to all its members by right as well as by use, and in every way" (WA 12:184.21). See Hellmut Lieberg, *Office and Ordination in Luther and Melanchthon* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2021), 35–40, for many such comments by Luther on 1 Pet 2:9 (WA 12:180.20ff.), 1 Corinthians 11:23 (WA 12.182.25) and Matthew 18:18 (WA 12:183.32ff.).

[89] Lieberg, *Office and Ordination,* 38. Lieberg provides this passage from Luther. "For to bear such fruits publicly or privately does not demonstrate different priesthoods, but different uses of the same priesthood" (WA 12:189.34ff.).

out by the bearers of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* as the successors of the apostles *and* the representatives of the entire church."[90]

Here is the key to understanding ordination, says Sasse. Public proclamation of the gospel, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments "is bound to the commission given at ordination."[91] Sharing the word with one's neighbor, instructing one's children in the faith, home devotion, and what Luther in the Smalcald Articles calls "the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren" (SA III IV) is not in view here. "According to Luther, an absolution can occur in the mutual consolation of the brethren (*mutua consolatio fratrum*), though this is normally left to the pastor."[92] "The *ministerium ecclesiasticum* always has to do with what happens and ought to happen publicly before the congregation."[93] Thus, it is here that AC XIV is applicable. "No one should publicly teach [German: "preach"] in the church, without a regular call." The *Variata*, notes Sasse, helps us understand what this means. It adds: "just as Paul instructs Titus to appoint presbyters in the cities."[94] Sasse concludes, "The call therefore normally happens through the bearers of the office authorized to extend it, self-evidently (according to ancient ecclesiastical law) with the agreement of the congregation."[95]

Sasse finishes by explaining that Luther's path was the "lonely way"[96] between Rome and fanaticism. The Spirit works through means, "the external word and Sacrament," as AC V confesses. Thus, the Office of the Ministry is necessary.

> That had to have appeared to the Spiritualism of that time, as also today, as a form of blasphemy against the Spirit. I say: Then, as today. For who are those "who think that the Holy Spirit comes to men without the external word" *[qui sentiunt Spiritum Sanctum contingere hominibus sine verbo externo]*? Is it not the mystic of every age? Is it not the bulk of modern theology from Pietism and Rationalism, through the *Herrnhuter [Moravians]* of a higher order, Schleiermacher, to the theology of liberalism and the History of Religions School? Does not all of modern Protestant theology of the Reformed churches really fall under this condemnation? In fact, here the spirits are distinguished. As Luther once went the lonely way between Rome and Spiritualism, so the Lutheran Church today stands alone between the world powers of Roman Catholicism on the one hand and modern Protestantism on the other. Her

[90] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:136.
[91] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:136.
[92] Unlike Löhe, Sasse takes no issue with Luther's affirmation that also laypersons may absolve in the context of their private vocations. *Lonely Way*, 2:136.
[93] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 3:136.
[94] Sasse references the Treatise, probably Tr 62. *Lonely Way*, 2:136.
[95] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:136.
[96] Sasse, *Lonely Way* 2:137.

> doctrine which teaches that the Spirit *is* bound to the means of grace is as inconceivable to modern people in the twentieth century as it was to their predecessors in the sixteenth. But we are convinced that behind this doctrine stands one of the most profound truths which has ever been expressed in Christian theology. Luther once formulated it in the Smalcald Articles in the following way:
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> "And in these matters which concern the external spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before. Thus we shall be protected from the Enthusiasts—that is, from the Spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word. . . .
>
> "In short, Enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendants from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism. Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and Sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and Sacrament is of the devil. (SA III VIII 3, 9–10)"[97]

Conclusion

Sasse set forth a great deal on the office up to the years 1943/1944. We summarize as briefly as possible. The office depends upon the christological substance of the faith (AC III) and delivers the gospel (AC IV) by word and sacrament (AC V). When the dogmatic substance of Christ is lost, the gospel is turned into something else, and sociological definitions of the church obtain. The office loses its proper tasks (*opus alienum [alien work]*: law; *opus proprium [proper work]*: gospel). Whether in German liberalism or the American Social Gospel Movement, the pastor becomes the "religious virtuoso," the great "leader," and not the deliverer of Christ. When the office is based on personality, the office is destroyed.

These convictions were clarified in Sasse's personal experiences in war, in the office, and in conversations in the Faith and Order Movement. The church is where Christ is. Christ is in word and sacrament (AC V). The office delivers this Christ in the same. The pastor speaks both in the name of the congregation (our name), and in the name of Christ. The alternatives look to sociology and end in one of many versions of churchless mysticism. AC XVI ("Two Realms") defines the office also by what it does *not* do (left-hand kingdom tasks). Attempts to Christianize the world

[97] Sasse, *Lonely Way*, 2:138.

only secularize the church. The question of the office is a dogmatic question, and the doctrine of ecclesiology is not complete without it. This dogma of the office is not complete in the Lutheran Church (Löhe), as the church at the time of the Augsburg Confession had not sufficiently "experienced" the dogma there confessed. The Lutheran contribution on this question may be its greatest contribution to the ecumenical understanding of the church in modern times.

The office is not derived from the priesthood but from the apostolate (Löhe). The office is superior to that of the New Testament prophets, to the horror of the fanatics. The office of teacher in the New Testament (1 Cor 12:27–29) is a trans-local office, like that of apostle, and not a reference to the Office of the Ministry proper. The apostles in the New Testament do not confer authority to the congregation, but rather "person to person" (Löhe). Sasse appears to rely less strictly on Löhe over time and does not follow the latter's *quatenus* subscription to the Symbols, particularly with respect to its statement in the Treatise on the office. Sasse grants Luther's view that a layman may grant absolution/forgiveness in "private," but this is normally left to the pastor. Both congregation and office belong together. The church comes into being via both. The congregation calls. The call comes through men. The laying on of hands bestows the "*Amtcharisma*."

The office is a divine institution. As according to Luther, the pastor's words of proclamation are God's words. The pastor's forgiveness is God's forgiveness. The task of the office is deeply connected with the New Testament *parelabon/paradoka* ("reception/tradition") teaching. The pastor receives the sacred New Testament teaching/tradition and hands it on, delivers it to the hearers. There is no line of succession in the New Testament. There is only a succession of true doctrine. To be Christian, the sermon must always include the gospel—that is, the sacrificial life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Preaching and the sacraments are inseparable. No sociology can explain why the church fails to come into existence where the sacraments are not celebrated.

Regarding the constitution of the church, the Lutherans know only AC V, XIV, and XXVIII. The constitution establishes and guarantees the ministry of the gospel. Pastors are bishops. Bishops are pastors. There is no one constitution (whether episcopal, synodical, presbyterial, congregational) that can be read into or out of the New Testament.

A study of Sasse's post–World War II writings—in the context of various crises affecting the office and Sasse's own vocations, and in his extensive efforts to bridge the Löhe and Walther traditions—will reveal much more. Particularly surprising in this study is Sasse's paucity of references to the traditional mandate passages from the Gospels for the Office of the Ministry. Further study of Sasse's views from 1945 to his death in 1976 is warranted.

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Confessional Loyalty or "I Let That Subscription Lapse"?

Scott R. Murray

What Is a Confession?

We must know what a confession is before we can speak of confessional loyalty. Theodore Schmauk and C. Theodore Benze, both of the General Council, offered this definition of confession: "Confessions are Scripture digested, assimilated, and beating the life pulses of the Church."[1] Confessions are simply saying back to God what he has first said to us on the lips of the prophets, apostles, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Confession is therefore doxological as well as theological. A confession is the reflex of the church demanded by the promise of our Lord, "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 10:32–33).[2] Ralph A. Bohlmann encouraged us, "Where God speaks, the only proper response of the church is to receive that Word, such reception being manifested in its 'Amen,' that is, its confession."[3] We can easily say that this act of confession is primal and primary. Confession is deeply rooted in the act of God by which he sent his Son to be incarnate of Mary and to pledge himself to our need by offering himself into death on the cross.

St. Paul says that Jesus is a confessor: "Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession" (1 Tim 6:13). Not only does Jesus confess, but St. Peter entwines our life with our Lord's:

> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example [ὑπογραμμὸν], so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled,

[1] Theodore Schmauk and C. Theodore Benze, *The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1911), 9.

[2] All Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[3] Ralph A. Bohlmann, "Foreword: Confessional Subscription" in *Essays for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 1:19–20.

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> he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. (1 Pet 2:21–25)

A ὑπογραμμόν is an outline or a *typus*, not merely a moral example, but a theological one, a patterned pathway. No wonder then that Peter encouraged a clear confession: "Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame" (1 Pet 3:15–16). Clear confession is integral to life in Christ. Indeed, confession becomes the gateway through which those who ask might learn of the gospel and receive the divine mission. Scripture certainly requires us to confess.

Our confessions are not different in kind from what any faithful preacher thinks of his own preaching and teaching, *Deus dicit* ("God says"). Only God's word is saving, thus we had better be preaching it. If we are incapable of saying "*Deus dicit*," then we are saying to our hearers "be damned," because we have not preached the saving word of God to them. This would be shepherding of the most horrifying sort! Schmauk and Benze write, "Confessions are the Scripture itself worked up . . . under the same guidance of the Holy Spirit that inheres in the office of the preacher in bearing witness to Christ in the pulpit—into Common Principles on which the Churches can rest, and in which the Church of the future can find anchorage."[4]

The great woe of St. Paul (1 Cor 9:16) would impend on those who thought they were preaching only their own religious opinions or only close approximations of what God has actually said in his word. Such a preacher would be denying his Lord and their Lord to those who hear him. For example, it is my habit to subscribe every sermon I preach to God's people. I will stand behind these words as correct expositions of the content of Scripture and in harmony with the analogy of the faith. I should not preach what I cannot subscribe. And contrariwise, I must preach what I have subscribed, namely, the Lutheran Confessions. Woe unto me if I divide between these things; as though the gospel could be proclaimed outside a sound pattern of words.

C. F. W. Walther defines the purposes of a confession in the following way:

> 1. That the church clearly and distinctly confesses its faith and teaching before the whole world.

[4] Schmauk and Benze, *The Confessional Principle*, 11–12.

> 2. That the church may thereby be distinguished from all heterodox communions and sects.
> 3. That the church may have a unanimous, definite, and common norm and form of teaching for its ministers out of which and according to which all other writings and teachings that are offered for test and adoption can and should be judged and regulated.[5]

Primary and Secondary Theology

Of course, we must keep the distinction between primary and secondary theology. All of God's word is primary theology. Therefore, what God has said becomes the norm over all theology. The psalmist has it right: "All mankind are liars" (Ps 116:11), and only God is always right and truthful in the first order. It is an *a priori* judgment to say that God's word is always right and truthful, that is, it is not susceptible to human objection or scrutiny, because that would place God under human judgment and entail a breach of the first commandment. You will recognize this as the Lutheran Church's Scripture principle. Bohlmann said,

> To deny or reject any part of the doctrine set forth in the Word places one outside of the stance of faith and puts one instead in the role of judge or arbiter. The question then becomes not: "How much must one accept [of the Confessions]?" but: "Does one deny any of the Lord's words, thus refusing to receive some of the gifts the Lord gives in and through His words?"[6]

The Scripture principle demands that the Scripture be understood as the *norma normans*, because there is nothing superior to it. Elegantly, Schmauk and Benze describe Scripture as the true foundation of the Confession, "The foundation of the Confession, that is, Scripture, determines every line and measurement and angle in the house."[7] It is truly the Rule (measurement) and Norm (standard). The Formula of Concord puts it this way,

> We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone, as it is written, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119[:105]), and Saint Paul: "If . . . an angel from heaven should proclaim to you something contrary, . . . let that one be accursed!" (Gal. 1[:8]).

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[5] C. F. W. Walther, "Confessional Subscription," in *Essays for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 1:24.

[6] Bohlmann, "Foreword," 1:19–20.

[7] Schmauk and Benze, *The Confessional Principle*, 13.

> Other writings of ancient or contemporary teachers, whatever their names may be, shall not be regarded as equal to Holy Scripture, but all of them together shall be subjected to it, and not be accepted in any other way, or with any further authority, than as witnesses of how and where the teaching of the prophets and apostles was preserved after the time of the apostles. (FC Ep Rule & Norm 1, 2)[8]

Scripture is and remains the norm and type for all teaching and practice in the church and the ultimate authority precisely because it is God's word.

Confessions, no matter their ancientness or resonance with us, remain second-order reflections on the content of God's word. They do not tell us what God's word means. The Confessions claim to be an exposition or a correct exhibition of Scripture. The Lutheran Confessions have what some might consider a naïve view: that Scripture speaks for itself and does not require wild exegetical gyrations through which the text can be tortured until it hands over its meaning only after the exercise of our exegetical prowess. Otherwise, the Bible could not be a saving text that the humble, meek, and untutored could study and apply to their own salvation (see FC Ep Rule & Norm 5). As the psalmist says, "The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple" (Ps 119:130). I wonder at the level of exegetical complexity being set forth by many exegetes. I am troubled by the amount of making simple things complex that is required by the academic enterprise, which is not always to the benefit of the church. In this sense, the content of both the Bible itself and our Lutheran Confessions is quite simple, granting light and understanding to the sinner (Ps 19:7).

The Lutheran Confessions claim a derived authority, an authority drawn from Scripture. This authority makes it a *norma normata*. This means that the Confessions bear the imprint of the scriptural truth. They are an antitype of Scripture. Scripture is the divine stamp. The Confessions are the coin pressed into the right shape when struck. The coin bears the marks of the original stamp. Robert Preus says that this means that "these symbolical writings become for me permanent confessions and patterns of doctrine."[9] This must be my confession held with my whole being.

The Lutheran Confessions are not merely a personal confession, although they are not less than that. They are and remain the confession of the church. This is true because the Confessions purport to convey the biblical truth. The church remains

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[8] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 486.

[9] Robert D. Preus, "Confessional Subscription," in *Evangelical Directions for the Lutheran Church*, ed. E. Kiehl and W. J. Werning (Chicago: Lutheran Congress, 1970), 46.

the church because God has spoken. She does not have an independent authority because she is the church. This would be the Romanist heresy. She is the repository of the truth because God has deposited the truth with her in his word which delivers the work of Christ. Therefore, there are no merely denominational or organizational guarantees to the truth. There is only the church under the word of God. The Confessions are above me as an individual. That's why Edmund Schlink says that the great consensus of which the Confessions so often speak "makes plain that the confession is not the doctrine of an individual but of the church."[10] The churches and her pastors and teachers place themselves under the uniting confession of the shared expression of the faith. Both corporately and individually we freely place ourselves under the authority of these texts because we must. We are freely compelled by the authority which they convey. Their truth obligates us to the "Amen" of agreement. Of course, we may also freely reject their content, but in so doing we are abandoning the simple scriptural truth.

This short exposition of the idea of confessional authority as a norm for our teaching and practice leads us to consider the issue of confessional subscription. Subscription is literally placing our signature on a document as a token of our agreement and desire to not depart from the doctrinal content modeled there. Until at least the mid-1980s, our pastors placed their written signature on the Lutheran Confessions at the first district convention subsequent to their ordination. What exactly does this subscription imply?

Confessional subscription continues to be an important topic in the LCMS. From time to time, we hear reports of our clergy scoffing at the Confessions to which they have pledged to be faithful (even to death). At the installation of a pastor, the phrase which I have used in my paper's title was overheard: "Confessional subscription? I let my subscription to that lapse many years ago." This cavalier and crass mockery of our Confessions demands that we ask the question, "What does it mean to be Lutheran?" Is this an outmoded and stale doctrinal formulation, which simply makes it impossible to carry out biblical mission and stultifies evangelical preaching?

What about Subscription?

Perhaps we should begin with what the Lutheran Confessions themselves say about subscription. It seems so obvious that it could hardly require much to be said about it. The well-known phrase which is packed into our confessions everywhere

[10] Edmund Schlink, *The Theology of the Lutheran Confessions,* trans. P. F. Koehneke and H. J. Bouman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 19.

can hardly be ignored: "*Ecclesiae magno consensu . . . docent*" (AC I). Or "We believe, teach, and confess . . ." (FC Ep I 1). We should never lose track of the fact that the confessors of Augsburg, every one of them a layman, were willing to lose their heads rather than depart from the content of the Augsburg Confession. The authors of the Confessions themselves pledged to confess with their whole heart (*toto pectore*) (FC SD Rule & Norm 4). They undertook to write down their church's faith in terms for which they were willing to stand before God under his divine judgment. For example,

> To demonstrate that this is our teaching, faith, and confession, as we want to account for it on the Last Day before the just Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ, and as we want to say or write nothing contrary, either in secret or publicly, but intend to remain in this teaching by the grace of God, we have upon careful consideration, in true fear of God and invoking him, subscribed with our own hands, done at Bergen, 29 May 1577. (FC Ep XII 31)[11]

These Confessions also stood as symbols of a much larger body of teaching which was implied by the confessors. For example, the Formula of Concord often points us to the writings of Martin Luther, especially on the Sacrament of the Altar. The conclusion to the Augsburg Confession indicates that Melanchthon thought its content to be only a short summary of what was believed and confessed by the Lutheran churches. "These are the chief articles that are regarded as controversial. For although many more abuses and errors could have been added, we listed only the principal ones in order to avoid prolixity and undue length. The others can easily be assessed in the light of these" (AC Conclusion 1).[12] "The others" here are primarily the faulty papistical practices, such as indulgence sales, the sacrifice of the Mass, and so on. Therefore, these Confessions claim to function as a standard or canon of public teaching and teachers as well as their practice in the church. "These writings, accepted officially and universally among us, have always been regarded in churches and schools that teach purely as the summary and model of the teaching that Martin Luther of blessed memory had thoroughly set forth in his writings, on the basis of God's Word, against the papacy and other sects" (FC SD Rule & Norm 9).[13] In the same way, the ecumenical creeds are short summaries that by necessity bring with them a more thorough confession. "Against [false teachers and heretics] the early church prepared *symbola*, that is, short, explicit confessions, which were regarded as the unanimous, universal, Christian creed and confession of the

[11] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 523.
[12] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 104.
[13] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 528.

orthodox and true church of Christ" (FC Ep Rule & Norm 3).[14] The Confessions consider themselves to be the pattern for the sound form of speech and writing. They are a *forma et typus*.

> This does not mean that other good, useful, pure books that interpret Holy Scripture, refute errors, and explain the articles of faith are to be rejected. Insofar as they are in accord with this model for teaching, they should be regarded and used as helpful interpretations and explanations. Speaking of this summary of our Christian teaching in this way only indicates that there is a unanimously and commonly held, reliable form for teaching to which all our churches commonly pledge themselves. The extent to which all other writings are to be approved and accepted shall be judged and evaluated on the basis of and according to this form, for it is taken from God's Word. (FC SD Rule & Norm 10)[15]

The unanimous agreement of the Lutheran Churches meant that these Confessions became a type to the antitype—that is, what was actually preached and taught in the Lutheran Churches was shaped and normed by these Confessions.

Inadequate Approaches to Confessional Subscription

The Old Bugaboo of Quatenus Subscription

The argument between a *quia* ("because") subscription and a *quatenus* ("insofar as") subscription to the Lutheran Confessions is old, but it must be mentioned because bad old ideas are hard to kill. Historically, even Zwinglians and enthusiasts were able to say that they would subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions, "provided they were permitted to interpret it according to the Scriptures."[16] Walther reports that even John Calvin wrote in 1539, "In truth I do not repudiate the Augsburg Confession, which I have gladly and willingly subscribed for some time as the author himself has interpreted it."[17] Of course, Calvin was counting on a weak Melanchthonian interpretation of AC X. This was not a *quatenus* subscription with Scripture as the standard, but a *quatenus* subscription with Melanchthon as the standard. This was a very low bar.

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[14] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 486.

[15] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 529.

[16] S. G. Wernsdorf, *Bericht von dem Indifferentismo der Religionen* (Wittenberg: S. G. Zimmermann, 1734), 860. Quoted in Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 22.

[17] *Epistolarum et Responsorum*, 2nd ed. (Lausanne: François Le Preux, 1576), 390. Quoted in Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 22.

John Conrad Dannhauer puts the last nail in the coffin of merely *quatenus* subscription:

> Although these symbols do not obligate anybody to adhere to all the circumstances, modes of expression, proofs, and citations in them, the doctrinal contents or the substance of the teaching must be adhered to as it is set down in writing, and not merely insofar as it may seem according to private judgment to agree with the Scriptures, for even the Quran could be subscribed in this way.[18]

Any *quatenus* subscription is no subscription whatsoever. The Lutheran Confessions claim to be an exposition of Scripture. Scripture is not an exposition of the Lutheran Confessions. Therefore, any *quatenus* subscription is a thoroughgoing rejection of the doctrinal content of the Confessions and a demotion of Holy Scripture to be an interpreter of something lesser, instead of as the doctrinal standard over all.

Picayunish Objections

Of course, picayunish objections abound among those who do not want to be bound by the actual doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions. They will bring up the fact that the Confessions say that garlic juice will mitigate the power of magnets (FC Ep I 15). This is beside the point. Our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions must ever remain faithfulness to its doctrinal content. How garlic juice affects magnets hardly rises to that level. Nor is it true that a false comparison makes the doctrinal point being illustrated false. Although, in this case, the Formula is using a false comparison to illustrate a false view of original sin.[19]

Exegetical Conclusions

Occasionally, people will object that they are not bound by the exegesis of the Confessions. This is true only in a very specific and limited way. First, we are bound to the exegetical conclusions of the Confessions, because that is the scriptural basis

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[18] John Conrad Dannhauer, *Lieber conscientiae Apertus*, 2nd ed. (Strasbourg, 1679), 1:258. Translation the author's. "Esto haec hujusmodi non obligent ad omnes in iis circumstancias, phrases, probationes, allegationes tenendas, ipsa tamen doctrinae substantia tenenda est, prout scripta, nec catenus tantum, quatenus sacris literis private judicio consonare videbitur; qua quidem ratione etiam Alcorano subscribi posset, cum reservatione, quatenus cum sacris literis concordat."

