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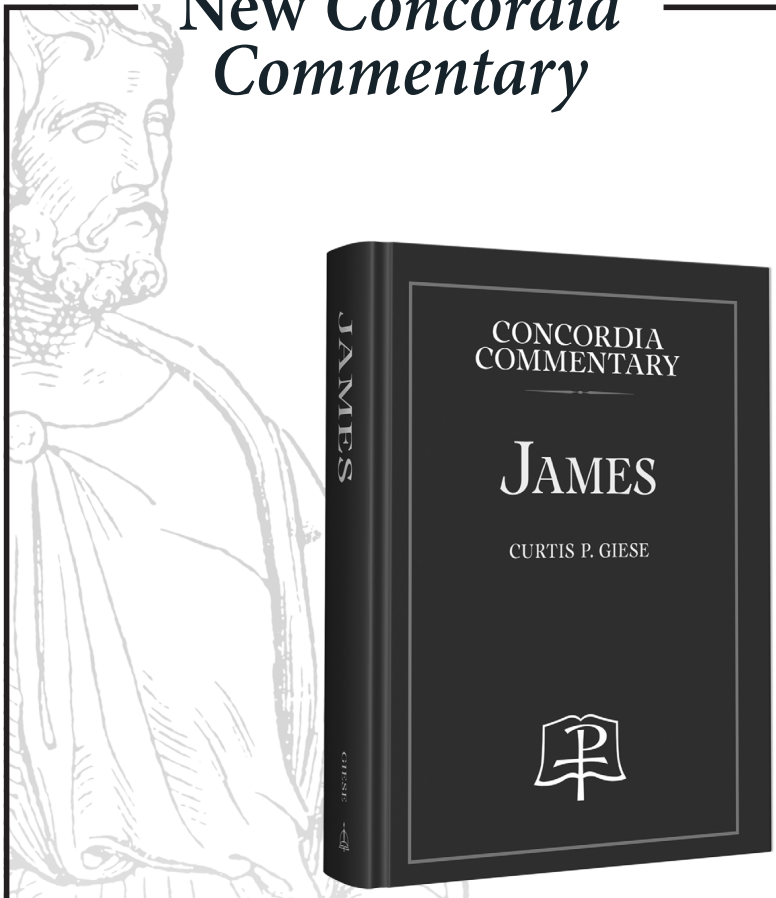

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Christological Exegesis of Theophanies and the Making of Early Christian Theology

Bogdan G. Bucur

Introduction[1]

One way in which Christians read the Hebrew Bible as a coherent narrative leading from Genesis to Jesus—in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as Moses and the prophets are deemed, according to Justin Martyr, "men of Christ,"[2] and in which the readers are invited to inscribe themselves—was the identification of "the Lord God of Israel" in biblical theophanies with "the Lord Jesus" of Christian worship.[3] This phenomenon, which I term "christophanic exegesis," gained prominence in the second century and maintained its importance for polemical engagement, doctrinal construction, and liturgical expression along the entire first Christian millennium. In what follows, I intend to present a survey of the available data on the christological exegesis of theophanies during the first Christian millennium, highlighting the existence of a puzzling blind spot on this topic in the

[1] Abbreviations: *ANF* = *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994); CCCM = *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio mediaevalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969–); CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum: Series latina*, 168 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1953–); CSEL = *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, n.d.); FaCh = *Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947–); GCS = *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1891–); *NPNF*^{2} = *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); PG = *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857–1886); SC = Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1943–). WSA = Edmund Hill and John E. Rotelle, eds., *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the Twenty-first Century* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990–).

[2] The phrase "men of Christ" in reference to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, occurs in Justin, *Apol.* 63.17 (Greek text and English translation in *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, ed. Denis Minns and Paul Parvis [New York: Oxford University, 2009], 248/249).

[3] Examples of biblical theophanies include God walking in the garden of Eden, conversing with Abraham at Mamre, appearing to Jacob in the dream of the ladder and wrestling with him at Peniel, and appearing to Moses in the burning bush; the anthropomorphic "glory," "angel," "fire," "pillar," "cloud," and "glory" on Sinai, which guided the Israelites out of Egypt, tabernacled in the tent of meeting and, later, in the temple; the "commander of the army of the Lord" seen by Joshua; the anthropomorphic glory seated on Ezekiel's chariot-throne and the enthroned "Lord of hosts" in Isaiah; Daniel's "Ancient of Days" and "Son of Man"; and the God seen "between the two living beings" in the LXX of Habbakuk 3 (Genesis 3; Gen 18:1; 28:12–13; 32:24–30; Exod 3:1–15; 13:21–22; 14:19–20; 24:10–17; 34:5–8; Josh 5:13–15; Ezek 1:26–28; Isa 6:1–3; Dan 7:10–13; Hab 3:2 LXX).

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field of early Christian studies, and speculating about what appears to be the theological bias behind this blind spot.

Christophanic Exegesis in Patristic Literature

The established scholarly position was, until relatively recently, that the so-called "argument from theophanies" was forged by Justin of Neapolis in the heat of his engagement against Marcion. More specifically, according to Oskar Skarsaune, Justin would have fused the traditional *testimonia*-argument in favor of two Lords (e.g., Gen 19:24, "the Lord rained . . . fire from the Lord out of heaven"; Ps 109:1, "The Lord said to my Lord") with his own original argument about theophanies as christophanies.[4]

This view has been shown to be untenable by scholars working in the field of Christian origins, who have documented the presence, in the writings of the New Testament, of what is often termed "YHWH Christology" or "Christology of Divine Identity."[5] According to these scholars, the cultic worship of Jesus as God and Son

[4] Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 208–209, 211–212. For the same position, see Benedict Kominiak, *The Theophanies of the Old Testament in the Writings of St. Justin* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 4; Demetrios C. Trakatellis, *The Pre-existence of Christ in the Writings of Justin Martyr: An Exegetical Study with Reference to the Humiliation and Exaltation Christology* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976), 59, 85. Unless otherwise marked, all Scripture quotations follow the LXX numbering and are taken from the Brenton translation.

[5] David B. Capes, *Old Testament Yahweh Texts in Paul's Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992); Jarl E. Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5–7," and "In the Beginning Was the Name: Onomanology as the Key to Johannine Christology," both in Jarl E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1995), 41–69, 109–133; Charles A. Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 51–123, 187–200; Gieschen, "The Real Presence of the Son before Christ: Revisiting an Old Approach to Old Testament Christology," *CTQ* 68 (2004): 105–126; C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila, G. S. Lewis, eds., *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); C. K. Rowe, "*Romans 10:13: What Is the Name of the* Lord*?" Horizons in Biblical Theology* 22 (2000): 135–173; Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Walther Binni and Bernardo G. Boschi, *Cristologia primitiva: Dalla teofania del Sinai all'Io sono giovanneo* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 2004); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Sean M. McDonough, *Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University, 2009); Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); Randy Rheaume, *An Exegetical and Theological Analysis of the Son's Relationship to the Father in John's Gospel: God's Equal and Subordinate*

of God occurred very early on, spread rapidly, and was the very marker of Christianity's emergence from the complex matrix of first-century Judaism. A probable explanation for the fusion between Jewish monotheism and the worship of Jesus is that the first generation of disciples had, in Hurtado's words, "revelatory experiences" which persuaded them that the God of Israel mandated the worship of Christ—more specifically, according to Christopher Barina Kaiser, "kyriocentric visions" in which Jesus was the subject of Old Testament throne theophanies.[6]

In a richly documented study of Jude 5–7 published in 1987, Jarl Fossum concluded that "weighing all the evidence, it would seem that Jude, *some fifty years before Justin Martyr*, was the first to use 'Jesus' as a name of the Son also in his preexistence."[7] Indeed, Jude 5 is straightforward and radical in its identification of "the Lord" with Jesus: "Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe." This reading is now also offered by the latest critical editions, NA 28/GNT 5/SBLGNT[8]: Ἰησοῦς λαὸν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σώσας τὸ δεύτερον τοὺς μὴ πιστεύσαντας ἀπώλεσεν. Since Justin Martyr simply assumes this very idea,[9] it appears that the "argument from theophany" did not derive *from* second-century anti-dualistic polemics, but was the extension *to* such purpose of a

(Lewiston: Mellen, 2014); Crispin Fletcher-Louis, *Jesus Monotheism, Volume 1: Christological Origins: The Emerging Consensus and Beyond* (Eugene, Oreg.: Cascade, 2015).

[6] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 70–74, 180–204; Hurtado, "Religious Experience and Religious Innovation in the New Testament," Journal of Religion 80 (2000): 183–205; Christopher Barina Kaiser, *Seeing the Lord's Glory: Kyriocentric Visions and the Dilemma of Early Christology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014); "YHWH Texts in the New Testament and Early Judaism: Disjunctive or Doxological?" *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 64 (2020): 27–70.

[7] Fossum, "Kyrios Jesus as the Angel of the Lord in Jude 5–7," 69 (originally published in *New Testament Studies* 33 [1987]: 226–243).

[8] Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Barbara Aland, Holger Strutwolf, and Rudolf Kassühlke, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013); Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Iōannēs D. Karavidopoulos, Carlo Maria Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Holger Strutwolf, eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014); Michael W. Holmes, ed., *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010).

[9] See Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 120.3 (Bobichon 1:506; trans. Falls-Slusser, 180): "He speaks therefore in the passage relating to Judah: 'A prince shall not fail from Judah, nor a ruler from his thighs, till that which is laid up for him come; and He shall be the expectation of the nations.' And it is plain that this was spoken not of Judah, but of Christ. For all we out of all nations do expect not Judah, but *Jesus, who led your fathers out of Egypt*." One should note that the *Dialogue with Trypho* itself seems to hint at the fact that Justin is not articulating anything new. Trypho invokes his own "teachers" who have *already* been warning the community against holding conversation with Christians, as these would ensnare the people into worshiping Jesus, alleging him to be the God of the exodus (*Dial.* 38.1 [Bobichon, 58]). For the *Dialogue with Trypho*, I have used Philippe Bobichon, ed. and trans., *Justin Martyr: Dialogue avec Tryphon* (Fribourg: Academic, 2003) and Thomas B. Falls, trans., and Michael Slusser, ed., *St. Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

much older exegetical tradition belonging to the internal Christian discourse in the context of worship and celebration.