[19] "Or that original sin is not a deprivation or lack of spiritual powers but only an external obstacle for such good, spiritual powers, just as coating a magnet with garlic juice does not take away its natural powers but only impedes them" (FC SD I 22). Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 535.

for the doctrine delivered in the Confessions. Second, we are free to find other passages that equally well, or perhaps even better, support the doctrine which we are confessing. Robert Preus pointed out that "consensus on the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar is contingent upon agreement on the exegetical conclusions drawn from the words of institution (FC 8)."[20] To reject those conclusions would be tantamount to rejecting the doctrine of the real presence. Biblical exposition certainly buttresses every doctrinal conclusion drawn by the Lutheran Confessions. If you get rid of the biblical exposition, you will get rid of the doctrine. Generally, those who have these picayunish objections have that as their ultimate goal.

The Possibility of Doctrinal Error

If it is asked, "Could the Lutheran Confessions be in error?" the answer is, "Yes, of course!" However, this is not yet proof that they actually err. It is like saying, "Could the bridge to the airport collapse?" "Yes, of course." That does not mean that it has or will. It remains to be seen whether those who question the truthfulness of the Confessions have proven its doctrinal faults.

Furthermore, the Christian's willingness to confess the content of the Lutheran Symbols is an *a posteriori* judgment. It is done only after mature theological reflection. The candidate for the ministry is asked to confess the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions for themselves after proper study and reflection on its content. They are certainly welcome, and indeed encouraged, to decline to be ordained into a confessional Lutheran church body, if after study and reflection they cannot confess as true the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions.[21] And we might say that anyone who has misgivings about the Confessions after reflection and study after ordination is free to repudiate a confession that necessarily must be repudiated precisely because it is in error. No Christian will willingly confess and

[20] Preus, "Confessional Subscription," 48.

[21] Kurt Marquart asked rhetorically, "Are the Confessions themselves interested in 'subscription' formalities (such as the pro forma acceptance of the confessional paragraph of the church bodies Constitution, see Article II, *Handbook,* 11) or in the actual doctrinal content? Clearly the latter. The much-tortured seventh article of the Augsburg Confession insists that 'the Gospel be unanimously preached in its correct sense and that the Sacraments be administered according to the divine Word.' In other words, the Christian doctrine ('in all its articles,' SD 10.31) must be actually proclaimed, the Sacraments actually administered. The living dynamic Gospel cannot be imprisoned like a museum display in some 'constitutional paragraph' . . . Doctrinal substance is primary, all else is secondary and subsidiary." Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion*, Concordia Seminary Monograph Series 3 (Fort Wayne: CTS Press, 1977), 70–71. The doctrinal content of the Confessions must be taught in the church for the church to be rightly called a confessional Lutheran Church.

defend an error. A man of conscience, who resigned his post for this reason, would receive our praise and thanks for his clarity and honesty.

While we may squabble about the meaning of the Pauline dictum that our pastors should be "apt to teach" (see 1 Tim 3:2), it should mean at least that a person is capable of working his way through our Confessions and determining for himself that this is his own confession. Anyone unable to do this is certainly not apt to teach.

Postmodernistic

Postmodernism is quite hard not only on the truthfulness of the Scriptures, but also especially on the truthfulness of a confessional standard, like the Lutheran Confessions. Postmodernism presumes that truth is personal, that it cannot be carried by words and texts. There is no identifiable authorial intention.[22] Texts have no objective basis, but are radically your own.[23] You are free to make any construction from them you desire. The book will always agree with you, because you tell it what it means. The possibility that the book tells me what I should mean is out of bounds. Of course, this makes confessional subscription impossible, by definition, because you would be subscribing to your own opinion, regardless of the content of the confessions. I hope that this is not what young people steeped in the postmodern truth—that there is no truth—mean when they subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions.[24]

Historicistic

Confessional subscription is not a time-bound sixteenth-century doctrinal straitjacket that ought to be junked in favor of unbounded Christian freedom. The Formula of Concord, subscribed more than forty years after the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, pledged to a faithful confession of the Augsburg Confession not because it was written by our theologians. "We do so not because [the AC] was

[22] "The effort to read books as their writers intended *them* to be read has been made into a crime, ever since 'the intentional fallacy' was instituted." Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 375.

[23] "There is an enormous difference between saying, as teachers once did, 'You must learn to see the world as Homer or Shakespeare did,' and saying, as teachers now do, 'Homer and Shakespeare had some of the same concerns you do and can enrich your vision of the world.' In the former approach students are challenged to discover new experiences and reassess old; in the latter, they are free to use the books in any way they please. A teacher who treated the Bible naively, taking it at its word, or Word, would be accused of scientific incompetence and lack of sophistication." Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 374.

[24] The postmodern rejection of objective truth is based on an internal contradiction: "The only truth is that there is no truth," which is not true.

produced by our theologians but because it is taken from God's Word and is firmly and solidly grounded in it" (FC SD Rule & Norm 5).[25]

If it is asked whether the Confessions need to be interpreted in a historically responsible way, the answer is, "Yes, of course." It is certainly helpful to know what the historical context was for the Augsburg Confession, created as it was in view of the predecessor documents, including the *404 Theses* of John Eck, the *Schwabach* and *Torgau Articles*, and the succeeding papal *Confutation*. However, this historical inquiry must never lead to a rejection of the doctrinal content. The crassest form of the historicist interpretation of the Confessions is simply to argue that the Lutheran Confessions were meaningful in the sixteenth century but have ceased to be meaningful through the passage of time. They can only testify to a long obsolete or even dead confession of faith.[26]

Furthermore, the Confessions themselves expected their content to obligate Lutheran posterity. The confessors did not produce these statements only for their own day, as though they had no significance for the future. The last paragraph of the Formula of Concord says this passionately and elegantly,

> Therefore, it is our intent to give witness before God and all Christendom, among those who are alive today and those who will come after us, that the explanation here set forth regarding all the controversial articles of faith which we have addressed and explained—and no other explanation—is our teaching, faith, and confession. In it we shall appear before the judgment throne of Jesus Christ, by God's grace, with fearless hearts and thus give account of our faith, and we will neither secretly nor publicly speak or write anything contrary to it. Instead, on the strength of God's grace we intend to abide by this confession. Thus, after careful consideration and in the fear and invocation of God, we have subscribed our signatures to this document with our own hands. (FC SD XII 40)[27]

To reject the Lutheran Confessions or part of its doctrinal content because they were not written by us or in our time is to fall into the historicistic error, or what I call the chauvinism of modernity. Would not a confession written ten years ago be equally suspect because of the passing of time as a confession written nearly five centuries ago?

Perhaps the obsolescence of which some are afraid is not so much in the document, but in their own minds and hearts. The passing of time does not

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[25] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 527.

[26] A recent example of this can be found in Timothy Wengert's *A Formula for Parish Practice* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[27] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 660.

invalidate the truth, but rather the opposite. As we mature, our confessional heritage becomes more attractive. What we passed over as young pastors and teachers in the church only becomes more precious as time passes, because we have seen the wonderful faithfulness of God's word reflected in our real-world experiences of preaching the content of the Confessions. Hopefully, as we become history, our respect for it increases.

Partial Subscription

To subscribe only to some of the doctrinal content of a confession is a meaningless subscription, because the rationale for what is doctrinally significant or fundamental is itself a moving target and indeed subject to the whims of the human conscience and the breezes of the times. For example, in the nineteenth century the Lutheran General Synod (a predecessor of the ELCA) regarded even the means of grace as nonessential parts of the confession.[28] This is why Francis Pieper spent so much time on fundamental and secondary articles in his *Christian Dogmatics* of the early twentieth century. Walther rejected subscription to only part of the doctrinal content of the Confessions: "In a doctrinal declaration everything that belongs to the doctrinal content belongs to its essence."[29]

Walther warns us against the attempt to distinguish between fundamental and secondary articles in such a way that we need only confess some truncated list of so-called fundamental articles of the faith. It has been argued that so-called faithful Lutherans have disagreed about what doctrines the Confessions actually obligate us to confess. Walther says this is merely begging the question.

> For loyal and resolute Lutherans are simply those who believe what the Lutheran church believes in conformity with its confessions. The casting of doubt on certain points of doctrine in the Lutheran symbols by men who are alleged to be resolute Lutherans will not convert these points of doctrine into open questions; the casting of doubt on parts of the Lutheran confessions rather makes it manifest that those allegedly resolute Lutherans are not what they are believed to be. Whoever allows such doctrines to be treated as open questions by alleged Lutherans thereby does nothing less than surrender the citadel of our church's confession.[30]

Perhaps it might be said that the first proof of such surrendering of the citadel of the church's confession is the present ELCA. Once we are open to picking apart

[28] Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 25.
[29] Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 25.
[30] Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 26.

the substance of our faith one block at a time, quite quickly the whole structure becomes suspect.

Reductionistic Subscription

A number of theologians in the predecessor bodies of the ELCA, such as Carl Braaten, considered the Lutheran Confessions to be purely a witness to the gospel.[31] Robert Preus reported that "Braaten claims that we are free today to work out our own approach toward the confessions. He then polemicizes without abandon against any unconditional subscription to the confessions as such. This he calls 'symbolatry' (a term used by Loehe), 'doctrinal legalism,' 'confessional totalitarianism,' 'repristinationism,' 'a kind of doctrinal methodism.'"[32] This is gospel reductionism, in which the content of the Confessions is reduced to what might be considered the good news. However, the gospel here was often defined merely as that which gave comfort to the troubled conscience, without reference to the specificities of the Christian gospel in the acts of God in Christ, such as the incarnation, the two natures in Christ, or the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

This viewpoint does not comport in any way with the actual views held by those who set the Book of Concord out for publication in the Lutheran Churches. They committed themselves to the content as well as to the specific forms of speech delivered in them.

> In conclusion, . . . we are minded not to manufacture anything new through this work of concord nor to depart in either substance or expression to the smallest degree from the divine truth. . . . On the contrary, by the grace of the Holy Spirit we intend to persist and remain unanimously in this truth and to regulate all religious controversies and their explanations according to it. In

[31] Unfortunately, Leif Grane's wonderful commentary on the Augsburg Confession is affected by this gospel-reductionist thinking. When considering the meaning of the phrase *consentire de doctrina evangelii*, Grane presumes that the verb *consentire* means to proclaim or preach. "There can be no doubt that the phrase *consentire de doctrina evangelii* (to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel), refers to proclamation, not to 'correct doctrine,' or something similar. This means that the AC had not yet drawn the consequences from the church schism which were later drawn by Lutheran Orthodoxy, namely that pure doctrine in the sense of correct theology should be the criterion for the true church." Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, trans. J. H. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981), 96–97. The problem with this is that the Confessions do not employ the verb *consentire* to mean proclamation anywhere else; rather, they employ it with the meaning precisely eschewed by Grane. See for example, FC Ep X 2: *etiamsi adversarii nobiscum in doctrina consentire nolint* ("although the adversaries refused to agree with us on doctrine," translation the author's). This cannot refer merely to proclamation, but refers rather to a substantive difference in doctrine.

[32] Preus, "Confessional Subscription," 44.

> addition, we have determined and intend to live in genuine peace and unity. (Book of Concord Preface 23)[33]

Furthermore, when the Confessions are understood merely as *a* witness to the gospel (among others), it also implies that other (even contradictory) witnesses to the gospel are equally valid and equally true. This accommodated the ecumenical mania perpetrated in the late twentieth century and which culminated in the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.[34] Of course, this is an entirely inadequate approach to confessional subscription, because it fails to take seriously the self-claims of the Confessions. Their content makes claims over against other churches' claims to Christian truth; both dispositively and polemically and based on biblical data. That may not be easily dismissed.

Pragmatistic Subscription

Today, we hear that our Lutheran Confessions are no longer relevant to the American context. This is nothing new! Of course, this same view was held by the Schmuckerites of Definite Platform[35] fame in the nineteenth century along with mainstream American Lutheranism until the arrival of the Saxons and other Old Lutherans from Germany. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the predecessor bodies of the ELCA sought closer adherence to the Lutheran Confessions in response to the arrival of the Saxons. However, the view that the Lutheran Confessions are irrelevant in the American context has now triumphed completely in the ELCA. The adoption of the Leuenberg Agreement and the subsequent sharing of altar fellowship with Reformed communions[36]—by which the Lutheran Confessions' teaching of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper

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[33] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 15.

[34] See my "Introduction," *Logia* 18 (Holy Trinity 2009): 5, and the entire *Logia* issue which focuses on the JDDJ. Michael Root, "Ecumenical Winter? The Ecumenical Movement Has Stopped Moving," *First Things* (October 2018), accessed September 10, 2020, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/10/ecumenical-winter.

[35] See Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1966), 99–104.

[36] See William G. Rusch and Daniel F. Martensen, eds., *The Leuenberg Agreement and Lutheran-Reformed Relationships* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989). See also Keith F. Nickle and Timothy F. Lull, eds., *A Common Calling* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 65. "While the disagreements between our communities that led to the 16th-century condemnations regarding eucharist, christology, and predestination continue to shape and reflect our identities, they cannot claim to be church-dividing today and should not stand in the way of achieving 'full communion' among us. In addition, we affirm that the differences among these churches of the Reformation on questions of confessional commitment, ministry, and ecclesial polity fall within the bounds of allowable evangelical diversity and are therefore not church dividing."

is simply shunted aside—and the continued adoption of culturally normed sexual mores[37] all give glaring evidence of this irrelevance.

There is a move afoot to reject the Lutheran Confessions' doctrine of the ministry as a purely European phenomenon that doesn't work here in twenty-first-century America. We cannot consider our theologically sturdy way of training clergy to be faithful confessors to be some Europeanized pedagogical method.[38] We are somewhat removed from the European educational scene; not to mention the fact that both our seminaries have revised their curricula in the last twenty years. We may ask, what would be placed in the gap created by a rejection of the Confessions' doctrine of the ministry as a European construct? It would be replaced by an American-pragmatic doctrine of the ministry. It would not be a biblical doctrine. Junking our confessional doctrine of the ministry by labeling our theologically rigorous preparation of theological candidates would make us nothing but schismatics.[39]

Yes, of course, the Confessions' doctrine of the ministry doesn't appear to work. In the jaundiced view of some, it is keeping the church from growing. I submit that a standard that confessional statements are required to conform to external definitions of success is driven not by the Bible, but by the American philosophy of pragmatism championed by John Dewey and William James. In American pragmatism, truth is not a static set of statements but an ever-changing flow of ideas the value of which is only certain according to their outcomes. For James, "truth is the 'cash-value' of an idea." Most crassly stated, a thing is true only when it can be externally shown to be successful or able to make money.[40] This is a uniquely American philosophy in which every American is swimming, whether he knows it or not. Pragmatism asks, "Does it work?" As an example, Timothy Wengert can say

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[37] See "Exposing the ELCA," accessed December 9, 2020, https://www.exposingtheelca.com/.

[38] Michael W. Newman, "Next Steps for LCMS Multiplication: Two Actions to Reignite a Gospel Movement," *Lutheran Mission Matters* (November 2019): 274.

[39] Remarkably, the rejection of the Office of the Ministry is a heresy of the Schwenckfeldians, who believe "the church's ministry—the Word as it is proclaimed and heard—is not a means through which God the Holy Spirit teaches human beings the saving knowledge of Christ and effects conversion, repentance, faith, and new obedience in them" (FC SD XII 30). Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 659.

[40] "Instead of asking whence an idea is derived, or what are its premises, pragmatism examines its results; it 'shifts the emphasis and looks forward;' it is 'the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, "categories," suppose it necessities, and of looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts.'" William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longman's, 1907), 54. "Scholasticism asked What *is* the thing? — and lost itself in 'quiddities;' Darwinism asked, What is its origin? — And lost itself in nebulas; pragmatism asks, What are its consequences? — and turns the face of thought to action in the future." Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Company, 1938), 558.

about the Formula of Concord: "The bottom line of any doctrine is not its correctness but its effect, its results."[41] This is a false dichotomy at best. Certainly, good theology saves. But good theology is good because it is true, correct.

Pragmatism may not be permitted to overrule the truth of Scripture and our Confessions' witness to the truth. The American critic James G. Huneker called pragmatism "a philosophy of Philistines."[42] Will Durant, the historian, summarized beautifully: "James talks of God as of an article to be sold to a materialistically-minded consumer by every device of optimistic advertising; and he counsels us to believe as if he were recommending long-term investments, with high dividends, in which there was nothing to lose, and all the (other) world to win. It was young America's defensive reaction against European metaphysics and European science."[43] If this is what we mean by rejecting a "European view of the ministry," count me out. I will not agree that what works is right. Nor should any confessional Lutheran. This is a standard of Philistines.

Ironically, both Wilhelm Loehe and J. A. A. Grabau of the Buffalo Synod considered the doctrine of the ministry as taught by the Lutheran Confessions to be an open question, according to C.F.W. Walther. The articles concerning church and ministry are "points of doctrine on which neither the Word of God nor the confessions of our church have made a definite decision."[44] In other words, Grabau and Loehe argued as though the Lutheran Confessions did not have a settled view of the call and the ministry. Those who want doctrinal freedom from the Lutheran Confessions are always willing to assert that their pet doctrine is an open question. However, the irony deepens when it is recognized that Grabau brought a doctrine of the ministry to America by which he diminished the rights of the priesthood of all believers against which our Lutheran Confessions protest with great vigor.[45] Therefore, it is obvious that the slaying of the Lutheran Confessions' doctrine of the call and ministry does not necessarily get its assassins where they want to go. Perhaps they will just end up like Marcus Brutus and his co-conspirators: having a dead authority and not knowing what to do next. Wouldn't that be seven devils worse than the first?

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[41] Wengert, *A Formula for Parish Practice*, 194.

[42] "Philosophy of Philistines," in *The Pathos of Distance* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 347–357.

[43] Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 564.

[44] Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 23.

[45] See for example, C. F. W. Walther, *The Congregation's Right to Call Its Own Pastor*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publications, 1997), 149, in which Grabau denies that the keys are given principally and immediately to the church (cf. Tr 24), a significant attack on the rights of the baptized priesthood.

The Legalistic Objection

Some argue that it is a legalistic imposition to expect an unconditional subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. The Lutheran Confessions are from beginning to end shaped and ordered for the sake of the gospel. Luther in the Smalcald Articles calls the article of justification the *Hauptartikel* ("chief article"), to which all other teachings must be conformed (SA II 1). Think of the length of Article IV in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, in which Melanchthon painstakingly distinguishes the gospel from that which obscures the gospel and buries Christ. The authors of the Confessions loved the gospel and placed their lives on the line for its publication. Why? Robert Preus answered beautifully:

> Not only because their personal salvation is involved, but because of their evangelical concern for lost sinners and their spiritual welfare, because of their love and concern over tender and terrified consciences, their concern over confused Christians, yes, concern for the eternal salvation of these people. It is this cause and concern with which a Lutheran pastor identifies when he wholeheartedly and joyfully subscribes and commits himself to the Lutheran symbols. The doctrinal content of the Lutheran symbols which he subscribes is the gospel and all its articles.[46]

The preservation of pure doctrine is similar to the preservation of pure drinking water. Who would object to a pure clear fountain offering the water of life? Who would seek to drink water from a ditch made filthy by runoff? When confronted with an abundance of clean drinking water, who would drink from adulterated sources? Who indeed?

Because our Lord delights in our confession, we, too, seek to do this not because we must, but because it is a great joy to us and a glory to him.

Walther says:

> No Law is in any way imposed on the person who wishes to undertake a ministry in the church; he is only asked to make a confession of his faith in order that the church may know whether or not it can with a good conscience commit the ministry in its midst to him. If he has the faith of the church he does not regard this requirement as a legal burden. It cannot be anything but a heart's delight and joy to him to confess openly and solemnly with his lips the faith that he cherishes in his heart and to make the sacred promise to preach this faith and none other as long as he lives.[47]

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[46] Preus, "Confessional Subscription," 48.
[47] Walther, "Confessional Subscription," 26.

Those who object to confessional subscription as a legalistic imposition are ultimately objecting to the possibility of pure teaching and the rejection of the opposite. Great offense is taken when we condemn teachings that are contrary to the gospel in the Lutheran Confessions. Yet, Jesus and the apostles are quite happy to reject and condemn false teaching. Was St. Paul a legalist? "Was he not an obedient servant of Christ who loved his Lord, but he also emphasized the great importance of pure doctrine (2 Tim. 1:13–14 [cf. FC SD Rule and Norm,9]; 1 Tim. 4:16; Tit. 2:2). He did not hesitate to condemn false teachers (2 Tim. 1:[15]; Rom. 16:[17]; Gal. 1:8), even by name (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17)."[48] Paul was positively and wholly motivated by the gospel and was the most effective missionary who ever proclaimed Christ. He demands that we proclaim using a sound pattern of words (2 Tim 1:13). When we vindicate the Lutheran Confessions, we are vindicating the apostolic gospel given to us in God's word.