As a matter of fact, the same view is expressed by Theophilus of Antioch and Melito of Sardis. Theophilus affirms that it was not "the God and Father of the universe" who was present in paradise and conversed with Adam, but "the Logos of God, who is also his Son"[10]—and one can assume that the same logic applies to other theophanies. As for Melito, he quite explicitly identifies the one who guided Israel in a pillar of fire, fed his people manna from heaven and water from the rock, and gave the law on Horeb, with the Son, the firstborn of God, the Crucified One.[11]

One generation after Justin, Irenaeus of Lyon refers to most if not all the same theophanic passages as his predecessors, both in his little handbook for insiders—the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*—and in his massive *Against Heresies*. Irenaeus is quite clear about the visionary component of theophanies: the Son "*appeared* to Abraham"; Jacob *"sees* him in a dream"; "he did appear to those seeing Him"; "things were *revealed* and *shown* to them"; "the things they *saw*."[12] Although theophanies are *partial* visions,[13] adapted to and varied in accordance with the capacity of the visionaries,[14] and the incarnation marks a qualitative advancement,

[10] Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum* 2.22, trans. Robert M. Grant (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 62/63, 64/65.

[11] Melito, *Peri Pascha* 84–85 (SC 123:108; English translation in Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *Melito of Sardis on Pascha and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans* [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001], 61): "He it was who led you into Egypt, and guarded you there and sustained you [Gen 46:3–4]. He it was who lit up your way with a pillar, and sheltered you with a cloud [Exod 13:21; Ps 77:14; 104:39]. He cut the Red Sea open and led you through [Exodus 14–15; Ps 135:13–14] and destroyed the enemy [Ps 135:15]. He it is who gave you manna from heaven [Exod 16:4–35], who gave you drink from a rock [Exod 17:4–7; Ps 135:16], who gave you the law at Horeb."

[12] Irenaeus, *Epid.* 24; 45 (John Behr, trans., *St Irenaeus of Lyon: On the Apostolic Preaching* [Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997], 55, 70); *Adv. haer.* 4.20.11 (SC 100/2:660); *Adv. haer.* 4.11.1 (SC 100/2:498): "How do the Scriptures testify of Him, unless all things had ever been revealed and shown (*revelata et ostensa*) to believers by one and the same God through the Word; He at one time conferring with His creature, and at another propounding His law; at one time, again, reproving, at another exhorting, and then setting free His servant, and adopting him as a son; and, at the proper time, bestowing an incorruptible inheritance, for the purpose of bringing man to perfection?" (emphasis added).

[13] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.20.11 (SC 100/2:660): "Neither Moses, nor Elias, nor Ezekiel, who had all many celestial visions, saw God; but if what they did see were similitudes of the splendor of the Lord, and prophecies of things to come . . . not in one figure, nor in one character, did He appear to those seeing Him, but according to the reasons and effects aimed at in His dispensations."

[14] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.20.10 (SC 100/2:656): "The prophets, therefore, did not openly behold the actual face of God, but [they saw] the dispensations and the mysteries through which man should afterwards see God."

it is the same Christ who is contemplated "in a prophetical manner"[15] in the Old Testament, and "openly" in the New Testament, by the Word's own incarnated manifestation.[16] In other words, the prophets' interaction with the Logos in theophanies anticipates, in a limited but real and transformative way, the full experience of glorification made possible by the Logos becoming man.[17]

Readers of Irenaeus seem to have remained faithful to the inherited exegesis of theophanies. Tertullian makes it an explicit part of his rule of faith:

> Now, with regard to this rule of faith—that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend—it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word, first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, and, under the name of God, was seen in diverse manners by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets *(id uerbum filium eius appellatum in nomine Dei uarie uisum a patriarchis, in prophetis semper auditum),* at last brought down by the

[15] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.20.5: "prophetice"; 4.36.8: "per propheticum Spiritum."

[16] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.36.8: "per suum adventum"; 4.20.9: "manifeste."

[17] Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 4.36.8 (SC 100/2:914, 916): "Then, again, this truth was clearly shown forth by the parable of the fig-tree, of which the Lord says, 'Behold, now these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, but I find none' (Luke 13:6), pointing onwards, by the prophets, to His advent [*per prophetas adventum suum significans*], by whom [*per quos*] He came from time to time (*aliquoties*) seeking the fruit of righteousness from them, which he did not find. . . . And, without using a parable, the Lord said to Jerusalem, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets, and stone those that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate' (Luke 13:34; Matt 23:37). . . . For that which had been said in the parable, 'Behold, for three years I come seeking fruit,' and in clear terms, again, [where he says], 'How often would I have gathered your children together,' shall be [found] a falsehood, if we do not understand His advent, which is [announced] by the prophets [*per prophetas*]—if, in fact, He came to them but once, and then for the first time. . . . He who chose the patriarchs and those [who lived under the first covenant], is the same Word of God who did both visit them through the prophetic Spirit [*visitans per propheticum Spiritum*] and us also who have been called together from all quarters by His advent [*per suum adventum*]"; *Adv. haer.* 4.20.8 (SC 100/2:650; emphasis added): "[I]t necessarily behooved those through whose instrumentality future things were announced, to see God, whom they intimated as to be seen by men; in order that God, and the Son of God, and the Son, and the Father, should *not only be prophetically announced, but that He should also be seen* by all His members who are sanctified and instructed in the things of God, *that man might be disciplined beforehand and previously exercised for a reception into that glory which shall afterwards be revealed* in those who love God. For *the prophets used not to prophesy in word alone, but in visions also*, and in their mode of life, and in the actions which they performed, according to the suggestions of the Spirit. *After this invisible manner, therefore, did they see God***,** as also Esaias says, I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of hosts, Isaiah 6:5 pointing out that man should behold God with his eyes, and hear His voice . . . Moreover, [with regard to] the other arrangements concerning the summing up that He should make, some of these *they beheld through visions*, others they proclaimed *by word*, while others they indicated typically by means of [outward] action, seeing visibly [*visibiliter videntes*] those things which were to be seen."

> Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ.[18]

Indeed, it is the Son of God who "was visible before the incarnation" (*ante carnem*) inasmuch as he "was seen . . . by prophets and patriarchs and Moses himself."[19] As a matter of fact, Tertullian's interpretation of Exodus 33:18–22, where Moses asked to see God's glory and was denied (an interpretation lifted from Irenaeus and repeated both against Marcion and against Praxeas!), is that the vision of divine glory was not strictly denied, but postponed to some later time, and later fulfilled at the transfiguration, when *the same Son of God* who had appeared and spoken on Sinai meets Moses *again* on Tabor.[20]

To be sure, the Son's apparitions to patriarchs and prophets, including Moses, were always somewhat veiled and imperfect—"in a mirror and enigma and vision and dream." The reason these apparitions were veiled is because they occurred "according to men's capacity, not according with the fullness of his divinity (*secundum hominum capacitates, non secundum plenitudinem divinitatis*)," since "the Son also on his own account (*suo nomine*), is, as Word and Spirit, invisible even now by the quality of his substance (*ex substantiae conditione*)."[21] In reaction to the Valentinians, who held that Christ displayed some kind of "heavenly flesh" or "body" both in theophanies and in the incarnation,[22] Tertullian is particularly insistent on the carnality of theophanies—although he describes the "flesh" of theophanic appearances as not having been born (*sine nativitate*) and therefore not subject to change and mortality. It is not the natural self-manifestation of the

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[18] Tertullian, *Prescription* 13.1–3 (trans. *ANF*; SC 46:106).

[19] Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 14 (Ernest Evans, ed. and trans., *Q. Septimii Florentis Tertulliani Adversus Praxean liber: Tertullian's Treatise Against Praxeas* [London: SPCK, 1948], 106/ 150).

[20] Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.22.14–15 (Ernest Evans, ed. and trans., *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem*, 2 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon, 1972], 2:382/383–384/385); *Adv. prax.* 14 (Evans, 105/150). For a discussion of the exegetical tradition of Exodus 33 as a promise fulfilled on Tabor, see Bogdan G. Bucur, *Scripture Re-envisioned* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 124–136.

[21] Tertullian, *Adv. Prax.* 14 (Evans, 104/149, 106/150).

[22] *Adamantius* 5.851c–d, e (GCS 4:176; English translation in Robert A. Pretty, trans., *Adamantius, Dialogue on the True Faith in God: De recta in Deum fide* [Leuven: Peeters, 1997], 150): "Adamantius asserts that Christ assumed earthly flesh—that is, from us, but Marinus is emphatic that he took heavenly flesh." The subsequent exchange (GCS 4:178; Pretty, *Adamantius*, 151) concerns the "substance in heaven having flesh and bones" which constitutes Christ's "heavenly flesh." *Adamantius* 5.851e (GCS 4:180, 182; Pretty, *Adamantius*, 152; 153): "We say that Christ assumed a body in appearance (δοκήσει). Just as the angels appeared to Abraham, and ate and drank with him, thus also he appeared"; "I believe that just as the angels appeared to Abraham, and ate and drank and conversed with him, so Christ appeared to humans."

visionary subject (*carnem non propriam*)—whether angels or God—but merely its manifestation in a bodily appearance (*in carnis habitu*) assumed for the occasion.[23]

Shifting our focus to Alexandria, we see that, although Clement and Origen do not seem focused on the christological exegesis of theophanies to the same extent as Justin, Irenaeus, or Tertullian, they remain, nevertheless, committed to the tradition of "christophanies." In a large section of his *Pedagogue*, Clement explicitly identifies the Logos, "our pedagogue, the holy God Jesus" (ὁ δὲ ἡμέτερος παιδαγωγὸς ἅγιος θεὸς Ἰησοῦς) with the "Lord" who appeared to Abraham (Gen 17:1), who appeared to Jacob on top of the ladder and in the night struggle (Gen 28; 32), who led Israel out of Egypt (ὁ ἐξαγαγών σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου) and led the people (ἦγεν αὐτοὺς) through the desert, who gave the law through his servant Moses (Exod 20:2; Deut 32:10–12),[24] who enjoined Israel to "fear God" (Deut 6:2), and who spoke to the prophets, in the course of such theophanies as are recorded in Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah 1.[25] It is the epiphany in the flesh of the same Logos, the Existing One and Preexisting One (ἡ ἐπιφάνεια . . . τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντος καὶ προόντος λόγου), who made all things and moulded humans, which "now" constitutes the "new song."[26] The difference between the Logos present in Old Testament theophanies as "that hidden angel, Jesus" (ὁ μυστικὸς ἐκεῖνος ἄγγελος Ἰησοῦς) and the incarnate Logos is, quite simply, that the incarnate Logos was born (γεγέννηται; τίκτεται).[27]

This theology represents the common tradition to which Clement felt bound. Nevertheless, within the framework of Clement's mystagogical curriculum, this discussion of theophanies in the *Paedagogue* represents a "lower," preliminary exposition, which acquires greater depth and precision with the advanced-level decoding of biblical theophanies in the *Stromata*, the *Eclogues*, and the *Adumbrationes*.[28] These observations also apply to Origen, who best exemplifies theological speculations in the vein of Philo's "noetic exegesis." Still, there are numerous instances in which Origen finds it useful to articulate this correct but

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[23] Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3.9.6 (Evans, 1:196/197); cf. Tertullian, *Carn. Chr.* 6.7 (Latin text and English translation in Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise on the Incarnation: The Text Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* [London: SPCK, 1956], 24/25).