Conclusion

We subscribe unconditionally to the evangelical Lutheran Confessions because we are evangelical Lutherans in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The gospel is the white-hot center of the Confessions' content. To abandon them by some mealy-mouthed non-subscription will ultimately bring us to ruin because the gospel is in their every paragraph. To have our Confessions is to have the gospel. The requirement to confess the Lutheran Symbols is the law. But our Confessions may be precisely what we conceive of in the third use of the law, a law in service to the gospel; a requirement set upon preachers to vouchsafe the contents of the gospel to God's people. Let me conclude with a quote from Ralph Bohlmann:

> [Walther] viewed confession through the lens of the Gospel. Consequently, for him the Lord's Word comes first. The doctrine contained in the Scriptures is a gift from God to His church. It is a gift that bears and brings the forgiveness of sins and every good gift to God's people. The only appropriate response to this Word is the response of faith. Faith receives that Word, receives it in its entirety.[49]

A confessional Lutheran cannot help but speak a hearty "Amen" to this and then ask, "Where do I sign up?"

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[48] Preus, "Confessional Subscription," 49.
[49] Bohlmann, "Foreword," 19.

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Justification in the Theology of Robert D. Preus

David P. Scaer

When Robert D. Preus joined the ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in 1957 and J. A. O. "Jack" Preus in 1958, a new dimension was added to the synod that would change its course. They had come to the attention of the presidents of both LCMS seminaries, which were working towards accreditation. Robert had his PhD from the University of Edinburgh under the leading British neoorthodox scholar T. F. Torrance. Jack had a PhD in classics from the University of Minnesota. Calling Robert to St. Louis in 1957 and Jack to Springfield in 1958 were academic opportunities not to be missed. In two years, Robert was challenging a new theology, known as neoorthodoxy, that was infesting the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, which eventually led to a majority of its faculty walking out in February 1974.[1] Now in place were events that culminated in the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which included those who supported the St. Louis majority faculty. Arriving in Springfield in 1958, Jack became seminary president in 1962. In 1969, Jack was elected LCMS president.[2] After the St. Louis seminary walkout, Robert first became its academic dean, then its virtual interim president, and then president of Concordia Theological Seminary, then in Springfield, Illinois.

By the mid-twentieth century, when Robert and Jack joined the LCMS, the old liberalism in American mainline Protestantism had given way to neoorthodoxy, which, in spite, of its seductive name, was an umbrella term for a theology that held that the real word of God was a preached or spoken word and the Bible was the word of God in a secondary or derivative sense. Robert Preus referred to it as "crisis theology" in that preaching becomes the word of God in the moment of preaching. According to this theology, what the Bible says does not have to correspond to the events it reports. First to go was Jonah, then the virgin birth of Jesus, his resurrection, and his miracles, all of which can be preached without asserting that

[1] On these events, see The Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, *Exodus from Concordia: A Report on the 1974 Walkout* (St. Louis: Board of Control, 1977).

[2] For an overview of J. A. O. Preus's professional life, see Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "J. A. O. Preus: Theologian, Churchman, or Both?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 74 (January–April 2010): 57–72.

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they really happened. What mattered was the proclamation of the one doctrine of the gospel as shaped by its circumstances—of good news in a bad situation. In the LCMS, this came to be called "gospel reductionism" by its critics.

Both Jack and Robert Preus were committed to Article XI of the Formula of Concord as it was understood by their great-grandfather Herman Amberg Preus (1825–1894), who came to minister to immigrants in the Upper Midwest and establish the Norwegian Lutheran Church (NLC), of which he was the second president. A controversy arose when some of its pastors taught that God's wrath ceased only when a person believes, which for H. A. Preus was a denial of the universal atonement and objective justification, and was seen as a denial of Article XI of the Formula of Concord, which confesses that God elects sinners to salvation. Faith receives salvation but is not a cause of it. In the predestination controversy with the Ohio Synod, C. F. W. Walther and Francis Pieper rejected the teaching that God chose believers to salvation "in view of [their] faith,"[3] that is, that God predestined those who he knew would believe; he knew the outcome of the game before it started and placed his bets on the winner. In the 1912 Madison Agreement, the synods that would form the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (NELCA) in 1917[4] (later simply the ELC before its merger into the ELCA) allowed both views—that God chose the elect without condition (the position of FC XI, which was later called in the NELCA the "first form") and the opposing view, that God elected those who he knew would believe, *intuitu fidei* (which was called the "second form").[5]

Jack and Robert Preus were confirmed in an LCMS Chicago-area congregation and attended Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, founded by their great-grandfather Herman Amberg Preus, and then Luther Seminary, where their uncle, another Herman Amberg Preus (1896–1995), taught. This Herman Amberg Preus represented the "first form," and his faculty colleague and soon opponent George Aus advocated for the "second form." Seminary students took sides and disrupted chapel services with foot stamping.[6] Robert, then a student in his final seminary

[3] The Latin phrase *intuitu fidei* means "in view of faith." It indicates that God elects those people to salvation who he knows will believe, and so predestination becomes an effect of his omniscience.

[4] Known since 1946 as the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC).

[5] *Doctrinal Declarations: A Collection of Official Statements on the Doctrinal Position of Various Lutheran Bodies in America* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), 12.

[6] See Roy A. Harrisville, "Contested Election Memoir," *Lutheran Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2020): 346–349. Harrisville mistakenly says that Jack left first. Of the situation at Luther Seminary, David Preus writes, "Some [Luther] seminary students delighted in stirring up classroom controversy between Professor [H. A.] Preus and Professor George Aus, who equally defended the second

year, requested the synod council to censure Aus's position. It responded that Aus's position was acceptable, so with only months to ordination at age twenty-three, Robert left Luther Seminary for Bethany Lutheran Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota, for ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS).[7] His brother Jack, already a pastor, soon followed. Aus pointed out that the NELCA never accepted the Formula of Concord, in which the doctrine of election is found.[8] In "My Confession," addressed to the synod council, Robert gave reason for leaving:

> I have been taught that unregenerate man under the influence of the Holy Spirit has a free will either to accept or reject Christ. I have been told in class that faith is not a gift or work of the Holy Spirit in me, and the whole class has been challenged to find a single passage which teaches otherwise. . . . It also has been stubbornly maintained that unregenerate man is not spiritually dead, dead in sins, but is only asleep. . . . It has also been publicly stated to the whole senior class that this teaching—that man is responsible for the acceptance or rejection of grace—is the official position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church [ELC].[9]

For Robert Preus, this was heresy and opposing it would define how he understood justification. Fifty years later, in a eulogy for his uncle, the second Herman Amberg Preus, Robert called Aus a "subtle synergist" who "taught emphatically that conversion is not exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. . . . [Aus] did not hesitate to say in class that 'man converts himself.'"[10] Preus notes that the 1969 LCMS declaration of fellowship with the American Lutheran Church (ALC) did not resolve this issue.[11]

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predestination for [God] elected those who he knew would believe." David W. Preus, *Two Trajectories: J. A. O. Preus and David Preus* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2015), 15.

[7] A brief summary of the controversy is provided by Mark Granquist, *A History of Luther Seminary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 109–110. Robert's letter of departure, "My Confession," was published in Klemet I. Preus, ed., *Doctrine Is Life: The Essays of Robert D. Preus on Justification and the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 193–194.

[8] Robert D. Preus, "Dr. Herman A. Preus: In Memoriam," *Logia* 4, no. 4 (October 1995): 55. Robert Preus called Aus's view on predestination a heresy (R. D. Preus, "My Confession," 194). On April 8, 1948, a committee appointed by NELCA president J. A. Aasgaard to resolve differences between Herman Preus and George Aus concluded that there was no essential difference on the doctrine of election between their positions (Granquist, *A History of Luther Seminary*, 125 n. 15). While Granquist notes that Robert and Jack left the NELCA, he makes no mention of the effect this would have for Lutheranism in America. H. A. Preus continued to teach at Luther Seminary until 1967 and Aus until 1973 (Granquist, *A History of Luther Seminary*, 110).

[9] R. D. Preus, "My Confession," 193–194.

[10] R. D. Preus, "Dr. Herman A. Preus," 55.

[11] Robert D. Preus, "Fellowship Reconsidered: An Assessment between the LCMS and the ALC in the Light of Past, Present and Future," in *Preus on Justification*, 311–335.

For Robert Preus, making justification dependent on faith was similar to what was called the "second form," that predestination was dependent on faith, that is, that God elected to salvation those he knew would believe. This would be at odds with the LCMS's historic position on justification.[12] Justification for Robert Preus was always *propter Christum per fidem* ("because of Christ, through faith") never *propter fidem* nor even *post fidem* ("after faith"). For Preus, "Christ's righteousness, the *justitia aliena* ["alien righteousness"] . . . [is] *extra nos* ["outside of us"] in every sense."[13]

Robert Preus saw seventeenth-century Lutheran Orthodox theology almost as his own. In "the period of orthodoxy . . . (ca. 1580–1715) no other doctrine was given such thorough treatment as the locus on justification," to which he adds that faith has no value in itself but "justifies only by virtue of its object."[14] Robert was not a repristination theologian and at times could be critical of Luther and the Lutheran Orthodox theologians. For example, Johann Wilhelm Baier—with good intentions but disastrous results—spoke of faith as a cause of salvation.[15] Preus wrote, "It is difficult to understand how one can make faith a condition of justification (in the causal sense), without teaching justification is *propter fidem* or at least *post fidem*."[16] God does not reward the believer because of his faith or after he comes to faith. *Propter* belongs with *Christum*, "on account of Christ," and not *fidem*, "on account of faith." Emphasizing that faith can never be a cause of salvation, *propter fidem*, it also cannot be *post fidem*, as if believers are rewarded with salvation.

If it were not for a tribute by the late Kurt Marquart to Preus entitled "The 'Realist Principle' of Theology,"[17] this aspect of Preus's theology may have continued unnoticed. "Realist Principle" means that the theological and historical words of the Bible correspond to objective truth. Its alternative is an idealism that holds that truth consists in ideas and not in things, a kind of Platonism that reappeared in the

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[12] Robert D. Preus, "Objective Justification," in *Preus on Justification*, 147–153. In more recent times, a variant of the second form of predestination is offered by James Nestingen, who holds that faith completes the atonement and so becomes a determinative factor for salvation. "He [Christ] enters the conscience through the absolution, through the proclaimed Word and administered Sacrament to effect the forgiveness of sins. This is the true substitutionary atonement, happening here and now." James Arne Nestingen, "Speaking of the End to the Law," in *The Necessary Distinction: A Continuing Conversation on Law & Gospel*, ed. Albert B. Collver III, James Arne Nestingen, and John T. Pless (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 174.

[13] Robert D. Preus, "Perennial Problems in the Doctrine of Justification," in *Preus on Justification*, 98.

[14] Robert D. Preus, "The Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Classical Lutheran Orthodoxy," in *Preus on Justification*, 79, 93.

[15] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 114.

[16] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 116.

[17] Kurt Marquart, "The 'Realist Principle' of Theology," in *Preus on Justification*, 367–373.

philosophies of Berkeley, Kant, and Hegel.[18] To Preus's list might be added the linguistic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Austin in which truth rests in language not in things or persons, a view incorporated into the theology of promise.

Marquart came across the "realist principle" in an essay by Preus, delivered in 1973 shortly before a majority of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, were removed from their positions in February 1974. Of the six theses, the fourth is "Luther's Realist Principle"[19] that "Our justification before God is a real verdict, not a myth (Apol. IV). The virgin birth, the suffering and death, the miracles, the resurrection of Christ are historical, having real references in fact."[20] Preus distinguishes doctrines or theology from historical facts, but historical facts such as the events in Christ's life are just as true as abstract doctrines such as election, sacraments, and justification.[21]

Already in 1962 before the tumultuous events at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1974, Preus had written that there are no "cases in which statements of Scripture do not seem to correspond to the apparent data in the external world (astronomy, geography, topography, etc.)."[22] What the Bible reports corresponds to actual historical events, things that really happened. Preus had in mind his St. Louis seminary colleagues who interpreted the historical elements of the gospels as myths, as did Rudolf Bultmann, or held to the neoorthodoxy of Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, which ignored the gospel's historical elements. For them, the Bible is not the word of God but becomes the word of God,[23] a view which he opposed in the theology of Gerhard Forde, then a new professor at Luther Seminary.[24] Son Klemet

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[18] In his 1973 Bethany Lectures, Preus identifies Strauss, Troeltsch, Ritschl, Harnack, Classical Liberalism, and Idealism as departures from historical Christianity. To these he adds Kierkegaard, Tillich, Bultmann, Käsemann, the post-Bultmannians, E. Brunner, and K. Barth. Robert D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret and Use the Old and New Testaments?" in *Doctrine Is Life: The Essays of Robert Preus on Scripture* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 179–214, here at 213.

[19] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 200–202.

[20] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 201.

[21] Marquart based his chapter "The 'Realist Principle' of Theology" (*Preus on Justification*, 367) on Robert Preus's "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret" (above, n. 18).

[22] Robert D. Preus, "The Word of God in the Theology of Lutheran Orthodoxy," in *Preus on Scripture*, 79–97, here at 91.

[23] Robert D. Preus, "The Word of God in the Theology of Karl Barth," in *Preus on Scripture*, 39–52, here at 50. This was the first of three essays appearing in *Concordia Theological Monthly* in February, March, and April 1960, all of which are included in *Preus on Scripture.*

[24] On Forde, see below, p. 51. A thorough presentation of this view that the Scriptures are inspiring and not inspired was set forth in some detail by Paul J. Achtemeier, *Inspiration and Authority: Nature and Function of Christian Scripture*, rev. ed. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1999). For example, "The reliability of Scripture is to be found in the reality to

explains, "His [father's] 'realist principle,'" which he attributed to Luther, "is nothing more than the fact that theological assertions correspond to reality outside of themselves."[25] "[For] when a biblical section in its intended sense has a referent, it is a real referent, whether the referent is a historical occurrence (Christ's resurrection), a state of being (the personal union), an act of God in history (personal justification through faith in Christ) or whatever."[26] Biblical words correspond to events that really happened, like the resurrection, and to what really exists, like the Trinity. Reality does not consist in the words but in what the words report. Preus called this "exegetical realism," that the "God who has caused all Scripture to be recorded is indeed a living God who invades history, authors it, and reveals himself historically."[27] Preus expands on his view that history is the locale of revelation in a response to Thestrup Pedersen, who said that "Luther engages in Christological exegesis . . . not with the eyes of a historian but with the eyes of a theologian."[28] In this view, what the Bible said about Christ could be theologically true but not historically true. For Pedersen, history had an objectivity that theology did not have. To this, Preus responds that the article on original sin in the Formula of Concord is "nothing more than a commentary on the history of Genesis 3." History was as important for Luther as it was to Preus, that he could say that biblical "history gives rise to doctrine"[29] and adds that "Luther would not distinguish between the eyes of a historian and the eyes of a theologian—as though they could come to different conclusions."[30] Preus sums up his argument, "The doctrines revealed in Scripture and the acts of God recounted there have a real basis, a real referent, or there would be no theology at all to Luther. This is a hermeneutical principle to Luther."[31] Doctrines are drawn out of historical events. Klemet Preus comments on his father's position, "Justification had to be a real verdict based on a

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which it points, rather than the form in which it is given" (142). The authority of the Bible is seen in what it does and not what it is. Compare Oswald Bayer: "[Scripture's] *authority consists in that it works faith*. The Lutheran tradition has articulated this in such a way that its *auctoritas normativa* follows from its *auctoritas causativa*—because of the authority it has to create faith." Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 77. The chapter in which this appears is entitled "*What Makes the Bible Become Holy Scripture*" (68–92, italics original).

[25] K. I. Preus, "Introduction," in *Preus on Justification*, 22.

[26] Quoted in Klemet I. Preus, "Introduction," 23. Klemet elaborated on his father's "Realist Principle of Theology" in a section of his introduction called "Correspondence" in *Preus on Justification*, 21–28.

[27] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 201.

[28] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 200.

[29] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 201.

[30] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 201.

[31] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 200.

real atonement that occurred through real historical events or the Christian could have no certainty of the grace of God."[32] The dogmatic bias of the apostles does not compromise the historical authenticity of their witness. Tellingly, he adds that anyone who experienced the resurrection would have a bias.[33]

Having attended Luther College and then Luther Seminary, Robert and Jack knew many of the theologians in the ALC in which the ELC was its majority component.[34] Succeeding Kent Knutson as ALC president was David Preus, who never understood why cousins Jack and Robert could be so upset with two Latin words, *intuitu fidei*.[35] In 1968, the year before the same convention in which the LCMS would first elect Jack president and declare fellowship with the ALC, Robert delivered an essay entitled "To Join or Not to Join." Here he noted that biblical inerrancy was being denied at his alma mater Luther College, and this was not "cut off from the main stream of theological development in the [American Lutheran] Church."[36] He continues, "At Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, the largest seminary of the American Lutheran Church and the second largest seminary in our country, the same denial of the truthfulness and infallibility of Scripture is explicit and denied."[37] He references Warren Quanbeck, an advisor to the ALC president, who said that "the doctrine that 'The Holy Spirit was the real author of Scripture' and that therefore 'every proposition in it was guaranteed infallible and inerrant' has been crushed by the blows struck by studies in historical and scientific matters."[38]

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[32] K. I. Preus, "Introduction," 25.

[33] Robert D. Preus, "Biblical Hermeneutics and the Lutheran Church Today," 131–178, here at 159: "Of course [the apostles] have a dogmatic bias. Who would not had seen the risen Christ? Of course they were believing Christians and not merely objective historians. But faith and history do not oppose each other. How can one report a historical event if he does not believe it? And profound interpretation does not vitiate or cast doubt upon the reality and historicity of the event interpreted. A religious aim may well influence the presentation of fact, but this does not change the facts themselves. There is nothing wrong with the facts being explained by one who has experienced them and been affected by them."

[34] Preus gives a historical overview of how Lutheran synods would eventually merge into the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in "To Join or Not to Join," in *Preus on Justification*, 275–310. This was followed by another essay, "Fellowship Reconsidered," 311–335.

[35] See David W. Preus, *Pastor and President: Reflections of a Lutheran Churchman* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2011). On the relationship and theological emphases of David and J. A. O. Preus, see D. W. Preus, *Two Trajectories*. For more background on the *intuitu fidei* controversy, see David P. Scaer, *Surviving the Storms: Memoirs of David P. Scaer* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: Luther Academy, 2018), 251–258.

[36] R. D. Preus, "To Join or Not to Join," 298–299.

[37] R. D. Preus, "To Join or Not to Join," 299–301.

[38] R. D. Preus, "To Join or Not to Join," 299–301. Fredrik A. Schiotz, president of the American Lutheran Church, had outlined his church body's stance with respect to the Scriptures in his *The Church's Confessional Stand Relative to the Scriptures: An Address* (Minneapolis: Office of Public Relations of The American Lutheran Church, 1966).

Then Preus zeroes in on Gerhard Forde, who he says is even more explicit in his rejection of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Forde says the Bible is inspired only by reason of its content; and so our preaching would be inspired for the same reason.[39] In this view, biblical authority rests in its proximity to the events it reports and not in its inspired character,[40] a view proposed long before by Schleiermacher.[41]

Forde's denial of the Bible as the inspired word of God was bad enough for Preus, but Preus also took Forde to task for being downright wrong in saying the divine origin of the Scriptures was an unproven presupposition for the earliest church fathers and for Lutheran Orthodox theologians when they did theology. For his position, Preus says, Forde "does not have a shred of evidence." He elaborates that Forde is "another young ALC theologian" who made an unfounded charge that any "orthodox Lutheran theologian ever treated Scriptures in such a cavalier fashion" as to assume the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible without proof.[42] Preus is emphatic: "Christians did not invent the theory of inspiration to support Christianity, as Forde implies. Rather all have arrived at the doctrine of inspiration in the same way as they arrive at every other article of faith, by drawing it from Scripture itself."[43]

Forde's claim that biblical inspiration was an unproven assumption was historically false and parallels his theory that the Bible's inspiration consisted in its ability to create faith. Preus's dog in the fight was his published PhD dissertation *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians*.[44] Forde's functional view that the Bible is inspired insofar as it inspires faith had already been proposed by neoorthodox theologians as an alternative to the classical view that the Bible is the inspired word of God.

Preus saw a connection between the denial of verbal inspiration and the synergistic view of faith that he encountered in his student days at Luther Seminary.

> One cannot fail to see the parallel between this synergistic theory of the origin of the Bible and the synergistic doctrine of conversion that prevailed at

[39] R. D. Preus, "Biblical Hermeneutics and the Lutheran Church Today," 172.

[40] R. D. Preus, "To Join or Not to Join," 301.

[41] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. and trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, 2 vols. (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1956), 1:594–596.

[42] R. D. Preus, "Biblical Hermeneutics and the Lutheran Church Today," 155–179, here at 171. Like others, Forde came under the spell of Karl Barth's neoorthodoxy (172–173), but the view that the efficacy of the Bible is derived from the proximity of the writers to Jesus had already been proposed by Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 1:591–594.

[43] R. D. Preus, "Biblical Hermeneutics and the Lutheran Church Today," 174.

[44] Robert D. Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians* (Edinburgh, UK: Oliver and Boyd, 1955).