[24] Clement exploits the lexical connection between παιδαγωγός, ἐξαγαγών (Exod 20:2) and ἦγεν (Deut 32:10–12) in the biblical passages.

[25] Clement, *Paed.* 1.7.56–57–1.7.60.1 (SC 70:210, 212, 214, 216).

[26] Clement, *Protr.* 1.7.3 (SC 2bis:61): Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ᾆσμα τὸ καινόν, ἡ ἐπιφάνεια ἡ νῦν ἐκλάμψασα ἐν ἡμῖν τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντος καὶ προόντος λόγου· ἐπεφάνη δὲ ἔναγχος ὁ προὼν σωτήρ, ἐπεφάνη ὁ ἐν τῷ ὄντι ὤν, ὅτι "ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν," διδάσκαλος, ἐπεφάνη ᾧ τὰ πάντα δεδημιούργηται λόγος· καὶ τὸ ζῆν ἐν ἀρχῇ μετὰ τοῦ πλάσαι παρασχὼν ὡς δημιουργός, τὸ εὖ ζῆν ἐδίδαξεν ἐπιφανεὶς ὡς διδάσκαλος, ἵνα τὸ ἀεὶ ζῆν ὕστερον ὡς θεὸς χορηγήσῃ.

[27] Clement, *Paed.* 1.7.59.1 (SC 70:214, 216).

[28] See Bogdan G. Bucur, "Clement of Alexandria's Exegesis of Old Testament Theophanies," *Phronema* 29 (2014): 63–81.

lower-level "christophanic" exegesis as the starting point for deeper exploration of the Logos.

In his *Commentary on John*, to substantiate his central thesis that "the Savior has become a man to men and an angel to angels," Origen identified Jesus with "the angel of the Lord" (Exod 3:2) in the burning bush scene (as well as "the angel of great counsel" at Isa 9:5, LXX);[29] in the *Commentary to the Song of Songs*, too, he speaks of the presence in the bush as the Logos in angelomorphic guise;[30] and in his well-known discussion of the transfiguration in his *Commentary on Matthew*, although he is obviously more interested in other matters (e.g., the Scriptures as garments of the Word), Origen explicitly mentions the interpretation of Exodus 33 as a promise fulfilled on Tabor.[31]

Recourse to "christophanic exegesis" is perhaps especially useful to early Christian writers engaged in anti-"Modalistic" polemics. I have already referred to Tertullian's *Against Praxeas*. As for Origen, in his successful disputation with Beryllus of Bostra, the Alexandrian refutes the view "that our Savior and Lord did not subsist beforehand according to his own circumscribed essence (μὴ προϋφεστάναι κατ' ἰδίαν οὐσίας περιγραφήν) before his arrival among human beings, and that he does not have his own divinity (θεότητα ἰδίαν), but only the Father's [divinity], which had taken up residence in him."[32] Origen's own position, as expressed in the *Commentary on John*, is perfectly in line with his refutation of Beryllus's Modalistic position: contrary to those who "think the Son of God is an expression (προφορὰν) of the Father occurring in syllables" and who, "in accordance with this view . . . do not give him substance (ὑπόστασιν) nor do they elucidate his essence (οὐσίαν),"[33] Origen holds that the Logos subsists preeternally and must be thought of as having *ousia* or *hypostasis*.[34] The advent of the Logos in the flesh—

[29] Origen, *Comm. In Io.* 1.218 (SC 120:166).

[30] Origen, *Comm. in Cant.* 2.8.8 (SC 375:410): "Hoc erat et in Exodo, cum angelus Domini dicitur in flamma ignis aparuisse Moysi in rubo. Continuo autem in subsequentibus Dominus et Deus loqui in angelo scribitur, et ipse esse Deus Abraham et Deus Isaac et Deus Iacob designatur."

[31] Origen, *Comm. Mat.* 12.42–43 (GCS 40:166–167, trans. *ANF* 10:473): "But perhaps the voice from the cloud says to Moses and Elijah, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased, hear Him,' as they were desirous to see the Son of man, and to hear Him, and to behold Him as He was in glory. . . . The disciples, *having understood that the Son of God had been holding conference with Moses*, and that it was He who said, 'A man shall not see My face and live' [Exod 33:20] . . . humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God" (emphasis added).

[32] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.33.1 (SC 41:135; Jeremy M. Schott, trans., *Eusebius of Caesarea, The History of the Church: A New Translation* [Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019], 315).

[33] Origen, *Comm. in Io.* 1.24.151 (FaCh 80:64; SC 120:136).

[34] *Comm. in Io.* 1.125, 151–152 (SC 120:126, 136, 138; FaCh 80:59, 64–65): "I frequently marvel when I consider the things said about the Christ by some who wish to believe in him. Why in the

occurring simultaneously with his angelic advent to the varied ranks of bodiless powers[35]—is merely the last stage of his theophanic advent to the patriarchs and prophets. As Origen explains, "Christ came spiritually even before he came in a body. He came to the more perfect . . . for example the patriarchs and Moses the servant and the prophets who contemplated the glory of Christ [τοῖς τεθεαμένοις Χριστοῦ τὴν δόξαν προφήταις] . . . Christ visited the perfect before his sojourn which was visible and bodily."[36] Origen makes it clear that the theophanies to patriarchs and prophets are real and transformative encounters with the glory of Christ: since the prophets *contemplated the glory of Christ*, their experience corresponds to that of Christians (Jn 1:14, ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ).

Turning now to the *Epistle of the Six Bishops*, an unambiguous theological ultimatum delivered to Paul of Samosata some time prior to his condemnation and deposition in 268/269, we find, yet again, that the "christophanic" approach to theophanies represented a nonnegotiable datum of tradition and functioned as a litmus test for christological orthodoxy. Indeed, the largest self-contained section of the document returns to the same christological interpretation of Genesis 18, 22, 32, and Exodus 3 and 33 encountered in Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen, and it is on this point, too, that the Samosatene is challenged "to think and to teach" in concert with the signatories, and reminded that "all catholic churches join us in thinking this way."[37]

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world, when countless names are applied to our Savior, do they pass by most of them in silence? Even if they should perhaps remember them, they do not interpret them in their proper sense, but say that these name him [not properly but] figuratively (οὐ κυρίως ἀλλὰ τροπικῶς). On the other hand they stop in the case of the title 'Word' alone, as if they say that the Christ of God is 'Word' alone . . . in the case of this one they believe they have a clear answer to what the Son of God is, when he is named Word . . . they think the Son of God is an expression of the Father (προφορὰν πατρικὴν) occurring in syllables. And in accordance with this view they do not give him substance (ὑπόστασιν) nor do they elucidate his essence (οὐσίαν). . . . Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father (κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς) and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι), nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with substance (καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον)." Cf. *Comm. in Io.* 1.291–292 (SC 120:206; FaCh 80:29): "the Word has his own individuality (ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν), that is, lives according to himself . . . the Christ will be understood to be the 'Word'—although the reason which is in us has no individuality apart from us (οὐκ ἔστι κατὰ περιγραφὴν ἐκτὸς ἡμῶν)—possessing substance (ὑπόστασιν) 'in the beginning.'"

[35] Origen, *Comm. in Io.* 1.217 (SC 120:166; FaCh 80:76): "The Savior, therefore, in a way much more divine than Paul, has become 'all things to all,' that he might either gain or perfect all things. He has clearly become a man to men and an angel to angels."

[36] Origen, *Comm. in Io.* 1.37, 38 (SC 120:80; FaCh 80:41–42).

[37] For the Greek text, see Eduard Schwartz, *Eine fingierte Korrespondenz mit Paulus dem Samosatener* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaftern, 1927), 42–46; English translation mine: "We affirm that it was he who came down and showed himself to Abraham as one of three *near the oak of Mambre* (Gen 18:1) to whom the patriarch addressed himself as 'Lord' and 'judge,' inasmuch as he had received all judgment from the Father, according

The anti-Modalistic polemics of the second and third centuries, flowing organically into the Arian crisis of the fourth century, brings us into the new imperial and conciliar context for "doing theology." A key figure for the transition into the new context is Eusebius of Caesarea, in whose writing "christophanic exegesis" looms large, "a privileged place of conjunction between the polemical tradition stemming from Justin and the Alexandrian scholarly tradition of Philo and Origen." In fact, according to Sébastien Morlet, "Eusebius appears to be the last representative of pre-Nicene theology: still a stranger to preoccupations that would only emerge after the council of Nicaea, he offers in the *Proof of the Gospel* and, earlier, in the *Prophetic Extracts*, the longest, most elaborate, and certainly richest reflection that any pre-Nicene author had ever consecrated to the question of ancient theophanies."[38]

The Arian controversy and the conflict with Marcellus of Ancyra led Eusebius to, as it were, "recycle" his already established interpretation of theophanies,[39] and

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to what is written, *the Lord rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven* (Gen 19:24). He is the one who, carrying out the paternal will, showed himself to the patriarchs and spoke with them, being confessed, in the very same passages and chapters, sometimes as *angel*, sometimes as *Lord*, and sometimes as *God*. . . . For we also have been taught this through Moses: *Now an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a fire of flame out of the bush* and so on; *Now when the Lord saw that he was drawing near to see, the Lord called him from the bush* (Exod 3:2–3). . . . And elsewhere, *Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Even this word that you have spoken, I will do for you.' And he says, 'Show me your own glory!' And he said, 'I will pass by before you in my glory, and I will call by my name "Lord" before you. And I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I have compassion'* (Exod 33:17, 18–19) . . . he who, [in the passage] above, passed by as he had promised, is the Son of God, the 'Lord,' and he is called by the name of the 'Lord,' the Father. This is he who confirmed this by saying, '*Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father'* (John 6:46)" (43–45). "Whoever fights against the Son of God, refusing to believe and confess that he is God before the creation of the world, claiming that, if the Son of God is preached, two gods would thereby be proclaimed—we hold such a one as foreign to the canon of the Church; and all catholic churches join us in thinking this way" (42). "Now that, from a host of considerations, we have drawn up this summary of a few points, we want to learn [from you] if you hold and teach these same points together with us, and [we ask] that you give written notice of whether or not you agree with the text above" (46; emphasis added).