> [Luther] Seminary. As faith has its origin in the cooperation of the human will with the Holy Spirit working through the gospel, so the Scriptures are the result of a collaboration of the will of the human authors and the Spirit of God. One who believes that faith and justification are entirely a gift of God's grace easily perceives the fundamental error underlying the historical-critical method.[45]

In his essay "Perennial Problems in the Doctrine of Justification," Preus lists five ways in which the doctrine of justification is threatened, of which, "The second assault against the article of justification by faith is to separate God's act of justifying the sinner through faith from its basis in Christ's atonement."[46] In a previous essay, "The Unity of Scripture," Preus wrote that "without reference to [Christ's] work of atonement . . . the very term Christocentricity of the Scriptures is a piece of deceptive theological blather."[47] "The danger and the tragedy of making faith a condition for justification is that one begins to look for assurance of salvation and grace, not in the objective atonement and righteousness of Christ, but in the quality or strength of one's faith, as if justifying faith is something other than pure trust and receptivity."[48] "There can be no imputation of Christ's righteousness with which I can stand before God, if Christ did not by His atonement acquire such righteousness."[49] In his last book, *Justification and Rome*, he points out that the nominalists and Socinians (forerunners of the Unitarians) "taught an 'absolute grace,' a free and absolute imputation which did not require the intervention of Christ to atone for the sins of the world."[50] He cites Luther, that the forgiveness of sins merely by imputation without atonement is a "miserable and shocking opinion and error," that if this were true, "the entire New Testament would be nothing and useless."[51] The view that justification was based on "a forensic act . . . dependent on His will rather than the atonement and righteousness of Christ" had been proposed by Peter Abelard, who denied the vicarious atonement.[52] For Preus, "The *propter Christum* is exclusive in that it is the *only* basis for God's verdict of justification."[53] For Preus, the atonement was the foundation for justification, just as it was for Francis Pieper: "We do not believe in Christ to our justification and salvation unless

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[45] R. D. Preus, "Dr. Herman A. Preus," 55 (as above, n. 8).

[46] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 100.

[47] Robert D. Preus, "The Unity of Scripture," in *Preus on Scripture*, 251.

[48] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 116.

[49] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 100–101.

[50] Robert D. Preus, *Justification and Rome* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 74.

[51] R. D. Preus, *Justification and Rome*, 132 n. 79.

[52] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 101. This has been put forth by Forde and his students Steven Paulson and James Nestingen (see above, n. 12), that justification is imputed through preaching without substitutionary atonement.

[53] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 106 (italics original).

we believe in Him as the One who was crucified for the expiation of our sins (1 Corinthians 2:2) . . . and in our stead fulfilled the Law (Galatians 4:4–5), shed his precious blood (1 Peter 1:18), gave His life into death (Matthew 10:28; Romans 5:10)." Preus saw the atonement as Christ placing himself under the law.[54]

"The fifth assault against the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith is to make faith a condition for justification."[55] Preus explains, "This tendency to make justification dependent upon faith has a long and sorry history in the Lutheran church, which in its Confessions hints at no such thing."[56] Here Preus probably had in mind George Aus or anyone else who made justification dependent on faith. Justification for Preus, as it is for Pieper, is always *propter Christum per fidem*, that is, we are justified, forgiven, found acceptable to God on account of Christ through faith and never *propter fidem*, "on account of faith." When faith is inserted into the proclamation, human beings take the place of God as the ultimate cause of their salvation.

> Crassly, of course, historic Roman and Arminian theology made faith a work and virtue of man a condition for fellowship with God and for salvation. But in a more subtle form the tendency to condition justification on faith is found in every form of synergism and pietism and religious emotionalism in ideologies which stress inwardness and subjectivity, in Christian Existentialism and Crisis Theology (Emil Brunner), all protestations of adherence to the *sola gratia* notwithstanding. We find the tendency where there is a preoccupation with faith as such or an inordinate interest in the phenomenology of faith rather than in the object of faith, Christ and His atoning work, and in the Gospel. For my faith is not the Gospel or the content of the Gospel, but rather embraces and applies the Gospel. Faith is never directed toward itself.[57]

To accentuate the point, justification for Preus is *extra et ante fidem*, and its reality does not reside in what he calls "any 'communication.'"[58] For Robert Preus, the Christian life was more than justification, *simul iustus et peccator*, as if only the final moment in a believer's life was important. In referencing Jesper Rasmussen Brochmand's commentary on James, Preus says, "He who says he believes in Christ who died is a liar, if by the power of Christ's death he does not daily die to sin; and

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[54] Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* 2:426. See also Robert D. Preus, "The Vicarious Atonement in John Quenstedt," in *Preus on Justification*, 57–58. "On the part of God there are two purposes for the vicarious atonement. First, His divine justice must be satisfied, for God is not willing to remit sins without satisfaction being made" (73).

[55] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 113.

[56] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," *114.*

[57] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 114.

[58] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 113.

he who claims to believe in the risen Christ deceives himself, if he does not by the power of the risen Christ advance daily in newness of life."[59]

Lutherans are widely agreed that justification is the chief article, but they are not agreed on its definition, a problem that surfaced at the Lutheran World Federation in Helsinki in 1963 where, Preus notes, it was seen in monolithic terms and since then it has been seen as the only articles necessary for church fellowship. Preus follows Lutheran Orthodoxy in affirming that justification is *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* ("article on which the church stands and falls"), a phrase still not located in Luther but which typifies his theology. He refers to Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article I: "What is beyond dispute is that 'The first and chief article [*Hauptartikel*] is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25).'"[60] Preus notes, "Indeed, [the Lutheran dogmaticians] never 'considered the doctrine of justification by faith' a fundamental article of the faith." For them, justification "means the centrality of the Gospel, the centrality of Christ crucified in the theology and the proclamation of the church."[61] Justification describes the effect, what preaching accomplishes, and not its content.[62] As for its content and basis:

> According to this classic Christian model, God is real, creator and sustainer of all that exists . . . the Son of God really became incarnate; He really suffered and died and rose again; the atonement is real; heaven is real; hell is real; forgiveness and justification are real, not just metaphors for something else. Unless all this is included in our theological *Vorbild*, there is nothing left of our Christianity and our Gospel, except words, empty words, impotent words, words without referents and without meaning, like tinsel on a discarded Christmas tree, or bridgework on a corpse.[63]

For Preus, justification is central, but it is not the only doctrine.[64]

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[59] R. D. Preus, "The Doctrine of Justification," 95.

[60] R. D. Preus, "How Is the Lutheran Church to Interpret," 195.

[61] R. D. Preus, "The Doctrine of Justification," 83.

[62] Robert D. Preus, "Luther and the Doctrine of Justification," in *Preus on Justification*, 127. "The doctrine of justification is a fundamental principle for the Christian in applying and integrating Law and Gospel and the entire Christian doctrine."

[63] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 113.

[64] Justification can become so central that it soon becomes the only doctrine or at least the only doctrine that matters. Consider what Suzanne Hequet says about a meeting in 2002 between ELCA Lutherans and Catholics held in the aftermath of the 1999 *Joint Declaration of Justification.* "[Steven] Paulson asserted that if both parties were truly in agreement on justification, then 'Let's do church now,' meaning that Paulson, as an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was willing to give and receive communion with the Cardinal [Avery Dulles] then and there. . . . For Paulson, however, justification as articulated in the *Augsburg Confession* was the sole

For Preus, the doctrine of justification "presents God's revealed answer to all major problems of sinful man," and then he proceeds to list them: "Does God exist? What is He like? Does He love me? What must I do to be saved? Can sinful man ever stand before a holy and righteous God?"[65] Oswald Bayer also sees justification as fundamental in the sense that each person is working to justify himself: "We cannot reject the question that others put to us. Why have you done this?"[66]

Whereas Preus sees justification as how God accepts the individual, Bayer here sees it as the way others accept him. Yet Bayer's definition can be of value in assessing Preus's life. Was what Preus did worth it in the eyes of others? Those seminary regents and those who conspired and succeeded in depriving him of his ministry said it wasn't. "One of his friends urged him to bear the cross quietly and accept the decision of the Board of Regents without demur."[67]

For his refusal to take this option, we need look no further than the title of the two-volume collection of his essays, *Doctrine Is Life*. What he believed and confessed is what he lived. His life and work are pictured in the words of Jesus: "So everyone who confesses me before men, I also will confess before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 10:32–33). Without confessing the truth, we put ourselves in danger of hearing the words no one wants to hear: "I never knew you" (Matt 7:23). The student who at age twenty-three did not back down before the synod and seminary leaders who found nothing wrong with the synergism of George Aus was the same man who at age fifty stood virtually alone at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in insisting that biblical history was the foundation of the gospel. In 1989, now old beyond his years, he was charged with false doctrine for defending the phrase that "all theology is Christology." Of course he had to defend it. Justification was only an extension of the atonement. This was what he once called "the realist principle in theology." For Preus, theology had to do with life and life had to do with belief and belief had to do with Christ. For Preus, theology was an academic discipline involving the mind, but it also involved the soul.

Oswald Bayer saw the value of one's life in this way: "We cannot reject the question that others put to us. Why have you done this?"[68] And the answer is Robert

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criterion" for church unity. Hequet, *The 1541 Colloquy at Regensburg: In Pursuit of Church Unity* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2009), 76.

[65] R. D. Preus, "Perennial Problems," 97.

[66] Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1.

[67] K. I. Preus, "Introduction," 27.

[68] Bayer, *Living by Faith*, 1.

Preus did it not only for himself or even his ministry, but for the sake of this seminary.

Soon after Preus was removed from the seminary presidency, his erstwhile friend turned accuser learned that Preus's replacement as interim president disallowed him from responding to an LCMS administrator who was advocating for the ordination of women. Caught in a sorry dilemma, that professor retired. The LCMS president involved in Preus's removal did not continue in office at the 1992 synod convention. If in the face of his accusers he had walked away, our seminary would not be what it is today, and in his own eyes he would have denied the ministry which he believed God had given him. In response to the colleague who urged him not to contest his removal from the seminary, Preus responded, "There is nothing abstract or unreal about the ministry or the minister or the function [of the ministry]."[69] His great-grandfather Herman Amberg Preus understood the ministry in the same way. After Preus was formally vindicated, he was returned to the seminary as its president and reinstated in the LCMS ministerium from which he had been removed by the praesidium, but in a year and a half he was dead. For Robert, justification, atonement, the history of Jesus, and the ministry were all real, as was this seminary which will owe him a debt as long as it stands.

In a memorial tribute to his uncle, Robert noted the connection between the synergist doctrine of justification he confronted as a student at Luther Seminary and the synergism inherent in the historical-critical study of the Scriptures, which no longer were regarded as the inspired word of God. When historical criticism was introduced at Luther Seminary, Preus writes,

> The older professors who had closed their eyes to the dangers of synergism in the doctrine of conversion had little trouble closing their eyes to this new intrusion. Once the historical-critical method controlled the theological curriculum at the seminary, the doctrine of the authority, verbal inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture, held so firmly just a few years before when I was at the seminary, was abandoned. When a number of concerned district presidents on the Church Council complained to the faculty about what was happening, they were told by a large number of younger professors that they would leave

[69] Preus also saw as a denial of the realist principle of theology the LCMS's "Wichita Recension" of AC XIV, adopted in 1989, that allowed licensed laymen to preach and administer sacraments (K. I. Preus, "Introduction," 31). He also saw his call to the presidency of Concordia Theological Seminary as belonging to the realist principle of theology and so fought to regain it (27).

> the school before they would affirm the impossible doctrine of biblical inerrancy.[70]

The Church Council backed down. And his uncle Herman Preus stood virtually alone.

After Robert was removed from the LCMS ministerium, he organized the Luther Academy, which would go on to publish the Lutheran Confessional Dogmatics and *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology*. Life is filled with as many tragedies as ironies. The Reformation 2006 issue of *Logia* printed James Nestingen's tribute to Gerhard Forde along with the "Funeral Sermon for Gerhard O. Forde" preached by Steven O. Paulson.[71] Paulson entitles his introduction to *The Essential Forde*, a collection of his writings, "Forde Lives."[72] In 2005, Forde died and has a still-growing group of disciples preserving his essays to advance his "theology of the cross" and adding their own. Yes, Forde lives. Klemet Preus published two volumes of his father's collected writings and more may be coming.[73] The time is already here to put the writings of Preus side by side with those of Forde and his disciples and to listen to the words of Joshua, "Choose this day whom you will serve" (24:15), or better, those of Jesus, "No one can serve two masters" (Matt 6:24).

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[70] R. D. Preus, "Dr. Herman A. Preus," 55 (as in n. 8).

[71] A decade previously, the Holy Trinity 1996 issue of *Logia* had published memorials of Robert Preus.

[72] Stephen D. Paulson, "Forde Lives," in *The Essential Forde*: *Distinguishing Law and Gospel*, ed. Nicholas Hopman, Mark C. Mattes, and Stephen D. Paulson (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2019), 18.

[73] See the comprehensive bibliography of Robert Preus's writings in this issue, below, p. 000.

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Repentance for the Corinthian Community: 1 Clement's Presentation of Christ in the Old Testament

Daniel Broaddus

The letter *1 Clement* is often understood to be a significant witness to the transitional period from the apostolic era to the early church.[1] As such, the epistle is primarily analyzed for how it reflects developments in the articulation of Christian doctrine and practice, especially church polity.[2] Despite the attention that *1 Clement* receives as a witness to the growth of early Christianity, there has been little scholarly analysis of the epistle's Christology. For that reason, this study will analyze portions of Clement's Christology, specifically his allusions to and interpretations of the Old Testament Scriptures in *1 Clement* 12, 16, and 17. This study demonstrates that Clement's Christology draws on complex early Christian understandings of the person of Christ that inform his exhortations to unity and humility and are integral to understanding the letter's purpose.

Background on *1 Clement*

The letter *1 Clement* is one of the earliest extra-canonical Christian writings and *the* earliest if one dates the *Didache* later. Most scholars date *1 Clement* no later than AD 96. There have been some attempts to date the epistle earlier or later, but on the basis of the letter's own evidence, the 96 date is the majority position.[3] First, the author mentions the deaths of Peter and Paul (*1 Clem.* 5:4–7), who are thought to have been martyred during the Neronian persecution of the church between 64–68. Second, some of the men that Clement wanted the Corinthian church to reinstate to their positions of leadership had been appointed by the apostles (*1 Clem.* 44:2). Finally, a clue Hagner suggests is "the most important time indicator" is found in the opening statement, "because of the sudden and repeated misfortunes and reverses that have happened to us, brothers, we acknowledge that we have been somewhat slow in giving attention to the matters in dispute among you" (*1 Clem.*

[1] Stuart G. Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 32–33.

[2] Hall, *Doctrine and Practice*, 32–33.

[3] Michael W. Holmes, ed. and rev., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings*, 3rd ed., ed. and trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2007), 35–36.

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1:1a).[4] It is widely understood that the "sudden and repeated misfortunes" to which Clement refers are an allusion to the strife Roman Christians endured under Domitian between 81 and 96.

Little is known about the author of the epistle from the text itself. The letter is addressed from the church (ἐκκλησία) in Rome to the church in Corinth. A number of early sources, which include Irenaeus and Eusebius, attribute the letter's authorship to Clement, the third bishop of Rome after Peter, who was in office from the late 80s or early 90s until the turn of the century.[5]

The occasion for the epistle was a rebellion or schism taking place in Corinth (*1 Clem.* 1:1) which had resulted in the removal of church leaders from their offices within the Corinthian congregation (*1 Clem.* 44). Although the epistle addresses the schism, it also presents an overview of the Christian religion and states in one of the concluding chapters, "We have written enough to you, brothers, about the things that pertain to our religion and are particularly helpful for a virtuous life . . . for we have touched upon every subject" (*1 Clem.* 62:1–2a).

The text *of 1 Clement* was widely received in the early church. One of the first explicit references to the epistle appears in the works of Irenaeus (130–202), who contrasts Clement with his gnostic opponents.[6] Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others throughout the centuries also mention *1 Clement*.[7]

Of all the writings numbered among the Apostolic Fathers,[8] *1 Clement* is second only to the *Epistle of Barnabas* in its frequency of Old Testament citation.[9] This

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[4] Donald Alfred Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 4. Unless indicated otherwise, all translations from *1 Clement* are the author's own, though they have been influenced by Holmes's revised translation of *The Apostolic Fathers*, 3rd ed., 44–131.

[5] See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV.22.1 and IV.23.11 and Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* III.3.3.

[6] Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 3.3. Irenaeus highlights the fact that Clement knew and was instructed by the apostles, thus coming from an older tradition than that of his gnostic opponents, and that Clement's epistle to the Corinthians offers a broad overview of salvation history, taking care to note God's creative activity.

[7] Robert M. Grant, *The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1964), 18.

[8] See Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers,* 5–6. The term "Apostolic Fathers" is used for the sake of convenience and refers to the rediscovered writings of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna, collated by J. B. Cotelier (1672) who attributed them to "holy fathers who were active in apostolic times." Since the initial grouping, the collection has been expanded to include *The Epistle to Diognetus*, the fragments of Papias, and Quadratus. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 6, adds, "The form of the collection as it exists today, therefore, is largely a matter of tradition (and now convenience) and is undoubtedly somewhat arbitrary."

[9] Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 24. This is also the case when comparing *1 Clement* to most books from the New Testament.

should come as no surprise since the Old Testament was already regarded as Scripture by early Christians, even while the documents that came to be known as the New Testament were being used and compiled.[10] The text of *1 Clement* also displays familiarity with a number of New Testament texts and has a unique relationship, universally acknowledged in patristic and modern scholarship, with the Epistle to the Hebrews.[11]

Introducing the Christology of *1 Clement*

Clement does not make an explicit case for the divinity of Christ. The Christology in *1 Clement* echoes prior Christian tradition and is recognized in Clement's application of it to his primary concern, the nature of unity and authority in the Corinthian church. Thus, Clement's christological contributions are not as widely recognized as those of Paul, John, and other early Christian writers.[12] This is not to say, however, that there are no unique christological expressions in *1 Clement*, only that his purpose in writing results in more of a Christology by application.

Before highlighting the Christology found in Clement's interpretation of the Old Testament, some acknowledgments and clarifications are in order. First, a paraenetic tone features prominently throughout the epistle in accord with the letter's purpose. There was dissension within the Corinthian church that has resulted in unholy discord and rebellion. Clement's epistle is a call to Christian

[10] Additionally, scholars have noted other possible influences, contemporary with Clement, that could have contributed to his appreciation for and interpretation of the Old Testament. See Chrys C. Caragounis, "From Obscurity to Prominence: The Development of the Roman Church between Romans and *1 Clement*," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Peter Richardson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 248–250; Raymond E. Brown, "Rome," in Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 179, argues that Clement's positive use of Levitical cultic language is indicative of two prominent themes of Roman Christianity: a strong Jewish heritage and an appreciation for imperial authority; Horacio E. Lona, "Die Septuagintazitate des Neuen Testaments im Ersten Clemensbrief: Textgeschichtliche Beobachtungen (besonders zum Codex Alexandrinus)," in *Textual History and the Reception of Scripture in Early Christianity*, ed. Johannes de Vries and Martin Karrer (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 292, concludes that *1 Clement* evinces the possible influence of Hellenistic Judaism from Alexandria by way of the Jewish synagogue in Rome.

[11] Andreas Lindemann, "The First Epistle of Clement," in *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction*, ed. Wilhelm Pratscher (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2010), 59; Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 179–180, 191, notes that some passages of Old Testament Scripture cited by Clement agree with those cited in the book of Hebrews over against the Septuagint (e.g., *1 Clem.* 17:5; 36:3).

[12] This is not without its disadvantages since Photius, *Bibliotheca* 126 suggests that *1 Clement* should be censured for a number of reasons to include inadequate christological language. See Caragounis, "From Obscurity to Prominence," 278.

humility and submission. He draws on a number of biblical and social considerations to formulate a rhetorically compelling case for putting an end to the conflict and instructing the faithful to submit to their ecclesiastical authorities.[13] Due to circumstances in Corinth—and possible circumstances in Rome at the time of composition—it comes as no surprise that the subject of ecclesiastical office is also prominent in the epistle and continues to be a significant aspect of current scholarly discussion of the epistle.[14]

These circumstances do not preclude Clement from using complex christological reasoning in his arguments. Clement's Christology and the christological traditions that precede him were foundational for his and his readers' theology, so we should expect that there is more Christology under the surface than what is stated explicitly in this letter and, as we shall see below, has been identified by modern scholarship.[15] This is not to argue that there is a hidden christological agenda that completely supplants the narrative of *1 Clement*; rather, this study illustrates how a closer examination of Clement's Christology is able to detect a fuller theological rationale behind his exhortations to the church in Corinth.

Little has been done analyzing the Christology in *1 Clement*. Frances Young's chapter on "Wisdom in the Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament" features a section on Clement's use of wisdom traditions. Young's evaluation is narrow in scope and does not offer a comprehensive investigation of *1 Clement*'s Christology. She argues that *1 Clement* exhibits an overall "'wisdom' outlook" adding that, "anything that supported the ethical advice was exploited—the biblical narratives becoming models of good behaviors like repentance, or bad characteristics like jealousy and envy, alongside the use of maxims and commandments, and all

[13] Horacio E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief: Ubersetzt und erklart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 42, 46. See also Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 7–8.

[14] James S. Jeffers, *Conflict at Rome: Social Order and Hierarchy in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 95–96, asserts that *1 Clement* is not an affirmation of Roman primacy but draws on a number of other scholars to suggest that it reflects and speaks to developments in the Roman church just as equally as it does to the Corinthian church.