[38] Sébastien Morlet, *La "Démonstration évangélique" d'Eusèbe de Césarée: Étude sur l'apologétique chrétienne à l'époque de Constantin* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 2009), 440–441.

[39] Like Justin Martyr, Eusebius calls the Logos δεύτερος θεός (*Extracts* 1.12 [PG 22:1068 C]; *Dem. ev.* 5.30 [PG 22:409 D; Ferrar 1:271]; he emphatically rejects the interpretation of theophanies as mere angelic apparitions and instead understands theophanies as manifestations of the Logos (*Hist. eccl.* 1.2.10 [SC 31:8]; *Dem. ev.* 5.9 [GCS 23:231–232]; *Eccl. Theol.* 2.21 [GCS 14:130]; *Ecl. proph.* 3 [PG 22:1028–1036]; *Comm. Isa.* 1.41 [GCS 55:37]; *Comm. Ps.* 79 [PG 23:952C]; *Extracts* 1.10 [PG 22:1056 B]; *Extracts* 1.12 [PG 22:1068 C]). The revelational manifestations of the Logos "concerning himself with the work of mankind's salvation even before the Incarnation" (*Extracts* 1.10 [PG 22:1056A]) offer the doctrinal foundation for a qualified reception of "Barbarian

redirect it against his opponent. Even though, however, the argument is different, the exegetical solution remains the same tradition of "christophanies": it was undoubtedly the Son of God who spoke to Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3), he who appeared to Abraham at Mamre (Gen 18), who told Moses that he had manifested himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 6:2–3), who later proclaimed himself to "be" before Abraham "was" (Jn 8:56), since he was the mediator (Gal 3:20) "even before the assumption of the flesh" (πρὶν ἢ τὴν σάρκα ἀναλαβεῖν).[40]

The same "christophanic" reading of the Old Testament forms the bedrock underneath the metaphysical considerations about the ὁμοούσιον articulated by the great champion of Nicaea, Athanasius. In *Contra Arianos*, for instance, Athanasius states, quite clearly, that "Moses beheld God," more specifically the Logos, just as the same Logos interacted with Jacob and Abraham.[41] He has no hesitation in rehearsing the pre-Nicene argument for the divinity of the Son: Christ is preexistent and divine and, as such, always already the object of human and angelic worship, because Abraham worships him in his tent (Genesis 18), Moses worships him at the burning bush (Exodus 3), and Daniel sees him as the Ancient of Days, seated on the divine throne and attended by thousands upon thousands of angelic ministers (Dan 7:9–10).[42] The same exegesis of theophanies occurs in Athanasius's *De synodis* 52.[43] It is noteworthy that the traditional christophanic exegesis defended by Athanasius in *De synodis* 52 is upheld by the "Arian" opponents lambasted a few chapters earlier, in *De synodis* 26–27:

> We . . . regard Him not as simply God's pronounced word or mental, but as Living God and Word, existing in Himself, and Son of God and Christ . . . For He it is, to whom the Father said, *Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness*, who also was seen in His own Person by the patriarchs, gave the law, spoke by the prophets, and at last, became man, and manifested His own Father to all men, and reigns to never-ending ages.
>
> Whosoever shall say that Abraham saw, not the Son, but the Ingenerate God or part of Him, be he anathema! Whosoever shall say that with Jacob, not the Son as man, but the Ingenerate God or part of Him, has wrestled, be he anathema! Whosoever shall explain "The Lord rained fire from the Lord" not

philosophies" (Eusebius, *Extracts* 1.12 [PG 22:1068 C]; *Dem. ev.* 5.30 [PG 22:409 D; William John Ferrar, trans., *The Proof of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 1:271]).

[40] Eusebius, *Eccl. Theol.* 2.21.4 (GCS 14:130; FaCh 135:265).

[41] Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3.25.13–14 (*Athanasius Werke* I.1, 3:322–323; trans. *NPNF*[2] 4).

[42] Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 1.38.5; 2.13.1 (*Athanasius Werke* I.1, 2:148, 189; trans. *NPNF*[2] 4).

[43] Athanasius, *Syn.* 52 (*Athanasius Werke* II.6:275–276; trans. *NPNF*[2] 4).

> of the Father and the Son, and says that He rained from Himself, be he anathema. For the Son, being Lord, rained from the Father Who is Lord.[44]

The target in both texts is the modalistic doctrine of Marcellus and Photinus ("Scotinus" to his adversaries): "those who make a pretence of saying that He is but the mere word of God and unexisting, having His being in another—now as if pronounced, as some speak, now as mental . . . Such are the disciples of Marcellus and Scotinus of Galatian Ancyra, who, equally with Jews, negate Christ's existence before ages, and His Godhead, and unending Kingdom, upon pretence of supporting the divine Monarchy."[45]

In subsequent decades, the argument, articulated earlier by Marcellus, Basil of Ancyra, and Athanasius, that the strict separation between ὁ ὤν ("He who is") and ὁ τοῦ ὄντος ἄγγελος ("The Angel of Him who is") amounts to equating the Son to a μὴ ὤν ("he who is not"), was reprised by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa. Basil buttresses his affirmation about Christ as "the truly Existing One" and "the source of being for all beings" with an exegesis of Exodus 3:14 in which "the angel," "the Lord," and "God" all refer to the Son:

> Please stop saying that he does not exist when he is the one who truly exists, the one who is the source of life, and the one who produces being for all that exists. Didn't he find a designation well-suited for himself and fitting for his own eternity when he named himself *He Who Is* in his oracle to Moses his servant? He said: I am He Who Is [Exod 3:14]. . . . It is written that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush burning with fire. After mentioning the angel at the outset of the narrative, scripture introduces the voice of God when it says that he said to Moses: *I am the God of your father Abraham* [Exod 3:6]. A little further on, the same one said: *I am He Who Is* [Exod 3:14]. So, then, who is this one who is both angel and God alike? Isn't it he whom we have learned is called by the name *the angel of great counsel* [Isa 9:5]? . . . when he named himself *He Who Is* before Moses, he is understood to be none other than God the Word, who *was in the beginning with God* [John 1:2].[46]

Like Basil, the Nyssen knows that "the one who made himself known by the title, 'He who is,' (cf. Ex 3.13–14) is the Only-begotten God," so that one must either subscribe to the untenable position that "the Only-begotten God never appeared to

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[44] *Ekthesis Makrostichos*, Anathema 6 (= Athanasius, *Syn.* 26.VI; *Athanasius Werke* II.6:253, trans. *NPNF*[2] 4); *First Council of Sirmium*, Anathemas 15–17 (= Athanasius, *Syn.* 27.XV–XVII [*Athanasius Werke* II.6:255, trans. *NPNF*[2] 4]).

[45] *Ekthesis Makrostichos*, Anathema 6 (= Athanasius, *Syn.* 26.VI; *Athanasius Werke* II.6:253, trans. *NPNF*[2] 4).

[46] Basil, *Adv. Eun.* 2.18 (SC 305:70, 72; trans. FaCh 122:155–156).

Moses," or concede that "He that is, from whom the word comes to the Servant, is himself the Son."[47] In Gregory of Nyssa, too, metaphysical speculation on "being" and "non-being" is welded to the exegesis of biblical theophanies. Gregory takes the divine Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν ["I am the One who is"] and the Ἐγώ εἰμι ["I am"] statements in Isaiah as the scriptural "mark of the true Godhead" and, simply *assuming* the traditional identification of Christ as Moses' interlocutor on Sinai, concludes that Eunomian theology—"the sophistical fabrication about the non-existence at some time of Him Who truly is"—is nonscriptural, a departure from Christianity, a turning to idolatry.[48] It should be noted, however, that, when Gregory of Nyssa reaffirms his belief that the theophany to Moses (ἐν τῇ γενομένῃ Μωϋσεῖ θεοφανείᾳ) was a manifestation of the Son who both appeared (i.e., as with the angel of the Lord) and declared himself to be ὁ ὤν, he assumes that Eunomius is familiar with the underlying christological exegesis of Exodus 3![49]

Gregory of Nyssa also uses theophanies on a second theological front, namely, in his anti-Apollinarian polemics. In the *Letter to Theophilus*, for instance, which sets out to counter Apollinarius's critique of the alleged "two sons" doctrine as "absurd and utterly impious,"[50] Gregory argues that the incarnation (ἐπιφάνεια) of the Son does not imply a duality of sons any more than the multiplicity of Old Testament theophanies would imply a multiplicity of sons.[51] It is quite clear that

[47] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 3.9.35 (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 2:277; trans. S. G. Hall, in *Contra Eunomium II: An English Version with Supporting Studies*, ed. Karfíková Lenka and Johannes Zachhuber, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 82 [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 211).

[48] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* 3.6.3, 4, 6 (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 2:186–189, trans. S.G. Hall, 153–154): "The word of holy scripture suggests one way of knowing true godhead, which Moses is taught by the heavenly voice, when he hears him who said, 'I am he who is' (Ex 3.14). We therefore think that that alone should truly be considered divine, which is deemed to be in existence eternally and infinitely, and every thing attributed to it is always the same, without addition or subtraction. So if any one says of God that formerly he was, but now is not, or that he now is, but formerly was not, we judge either statement equally godless. … the argument that the one who really is, once was not, is a denial and rejection of true godhead. Consider: the one who through light revealed his existence to Moses, named himself as being, when he said, 'I am he that is' (Ex 3.14); and Isaiah, becoming a kind of instrument for the one who spoke in him, says in the person of him who is, 'I am first and I am hereafter' (Is 44.6), thereby making known by each thought the eternity of God … we who have regard to that which is, classify those who put together that which is not with that which is, and say that it once was not, with the worshippers of idols."