[15] My inspiration to take a closer look at *1 Clement* is due, in large part, to Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), and *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2016). In *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 357, Hays observes about the synoptic writers that, "Their way of pursuing what we call 'doing theology' was to produce richly intertextual narrative accounts of the significance of Jesus. Because the language of Scripture was the Evangelists' native medium of expression, their reflection about God was articulated through subtle appropriations and adaptations of that linguistic medium." I have come to recognize that this is true also for most early Christian authors, including Clement of Rome.

exploited without differentiation."[16] According to Young, Clement's use of various wisdom traditions is in service to his paraenesis and thus does not add to the development of a Wisdom or Logos Christology.[17] Instead, she argues that for Clement, "Christ is a model of the humble-mindedness the author wishes to encourage."[18] Other aspects of Clement's Christology are recognized but they also, as Young presents them, appear to be muted by comparison to the epistle's paraenesis.[19]

A brief look at Clement's Christology can be found in Charles Gieschen's "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology."[20] There, Gieschen identifies three passages (*1 Clem*. 58:1; 59:2; 60:4) where Clement reflects an understanding of Christ as the Divine Name of God.[21] This is significant because it indicates that a much more complex Christology is at work in the background of Clement's letter than is typically recognized by scholars. Christ is not merely an intermediary between God and man but also shares in the unique divine identity. This will have important implications for Clement's identification of Christ with those who are "lowly of mind" in *1 Clement* 16:1 and what follows in chapters 16 and 17.

Perhaps the most extensive commentary on the Christology of *1 Clement* can be found in Horacio E. Lona's extensive work, *Der erste Clemensbrief*.[22] Lona includes an eight-page excursus on the Christology of *1 Clement*. In his analysis, the primary function of Clement's Christology is to convey God's work of salvation. He writes, "according to the prevailing theocentricity of the writing, God is the subject of the action but this is ultimately realized through Jesus Christ."[23] According to Lona, the second function of Clement's Christology highlights Christ as an

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[16] Frances M. Young, "Wisdom in the Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament," in *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 90.

[17] Young, "Wisdom in the Apostolic Fathers," 91.

[18] Young, "Wisdom in the Apostolic Fathers," 91.

[19] Young, "Wisdom in the Apostolic Fathers," 91. In Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 203–204, Young argues that "paraenetic exegesis" is the primary way to read Scripture in the early Christian tradition and laments that "the primacy of this way of reading scripture in the Christian tradition has been obscured by concentration on other features such as the rejection of Halakah and the development of the Christological reading, or the supposed concern for history in the Antiochene reaction against Alexandria."

[20] Charles A. Gieschen, "The Divine Name in Ante-Nicene Christology," in *Vigiliae Christianae* 57, no. 2 (2003): 115–158.

[21] Gieschen, "The Divine Name," 149.

[22] Horacio E. Lona, *Der erste Clemensbrief: Ubersetzt und erklart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

[23] Lona, *Die erste Clemensbrief*, 403, "Gemäß der vorherrschenden Theozentrik des Schreibens ist Gott das Subjekt der Handlung, aber diese verwirklicht sich schließlich durch Jesus Christus."

exemplar, but Lona is quick to clarify that the first function is incomparably more important for characterizing Clement's Christology.[24]

Clement's Interpretation of the Old Testament

Larry W. Hurtado characterizes the second-century, proto-orthodox Christian use of the Old Testament according to three main approaches, and I am convinced these approaches can be helpful for identifying various aspects of Clement's use of the Old Testament: (1) the identification of Old Testament proof texts that demonstrate the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus; (2) a typological reading of the Old Testament that understands certain figures and events to foreshadow Christ (e.g., 1 Cor 10:4); and (3) the interpretation of theophanies found in the Old Testament as manifestations of the preincarnate Son of God.[25] The *modern* assessment of Clement's interpretation of the Old Testament, however, is quite restrictive and only rarely places his approach to the Old Testament within one of the categories outlined by Hurtado. Clement's use of the Old Testament is often characterized as rhetorical for ethical exhortation. Hagner posits that, for Clement, the Old Testament is effectively a "source-book for Christian behavior" and his interpretation of it, in large measure, is "indistinguishable from the Jewish piety of the [Old Testament]."[26] Two significant passages from Hagner help assemble a portrait of the modern assessment of Clement's use of the Old Testament. Hagner writes:

> It must be admitted that the majority of OT quotations in the epistle bear a literal interpretation which, if taken out of the total context, is more Jewish than it is specifically Christian. This is only to say that the epistle is filled with a type of moralizing to which few Jews would have taken exception; this is as much true of the context as it is of the form or method of Clement's scriptural argument.[27]

Hagner goes on to add:

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[24] See Lona, *Die erste Clemensbrief*, 404, "Von diesen zwei Funktionen ist die erste unvergleichbar wichtiger für ein Urteil über die Christologie in Clem, wenn man bedenkt, wie wenig andere Aspekte entfaltet sind, etwa die knapp angedeutete Präexistenz (s. o. Nr. 1) und vor allem das Verhaltnis des Kyrios zu Gott." Lona, *Die erste Clemensbrief*, 407, also suggests that Clement has an active engagement with prior christological formulations in application to his pastoral concerns; cf. *1 Clem.* 2:1; 16:2, 17; 36:2.

[25] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 565–566.

[26] Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 125.

[27] Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 127.

> Yet Clement writes as a Christian, and it is this fact that makes his literal interpretation of the OT so interesting and unique. Clement's epistle contains a fair amount of distinctly Christian doctrine and a large number of allusions to NT writings. One cannot help wondering why Clement does not employ more of a distinctively Christian interpretation of the OT. . . . When Clement does draw Christian doctrine from the OT he usually does so, as we have seen above, by literal interpretation of what he regards as plainly prophetic.[28]

Hagner goes on to recognize that Clement does understand Christ to speak in the Old Testament and that the Old Testament looks forward to Christ and the church. He clarifies, however, that this is constrained to purely literal, prophetic interpretations for the sake of ethical exhortation.[29] It does appear that of the three main approaches to the Old Testament Hurtado highlighted for early Christians, Clement's use of the first approach—the identification of prophetic proof texts of Christ—is the most obvious; however, the other two approaches—of typology and the interpretation of theophanic traditions—are also present but underappreciated by scholars, especially Clement's understanding of Old Testament theophanies.

Clement's Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament

One of the first instances of christological prophecy and typology in Clement's interpretation of the Old Testament is found in *1 Clement* 12. It is something of an anomaly for Clement because he engages there in uncharacteristically allegorical interpretation of Scripture. In the passage, Clement calls attention to Rahab for her faith and the example that she serves, "through faith and hospitality was Rahab the prostitute saved" (*1 Clem.* 12:1), exhorting his hearers to the same faith. Clement goes on, however, to describe the whole episode of Joshua 2 and concludes "additionally, they gave to [Rahab] a sign, that she hang out of her house something crimson [κόκκινον], making it manifest that through the blood of the Lord will be redemption for all who believe and hope in God," adding, "see, beloved, not only faith but prophecy is found in the woman" (*1 Clem*. 12:7–8). This indicates that for Clement there is a connection between the Christian life lived in faith and the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is not mere moralizing or identification of good examples. This indicates that, for Clement, true piety consists in identifying and identifying *with* Jesus Christ. He sees this is as much the case for the Old Testament saints as it should be for the Corinthian Christians.

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[28] Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 128.
[29] Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 131.

This becomes clearer as we examine *1 Clement* 16–17 where Clement uses Old Testament Scripture to paint a portrait of Christ and then identifies how Old Testament saints modeled and submitted to Christ. Chapter 16 is especially interesting for its unique christological designation not found anywhere in Scripture. Clement writes: "For Christ is of those who are lowly of mind [ταπεινοφρονούντων], not those who set themselves up [ἐπαιρομένων] over his flock. The Majestic Scepter of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, did not come in haughty boasting or pride—although he was able [καίπερ δυνάμενος]—but in lowliness of mind [ταπεινοφρονῶν], just as the Holy Spirit spoke concerning him" (*1 Clem*. 16:1–2).[30] Here "our Lord Jesus Christ" is set in apposition to the title "the Majestic Scepter of God," identifying the man, Jesus, in the central position of power and authority with God as the Majestic Scepter of God. Although the title is unique to *1 Clement*, it has possible precedents. In Hebrews 1:8–9, the author quotes from Psalm 45:6–7 (LXX 44:7–8), "And to the Son [he says] 'Your Throne, O God, is forever and the Scepter of Righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and have hated wickedness. Because of this, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of exaltation above your companions.'"[31] Clement calls Christ the "Majestic Scepter of God," whose sovereignty is contrasted with the proud who lift themselves up. Hebrews quotes Psalm 45 to highlight Christ's exaltation to the throne of God because of his love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness.

There is, however, a key difference between the two passages. In Hebrews 1:8–9, Christ is *bestowed* with the "scepter of righteousness," whereas in *1 Clement* 16:1–2, Christ *is* "the Majestic Scepter of God." Another difficulty in detecting a direct connection between Clement and Hebrews is that Hebrews 1:8 uses ῥάβδος whereas Clement uses σκῆπτρον, the latter of which finds no usage in the New Testament and next to none in the LXX.[32]

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[30] The Syriac and Coptic translations of the text, as well as Jerome's quotation of it, omit τῆς μεγαλωσύνης, but the earlier and more complete versions of the text (Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Hierosolymitanus, and the Latin translation) include it; see Tom Robinson, "First Clement," in Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 39.

[31] Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are the author's translation. Another possible precedent is found in 2 Peter 1:17 where μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης is also used as a title but in reference to the Father. See Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 248, for a more detailed discussion of Clement's possible dependence on 2 Peter 1:17.

[32] Walter Bauer and William F. Arndt, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 929b. It is possible that Clement's usage of the term σκῆπτρον is derived from the influence of Second Temple Jewish texts such as *The Testament of Judah* 24:5 and *Joseph and Aseneth* 5:6.

Clement's use of "scepter" as a title for Christ is more akin to Numbers 24:17, which if read christologically, designates Christ as the scepter (שֵׁבֶט) that rises up out of Israel. Like *1 Clement* 16:2, the scepter spoken of in Numbers 24:17 is a designation for a person. Lexical considerations present a problem, though, since the LXX does not translate שֵׁבֶט in that passage as ῥάβδος or σκῆπτρον, but rather it uses the term ἄνθρωπος. Thus the title "the Majestic Scepter of God" appears to be a unique title for Christ of Clement's own invention and is applied in such a way as to indicate that Christ is in full possession of his divinity, even in the midst of humility, and that his sovereign designation is manifested in his humility. This alone indicates that Clement is moving beyond a reflection on merely ethical exhortation.

Another complex christological parallel to *1 Clement* 16:1–2 is found in the Christ hymn of Philippians 2:5–11. Paul's description of Jesus in his humility does not mean that he gains equality or loses equality with God; instead, Paul holds to a pre-existent Christology and describes how Jesus interacts with his divine status for the sake of man's salvation.[33] This is also the sense of *1 Clement* 16:2, "The Majestic Scepter of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, did not come in haughty boasting or pride—*although he was able* [καίπερ δυνάμενος]—but in lowliness of mind [ταπεινοφρονῶν]." The addition of "our Lord Jesus Christ" does not create a distinction; it clarifies "the Majestic Scepter of God" so that the Corinthians understand that the Scepter of God has come in humility.

The similarities between *1 Clement* 16 and Philippians 2 are still more interesting in light of Clement's subsequent quotation from the Old Testament. After highlighting Christ's humility, Clement adds, "just as the Holy Spirit spoke concerning him, for he says . . ." (*1 Clem.* 16:2b) and then goes on, in *1 Clement* 16:3–16, to quote Isaiah 53:1–11 and Psalm 22:6–8 (LXX 21:7–9), respectively. Richard Bauckham, in his book *Jesus and the God of Israel*, detects a connection between the theme of Christ's humiliation and exaltation in Philippians 2:6–11 with that of Isaiah 53, as well.[34] Bauckham has three emphases. First, Paul is engaging in an interpretation of Isaiah that identifies the Suffering Servant as the very one who receives the Divine Name.[35] Second, Paul is not speaking to the question of whether God can become man but whether the cross of Jesus Christ can be included in the identity of God. Bauckham writes, "The self-humiliation and obedience to which verse 8 refers are no mere ethical attitudes, but the repudiation of status . . . the

[33] Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, 1998 reprint (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2017), 337–339; also, Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 41.

[34] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 37–45.

[35] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 42–43.

voluntary descent to the place furthest removed from the heavenly throne to which he is then—and Paul says 'therefore'—exalted."[36] What this means for Paul, then, is that "only the Servant can be the Lord."[37] Third, Bauckham asserts that Paul, in Philippians 2, is making a christological statement about the identity of God, that "his humiliation belongs to the identity of God as truly as his exaltation does."[38]

Clement has a similar Christological understanding. Like Paul in Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus," Clement invokes the image of Christ as the model of humility that should characterize those who identify with him, "For Christ is of those who are lowly of mind" (*1 Clem.* 16:1a). Clement then goes on to describe Christ as fully possessing the divine nature with the unique title of "the Majestic Scepter of God," who is identified with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Clement's use of the Old Testament is more than mere ethical exhortation. He draws on the christological interpretation of the Suffering Servant to identify Christ and to identify *with* Christ. His conclusion is similar to what Bauckham has highlighted for Philippians 2:6–11 but with a slightly different emphasis: the only Lord *is* a servant.[39]

The most significant difference between *1 Clement* 16 and Philippians 2 is where Clement ends his quotation from Isaiah 53 and where Paul begins his allusion to it. Whereas Clement quotes from Isaiah 53:1–11, the most explicit allusions to Isaiah 53 in Philippians 2:7–8 point to the next verse, Isaiah 53:12, at the end of the chapter where the Suffering Servant is exalted.[40] The differences between Paul and Clement in their choice of allusions and direct references to Isaiah 53 is likely in the different occasions for each epistle. There are a number of theories as to what kind of "opponents" Paul is addressing at Philippi, but the presence of internal opposition or discord is much more muted than in some of his other epistles such as the letter to the Galatians.[41] Instead, Paul is intent on thanking the Philippians for their share in the ministry (Phil 1:3; 4:10–20) and strengthening them against false doctrine (Phil 1:27; 4:9). Clement, on the other hand, is speaking to a situation referred to throughout the epistle: some have set themselves up in the place of those who were duly appointed. Unity and order within the church are under threat. Clement's intent in quoting Isaiah 53:1–11 is to call attention to the need for the faithful to

[36] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 44.
[37] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 45.
[38] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 45.
[39] Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 45, "only the Servant can be the Lord."
[40] Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 43.
[41] See Jerry L. Sumney, "Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges," in *Paul and His Opponents* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 25–29.

identify with Christ and emulate his humility by submitting to God's good order and not to rush ahead to their own exaltation.[42]

Thus, while Paul goes on to allude to Isaiah 45:23, "By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has the word gone out in righteousness and it shall not return, to me shall every knee bow and every tongue confess" (cf. Phil 2:10–11), Clement goes on to quote from Psalm 22:6–8 (*1 Clem.* 16:15–17), "And again he [Christ] himself says: 'But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach among humans and an object of contempt to the people. All those who saw me mocked me; they spoke with their lips; they shook their heads saying, "He hoped in the Lord; let him deliver him, let him save him, because he takes pleasure in him." ' "[43] Clement's reference to Psalm 22:6–8 indicates that he views it as a dialogue between the Father and the Son and that he uses it to stress for his hearers that the same Majestic Scepter of God, manifested in the midst of suffering, is identified as the one who trusts in the Lord. He assumes that the reality of God suffering in Christ would have been understood by his hearers and that such a reality is congruent with—even requires as a matter of their very identification with Christ as Christians—the lowliness of mind (*1 Clem.* 16:1, 2) to which he now exhorts his hearers.

The beginning of chapter 17 signals an interesting shift in Clement's argument. In chapter 16, he identifies Christ with the majesty and sovereignty of God while

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[42] Another example of an author identifying the Christian with the person of Christ in his humility by echoing Philippians 2 can be found in *The Letter of the Churches of Vienna and Lyons to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia including the story of the Blessed Blandina*: "The Witnesses were zealous in their imitation of Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought it not a prize to be treated like God." As found on "The Medieval Sourcebook: The Persecution & Martyrdoms of Lyons in 177 A.D.," Fordham University, accessed January 13, 2021, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/177-lyonsmartyrs.asp.

[43] The translation for this passage is provided by Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 67, 69. It is interesting to note that Clement understands Christ to be the speaker in Psalm 22:6–8 and not merely to have recited verse 1, as Christ does from the cross in Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34. Commenting on Clement's use of Psalm 22:6–8, Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012), 263, suggests that Clement is amenable to the prosopological method of interpretation—a method used by some early Christian authors to identify otherwise ambiguous speakers in scriptural texts—because he identifies Christ as the speaker in his introductory formula for Psalm 22:6–8. For further discussion on the use of prosopological exegesis by early Christian writers see also Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) and Kyle R. Hughes, *The Trinitarian Testimony of the Spirit: Prosopological Exegesis and the Development of Pre-Nicene Pneumatology*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). For further discussion on the application of the entirety of Psalm 22 to the life and ministry of Jesus, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels,* 78, 83–86, and Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments*, 94, with his discussion of the Testimony Book hypothesis and C. H. Dodd's alternative to it.

also identifying him as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 and as the speaker in Psalm 22. Christians show due reverence and humility towards Christ by joining him in humility. In chapter 17, Clement directs his hearers' attention to those who prefigured Christ by humbling themselves before him when he appears to them. This interpretive move is consistent with his prophetic and paraenetic focus but involves much more complex christological assumptions.

In *1 Clement* 17:1, Clement writes, "Let us be imitators also of those who walked about in goatskins and sheepskins, preaching [κηρύσσοντες] the coming of Christ. And we are speaking about Elijah and Elisha, and also Ezekiel, the prophets, and with them also those of renown" (*1 Clem.* 17:1; cf. Heb 11:37). Clement then goes on to highlight in more detail the Old Testament figures of Abraham, Job, and Moses (*1 Clem.* 17:2–6).[44]

Clement has a twofold understanding of how the men of renown proclaimed Christ. First, Clement describes each man in much the same way he has described Christ in chapter 16. These exemplars proclaim Christ by being worthy, godly men who humble themselves as Christ humbled himself. Of Abraham, Clement writes, "Abraham was greatly renowned and titled [προσηγορεύθη] 'friend of God,' but said in lowliness of mind [ταπεινοφρονῶν] when he gazed intently [ἀτενίζων; see *1 Clem.* 7:4] on the Glory of God, 'I am only dust and ashes'" (*1 Clem.* 17:2). Here there is a pattern like Christ's: Abraham holds a special status before God but humbles himself before God despite that status. Abraham emulates Christ with his "lowliness of mind" (*1 Clem.* 16:1, 2). A similar connection can be made between his self-humbling statement, "I am only dust and ashes" and Christ's words from Psalm 22:6–8 (*1 Clem.* 16:15–16). Thus Abraham is "preaching the coming of Christ" by his example. This pattern is also in Clement's references to Job and Moses. Clement quotes Scripture to describe Job as "righteous and blameless, true, abstaining from all evil" (*1 Clem.* 17:3; cf. Job 1:1) and Moses as "faithful in all his house" and "greatly glorified" (*1 Clem.* 17:5; cf. Num 12:7; Heb 3:2). These men then humble themselves, despite their greatness and honor, and thereby prefigure and preach Christ in their conduct.

The second way in which these exemplars, specifically Abraham and Moses, preach Christ is their humble acknowledgment of the presence of Christ. This second form of proclamation involves the association of Christ with Old Testament theophanies. The first indicators are the words of Abraham that Clement quotes. Abraham says, "I am dust and ashes" while he is being visited by the Angel of the

[44] In doing this, Clement is echoing a number of New Testament passages that also identify Christ as the content of Scripture to which the Law and the Prophets point (e.g., Luke 24:27; John 1:45; 5:39; Gal 3:24).

Lord and is interceding with him on behalf of the hypothetical righteous in Sodom (Gen 18:27). Gieschen observes that Genesis 18:1–19:1 is probably one of the most well-known passages from the Old Testament where God appears as a man.[45]

The second indicator is Clement's designation, "the Glory of God" (*1 Clem.* 17:2). Gieschen notes that the "Glory of God" has a wide range of meaning in Jewish literature, but within that range of meaning, it can signify the visible presence of God and is commonly associated with the language of the temple cult.[46] Given that Clement uses the expression within the context of a widely recognized theophanic tradition, he uses the designation for the visible manifestation of God, specifically, for Christ himself.[47] This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that elsewhere, in the most explicit expression of his Christology, Clement identifies Christ as the tangible and final mediator between God and man who fully possesses the divine nature:

> This is the way, beloved, in which we found our salvation, Jesus Christ, the High Priest of our offerings, the benefactor and helper of our weakness. Through him we gaze intently [ἀτενίζομεν] into the heights of heaven; through him we see in a mirror his faultless and transcendent face; through him the eyes of our hearts have been opened; through him our foolish and darkened mind revives into the light; through him the Master has willed that we should taste immortal knowledge, for he, being the radiance of his majesty, is as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent. (*1 Clem.* 36:1–2)

This passage resonates with much of the New Testament witness about Jesus—especially the Epistle to the Hebrews—that he is the visible manifestation of God and is God himself. If anyone has seen God, it is the Son, who has been seen. This conclusion is not only asserted by *1 Clement* 36 but is also in his description of the "preaching of the coming of Christ" (*1 Clem.* 17:1–6).

Clement appeals to another prominent theophanic tradition with his reference to Moses' conversation with God in the burning bush (*1 Clem.* 17:5; cf. Exod 3:1–

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[45] Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 59–60.

[46] Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 78.

[47] Where exactly Clement gets his "Glory theology" is difficult to determine. Given the apparent familiarity that Clement has with much of the Pauline corpus, it would seem that the most likely source for his understanding of Jesus as the Glory of God comes from Paul. There are, however, a number of other connections that suggest a familiarity with the Johannine tradition or a common tradition, even though there is nothing in the way of direct quotations from the Johannine literature. Perhaps the most significant possibility for a connection is found in several intertextual allusions shared between *1 Clement* 34 and Revelation (e.g., [*1 Clem.* 34:3 and Rev 22:12; *1 Clem.* 34:6 and Rev 5:11]). Direct connections are rather tenuous and a fuller discussion of the possibilities is outside of the scope of this paper.

4:17). In addition to the direct reference to the burning bush theophany of Exodus 3 and 4, Moses is clearly recognized as having been one to whom God spoke face to face (see Exod 33:11).[48]

It could be taken as a coincidence that Clement chooses to highlight two theophanies in the lives of two men who "preached Christ" and humbled themselves before Christ. However, given both the evidence that these theophanies were widely recognized as such (especially in the case of Genesis 18) and the use of titles that bear those kinds of connotations, such as the "Glory of God"—and perhaps even "the Majestic Scepter of God"—it appears that this is Clement's association of humility with submission and identification with Christ—with the tangible experience of Christ's presence.[49] This line of reasoning is strengthened by the fact that Clement's exhortation to the Corinthian church involves their submission to their called and ordained ministers.

Clement's appeal to the Corinthians that they imitate the Old Testament exemplars has two elements. First, that they imitate the men as figures of Christ and thereby proclaim Christ through humility. Second, that they imitate the men in their submission to Christ as he appears to them. The latter imitation advances Clement's

[48] Clement's description of Moses as "faithful in all his house" echoes Numbers 12:7 and Hebrews 3:2. It is likely that Clement's reference here is principally drawn from Hebrews and is partially informed by the background of Hebrews. A unique feature of Hebrews 3 is that it is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is overtly called "Apostle." Gieschen notes that there is a well-established tradition of referring to angels as "apostle," and the author of Hebrews is highly likely conscious of this (Heb 1:14). Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 304, observes that in Samaritanism the "Apostle" designation began to replace the designation "Angel of the Lord." Furthermore, for some Jews and Samaritans, Moses was considered to be the Apostle par excellence. An example of this is found in a Samaritan writing that refers to Moses in a number of ways including "Apostle," "the Son of the house of God," "Priest," "faithful one," and "Servant." Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology*, 305, then argues that "the use of these designations not only forms a portion of the author's argument for the superiority of Christ over Moses, but probably is also a polemic against veneration of Moses in Jewish and Samaritan groups." The convenience of this argument for Clement is apparent since, like the author of Hebrews, he wants to highlight the supremacy of Christ and make positive use of Moses, as one who "is faithful in his house," pointing to Christ. It could be that Clement simply extends the argumentation of Hebrews by referring to a theophanic tradition where Moses and the Angel of the Lord are rightly distinguished from each other. Clement is then able to highlight Moses' humility in this distinction for the purpose of his own pastoral concerns for the church in Corinth.

[49] A distantly related note: Leo the Great comments on the significance of the appearance of Moses and Elijah thusly, "Because, as says the blessed John, 'the law was given through Moses: but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ,' in Whom is fulfilled both the promise of prophetic figures and the purpose of the legal ordinances: for He both teaches the truth of prophecy *by His presence*, and renders the commands possible through grace" (Leo the Great, "Sermon 51," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969–1976], vol. 12: 163).

argument toward his ultimate goal of restoring order in the Corinthian church and the reinstatement of their duly appointed leaders who serve at the behest of Christ himself (*1 Clem*. 42:1–2).

Conclusion

Clement draws on a very complex Christology in his exhortations to the Corinthian church. Clement's Christology in *1 Clement* has often been sidelined by other areas of interest, such as church polity and early Christian paraenesis; however, this study has shown that his Christology is the ground of those interests. If one would understand the significance and force of Clement's appeal to the Corinthian Christians, one must seek to understand Clement's Christology in more detail.

The significance of Clement's Christology to his paraenetic exhortation, though, is not limited to only a deeper and more thorough understanding of *1 Clement*. A broader analysis of Clement's Christology will also contribute to the ongoing relevance of Christian proclamation today. For just as Clement exhorted his hearers to unity and humility, so also Christian leaders today must do the same. Perhaps what is most difficult for Christian preachers today is exhorting the faithful to righteous living while also directing their focus away from themselves and toward Christ. There is always the danger when exhorting the faithful to righteous living that such exhortations are mistaken for moralism or that Christ may be made merely into an ethical exemplar. The key for correct exhortation is not to neglect exhortation but to ground it in the Christian's identity within the one who has saved them by virtue of his own sufferings and death. Christ humbled himself and in such humility was manifest as the Majestic Scepter of God, the Lord. Christians, likewise, do not make themselves the sons of God—the Holy Trinity is responsible for that—but are found to be sons, and proclaim the true Son, when they humble themselves as did their Savior. *1 Clement* serves as an example for our imitation in exhorting the faithful to righteousness by proclaiming Christ: "Let us gaze intently on the blood of Christ and understand how precious it is to his Father, because, being poured out for our salvation, won for all the world the grace of repentance" (*1 Clem*. 7:4).

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Research Notes

Private Celebrations of Holy Communion and Laity Conducting Services of Holy Communion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, governments chose to close what they called "nonessential gatherings," in which they sometimes included churches. This made the reception of Holy Communion by our people much less frequent, and in some places impossible. This in turn has raised the question of whether it would be permissible for laity at home with their families and without a pastor to conduct a service of Holy Communion, blessing bread and wine and distributing and receiving the body and blood of Christ. In other places, the idea has been advanced that in a live, online streaming service, the pastor could consecrate bread and wine in the parishioners' homes remotely.

This led me to search the writings of our Lutheran forebears for any possible guidance.[1] The attached quotations speak against laity conducting Communion services, and also against the idea that there could be any emergency situation that would call for such practices. It is important to remember that the following Lutheran theologians address not the *possibility* that such a lay-consecrated Supper would be the real body and blood of Christ, but only whether such a practice would be in accordance with God's will.

Luther to Kaspar Huberinus in Augsburg, January 3, 1532[2]

In Augsburg in 1532, Catholics controlled some of the churches and evangelicals controlled others. Among the evangelicals, however, the Zwinglians were predominant, who denied the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Supper. In this situation, the question arose of whether laity in Augsburg, not having

[1] Quotations from Luther's letters are from Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel*, 18 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1930–), hereafter abbreviated WA Br. Quotations from Luther's Table Talks are from Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1912–21), hereafter abbreviated WA TR. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by Benjamin T. G. Mayes.

[2] WA Br 6:244–245. Huberinus (1550–1553) was a layman trained in theology at Wittenberg who defended Luther's doctrine in Augsburg against the Zwinglians. In 1535, he was called as an assistant pastor (Diakon) in Herbst, and beginning in 1542 served as senior pastor of various churches. Gunther Franz, "Huberinus, Caspar," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie 9* (1972), 701. Online: https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118707531.html#ndbcontent.

access to a Lutheran celebration of the Supper, should hold private celebrations of the Supper in their homes.

> Grace and peace in Christ! Beware, beware, my dear Kaspar, of the fanatics, that you may have nothing to do with their ministry, as you yourself indicate, so that you may not participate in their calamity. God has already given punishment twice: first, under Münzer, now under Zwingli. I am worried that Augsburg will belong to them completely. If you cannot do otherwise, do as did the Jews in captivity in Babylon, who had to go without temple, without worship, without the use of their Moses, but had to satisfy themselves with the Word seventy years long. For it still cannot be advised that you should begin something of your own in corners.[3] Endure this trial and comfort yourself in the meantime with reading and teaching of the Holy Word, and with wishing and praying! As Daniel in Babylon prayed toward Jerusalem, so also you, desiring the Sacrament with sighs [should pray], until God takes notice! With Baptism, the lack is not so great; even under the papacy, people baptized in houses. Therefore you can indeed still baptize and pray there as in the church. Likewise, you can bless marriages in houses, as people elsewhere indeed betroth them [there]; and if it cannot be otherwise, and a [city] council forbids this baptizing, I would rather receive it from Papists with the explanation that we indeed hold their Baptism to be right, but not their faith and teaching in other points. The fanatics have no Baptism nor Sacrament. That's enough now in haste, since I am extremely burdened. Be committed to God, Amen! January 3.
>
> Dr. Martin Luther

Luther, Table Talk Recorded by Anton Lauterbach

Luther addressed the same question in a table talk whose date is uncertain.

> Question: Can a father of a household in a case of necessity communicate the Lord's Supper to his family? Dr. Martin Luther responded: By no means! First, because the call is not present. Numbers 11[:28], "Lord, prohibit those who are prophesying." Deuteronomy 4[:10] and 6[:6]: "Put your hearts toward all my words." Acts 2[:17] and Joel 2 [3:1]: "And it will happen in the last days, etc." It follows that people who are not called should not dare to preach. It is still more fitting that they should not dare to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's

[3] That is, in private assemblies. Luther had apparently heard of the secret celebrations of the Supper in the Carmelite Cloister; cf. WA Br 5:528.17ff.

> Supper, in order to avoid offenses. For many would not get priests if they could serve themselves.[4]

Luther, Letter to Lorenz Kastner and Colleagues in Freiberg, February 11, 1536

In 1536, Freiberg's churches were Roman Catholic. Lutheran citizens there could not receive the Supper in both kinds (both the Body and Blood of Christ). Many would travel to nearby Leisnig to receive the Supper in both kinds from Lutheran pastors. In a letter Luther answered the question of friends in Freiberg as to whether, in this emergency situation, when the full Sacrament was not being administered in Freiberg, laity could hold private celebrations of the Sacrament in their homes.

> Beware! By no means let yourselves be persuaded that every house-leader *(Hauswirt)* may give the Sacrament in his house. For I may teach at home, but I am not thereby a public preacher unless I am publicly called. Thus St. Paul also speaks of the Sacrament, 1 Cor. 11[:21–22]: *We should come together, and not each one make his own Supper.*
>
> Therefore it is not right to say, "The Sacrament is made through the Word, therefore I may make it at home." For it is not God's order and command; but rather He wants the Sacrament to be distributed *(gereicht)* by the public ministry *(Ampt).* For the Sacrament was instituted as a public confession, as Christ speaks: *This do, in remembrance of Me,* that is, as St. Paul says [1 Cor. 11:26]: *Proclaim and confess the death of Christ.*[5]

Johann Benedict Carpzov (Seventeenth Century)

The late 17th-century Lutheran theologian of Leipzig, Johann Benedict Carpzov, addressed this question in his introduction to the Lutheran Confessions.

> On the Supper . . . it is disputed among theologians, whether in the case of necessity even a layman is competent to administer the holy Supper? Although many seem to incline toward an affirmative opinion . . . nevertheless *Luther* simply denies it (Tome VI. Jenens. Germ. fol. 339) as something lacking vocation, examples, and the Consensus of Antiquity; moreover, as rejected, as Theodoret proves from Ignatius' epistle to the Trullians, from Athanasius' *Apology Against the Arians,* from Epiphanius' *Heresy* 79 (Book IV, *Ecclesiastical History,* chap. 12). Without doubt, there is no such case of

[4] WA TR 5:621, no. 6361.

[5] WA Br 7:366, no. 2296. The same argument was repeated several times by Luther (WA Br 5:528; 6:507–509; 7:167–168, 338–339).

> necessity as there is in Baptism, since adults are already in the Faith and have it. Infants, on the contrary, have Baptism as the only ordinary means by which they are able to receive faith.[6]

C. F. W. Walther (Nineteenth Century)

Walther's *Pastoral Theology* notes that the reality of the sacrament does not depend on whether or not it is consecrated and administered by a pastor. Nevertheless, according to God's will, it should never be consecrated and administered by a layperson. He explains:

> Starting with Luther, the vast majority of our theologians maintain that the Holy Supper *should never be administered* privately by a person not holding the public preaching office or by a so-called *layman*—partly because, unlike with Baptism or Absolution, there cannot be an *emergency* regarding Holy Communion which would justify straying from God's order (1 Cor. 4:1; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4); partly because the Holy Supper "is a *manifest confession* and should thus have manifest ministers"; partly because *divisions* can easily be caused by such private [acts of] Communion.[7]

C.F.W. Walther's systematic theology textbook states that only "ordinary ministers" are permitted to administer the Lord's Supper, since it is not necessary for salvation.

> In a case of emergency, a layman, too—even a woman—can administer Baptism. . . . But this is *outside of what is ordinary.* Hence, regarding the Holy Supper (its necessity is not the same), it is also not permissible for anyone besides the ordinary minister to administer it.[8]

This textbook also explains that the minister of the church is the "ministerial cause" of the Eucharist, that is, the instrument through whom God chooses to administer the Lord's Supper.

> The *ministerial* cause[a] [of the Holy Supper] is the *ordinary minister* of the Church, who consecrates the external elements and distributes them to the communicants.

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[6] *Isagoge in Libros Ecclesiarum Lutheranorum Symbolicos* (Leipzig, 1675), 423.

[7] Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, ed. David W. Loy, trans. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 206.

[8] "*Baptismum* quidem in casu necessitatis etiam laicus aut femina administrare potest. . . . Sed hoc *extraordinarium* est. Unde *nec s. coenam*, cujus non eadem est necessitas, alii, quam ministro ordinario administrare licet." Johann Wilhelm Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae, Adjectis Notis Amplioribus*, ed. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, vol. 3 (in Urbe Sancti Ludovici: Ex Officina Synodi Missouriensis Lutheranae [Luth. Concordia-Verlag], 1879), 705.

a) That is, that [cause] which, by the authority of another (superior), puts the sacrament in use.[9]

My colleague William Weinrich reminded us of Walther's teaching:

Historically, Lutheranism has answered the question of whether or not a layman should exercise the duties of the Office of the Public Ministry with a definite "No." The biblical basis for this answer included 1 Cor. 4:1 and Eph. 4:11. The basis in the Lutheran Confessions is AC XIV: "Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call." When C. F. W. Walther observed that "in the case of the Lord's Supper no genuine case of emergency can arise" and so "almost all orthodox Lutheran theologians declare that no layman should administer holy communion," he was simply reflecting the common opinion of Lutheran exegetical and dogmatic tradition.[10]

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

The Third Homily on the Holy Pascha by Basil of Seleucia

Early Christian paschal homilies are a largely ignored source for theological reflection on the meaning of Easter. However, as a resource for homiletic imagery, linguistic vitality (at times virtuosity!), and rhetorical strategies, ancient paschal homilies provide a rich mine of materials.

In an earlier submission, I presented a translation of a homily attributed to Pseudo-Chrysostom.[11] The short homily translated below is another wonderful example of such a homily (that is, an Easter homily). The Greek text for this translation is the critical text provided by Michel Aubineau.[12] In the notes, I have

---

[9] "Causa *ministerialis*[a] est *minister* ecclesiae *ordinarius*, qui elementa externa consecrat et communicantibus distribuit.

"a) Seu quae auctoritate alterius, velut superioris, sacramentum in usu constituit." Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, 3:494.

[10] William C. Weinrich, "Should a Layman Discharge the Duties of the Holy Ministry?," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68, nos. 3–4 (2004): 212–213; C. F. W. Walther, *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*, ed. Wilbert Rosin, trans. Fred Kramer (Fort Wayne, Ind.: The Office of Development, Concordia Theological Seminary, 1987), 107.

[11] William C. Weinrich, "A Homily: On the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ—Attributed to Pseudo-Chrysostom," *CTQ* 85, no. 1 (2021): 83–88.

[12] Michel Aubineau, *Hésychius de Jérusalem, Basile de Séleucie, Jean de Béryte, Pseudo-Chrysostom, Léonce de Constantinople: Homélies Pascales (cinq homélies inédites)*, Sources Crétiennes 187 [hereafter SC] (Paris: Les Ėditions du Cerf, 1972), 169–277 (Greek text, 206–214).

made ample use of the material given by Aubineau, while also making some observations and comments of my own.

Very little is known of the life of Basil of Seleucia. His birthdate is unknown, as is the course of his life before he became the bishop of Seleucia at some point before 448. He is best remembered for his somewhat vacillating behavior during the Christological debates of the fifth century. He attended the Synod of Constantinople in 448, summoned by Bishop Flavian of Constantinople, at which Eutyches was condemned as heretical for his christological opinions. Basil of Seleucia supported Flavian and voted against Eutyches. However, in the following year at the so-called "Robber Synod" of Ephesus (449), Basil, perhaps under pressure from Dioscorus of Alexandria, voted to remove the previous condemnation against Eutyches, and in addition to depose Flavian as Patriarch of Constantinople. Finally, at the Council of Chalcedon (451) Basil again voted to condemn the heresy of Eutyches, while escaping any disciplinary action against himself. After Chalcedon, Basil seems to have remained an advocate for the council. We last hear of Basil in 458 when he joined with other bishops of Isauria in a letter to Emperor Leo I, urging the emperor to support the decisions of Chalcedon and protesting the recent elevation of the "monophysite" Timothy Aelurus as Patriarch of Alexandria. The date of Basil's death is also unknown, but Ernst Honigmann has argued for a date after 468.[13]

The city of Seleucia was founded around 300 BC by Seleucus I, king of Syria. It is located near the mouth of the river Calycadnus, in the southern part of Isauria, a rugged inland area of southern Asia Minor. Early on Seleucia had a Christian population, and the city became famous for the tomb of St. Thecla (first century), which became a favorite for Christian pilgrims.[14] The see of Seleucia was attached to the patriarchy of Antioch. In 359, a council of some 160 bishops was assembled to discuss the doctrine of Christ and his relation to the Father. This council is usually termed "Semi-Arian," because it rejected the ὁμοούσιον of Nicaea as well as the formula ὁμοιούσιον ("similar in essence") since neither was used in the Scriptures. Rather, the council strongly condemned the "unlike" formula (ἀνόμοιος) of Aetius and Eunomius and accepted the creed of Acacius of Caesarea, which affirmed that the Son was "like in all things" (ὁμοῖος κατὰ πάντα) to the Father.

[13] Ernst Honigmann, *Patristic Studies*, Studi e testi 173 (Roma: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1953), 174–184.

[14] According to the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (c. 190), Thecla came from Iconium and was dedicated to virginity. She was converted by Paul and died at Seleucia. Etheria visited the tomb during her famous pilgrimage (c. 384).

Although a relatively minor figure, Basil and his works have been greatly appreciated. Forty-one homilies of Basil are printed in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*[15] (PG 85:28–473). Six sermons attributed to Pseudo-Athanasius are now thought to be from Basil (PG 28:1047–1061, 1073–1108).[16] Also authentic to Basil are the *Life of St. Thecla* (PG 85:477–560) and the *Collection of Thirty-One Miracles of St. Thecla* (PG 85:561–617). The reputation of Basil as a homilist is attested by the fact that the famous Byzantine hymnographer, Romanos the Melodist, used some material from Basil in his *kontakia*.[17]

The present homily is preserved in five manuscripts, dating from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. Four of these witnesses attribute the homily to Basil. The fifth (*Codex Parisinus gr. 1554 A*, fourteenth century) attributes the homily to Chrysostom. It was common to attribute sermons to Chrysostom when the origins were unknown or less famous. The fact, then, that four of the five witnesses attribute the text to Basil is a good argument for his authorship.[18] On the other hand, it is evident that Basil made use, sometimes word for word, of a paschal homily by Proclus of Constantinople (*Oratio* 15, *In S. Pascha*).[19]

This homily reveals a strong anti-Arian theology, emphasizing the full deity of the Word. Basil emphasizes the immutability of the Word and its subsistence without any beginning (emphasis on the imperfect "was") especially in the second section. The first section praises the benefits and effects of baptism. The third section is addressed directly to those recently baptized. There Basil exhorts the newly baptized not to fall away from the heavenly gifts of Baptism into the evil realities and habits which had previously been their custom. Notable are the sixteen ways in which Baptism is a good gift from heaven. The heavenly gifts of Baptism are due to the fact that the one in whose name they are baptized is none other than the fully divine Word of whom the evangelist John speaks in John 1:1–3. In the Byzantine liturgy, the prologue of John was the usual lectionary reading for the eucharistic service on Easter morning. Thus, this homily was probably delivered "on the day of Pascha itself, during the morning service, before a public which contained within its ranks those 'newly illumined' in the previous night."[20]

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[15] *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857–1886) [hereafter PG].

[16] See now also Richard W. Bishop, "Homilia in Pentecosten (CPG 6665): A Sermon of Basil of Seleucia," *Sacris Erudiri* 52 (2013): 119–160.

[17] For discussion of the works attributed to Basil and the use of some by Romanos, see Aubineau, SC 187:170–174.

[18] For discussion of the textual tradition, see Aubineau, SC 187:175–181.

[19] For evidence, see Aubineau, SC 187:181–186. This sermon by Proclus is printed in PG 65:800–805.

[20] Aubineau, SC 187:201–202, here 202.

With some variations in the manuscripts, the title of the homily is as follows:

Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βασιλείου ἐπισκόπου Σελευκείας
λόγος εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πάσχα

[Discourse of Basil, our father among the saints, Bishop of Seleucia.
On the Holy Pascha]

1. Inexpressible is Christ's love of humankind toward us in that he has enriched his church with many gifts. He who is great in will "and mighty in his works"[21] has "redeemed our nature from the curse of the law,"[22] he has freed it from the ancient "certificate of debt."[23] Upon the wood [of the cross] he has led in triumph him who set a snare [for Adam] through a tree.[24] He has made dull the sting of the fearful death. Those who have become aged by sin he has made new, not through fire but through water. He has shown the three-day tomb to be the gate of the resurrection. "Those who are estranged from the commonwealth of Israel"[25] he has shown to be "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household."[26] "To those who

[21] A quotation from Jeremiah 39:19 (LXX). The first part of Jeremiah 39:19 reads "the Lord of great counsel" (Κύριος μεγάλης βουλῆς). (All Scripture quotations are that of Brenton's English translation of the LXX.) Basil has slightly altered that reading: "He who is great in will" (ὁ μέγας τῇ βουλῇ). In doing so, Basil makes the language of Jeremiah into a divine attribute or characteristic of Christ. This corresponds to the pervasive claim of this homily: Jesus Christ is true God, equal to the Father in all things divine.