[49] Gregory of Nyssa, *Refut.* 29 (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 2:323; trans., *Against Eunomius* 2.4 *NPNF*[2] 5:105): "Real existence (τὸ ὄντως ὄν) is opposed to unreal existence (τὸ μὴ ὄντως ὄν). . . . But if they do not deny the existence of the Maker of all things, let them be content not to deprive of real existence Him Who is, Who in the Divine appearance to Moses gave Himself the name of Existent, when He said, 'I am that I am' even as Eunomius in his later argument agrees with this, saying that it was He Who appeared to Moses."

[50] Gregory of Nyssa, *Theoph.* (Gregorii Nysseni Opera 3/1:119–128, at 120–121; FaCh 131:260).

[51] Gregory of Nyssa, *Theoph.* (FaCh 131:261–262; Gregorii Nysseni Opera 3/1:119–128, at 121–122).

Gregory bases his argumentation on the traditional theology of theophanies as christophanies, building on the undisputed assumption that the one and the same Son appeared to the patriarchs and prophets of old and, later, appeared in the flesh and revealed his divine identity to his disciples.

There are many more texts that could be brought into the discussion. Among Greek-speaking sources, one may quote Cyril of Jerusalem,[52] Epiphanius,[53] John Chrysostom,[54] Theodoret of Cyrus,[55] and the *Apostolic Constitution*;[56] among Latin

[52] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 14.27 (PG 33:861 A; FaCh 64:50), arguing for the Son's natural and eternal divinity ("He did not gain His throne by way of advancement"): "The prophet Isaiah, having beheld this throne before the coming of the Savior in the flesh says, *I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne.* For the Father *no man has at any time seen*, and He who then appeared to the prophet was the Son."

[53] Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 29.5 (GCS 25:38; FaCh 128:103) on the Mamre theophany: "that he might point out the one God and the two others following him, his angels"; 39.4 (GCS 25:49; FaCh 128:118): "the Son of God who came from above with two angels."

[54] Chrysostom, *Hom. Gen.* 42.2 (PG 54:387): "In Abraham's tent both the angels and their master (καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι, καὶ ὁ τούτων Δεσπότης) were seen at the same time"; *Theatr.* 3 (PG 56:546): "Christ appeared to you, O wondrous one, flanked by two angels; and through [your] care for strangers (διὰ φιλοξενίας) you became a messmate to God and angels (Θεῷ καὶ ἀγγέλοις ὁμόσκηνος). O, blessed tent (σκηνὴ), which by condescension (δι' οἰκονομίαν) housed God accompanied by angels! Christ appeared to you in human form (ἐν ἀνθρώπου σχήματι), disclosing to you the mystery of the divine advent of himself and [his] salvation." *Contra Anomoeos* 11 (SC 396:304–306): Isaiah 6, together with Daniel 7 and 1 Kings 22:19–23 (3 Kings 22:19–23, LXX) are invoked as proof texts for the Son's divinity, expressed visually by his being seated on the divine throne.

[55] Theodoret of Cyrus, *Qu. 70 on Genesis* (*Quaestiones in Octateuchum,* trans. Robert C. Hill [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007], 144): the three visitors, who only appear to be eating, were two angels accompanying the Master ("they and their Lord," αὐτοὶ καὶ ὁ τούτων δεσπότης).

[56] *Apos. Con.* 5.20.5 (SC 329:278; trans. *ANF* 7): "He is the Christ of God . . . To Him did Moses bear witness, and said: *The Lord received fire from the Lord, and rained it down* (Gen 19.24); Him did Jacob see as a man, and said: *I have seen God face to face, and my soul is preserved*; Him did Abraham entertain, and acknowledge to be the Judge, and his Lord; Him did Moses see in the bush; . . . Him did Joshua the son of Nun see, as the captain of the Lord's host (Josh 5:14) ; . . . Him Daniel describes as the Son of man coming to the Father, and receiving all judgment and honour from Him; and as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands." Similarly, the Anaphora suggests that Abraham's call consisted of a vision of the Messiah by which God delivered him from idolatry (Σὺ εἶ ὁ . . . ἐμφανίσας αὐτῷ τὸν Χριστὸν σοῦ [*Apos. Con.* 8.12.18–27; SC 336:188]).

writers, Novatian,[57] Gregory of Elvira,[58] Phoebadius,[59] Ambrose of Milan,[60] Hilary of Poitiers,[61] and Jerome[62]; among Syriac writers, Jacob of Serugh.[63] In addition to these, one should also consider the ascription of later pseudepigraphic writings to fourth-century luminaries such as Cyril of Jerusalem, Asterius, or "blessed papa Athanasius."[64] A fifth-century homily on the Meeting of the Lord ascribed to Cyril of Jerusalem,[65] for instance, delights in the paradoxical identification of the fragile baby Jesus in the arms of Symeon with the Lord of the exodus and omnipotent Ancient of Days. For Ps.-Cyril, "it is this child who, of old, parted the sea for Israel, and drowned Pharaoh, and gave the Law to the Israelites, and rained down manna,

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[57] Novatian, *Trin.* 18.11–17 (CCSL 4:45–46).

[58] Gregory of Elvira, *De fide* 80–90 (CCSL 69:242–244): a list of christologically interpreted theophanies associated with Abraham, Jacob/Israel, and Moses; *Tractates on the Books of Holy Scripture* 2.10–11 (CCSL 69:11–12).

[59] Phoebadius of Agen (*Contra Arianos* 16.7–17.3; FC 38:130, 132) first ascribes Exodus 3:14 to the Father (16.7), then states that the Son, being the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15), could not have come into being at a later point, and, finally, reaches the conclusion that the one who spoke to Moses was the Son (17.2).

[60] Ambrose, *De fide* 1.13.83 (CSEL 78:36): "Non pater in rubo, non pater in eremo, sed filius est Moysi locutus . . . Hic est ergo qui legem dedit . . . Hic est ergo deus patriarcharum, hic est deus profetarum." Cf. *De fide* 5.1.26 (CSEL 78:225–226): the *qui est* of Exodus 3:14 establishes the eternity of Christ (*semper est*) as opposed to the created existence of angels ("erat Gabriel, erat Raphael, erant angeli . . . qui aliquando non fuerint"). See also the opening of Ambrose's hymn, "Intende, qui regis Israel, super cherubim qui sedes." For the biblical exegesis of Ambrose's hymn, see Édouard Cothenet, "L'arrrière-plan biblique de l'hymne de St. Ambroise 'Intende, qui regis Israel,'" in *L'Hymnographie: Conférences Saint-Serge XLVIe Semaine d'études liturgiques, Paris, 29 juin–2 juillet 1999*, ed. A. M. Triacca and A. Pistoia (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000), 153–160.

[61] Hilary of Poitiers, *Trin.* 4.23–34 (SC 448:56–76): a discussion of theophanic texts (Genesis 16; 18–19; 28; 32; Exodus 3) to prove the divinity of the Son, identified as the "angel of the Lord."

[62] Jerome, *Comm. in Esa.* 18.65.1 (CCSL 73A:744), in a casual remark that Exodus 3:14, as well as several other Old Testament theophanies, refers to the Son; *Comm. in Mat.* 2.14.27 (CCSL 77:124), where *ego sum* at the burning bush is linked to *ego sum* in Matthew 14:27 (implying identity of subject); *Comm. in Mc.* 1 (CCSL 78:452), where connecting John 1:1 with Exodus 3:14 offers proof for the eternity and divinity of the Son, who always "was" (ἦν) as opposed to John the Baptist, who came to be (ἐγένετο). In *Ep.* 18A 4.1 (CSEL 54:78), Jerome ascribes the Origenian view (the enthroned figure as the Father, and the two seraphim as the Son and the Spirit) to unnamed earlier interpreters, both Greek and Latin. His dissent from their opinion is exegetical: judging from John 12:39–41 and Acts 28:25–27, the enthroned figure was Christ, who therefore cannot be identified with one of the seraphim. The same exegesis is set forth, this time in a more strident polemical tone, in *Comm. in Esa.* 3.6.1–8 (CCSL 73:83–90). Jerome repeats his fundamental view twice (CSEL 73:84 and again at 73:87): "visus est autem Filius in regnantis habitu."

[63] See Alexander Golitzin, "The Image and Glory of God in Jacob of Serug's Homily, On That Chariot That Ezekiel the Prophet Saw," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 46 (2003): 323–364.

[64] Epiphanius, *Pan.* 72.4.4 (GCS 47:259).

[65] Ps.-Cyril of Jerusalem, *Homilia in occursum domini* (PG 33:1183–1204). This homily was probably written around 450 (Michel Aubineau, *Les homélies festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem,* 2 vols. [Brussels: Societé des Bollandistes, 1978], 1:4n2). See the translation and thorough discussion of the text by Ellen Alex, "Die Homilie *In occursum domini* des Ps-Cyrill von Jerusalem: Übersetzung und Kommentar" (MA thesis, University of Regensburg, 2012).

and led the Hebrew nation by a pillar of fire, and rent the rock asunder, and kept the bush unconsumed in a flame of dewy fire."[66] A nativity homily ascribed to Athanasius revolves around the same paradox by invoking the burning bush theophany and Daniel's vision:

> I behold a strange mystery: in place of the sun, the Sun of Righteousness placed in the Virgin in an uncircumscribed manner . . . Today God, He-Who-Is and preexists, becomes what he was not; for being God, he becomes a human being without stepping out of his being God. . . . The Ancient of Days is born as a child.[67]

The convergence of so many geographically and theologically diverse sources on the christological interpretation of theophanies indicates that, although perceived as insufficient and rendered obsolete *for the articulation of doctrine* by the development of a more sophisticated and precise technical glossary and argumentation, christophanic exegesis continued to be widely recognized as an element of shared tradition, and functioned as a polemical aid to fourth-century anti-Jewish, anti-Arian, anti-Modalistic, and anti-Apollinarian argumentation. The writings of "divinely-inspired clarions of Orthodoxy" like Ephrem Syrus and Gregory Nazianzen exerted a strong influence over the great Byzantine hymnographers Romanos the Melodist, John Damascene, and Cosmas of Maiuma.[68] It comes as no surprise, then, to find that recourse to christophanies abounds in the hagiographical, hymnographical, and iconographical productions that flourished in the Christian East and West during the second half of the millennium and beyond.[69]

Indeed, Byzantine festal hymns discern the luminous face of Christ in *all* theophanies of the Old Testament. The paradoxical identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the Lord of Paradise, the God of our fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He-Who-Is, who spoke to Moses in the burning bush and gave the Law on

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[66] Ps-Cyril of Jerusalem, *De occursu* 12 (PG 33:1200 AB), my translation.

[67] Μυστήριον ξένον βλέπω, ἀντὶ ἡλίου τὸν ἥλιον τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἀπεριγράπτως χωρήσαντα ἐν τῇ Παρθένῳ. . . . Θεὸς σήμερον ὁ ὤν καὶ προὼν γίνεται ὅπερ οὐκ ἦν· ὢν γὰρ Θεὸς, γίνεται ἄνθρωπος, οὐκ ἐκστὰς τοῦ εἶναι Θεός . . . Ὁ Παλαιὸς τῶν ἡμερῶν παιδίον γέγονεν (PG 28:960A–961A).

[68] Peter Karavites, "Gregory Nazianzinos and Byzantine Hymnography," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 113 (1993): 81–98; William L. Petersen, "The Dependence of Romanos the Melodist upon the Syriac Ephrem: Its Importance for the Origin of the Kontakion," *Vigiliae christianae* 39 (1985): 171–187; William L. Petersen, *The Diatessaron and Ephrem Syrus as Sources of Romanos the Melodist* (Louvain: Peeters, 1985).

[69] Bogdan G. Bucur, "Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies in Byzantine Hymnography: Rewritten Bible?," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007): 92–112; Gabriel Bunge, *The Rublev Trinity: The Icon of the Trinity by the Monk-Painter Andrei Rublev* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007); François Boespflug, *Les théophanies bibliques dans l'art médiéval d'Occident et d'Orient* (Geneva: Droz, 2012).

Sinai, the Lord whom Ezekiel saw riding upon the cherubim, whom Isaiah saw enthroned and worshiped by the seraphim, whom Daniel discerned in the characters of both Son of Man *and* Ancient of Days, the Glory of his people, the Holy One of Israel—all of these occur in the hymns of Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, of Annunciation, Nativity, Circumcision, Presentation, Baptism, and Transfiguration.

For instance in the celebration of the Transfiguration the hymns bring together Christ's manifestation on Tabor with his earlier apparition to deliver the Law to Moses on Sinai,[70] and present Christ, who "today ineffably has shone forth in light on Mount Tabor" as the same one who "led Israel in the wilderness with the pillar of fire and the cloud."[71] What Moses once saw in darkness, he now sees, on Tabor, in the blazing light of the Transfiguration: the same glory, the same "most pure feet," the same Lord.[72] The hymns of the Presentation are also replete with the same Christological reading of the divine manifestation on Sinai,[73] and the same occurs in the hymns of Epiphany: the Baptist is shaken with awe, knowing that he is to

[70] "In the past, Christ led Israel in the wilderness with the pillar of fire and the cloud [Exod 14:19]; and today ineffably He has shone forth in light upon Mount Tabor" (First Canon of Transfiguration: Ode 3 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 484]); "The mountain that was once gloomy and veiled in smoke has now become venerable and holy, since Your feet, O Lord, have stood upon it . . ." (Great Vespers of Transfiguration, Sticheron at *Lord I have cried* [*Menaion*, 471]). Cf. First Canon of Transfiguration: Ode 4 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 486].

[71] First Canon of Transfiguration: Ode 3 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 485].

[72] "You have appeared to Moses both on the Mountain of the Law and on Tabor: of old in darkness, but now in the unapproachable light of the Godhead" (Second Canon of Transfiguration, Ode 1 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 483]); "He who once spoke through symbols to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, 'I am He who is' [Exod 3:14] was transfigured today upon Mount Tabor before the disciples . . ." (Great Vespers of Transfiguration, Apostichon [*Menaion*, 476]).

[73] Receive, O Simeon, Him whom Moses once beheld in darkness, granting the Law on Sinai, and who has now become a babe subject to the Law, yet this is the One who spoke through the law! . . ." (Great Vespers of the Presentation: Sticheron at *Lord I have cried* [*Menaion*, 408]); "The Ancient of Days, who in times past gave Moses the Law on Sinai, appears this day as a babe. As Maker of the Law, He fulfills the Law, and according to the Law He is brought into the temple . . ." (Great Vespers of the Presentation: Sticheron at the Lity [*Menaion*, 412]); "Today Simeon takes in his arms the Lord of Glory whom Moses saw of old in the darkness, when on Mount Sinai he received the tables of the Law . . ." (Presentation of the Lord: Sticheron at the Lity [*Menaion*, 413]). See also the following: "Today He who once gave the Law to Moses on Sinai submits Himself to the ordinances of the Law, in His compassion becoming for our sakes as we are . . ." (Great Vespers of the Presentation: Sticheron at the Lity [*Menaion*, 412]); "Today the holy Mother, who is higher than any temple, has come into the temple, disclosing to the world the Maker of the world and Giver of the Law" (Small Vespers of the Presentation: *Glory* Sticheron [*Menaion*, 407]).

baptize the Creator of Adam,[74] the God of Jacob,[75] the God of Moses,[76] the Lord who drowned the Egyptian army in the Red Sea.[77] On the Eve of Nativity, Byzantine hymns composed in the second half of the first millennium proclaim that "He who rained manna down on the people in the wilderness is fed on milk from His Mother's breast";[78] and, on Good Friday, that the one hanging on the cross is none other than "He who hung the earth upon the waters," "the Lord who divided the sea . . . smote Egypt with plagues . . . rained down manna."[79]

In all these hymns, one encounters the very same reading of biblical theophanies, and, by way of consequence, the same type of "YHWH Christology," which, even though marginalized during the great christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries in favor of a more precise and nuanced "technical" vocabulary, had become ubiquitous in the worship and spirituality of the first-millenium church.

Christophanic Exegesis in Patristic Scholarship

In stark contrast with the importance that early Christians ascribed to Old Testament theophanies, the vast majority of manuals, patrologies, dictionaries,

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[74] "The Maker saw the man whom He had formed with His own hand, held in the obscurity of sin, in bonds that knew no escape. Raising him up, He laid him on His shoulders [Luke 15:5], and now in abundant floods He washes him clean from the ancient shame of Adam's sinfulness" (Second Canon of Theophany: Ode 5 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 372–373]); "Thus spoke the Lord to John: 'O Prophet, come and baptize Me who created you, for I enlighten all by grace and cleanse them. Touch my divine head and do not doubt" (Eve of Theophany: Sticheron at the Sixth Royal Hour [*Menaion*, 327]).

[75] "Today the prophecy of the psalms swiftly approaches its fulfillment: the sea looked and fled, Jordan was driven back before the face of the Lord, before the face of the God of Jacob [Ps 113/114:3–7], when He came to receive baptism from His servant" (Eve of Theophany: Sticheron at the Sixth Royal Hour [*Menaion*, 327]).

[76] [John the Baptist speaking to Jesus]: "Moses, when he came upon You, displayed the holy reverence that he felt: perceiving that it was Your voice that spoke from the bush, he forthwith turned away his gaze [Exod 3:6]. How then shall I behold You openly? How shall I lay my hand upon You?" (First Canon of Theophany: Ode 4 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 370]); "If I baptize You, I shall have as my accusers the mountain that smoked with fire [Exod 19:8], the sea which fled on either side, and this same Jordan which turned back [Ps 113/114:5]" (First Canon of Theophany: Ode 4 Sticheron [*Menaion*, 370]).

[77] "He who in ancient times hid the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, now is cloaked and hidden in the stream of Jordan" (Forefeast of Theophany Canon: Ode 1 Irmos [*Menaion*, 297]). Compare: "He who in ancient times hid the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, is hidden in a manger and Herod seeks to kill Him" (Forefeast of the Nativity: Compline Canon, Ode 1 Irmos [*Menaion*, 204).

[78] Ninth Hour of the Eve of Nativity: *Glory* Sticheron, in *The Lenten Triodion* (trans. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware; London/Boston: Faber&Faber, 1977), 587.

[79] Good Friday: Antiphon 15; Antiphon 6 [*Triodion*, 577].

encyclopedias, and large monographs on early Christianity barely mention the christological exegesis of theophanies. It is generally viewed as the province of pre-Nicene writers such as Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, and assumed to hold very little significance for the history of dogma during the conciliar era. Nobody seems to notice that overlooking the continued appeal to theophanies across much of the fourth-century theological spectrum leaves unexplained the pervasive and insistent references to theophanies in later Byzantine hymnography (which is due not to some retrieval of pre-Nicene theology, but to the reception of the "Holy Fathers" of the fourth and fifth centuries).

It is not only patristics scholars who seem to have difficulty integrating the early Christian tradition of christophanic exegesis. It is quite telling that, despite Fossum's 1987 study of Jude 5, which concluded that "Jude . . . was the first to use 'Jesus' as a name of the Son also in his preexistence," the reading "*Jesus*, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt" was moved from the footnotes into the critical text only in 2005, with the *Editio Critica Maior* of 2 and 3 John and Jude,[80] and then in 2012 (NA 28). In almost all English translations, therefore, one continue to read that "*the Lord* saved the people out of Egypt." The weight of textual witnesses and the strict application of text-critical principles would have required the adoption of the reading "Jesus" in earlier editions; but, as Metzger's *Textual Commentary* explains, "a majority of the Committee was of the opinion that the reading was difficult to the point of impossibility."[81] Since the committee acknowledges "the weighty attestation supporting Ἰησοῦς (A B 33 81 322 323 424c 665 1241 1739 1881 2298 2344 vg cop, bo eth Origen Cyril Jerome Bede; ὁ Ἰησοῦς 88 915)" and later notes "the strange and unparalleled mention of Jesus in a statement about the redemption out of Egypt," the difficulty seems to have been a *theological* one: "The reading Ἰησοῦς is deemed too hard by several scholars, *since it involves the notion of Jesus acting in the early history of the nation Israel*."[82] Of course, as I noted earlier, "the notion of Jesus acting in the early history of the nation Israel," which so gravely scandalized the committee, does not seem to have appeared too "hard" or "strange" to Justin and the vast majority of early Christians.