[22] Galatians 3:13. In a note, Aubineau reminds us that the "curse" here mentioned is that which arises from the accusation of the law. He quotes Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De paenitentia sermo* 3, as illustration: "How did Christ redeem us? By giving gold or silver?—By no means! But by giving his own blood which is more valuable than gold or precious stones. He has in effect redeemed all of our sins. . . . What sins?—Those of the Law. Not that the Law is sin. Not at all! But because without the Law one would not commit sin. As the Law, having made a transgressor of me, has placed me under a curse, Christ Jesus has come to redeem me from the curse of the Law, having become for us a curse" (PG 60:707).

[23] See Colossians 2:14. The idea that Christ paid or cancelled a certificate of debt was a common theme in patristic literature. Here Basil seems to say that the certificate of debt from which our nature is freed was the Mosaic law. See the discussion with further evidence on the use of the theme in Aubineau, SC 187:217–218.

[24] The verb σκελίζω "to trip up, ensnare, overthrow" (also ὑποσκελίζω) was a favorite term for the devil's temptation. For example, Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* 3.10: "He [the devil] made Adam trip and he overwhelmed him" (ἐνίκησε τὸν Ἀδαμ καὶ ὑποσκέλισε [ACW 31:59; SC 50:155]). The theme that by a tree Christ overcame sin and death which had entered the world by a tree was common. With great economy, the idea is expressed by Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In Pascha sermo* 6.50–51: "having planted the tree in the place of the tree" (ξύλον ξύλῳ ἀντιρριζώσας [SC 27:176]).

[25] See Ephesians 2:12. Baptism is the new birth which allows Gentiles to share in the promises of God first given to Israel. Basil now repeats this idea through various descriptions of the Gentiles given in Ephesians 2:12, 13, 19.

[26] Ephesians 2:19.

were strangers to the covenants of the promise"[27] he has given the heavenly mysteries. "To those who have no hope"[28] he has freely given the down payment of salvation, the Spirit.[29] "Those who were without God in the world"[30] he has promoted to be temples of the Trinity. "Those who once were far away,"[31] not in place but in the manner of their conduct, he made to be near, not in distance but by intention, not by location but by worship, through the cross of salvation, having embraced those who were rebellious.

It is truly so as the prophet [said], "Who has heard of such things and who has seen anything like this?"[32] All the angels are amazed at the mystery! All the heavenly powers shudder before the wonder. The throne has not been left vacant, but the world has been saved.[33] He did not depart from the heavens, but he freed the earth. He did not leave bare the paternal breast,[34] but he has despoiled hades. He remained unchangeable,[35] yet he has clothed himself with those newly enlightened.[36]

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[27] Ephesians 2:12.

[28] Ephesians 2:12.

[29] An echo of 2 Corinthians 1:22 (τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος).

[30] Ephesians 2:12.

[31] Ephesians 2:13.

[32] Isaiah 66:8 (LXX). Basil reads according to Codex Sinaiticus (τὶς ἤκουσε τοιοῦτα καὶ τὶς ἑώρακεν οὕτως). Aubineau notes that this text of Isaiah was employed also by Severian of Gabala (+ c. 408) in a baptismal context (*In allud: In principio erat Verbum* 2 [PG 63:546]).

[33] In four parallel statements, Basil expresses the conviction that he who became man and suffered and died remained that which he eternally was, namely, the fully divine Word. The claim was made especially against Arian denials that the Word was fully divine. The throne was a common image for the assertion that the Word shared in the divine rule with the Father. For example, Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 1.61: ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θρόνον τῷ πατρὶ κάθηται (PG 26:140).

[34] Greek: πατρικοὺς κόλπους. This is an image perhaps derived from John 1:18 (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρός). This image was commonly used to assert the deity of Christ along with his humanity. That the Word did not depart the paternal breast asserts not only that the Word incarnate remained fully divine, but also that he remained with the Father in the inseparable unity of the Trinity. That the one Son of the Father existed in and through his deity and in and through his humanity provided rich homiletic opportunity. For example, Proclus of Constantinople, *Oratio* 15, *In S. Pascha* 5–6: ἴδε μητρικῷ κόλπῳ τὸν μὴ χωρισθέντα τοῦ πατρῴου κόλπου . . . ὁ μὴ γυμνώσας τὸν πατρικὸν θρόνον (PG 65:804). See Aubineau for other examples (SC 187:223–224).

[35] Greek: ἀναλλοίωτος ἔμεινε. The adjective "unchangeable, immutable" (often with ἄτρεπτος, "immutable") was common in discussions with the Arians. In its final anathema, the *Symbolum Nicaeanum* of 325 includes these terms: "Those who say that the Son of God is either mutable [τρεπτόν] or changeable [ἀλλοιωτόν] the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes." For the wide use of these terms, see G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon, 1961).

[36] Greek: ἑαυτὸν τοὺς νεοφωτίστους ἐνέδυσε. Perhaps inspired by Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε). Basil takes the liberty to reverse the image. In Baptism, Christ has clothed himself with the raiment of the baptized!

2. The Word subsisted, and to fishermen he has provided wings for speaking about God.[37] For that reason John cried out,[38] "In Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God."[39] See the accuracy of the evangelist! He does not say, "In the beginning was the Word begotten."[40] He does not proclaim the begetting but the subsistence. For since a begetting suggests a beginning of existence, the evangelist, wishing to establish that the Son was without beginning,[41] is silent about the begetting and proclaims the subsistence.

"In Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." These three statements suffice as a wall of defense for the church.[42] Who has

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"Newly enlightened" was a common term for those who had just been baptized. For more examples, see Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. νεογώτιστος.

[37] Basil begins a reflection on John 1:1–3. In doing so, he shows the anti-Arian emphasis of this homily. The fishermen refer to the apostles, especially St. John. Aubineau interprets the mention of fishermen to refer to the fact that Christ chose untrained men rather than philosophers to be his apostles. He translates: "Il a donné des ailes pour la contemplation" ("He has given wings for contemplation" [SC 187:209, 226–228]). The mention of "wings" might lead to this interpretation, for John, signified by the eagle, was often thought to have been given sight into heavenly realities. Later in the homily, Basil emphasizes the ascent of John to the royal throne of God. However, perhaps "fishermen" possesses also a secondary sense. The Greek is τοὺς ἁλιέας πρὸς θεολογίαν. Θεολογία means "speaking about God" (see Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. θεολόγια for references). The idea then seems to be this: John has received wings so that he might ascend to behold heavenly realities in order to speak about them. As a parallel, Aubineau adduces Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In allud: Si qua in Christo nova creatura* (PG 64:25). But that text refers to the "preaching" (κήρυγμα). Nevertheless, "wings" refers to an exalted vision.

[38] Greek: βοᾷ Ἰωάννης. Aubineau reports that he has found thirty-nine occasions in the homilies of Basil where the verb βοᾶν is used to introduce a biblical citation. Nineteen times the subject of the verb is Christ; eleven times the subject is the apostles, especially Paul and John; three times the verb is used of Moses or Isaiah.. The verb ἀναβοᾶν also occurs, but less frequently (seven times) and for a wider circle of speakers. See Aubineau, SC 187:228.

[39] According to Aubineau, this commentary on John 1:1–3 is taken, almost word for word, from *Homily* 15 of Proclus of Constantinople (*In S. Pascha* [PG 65:800–801]). His note gives an interesting summary of the reading from John 1:1–17 in paschal liturgies (SC 187:228–229).

[40] Aubineau notes that in his homily (see previous note) Proclus, perhaps in view of the *Symbolum Nicaeanum*, interprets "begetting" (γέννησις) and "subsistence" (ὕπαρξις) as complementary terms. The former refers to the eternal generation of the Son, the latter refers to the eternal subsistence of the Son in the deity of the Godhead. Basil, on the other hand, speaks of these two terms as opposites. "Begetting" refers to a beginning in time; "subsistence" to the Son's eternal subsistence in the Godhead.

[41] Greek: βουλόμενος οὖν ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς παραστῆσαι τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὸ ἄναρχον. Τὸ ἄναρχον is an adjectival substance with the genitive "of the Son." That is difficult to put into readable English. The adjective ἄναρχος is at times translated "eternal." However, in this context Basil is not concerned about an attribute, but about the contrast "without a beginning"—"with a beginning."

[42] I have translated the Greek εἰς τεῖχος as a "wall of defense." A τεῖχος was specifically a wall around a town or city, and so a defense against hostile intruders. The word could then simply mean a "fortification, castle, fort." Here the theological statements in John 1:1 form a "wall of defense" against the Arian heretics. For further evidence on the use of this image, see Aubineau, SC 187:233–234.

taught you these things, O John?[43] The sea? But the sea teaches no doctrine! The fish? But fish do not contemplate God! Zebedee? But he was uneducated! The fatherland? But your village was insignificant! Your fellow citizens? But they were rustic folk! The Jews? But they were unbelieving! The law? But it has only shadow![44] Moses? But he was "weak in speech and slow in tongue!"[45] Abraham? But he was "earth and ashes!"[46] David? But he was "a worm and not a man!"[47] The prophets? But the veil of the law still lay over them![48]

How, then, do you say, "In Beginning was the Word"? Who has raised you up to such a height?[49] Who has graciously granted to you such wings? You have forgotten your nature! You have left the earth behind! You have gone beyond the air! You have surpassed the ether! You have flown beyond the heavens! You have leapt over the angels! You have gone beyond the seraphim! You have surpassed the cherubim! You have stood near the royal throne! You have bent over and peered

[43] The homilist addresses the evangelist as though in personal conversation. In patristic homily, this was an oft-occurring and effective rhetorical strategy. It has the effect of bringing the author of the written text *into* the orality of the sermon. The following series of rhetorical questions are taken, with some variation, from Proclus of Constantinople (*Oratio* 15, *In S. Pascha* [PG 65:800–805]), one of the clearest examples of Basil's use of Proclus.

[44] Basil writes σκιὰν εἶχε, perhaps with Hebrews 10:1 in mind (σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν). However, the idea that the law was a shadow of the new things to come in Christ was so common that an allusion to a biblical passage would have been unnecessary.

[45] Exodus 4:10.

[46] Genesis 18:27.

[47] Psalm 21:6 (LXX).

[48] Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:13–16.

[49] Basil now describes the ascension of the evangelist to the vision of God. To speak of this ascension, Basil employs a series of verbs, each prefixed by a preposition indicating a going beyond (παρατρέχει, παρέρχεσθαι, ὑπερβαίνειν, ὑπερίπτασθαι, ὑπερπεδᾶν). Basil lists the stages through which and beyond which the evangelist rises to the throne of God: earth, air, ether, heavens, angels, seraphim, cherubim. Aubineau refers to similar descriptions of John's ascent in Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De S. Iohanne* (PG 59:611); Paulinus of Nola, *Epistle* 21.4 (CSEL 29:151–152; PL 61:251). Citations marked PL are from *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1844–1864).

into the royal breast![50] You have been furnished with wings by faith![51] As though by a trumpet [you have proclaimed] an incomprehensible faith. As though by a thunderclap [you have proclaimed] an unknowable generation.[52] You have proclaimed a subsistence without a beginning. You have said, "In Beginning was the Word." A Beginning which does not admit of a beginning.[53] "In Beginning was the Word." For, before every beginning the Word was. The Word was.[54] It did not come [into existence]. For, without passion [the Word] was begotten,[55] inconceivable,

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[50] Greek: εἰς τοὺς βασιλικοὺς ἐνέκυψας κόλπους. The verb κύπτειν "to bend over" in order to peer inside (also ἐνκύπτειν, παρακύπτειν) occurs often in texts describing contemplation. See Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. ἐγκύπτειν, παρακύπτειν. Παρακύπτειν occurs in John 20:5: The beloved disciple ran ahead of Peter, and coming to the tomb, he bent over and peered (παρακύψας) into it. The "royal breast" is that of the Father. From that standpoint, the evangelist could contemplate the eternal generation of the Son. A common patristic claim was that John was allowed (or enabled) to peer into the mysteries of the Godhead because it was he who leaned upon the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper. For a good example of this, see Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In laudem S. Iohannis, hom*. 2 (PG 61:722): "He reclined on the lordly breast of the Savior, and having been enlightened in his mind into the depths of wisdom and knowledge, he cried out, 'In Beginning' . . . ." For other evidence of this, see Aubineau, SC 187:243–244.

[51] Greek: ἐπτεροποιήθης τῇ πίστει. The very rare verb πτεροποιέω "make winged" is not listed in Liddell-Scott: Henry George Liddell, and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* ed. P. G. W. Glare and A. A. Thompson, rev. and augm. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0725/95032369-b.html.. Lampe's *Patristic Lexicon* gives but two examples: Athanasius, *fr. 1 in Cant*. (PG 27:1349) and Proclus of Constantinople, *Oratio* 15.3 (PG 65:801). The Proclus citation is, in fact, the same as in our homily. Basil of Seleucia seems to have borrowed the phrase from Proclus.

[52] Greek: γέννησιν ἀκατάληπτον. Perhaps referring to Isaiah 53:8 (LXX): τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται;. The fathers frequently interpreted this verse as a reference to the temporal generation of the incarnation. But it could also be applied to the eternal generation. For evidence, see Aubineau, SC 187:245–246. Aubineau refers to G.-M. de Durand, "Sa generation, qui la racontera (Is. 53,8b): l'exégèse des Pères," *Revue de Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 53 (1953): 638–657.

[53] Greek: ἀρχῇ ἀρχὴν οὐκ ἐπιδεχομένῃ. The adjective ἄναρχος "without beginning" was frequently employed to assert the deity of the Word. This precise phraseology probably was borrowed from Proclus of Constantinople, *Homily* 15 (PG 65:805), who expresses the two natures of Christ by distinguishing between having no beginning and receiving a beginning (ὁ λόγος . . . ὁ ἄναρχος καὶ ἀρχὴν μὴ δεχόμενος καὶ ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι λαβών). For further discussion, see Aubineau, SC 187:247–248.

[54] Rhetorically, Basil is giving emphasis to the durative imperfect "was" (ἦν). In the presentation of the sermon, Basil would have given the verb emphasis by tone of voice and perhaps by lingering on the verb. As Aubineau notes, this entire section reflects the debate with the Arians. Consider the anathemas at the conclusion of the *Symbolum Nicaeanum*: "Those who say that there was a time when *he was not* [ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν] and that he was begotten *he was not* [πρὶν γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν] and that he was brought forth out of nothing [ἐκ οὐκ ὄντων ἐγένετο] the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes."

[55] Greek: απαθῶς γὰρ ἐγεννήθη. "He was begotten without passion" distinguishes the eternal generation of the Son from the Father from all animal or human generations. The Father did not *become* a father by begetting a son, nor did the Son *become* a son by being begotten. There is no "before" nor "after" in their relationship. In animal and human generation, a father was the son of

simple, non-composite, beyond all understanding, inaccessible to idle inquiry, eternal, indivisible, immutable, uncreate, being everything whatsoever the one who begot [him] is.[56]

"In Beginning was the Word." He [i.e., John] has shown that the person has no beginning.[57] "And the Word was with God." He has shown that the essence is indivisible. "And the Word was God." He has shown the identity of the nature. "He was in Beginning with God." He has shown that he is coeternal with the Father. "All things were created through him." He has shown that he acted freely when he created.[58] "All things were created." They were created long ago, but now they have been renewed.

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his father, and the son of a father will himself become a father of a son. Such a sequence of "before" and "after" which includes separation and divisibility is excluded in the relation Father-Son in the Trinity. See the discussion in Aubineau, SC 187:250–252. See especially Athanasius, *De decretis* 11 (PG 25:441–444).

[56] Basil lists ten attributes of the Word which are implied in his generation from the Father "without passion." Greek: ἀπερινόητος, ἁπλοῦς, ἀσύνθετος, ἀνέφικτος, ἀπολυπραγμόνητος, ἀίδιος, ἀμέριστος, ἀναλλοίωτος, ἄκτιστος, πάντα ὤν ὅσα ἐστὶν ὁ γεννήσας. For discussion of these terms, see Aubineau, SC 187:252–256; Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*.

[57] Until now, Basil has commented only upon the first clause of John 1:1. John has demonstrated that the person of the Word is without beginning (ἔδειξε τῆς ὑποστάσεως τὸ ἄναρχον). Now Basil, with great brevity, gives commentary on the remaining clauses of John 1:1–3, indicating how each reinforces the full deity of the Word. That the Word created all things was commonly used as an argument for the eternal preexistence of the Word. With a striking suddenness, Basil transitions at the end of the paragraph to the new creation of Baptism, the real homiletic topic of the sermon (καὶ νῦν ἀνεκαινίσθη).

[58] That all things were created through the Word was an argument for the Word himself being "uncreated." Here Basil of Seleucia asserts the *freedom* by which the Father created through the Word. The Arians claimed that God freely willed to create his Word/Son. Were the Son generated by nature, then the Son was generated by a natural necessity. The fathers of Nicaea, in opposition to the Arians, asserted that the eternal generation of the Word was itself characterized by the freedom of love. At the same time, as here, they asserted that the creation of the universe was an act of freedom. Aubineau adduces Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos* 3:63–64: "But the Son is not a work of will [θελήματος δημιούργημα], nor has he come after [the will], as is the creation, but he is by nature [φύσει] the proper offspring of God's essence. For being the proper Word of the Father, he does not allow us to think of a will as before himself, since he is himself the Father's living counsel and power and the framer of the things which seemed good to the Father. . . . Therefore, if the works subsist 'by will and favor,' and the whole creation is made 'at God's good pleasure,'. . . he is external to the things which have come to be by will [βουλήσει], but rather is himself the living counsel of the Father by which all these things have come to be" (PG 26:456–457; *NPNF*^{2} 4:428–429). I have not followed completely the selection of quotation as Aubineau gives it. The whole passage is worthy of reading and reflection. Quotations marked *NPNF*^{2} are from *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952–1957).

3. Behold, therefore, O newly enlightened,[59] of what great mysteries you have been thought worthy! You have come to know their power by experience.[60] You have been redeemed. Do not again allow yourself to be taken prisoner. You have renounced.[61] Do not be again deceived and associate again with [the devil].[62] You have openly given your signature. Take care concerning the interest.[63] You have

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[59] Basil addresses the newly baptized directly and refers to them as "newly enlightened" (ὦ νεοφώτιστε). The language expresses two ideas: (1) the minds of the newly baptized are illumined to know, perceive, and acknowledge the truth of divine revelation in the Gospel of Christ; (2) but perhaps more specifically, the newly baptized are themselves the new creation. As at the first creation God said, "Let there be light," so now through Baptism the newly baptized have themselves become the light of the new creation, enlightened by the Light which is Christ himself. It should be noted that the transitional conjunction "therefore" is in strengthened form (τοιγαροῦν).

[60] Greek: ἔγνως τὴν δύναμιν τῇ πείρᾳ. Basil employs similar language in *Vita sanctae Theclae* 1 (PG 85:553): "Thanks to you, O Paul, I have come to know [ἔγνων] the grace and the power [δύναμιν] of this divine bath that is baptism, both by the instruction and by the experience [πείρᾳ]." Cited by Aubineau, SC 187:260. We learn that passages from Paul's letters were used in pre-baptismal catechesis, and these spoke of the gifts and benefits of Baptism. However, what Paul had instructed about was also *experienced* through the event of Baptism itself. Power (δύναμις) is not a thought. It is a force which moves and so is experienced.

[61] Greek: ἀπετάξω. In the middle, ἀποτάσσεσθαι means "to say good-bye" to a person, "to depart from" a person. Or, more negatively, "to get rid of" a person (ἀποτάσσεσθαι τῷ βίῳ = "to commit suicide"). The middle also has the sense of "to renounce" or "to give up." Here the reference is to the "renunciation" of the devil and of all his pomp and wiles. The renunciation of the devil was an essential aspect of Baptism, signifying the abjuring of a former allegiance and lordship and the habits of life corresponding to them. See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catecheses* I.4–9 (SC 126:88–99); John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* II.17 (SC 50:143; ACW 31:49–50). For further references, see Aubineau, SC 187:260–261; Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. ἀποτάσσω, II.A. In the middle form, the verb also became a technical term for the renunciation of the world when entering the monastic life (Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. ἀποτάσσω, II.D). See also J.-H. Waszink, "Pompa diaboli," *Vigiliae Christianae* 1 (1947): 13–41.

[62] Greek: μὴ πάλιν δελεασθεὶς συντάξῃ. The verb συντάσσω is the opposite of ἀποτάσσω. In the passive and middle, the verb was used of military formations ("to draw up in a live" for battle). It is possible that Basil is thinking of such ideas (do not again become a soldier in the army of the devil). The verb for "to deceive" is δελεάζω. Its basic sense is "to catch by a bait" (noun: δέλεαρ = bait [also δόλος]). Aubineau adduces two other instances in which Basil uses the image of deception (SC 187:261–262). One is of a stratagem of the devil to deceive so as to effect the fall of a Christian (*In sanctam Thomam* 6 [PG 28:1089]). The other is of Christ deceiving hades: "Christ himself descends into Hades, deceiving Hades by the flesh which he was wearing, destroying the royal palace by the power of his divinity" (*In S. Pascha* 4 [PG 28:1080]).