Returning to patristics, the important change in the evaluation of Justin Martyr—from viewing him as the first Christian author to articulate "the argument

[80] *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior. Vol. IV/4: Catholic Letters: The Second and Third Letter of John. The Letter of Jude*, ed. B. Aland, K. Aland†, G. Mink, H. Strutwolf, and K. Wachtel (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005).

[81] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament: A Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, 2nd ed.* (London: UBS, 1994), 657.

[82] Daniel Wallace, footnote *ad locum* in the apparatus of the NET Bible (joined only by the ESV in adopting the reading "Jesus"). *NET Bible: A New Approach to Translation, Thoroughly Documented with 60,932 Notes* (Spokane, Wash.: Biblical Studies Press, 2005) (emphasis added).

from theophanies," to understanding that he, in fact, "did not originate the basic idea that the preincarnate Jesus could be found active in certain Old Testament passages" but "reflects an approach to the Old Testament that had been a feature of devotion to Jesus during the first decades of the Christian movement"[83]—is a very recent development for which credit is due to Larry Hurtado's study of "early high Christology" rather than to traditional patristics scholarship.

Even Irenaeus's understanding of theophanies is deemed "an open question in scholarship."[84] The view I find most compelling constitutes, in fact, a rejection of widespread scholarly narrative about a significant *difference* between Justin and Irenaeus on the question of theophanies.[85] "Irenaeus," writes the French historian of dogma Jules Lebreton, made "enormous progress" over Justin.[86] Adolf Harnack, too, notes "a striking advance that Irenaeus has made beyond Justin" as far as the Christian appropriation to the Old Testament.[87] Time and again, one reads that the bishop of Lyon "exalts the prophetic value of ancient theophanies," insisting "on the figurative and prophetic character of these visions," and interprets theophanies as "preludes to the Incarnation": a series of "preparations" and "portents" or "promises" and "outlines," in themselves partial and imperfect, "of the great revelation."[88] John Behr radicalizes the "prophetic turn" in Irenaeus's interpretation of theophanies—for Irenaeus "*all* scriptural theophanies and visions are prophetic, pointing forward to Christ"[89]—and rejects the idea that Irenaeus would have understood Jesus as in some way visible in Old Testament theophanies; rather, "his preexistence and eternity is scriptural."[90] Moreover, he understands the sharp

[83] Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 577.

[84] Jackson Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 129n149.

[85] See Bogdan G. Bucur, "Scholarly Frameworks for Reading Irenaeus: The Question of Theophanies," *Vigilae Christianae* 72 (2018): 250–282.

[86] Jules Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité des origines au Concile de Nicée*, 2 vols. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1928), 2:597.

[87] Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (New York: Dover Publications, 1961), 2:304–305.

[88] Gervais Aeby, *Les missions divines de Saint Justin à Origène*, Paradosis: Études de littérature et de théologie anciennes 12 (Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1958), 45; A. Houssiau, *La christologie de Saint Irénée* (Louvain: Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1955), 92; Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, 467, 596, 597. For a more extensive discussion, see Aeby, *Les missions divines*, 44–49; Houssiau, *La christologie*, 80–104.

[89] John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 114 (emphasis added).

[90] Behr, *Way to Nicaea*, 115, 230, 239. One is left wondering about what exactly is affirmed and what is excluded by the conception of the Logos's "scriptural preexistence" and "scriptural eternity." Perhaps "exegetical preexistence" would be a more fitting term, since "for Irenaeus, the crucified Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the apostles, was present prior to the Passion as the veiled content of the Scripture" (Behr, *Way to Nicaea*, 119–120). Lashier also speaks about "the literary

opposition between Justin and Irenaeus in terms of heresy (Justin) and orthodoxy (Irenaeus): "the contrast between Justin and Irenaeus regarding the relationship between the Word and God in many ways parallels that between Arius and the Council of Nicaea."[91] To a large extent, the scholarly disagreement over the interpretation of Irenaeus is a matter of placing the bishop of Lyon in the proper theological context. In my view, the "christophanic" reading simply makes better sense of Irenaeus's early Christian context.

Within patristic scholarship proper, the christophanic exegesis of the Alexandrians Clement or Origen is rarely discussed, even though it is quite clear that the latter's anti-Modalistic stance cannot be divorced from it. Another document I have mentioned, the *Epistle of the Six Bishops* against Paul of Samosata, is not even translated into English, French, or German, and the reference to theophanies—its largest section and, quite evidently, its strongest theological corrective to the Samosatene—is strangely marginalized in the literature. As for Eusebius, here is the judgment of an eminent specialist: "The argument from theophanies in Eusebius has never been the object of thorough examination. Those few authors who have shown some interest in this topic have not guessed its riches and importance in the history of doctrines."[92] The same can be said of fourth-century Christian writers, generally. It is exceedingly rare and unusual that authoritative scholarly treatments of Nicene and post-Nicene patristic literature should dedicate an excursus, let alone a chapter, to the question of theophanies.[93] The continued appeal to theophanies across much of the fourth-century theological spectrum is more or less invisible.

It seems that a blind spot exists, which hides this early Christian tradition from the lights of modern scholarship, making it almost invisible and inconsequential. The story has older roots, however, since an explicit rejection of christophanic exegesis and a relegation of theophanies to the periphery of theological reflection (or, in a vertical perspective, to the bottom of a ladder leading to the vision of God) first occurred in a certain strand of early Christianity. Indeed, within this massive

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character" of theophanic visions, by which he means that "insofar as Christ is 'seen' in his fullness prior to the incarnation, he is 'seen' in the scripture that testifies about him" (Lashier, *Irenaeus on the Trinity*, 127, 128).

[91] Behr, *Way to Nicaea*, 239. Cf. 104: The difference between Justin and Irenaeus "would be played out a couple of centuries later between the Arians . . . and Athanasius" (cf. 106n27); John Behr, *The Nicene Faith* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 1:16n48: "contrasts between Justin and Irenaeus similar to those between the non-Nicenes and Nicenes are noted."

[92] Morlet, *La "Démonstration évangélique" d'Eusèbe de Césarée*, 440–441.

[93] A notable exception: Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Augustinianum, 1975), 506–511 ("Le teofanie").

strand of tradition, the distinct voice of Augustine of Hippo marks a turning point in the exegesis of theophanies.[94]

Augustine and the New Perspective on Theophanies

Briefly put, Augustine views those biblical passages traditionally assumed to be angelomorphic manifestations of the Logos as manifestations of the Trinity through angels—either visions of real, created angels,[95] or visions of some preexisting material reality, in which angelic manipulation brings about "a change of some kind" (e.g., the rock from which Moses draws water).[96] As a third and more spectacular possibility, Augustine also mentions the vision of a material reality that the divine will creates spontaneously for the occasion, and which is then "discarded when its mission is accomplished."[97] These "symbols" and "signs" (*similitudines, signa*) of the trinitarian realities (*res)* are created, sensible, and evanescent;[98] and the

[94] On Augustine's theology of theophanies, see Jules Lebreton, "Saint Augustin, théologien de la Trinité: Son exégèse des théophanies," *Miscellanea Augustiniana* 2 (1931): 821–836; Laurens Johan van der Lof, "L'exégèse exacte et objective des théophanies de l'Ancien Testament dans le 'De Trinitate,'" *Augustiniana: Tijdschrift voor de studie van Sint Augustinus en de Augustijnenorde* 14 (1964): 485–499; Jean-Louis Maier, *Les missions divines selon Saint Augustin* (Fribourg: Librairie de l'Université, 1960); Basil Studer, *Zur Theophanie-Exegese Augustins: Untersuchung zu einem Ambrosius-Zitat in der Schrift "De Videndo Deo"* (Rome: Herder, 1971); Michel René Barnes, "Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine's *De Trinitate* I," *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 43–60; Michel René Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19 (2003): 329–356; Kari Kloos, *Christ, Creation, and the Vision of God: Augustine's Transformation of Early Christian Theophany Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[95] Augustine had already mentioned the possibility that theophanies be in fact "angelophanies" in Book 2. First he presents this as a hypothetical case (a situation in which "one of many angels . . . by some dispensation represented the person of his Lord," but then he seems to take this possibility as a matter of fact: "it is not sufficiently clear which person of the Trinity *that angel* represented" (*Trin*. 2.13.23 [CCSL 50:110], FaCh 45:79; italics mine).

[96] Augustine, *Trin.* 3.10.19 (CCSL 50:146; FaCh 45:115).

[97] Augustine, *Trin.* 3.10.19 (CCSL 50:146; FaCh 45:115). Augustine (*Trin.* 2.6.11 [CCSL 50:96; FaCh 45:66]) lists the following here: the form of a dove at the Jordan Baptism, which had not existed before, but came into being "suddenly" (Lk 3:22); the tongues of fire (Acts 2:3); the burning bush (Exod 3:2); the pillar of fire (Exod 13:21); the lightning and thunder on Sinai (Exod 19:16). The same applies to the visions of Adam (in Eden), Abraham, or Moses (Augustine, *Trin.* 2.10.17 [CCSL 50:102–103; FaCh 45:71]).

[98] "These things appeared . . . as a creature serving the Creator"; "the material form of those things came into being . . . to signify something and then pass away" (2.6.11 [CCSL 50:94, 96; FaCh 45:64, 66]); "All these tangible signs were displayed through a creature that has been made subject (*per subiectam . . . creaturam*) in order to signify the invisible and intelligible God" (*Trin*. 2.15.25 [CCSL 50:114; FaCh 45:82]); "those visions were wrought by a changeable creature (*per creaturam commutabilem*) . . . they do not reveal God as he properly is, but signify his presence by . . . signs" (*Trin*. 2.17.32 [CCSL 50:123; FaCh 45:90]); "some form of a creature was made for the occasion

divine presence in such phenomena is indirect, inasmuch as the angel speaks in the persona of God (*ex persona dei)*,[99] which is, says Augustine, "a manner of speaking in which the effect is attributed to the cause [*significatur per efficientem id quod efficitur].*"[100]

The first thing to consider is the polemical context of Augustine's new theology of theophanies.[101] More specifically, Augustine's take on theophanies constitutes an effective response to a three-sided conflict that opposes the "Modalist" theologians, with their very limited distinction of the Logos within the divine monad; the "Homoians," who exploit the anti-Modalistic use of theophanies to also extract a subordinationistic Christology;[102] and the pro-Nicenes, who hold on to both christophanic exegesis and *homoousios*. The pro-Nicenes argue that the subordinationist "extension" of christophanic exegesis is unwarranted because the Son is invisible *according to nature*, and manifested in theophanies only *according to his will*, the latter producing a certain adaptive visual appearance (*species*) that foreshadows the incarnation. Augustine's response to the Homoians completely changes the terms of the debate: he dispenses altogether with the idea that theophanies are manifestations of the Logos, thereby cutting off the main exegetical and theological supply for subordinatian Christology.