[63] Greek: ἐξέθου τὸ χειρόγραφον· μερίμνα περὶ τοῦ τόκου. Baptism arranges one on the side of Christ as one's new Lord. The one newly baptized, therefore, assumes a new set of habits and obligations which are, so to speak, contracted with Christ. Basil articulates this new reality as a contract signed. The new master, Christ, gives a loan to the newly baptized and expects the principal to be kept safe, and indeed interest to be paid. The term ὁ τόκος (from the verb τίκτω = "to bear, give birth") means "childbirth," or concretely that brought forth, "a child." However, metaphorically it was used in an economic sense of that brought forth from the lending of money, that is, interest. The following mention of the "talent" and the "work" expected makes clear that the interest expected through the baptismal contract is the disciplines and habits of that life

been entrusted with the talent. Take heed of the work. By experience you have been given into marriage. Do not commit adultery through blasphemy.[64] You have been led into freedom. Do not behave arrogantly toward your liberator as though he were a slave. You have put on the bright garment. Flash like lightening by your conscience. You have put away your outward form.[65] "Do not grieve the Spirit." For, preaching from above the mystery of Baptism and the unmeasurable grace of him who was crucified, the prophet cries out, "He is the one who desires mercy!"[66] Who, O prophet? Christ, who for mercy's sake became man! He who, although by his birth he did not open the virginal gates, will himself "return and have pity upon us."[67] Having "returned," he has delivered you from error. "He has had pity" upon you. For, upon the cross he has triumphed over the common sin and "has drowned our iniquities,"[68] since the mystical waters of Baptism have expunged "our sins in the

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renewed and engendered through Baptism. See the discussion and evidence given by Aubineau, SC 187:262–264. As illustration, Aubineau adduces a fifth- or sixth-century baptismal catechesis (perhaps from Constantinople) which gives a full analogy: "Take note, you have come to the end of your catechumenate and to the time of your deliverance. Today you will give over to Christ the letter [γραμμάτιον] of your faith. The paper [χάρτης] is your conscience. The ink [μέλαν] is your speech, and the reed/pen [κάλαμος] is your disposition [σχῆμα]. See, therefore, how you are going to give your signature [χειρογράφητε] on your confession. . . . Note that you have renounced the devil and that you have aligned yourselves with Christ. The contract is effected. The master holds it in heaven. Strive to observe its stipulations [συνθήκας], for on the day of judgment this contract will be presented to you. Do not lose the principal [τὸ κεφάλαιον]. On the contrary, add some interest [τοὺς τόκους] to it" (SC 50:85, 87). Aubineau notes that these images are analogies and do not suggest that there was, in reality, a subscription by hand to a confession of faith.

[64] Baptism was frequently described as a spiritual marriage in which Christ as groom takes to himself the church/each Christian as his bride. The image occurs already in Paul (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–26). See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Baptismal Catecheses* 3.1–2 (PG 33:425); John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* I.1 (SC 50:108). Ammonius of Alexandria: "The groom is Christ; the bride is the church; the marriage is the place of baptism" (J. Reuss, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Texte und Untersuchungen, 89; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 221. Any sundering of the baptismal union is the adultery of blasphemy.

[65] Greek: ἀπέθου τὸ σχῆμα. Basil has just mentioned the clothing with bright garments. This refers to the putting on of white garments on those coming up from the baptismal font. However, the white garment was itself a figure of the renewed body and soul of the baptized. When now Basil speaks of putting away "your outward form," he is referring to the habits of sin which characterize the unbeliever.

[66] Greek: θελητης ἐλέους ἐστίν. Aubineau translates: "Il veut la miséricorde" ("He desires mercy"). However, Aubineau gives the sense of the subject noun to the verb. Θελητής is a masculine noun serving as the subject of the sentence. As such, it identifies the desire with the person himself: He is the desiring person, or, he is the person whose personal characteristic it is to desire mercy. The Greek of Basil is an exact rendering of Micah 7:18. For this noun form, Liddell-Scott refers only to the Micah text. But see Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. θελητής.

[67] The quote comes from Micah 7:19. Basil will now elaborate on the two verbs, "shall return" and "shall have pity."

[68] Basil continues to quote Micah, here again Micah 7:19. Basil mentions "common sin" (τὴν κοινὴν ἁμαρτίαν), a reference to the sin of Adam which finds its like in every human being.

depth of the sea."[69] He considers the baptismal font and proclaims grace. For Baptism is the principal of all good gifts—the purification of the world, the renewal of nature, redemption in concise form, a simple medicine, a moisture which as fire consumes sins, a sponge which purifies the conscience, a clothing which does not become old with time, a womb which conceives without passion,[70] a tomb which gives new birth to those who are buried, an abyss which drowns sins,[71] an element which is the tomb of the devil, the seal of him who took the rampart, the certain advocate before the judge, a fountain which quenches Gehenna, the gift which secures the Supper of the Lord,[72] a mystery both ancient and new which was foreshadowed in the writing of Moses.[73]

To Christ himself, our God, be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

William C. Weinrich
Translator

Aubineau comments: "An allusion to original sin" ("péché original" [SC 187:268]). This may be a misleading translation. It is doubtful that Basil of Seleucia is thinking in Augustinian terms, of sin inherited from Adam and organically connected to it. Basil's way of speaking is not common. Aubineau notes the phrase "the common sin" is not mentioned in Lampe's *Patristic Lexicon*. Aubineau adduces a text from Theodoret of Cyrus, *De incarnatione Domini* 12: "The defeat of our first father [προπάτορος] has become the common defeat [ἧττα κοινή]" (PG 75:1436).

[69] The quotation of Micah 7:19 continues.

[70] The baptismal font was frequently called the womb of the church, and likened to the virginal womb of Mary. For example, Leo I, *Sermon* 24.3: "For every person who is born anew, the water of baptism is as a virginal womb. It is the same Spirit who filled the Virgin who now fills the baptismal font" (PL 54:206).

[71] An allusion to the drowning of the army of Pharoah, who was regarded as a type of the devil.

[72] Greek: δείπνου δεσπότικου πρόξενος χάρις. A reference to Baptism as that which allows one to partake of the Eucharist. It was common for the newly baptized to be led straightway to the Supper. For example, John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* 2.7: "For straightway [εὐθέως] after they come up from the waters, they are led to the awesome table heavy laden with countless favors, where they taste of the Master's body and blood, and become a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Since they have put on Christ Himself, wherever they go they are like angels on earth, rivalling the brilliance of the rays of the sun" (SC 50:149; ACW 31:53). Also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures* 4.7: "When a person says to God, 'You have prepared a table before me' (LXX Ps 22:5), what does he intend to signify if not the mystical and spiritual table" (SC 126:141). For other evidence, see Aubineau, SC 187:274–275.

[73] Greek: ἐπὶ Μωυσέως σκιαγραφηθέν. A reference to the typology of the exodus. Early Christian authors frequently referred to Old Testament prefigurements of Christ and the church as written "in shadow" and the fulfillment as being "in truth/reality" (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ).

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Book Reviews

***A History of Evangelism in North America*. Edited by Thomas P. Johnson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021. 368 pp. Paperback. $23.99.**

These are histories, not a history. The scope of this volume of essays by various Southern Baptist professors of evangelism is the entirety of America's history, not Canada's or Mexico's, so titles can be misleading. Why would a Lutheran read a book so deeply Southern Baptist that "your Cooperative Program dollars" are referenced in the editor's acknowledgments? A Lutheran should read this book to understand, without spite or prejudgment, the history and nature of American religion, which is more intimately tied to frontier religion, radio preaching, and the influence of the Jesus Movement (all covered here in some measure) than it is to the forms of church life native to confessional Lutheranism.

You will find here some strange and fascinating connections, such as the role of the radio preaching of Donald Grey Barnhouse in converting D. James Kennedy, who first heard the question, "Suppose you were to die today and stand before God . . . what would you say?" on his radio and was brought to his knees by that question before it became a famous part of *Evangelism Explosion*, or the linkage between Henrietta Mears's Sunday School in Hollywood, California with Dawson Trotman, the founder of Navigators, and Billy Graham. You will find clear coverage of things of foundational importance to American Christianity, such as Jonathan Edwards's method of revival and Donald McGavran's definition of "church growth," by which he meant evangelism, not simply numerical increase in congregations. Many of the leading figures of the history of evangelism are unknown to Lutherans or, when known, are caricatured by Lutherans. Reading these essays will restore some fullness to our ideas and some complexity to our understandings.

These histories cover almost nothing between the antebellum period and the run-up to World War I, the only exception being J. Wilbur Chapman, the mentor of Billy Sunday. Dwight Lyman Moody is not here, nor would one learn anything about revival-like American institutions such as the Chautauqua or the beginnings of radio preaching. Walter A. Maier's absence is conspicuous but unsurprising. The unevenness of coverage leaves a gap between the revivals of the early nineteenth century and the evangelists and evangelistic methods of the later twentieth century. That lacuna is enormous, and one wishes someone had filled it in a little more. In addition, some essays are pedestrian or devotional in tone—Protestant hagiographies. Most essays, however, are thorough, interesting, and well-written, especially the ones on the leading figures of the latter twentieth century.

Even something as apparently esoteric as a survey of Southern Baptist evangelistic literature displays the constant demand for denominationally specific versions of things available outside denominations—Southern Baptist versions of *Evangelism Explosion*, for example, were produced at the height of Kennedy's project. Is this true also in our circles? That history remains to be written, perhaps, but the connections between the history of American Lutherans and the history of American evangelism and evangelistic preaching may well be numerous, strange, and fascinating.

Adam C. Koontz

***Luther's Works*, vol. 56, *Sermons III*. Edited by Benjamin T.G. Mayes. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018. xxviii + 440 pp. Hardcover. $59.99.**

The "new series" of *Luther's Works*—which, when complete, will have added another twenty volumes to the original fifty-five of the now classic American Edition—continues to be a great boon to students of Luther, both academic and pastoral. Volume 56, the third of three new sermon volumes, is no exception. Preachers will surely peruse its sermons in the preparation of their own, as they have with previous collections, whether in the original series or in the translated postil collections of Lenker and Klug. (They might not, however, want to follow Luther's lead when, on New Year's Day, 1530, he exasperatedly announced—mid-sermon—that he "would rather preach to mad dogs," and so would not be returning to the pulpit [p. 320].)

Researchers will benefit no less from these sermons collected from Luther's output of 1522 to 1531 (and the excellent introductions to each, copious footnotes, and substantial index). As Christopher Brown notes in the volume's introduction, more than half of the sermons Luther is known to have preached over his forty-year career (1065 of 2068) are dated to this single decade. This was, of course, the tumultuous decade immediately following his excommunication, in which Luther's theology was being clarified not only in continued controversy with Rome, but also in debate with increasingly "radical" reformers. These years likewise witnessed such significant events as the Peasants' Rebellion and the presentation of the Augsburg Confession. Though Luther's thoughts on such matters have never been obscure, further light might still be shed on them by means of his contemporary sermons. Indeed, some of those compiled here are clearly "first drafts" of subsequent and better known treatises, or are homiletical presentations of previously published works, inviting comparative analysis (e.g., on eucharistic matters, compare the sermons in pp. 8–12 and 69–80 with the works in LW 36:231–67 and 307–28).

Given the necessity of clarifying and teaching his doctrine in a rapidly splintering theological context, it is unsurprising to find him concisely attempting to do so from the pulpit. Thus, in the summer of 1524 he presents a five-point "summary of the chief articles" (p. 68). In a weekday sermon of the following year, he will refer even more concisely to "two chief articles of Christian doctrine: faith and love" (p. 92). In light of the decade's political turmoil, equally unsurprising is the frequency with which Luther returns to these "two chief articles" in explicating God's governance of the world "in a twofold way" (p. 268). His treatments of this twofold government, however, highlight the fact that Luther's thought does not map neatly over simplistic modern dichotomies. While insisting that the temporal sword concerns only "bodily matters" (p. 66), for example, he can also call upon the magistrates to suppress the "abomination of the Papists' Mass" (p. 79). Similarly, while lamenting in 1531 that marriage has "suffered violence and wrong by being labeled a secular estate" (p. 364), he will, only a year later, insist that marriage is indeed a "secular and outward thing" (LW 21:93). Such stark contrasts, though not necessarily contradictions, provide a helpful warning against facile proof-texting of the reformer; the oft-repeated claim that Luther was an "occasional" rather than a "systematic" writer only became a cliché because it reflects something of reality.

Other Lutheran commonplaces also find some confirmation here, as when the Christian is more than once explicitly described as "simultaneously righteous and unrighteous" (p. 112; see also 334). Yet, potential surprises are scattered throughout. Those assuming a Lutheran abandonment of such "medieval" ideas as natural law or guardian angels may be confused to find Luther casually affirming both (pp. 85, 342). His own hearers presumably were similarly confused that, as late as 1529, St. Christopher was still deemed a suitable sermon topic, despite Luther's frank acknowledgment that the popular saint "never existed" (p. 314). More substantive surprises are evident, however, in conclusions that sound, in hindsight, not at all Lutheran. Two examples from the same 1525 series on 1 Timothy are illustrative. Reading 1 Tim. 2:4 as proclaiming God's will that all be "rescued" or "helped" in a general sense, he concludes that "it does not follow that God wills to *save* all men" (p. 125, emphasis added). Less perplexing than the fact that this stands in contrast to the later Lutheran Confessions (e.g., FC SD XI) is the observation that it deviates even from Luther's own allusive use of the passage in the same year's *Bondage of the Will* (see LW 33:140). Perhaps just as scandalous is Luther's reference to the law's function as a "curb" being "its proper use," and his subsequent mention of its sin-revealing function as merely "another use" (p. 107).

Again, Lutheran preachers—and theologians—might prudently refrain from following Luther down every trail he explored, especially in the still-evolving context

of the 1520s. They can, nonetheless, remain grateful to the editors and translators of this new series for making available a more complete map of those trails.

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***Debating the Sacraments: Print and Authority in the Early Reformation*. By Amy Nelson Burnett. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. xx + 524 pp. $105.00.**

Three generations of Missouri Synod pastors and theologians have been shaped in their understanding of the Reformation controversy over the Lord's Supper by the now-classic study *This Is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar*, authored by Erlangen theologian and church historian Hermann Sasse. As indicated in the book's preface, written in South Australia in August 1958, Sasse brought together over twenty years of research interrupted by the terrors of the Second World War to address an English-speaking audience—Sasse specifically mentions the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Australia, where the Church of the Augsburg Confession "still confesses, with heart and mouth . . . the faith of the fathers, not because it is our fathers' faith, but because it is the faith of the New Testament." In this book Sasse passionately communicated his devotion to preserving Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper in a time when, especially in Germany, that doctrine was being sacrificed on the altar of modern ecumenism and confused by developments in the modern liturgical movement. As its subtitle indicates, the goal of the book was to present Luther's vigorously-fought view; he carries out this goal through sections on the medieval background, Luther's early development of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli's understanding, before analyzing the Great Controversy on the Sacrament, the Marburg Colloquy and its aftermath, and finally the Sacrament of the Altar in modern Lutheranism. The book thus mirrored, from a Lutheran conviction, the important analysis of the controversy by the Zurich/Heidelberg historian Walther Koehler, published in two volumes in 1924 and 1953 (reissued in a single volume in 2017), titled (translated) *Zwingli and Luther: Their Struggle over the Lord's Supper in Its Political and Religious Connections*.

Both studies—Koehler's and Sasse's—were careful and "objective" historical analyses, yet their apologetic purpose was clear throughout: each was a defense of either Zwingli's or Luther's position in the great controversy over the Lord's Supper. Both studies focused on Zwingli and Luther and gave considerable space to their personal confrontation at the Marburg Colloquy. (Sasse's book devotes 52 pages to the controversy of 1524–1528, but nearly 90 pages to the Colloquy and its immediate

result, and another 50 pages to its aftermath, while Koehler used the Colloquy as the pivot connecting his two volumes, and also published a reconstruction of the Colloquy in 1929.)

I provide description of these older studies because Amy Nelson Burnett's book *Debating the Sacraments: Print and Authority in the Early Reformation* takes analysis of the sacramentarian controversy of the 1520s to a new level in a book that deserves a place next to Sasse's classic study in the formation of future generations of Lutheran pastors and theologians. Burnett's book originates from a very different context: rather than a church historian trained in the German tradition, Burnett is a cultural historian of senior rank at a major American university (professor of history at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln). Although she certainly knows her Reformation theology, her doctoral education was likewise pursued in history at a secular American university rather than with a theological faculty; she and her husband Stephen, likewise a historian at the same University, are not "trained theologians" or clergy, but lay members of a Missouri Synod congregation in Lincoln.

Burnett's goals in her book are also different from those of Koehler and Sasse. She analyzes the controversy over the sacraments (emphasizing, importantly, that it was also a controversy over the meaning and practice of Baptism), not as a defense of either side but to understand the crucial role the controversy played in the early Reformation. Burnett argues that the controversy exposed a "crisis of authority" among evangelical reformers, as both sides had repudiated the hierarchy of authorities that had governed the papal church for a millennium (or at least for over 700 years, since Carolingian times), and so would appeal finally to Scripture alone (as the highest authority) to define both Christian doctrine and heresy. (For the Sacramentarians, the Lutheran view of the substantial presence of Christ's body in the elements amounted both to Docetism—that is, Christ's body lacks the character of a true body, which must be located in a place—and to idolatry.) The controversy was thus played out not in councils or colloquies but through "print"—the term in the subtitle and throughout the book is Burnett's shorthand for the array of shorter pamphlets, extensive treatises, and expository commentaries on the Bible that were the media of the controversy from all sides. Finally, reference to "all sides" is critical in Burnett's analysis. Koehler's study (and following him, Sasse's) is quite distorting of the character of the controversy through its focus almost exclusively on Zwingli and Luther. Burnett focuses on all the figures who contributed shorter or longer pieces, in fewer or greater numbers of publications and editions, in this great controversy that was carried out in print and was already "settled" as unresolved and

unresolvable by the time Luther and his supporters faced the Swiss and the Strassburgers at the finally fruitless Marburg Colloquy in October 1529.

Astoundingly, Burnett's study incorporates both analytical and quantitative analyses of 372 titles, in 905 printings published between 1525 and 1529, that contributed to the debate on the Lord's Supper. By focusing on the numerous authors who contributed to the controversy, and also analyzing the question about who was responding to whom in which publication, Burnett convincingly demonstrates that not only did Luther, as Sasse noted, delay his own response to the Swiss (whose central figure was arguably Oecolampadius and not Zwingli) while several other figures—especially Johannes Bugenhagen and Johannes Brenz—argued on behalf of the Lutheran doctrine, but also that the two "suns" (as Koehler described them) around which the many lesser actors in the controversy revolved were not Luther and Zwingli but Luther and . . . Erasmus! Yes, the many and varied explanations for why "This is my body" could not mean that Christ's true body was eaten in (or "with" or "under") the bread of the Lord's Supper can all be traced to the Platonic dualism (spirit vs. flesh) of Erasmus of Rotterdam. This despite the fact that the conservative humanist-reformer never repudiated the papal doctrine of the Mass, and had begun to withdraw personal support for Luther already in October 1520 after recognizing the radical character (and thus the fatefully divisive and destructive nature) of Luther's critique of the papal sacramental system in his treatise *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.

It may be too much to expect Lutheran seminarians, theologians, and pastors to master the details of this careful analysis carried out in 314 pages of text (plus another 120 pages of Endnotes followed by bibliographies—30 pages of the sixteenth-century imprints plus another 27 pages of modern editions and secondary literature). However, it is absolutely necessary for Lutherans today to understand the character of this controversy that caused the Reformation to become not one but two major traditions—Lutheran and Reformed—that have so deeply shaped modern culture, both in the church and in society. One cannot understand the Lutheran Confessions, or even the Lutheran confession of the gospel, without understanding the Reformation, and Burnett makes a clear case for understanding the central issue of the Reformation as its controversy over the sacraments (both of them!) and its crisis of authority in the attempt to settle controversies among Evangelicals.

Lutheran theologians and churchmen are mistaken when they view the original Lutheran reform of the sacraments (and the liturgies of the sacraments) as "conservative," and appeal variously to the early church fathers, to dogmatic and liturgical history, to a "eucharistic interpretation of John 6," or to traditions

celebrating the Lord's Supper as a Eucharist—all in an effort to re-form ways of speaking about and celebrating the Lord's Supper in Lutheran congregations today. All these arguments were used by Luther's sacramentarian opponents in the controversy of 1524–1529 over-against Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper. Luther defined the meaning and practice of the Lord's Supper by the words of Christ's institution, not only at Marburg (where he chalked the words *Hoc est corpus meum* on the conference table), but throughout the controversy, ever since it erupted from Andreas Karlstadt's attacks on Luther's theology and personal authority as a reformer. Luther viewed the words of institution as words of command and promise (just as with Baptism), through which Christ gives pure gift: communion with the very body and blood that he gave once and for all on the cross as atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world, in which communion he promises (and promise requires faith) the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

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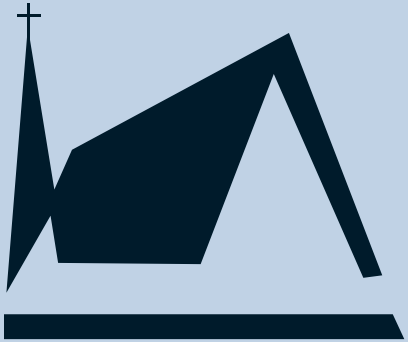

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