Augustine's revolutionary view of theophanies as created manifestations of the Trinity is not only a matter of polemical expediency; it is also intimately linked to his eschatological "transference" of the vision of God, which, naturally, relegated theophanies to the bottom of the ladder leading to the vision of God, and to the periphery of Christian reflection. If theophanies (whether those in the Old or the New Testaments, or in the lives of the saints) do not confer a direct experience of

(*facta est enim quaedam creaturae species ex tempore*), in order that the Holy Spirit might be visibly manifested by means of it" (*Trin*. 2.5.10 [CCSL 50:93; FaCh 45:62]).

[99] Augustine, *Trin.* 3.10.20 (CCSL 50:146; FaCh 45:116).

[100] Augustine, *Trin.* 3.11.25 (CCSL 50:155; FaCh 45:124). Cf. Marie-Odile Boulnois, "L'exégèse de la théophanie de Mambré dans le *De Trinitate* d'Augustin: enjeux et ruptures," in *Le* De Trinitate *de saint Augustin. Exégèse, logique et noétique*, ed. E. Bermon and G. O'Daly (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2012), 35–65, at 65 (emphasis added): "c'est Dieu qui parle et qui est présent dans la créature, *mais il n'agit pas directement*. . . . Figure, signification, nous sommes dans le registre de la représentation et non plus de la manifestation."

[101] Even though a rough map of the theological debate ("Arians" versus "Modalists") was offered by earlier studies, such as those by Lebreton and van der Lof, the precise identification of the historical parties involved in the conflict is due to Studer and Barnes.

[102] Their argument is that, since the Son is manifested in theophanies, he must be inherently visible in a way that the Father is not and therefore be of a different nature from the Father. See Augustine, *Trin.* 2.9.14–16 (CCSL 50:98–101; FaCh 45:68–70); 2.16.27 (CCSL 50:116; FaCh 45:83); Studer, *Zur Theophanie-Exegese Augustins*, 8; Barnes, "Visible Christ," 341.

the divine, it is because, for the bishop of Hippo, "that vision is promised to the saints in the next life."[103] According to Michel Barnes,

> [B]y the year 400, Augustine had come to understand that in this life we were incapable of a vision of God—that we were now incapable of direct knowledge of the truth . . . . Augustine had also come to understand something else about such visions: fundamentally, there was no virtue to them . . . . Augustine had a new understanding not simply of the (im)possibility of a vision of God in this life, but of the significance of any such vision: . . . no salvation in or from that vision. Salvation came from faith—this is faith's "utility."[104]

According to the threefold (corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual) hierarchy of vision, which Augustine presents in *De Genesi ad litteram* 12, theophanies exemplify either the bodily vision (the pillar of cloud, the Sinai theophany, Isa 6:1–3; Rev 1:13–20), or the spiritual vision (Exodus 19; 33).[105] At any rate, they do not grant the higher "intellectual vision," the true vision of God. In theophanies, "God deigned to appear to certain persons, such as Abraham, Isaiah, and others like them, though not in his nature but in the form in which he willed to appear [*non in sua natura, sed in qua voluit specie]*."[106] For a theology in which the theophanic manifestation or "role" and the bearer of the role are one and the same—the Logos—the occasional occurrence of "created" and "creature" is simply loose language meant to convey the adaptive character of the apparent form (*species)*, which is undoutedly "owned" by the Logos. For Augustine, by contrast, the adaptive *species* is "created" in a strict sense: a created revelatory instrument of the Trinity, ontologically other than the divine nature.[107] In theophanies, the visionaries encounter created manifestations of God, whereas the vision of God refers to "gazing upon the substance by which he is what he is."[108] This is the first main difference between theophanies and the proper vision of God (*visio intellectualis*). The second difference is that theophanies take place in the embodied and fallen state of this age, whereas the vision of God is eschatological.[109]

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[103] Augustine, *Ep*. 147.8.20 (CSEL 44:293, 294; WSA 2/2:329).

[104] Barnes, "Visible Christ," 342.

[105] Augustine, *Gen. litt.* 12.26.54; 34.67 (CSEL 44:420, 432; WSA 1/13:495, 504).

[106] Augustine, *Ep*. 147.6.18; 10.23 (CSEL 44:289, 297; WSA 2/2:327, 331).

[107] Augustine, *Gen. litt.* 12.4.9 (CSEL 28/1:384; Hill, 467): "the difference between the very substance of God and the visible creature in [theophanies]"; *Gen. litt.* 12.27.55 (CSEL 28/1:420; Hill, 495): "to see God . . . in his very substance as, without any bodily creature being assumed."

[108] Augustine, *Ep.* 147.8.20 (CSEL 44:293; WSA 2/2:329).

[109] Augustine declares Moses and Paul to be exceptions to the rule that the vision of God occurs in the life to come. According to Barnes ("Visible Christ," 352n48), "the most accurate description of Augustine's judgment about the possibility of a vision of God in this life is that it cannot happen, but it sometimes does anyway"—namely, in extraordinary cases such as those of

Augustine's New Lenses and the Scholarly Blind Spot

Even though, East of the Adriatic, Christians continued to view theophanies as manifestations of God the Word himself, and even if the pre-Augustinian view continued to be affirmed in hymns such as the Good Friday Reproaches,[110] the O Antiphons of Advent,[111] the ninth-century hymn "Veni Immanuel," and numerous manuscript illuminations,[112] Augustine's view of theophanies as created and evanescent manifestations gradually imposed itself as normative in Latin-speaking Christianity. It had certainly acquired this status by the time of John Scotus Eriugena in the ninth century,[113] and remained unchallenged in subsequent centuries in Western Christianity. As the ancient hymns and orations and manuscript illuminations were increasingly perceived as somehow belonging to a different "realm" than doctrinal reflection, systematization, and teaching, the theological framework of the second millennium was erected largely without the corrective these sources could have provided. The question of theophanies should perhaps be considered as a part of the major theological and devotional shift described by Yves Congar as happening at the hinge of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In his words, "between the ends of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries everything changes . . . But the shift takes place only in the West."[114]

Moses and the apostle Paul. Moreover, a number of statements in writings covering Augustine's entire lifespan seem to imply or even affirm explicitly that some among the apostles—*other than Paul!*—were granted this vision and that it continues to occur, quite often in mystical rapture. For relevant texts and their discussion, see Roland J. Teske, "St. Augustine and the Vision of God," in *Augustine Mystic and Mystagogue, ed.* F. van Fleteren et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 287–308. These texts witness, in my view, to the tension between the inherited theological tradition and the logic of Augustine's bold and innovative thought.

[110] Cf. *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), 518–521.

[111] Cf. *LSB* 357 appendix. Quotations marked *LSB* are from *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006).

[112] Antiphon for December 18: "Lord and Ruler (*Adonai et Dux*) of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and gave him the law in Sinai, come to redeem us with an outstretched arm!"; "Veni Immanuel": "Veni, veni Adonai qui populo in Sinai legem dedisti vertice in majestate gloriae," with its well-known English rendering "O come, O come, Thou Lord of might / Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height / In ancient times didst give the Law / In cloud and majesty and awe" (*LSB* 357:3). For the persistence of christophanic exegesis in the visual arts, see Boespflug, *Les théophanies*.

[113] Eriugena assumes, based on *beatus Augustinus*, that in theophanies God appears "in some creature made subservient [*in aliqua subiecta creatura*]" (*Commentary on John* 25 [SC 180:120]), so that Isaiah, for instance, saw "not His [God's] Essence . . . but something created by Him" (*Periphyseon* 1, CCCM 161:9; John J. O'Meara, ed., *Periphyseon: The Division of Nature*, trans. I.P. Sheldon-Williams [Montréal: Bellarmin, 1987], 31). This Augustinian notion of created theophanies functions as the unacknowledged interpretive lens even when Eriugena reads Ps.-Dionysius. See Bogdan G. Bucur, "Dionysius East and West: Unities, Differentiations and the Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies," *Dionysius* 26 (2008): 115–138, esp. 133–136.

[114] Yves Congar, *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism between the Eastern and Western Churches* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1959), 38–39, referring to André

The Augustinian de-centering of theophanies and explicit rejection of christophanic exegesis is an important aspect of the theological formation of those learned clergymen to whom we owe its birth, development, and flourishing of scholarly editions and studies of the church fathers (e.g., the Benedictines of St. Maur, the circle of the Oxford Movement, the Jesuits and Dominicans of the Nouvelle Theologie); it remains "baked into" the project of early Christian studies, undisturbed by the change of paradigm from patristics to early Christian studies.[115] Much of this scholarship regards christophanic exegesis as, simply, the background against which the bishop of Hippo's view on the created manifestations of the Trinity shines brilliantly. Consider, for instance, John Henry Newman's observations on this topic:

> [T]he Ante-nicene Fathers . . . speak of the Angelic visions in the Old Testament as if they were appearances of the Son; but St. Augustine introduced the explicit doctrine, which has been received since his date, that they were simply Angels. . . . This indeed is the only interpretation which the Ante-nicene statements admitted, as soon as reason began to examine what they did mean. They could not mean that the Eternal God could really be seen by bodily eyes; if anything was seen, that must have been some created glory or other symbol, by which it pleased the Almighty to signify His Presence. . . . The earlier Fathers spoke as if there were no medium interposed between the Creator and the creature, and so they seemed to make the Eternal Son the medium; what it really was, they had not determined. St. Augustine ruled, and his ruling has been accepted in later times.[116]

Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin. Études d'histoire littéraire* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932) 59–60, 62, 506: "Dom Wilmart, a profound student of ancient texts, has written that a Christian of the Fourth or Fifth Century would have felt less bewildered by the forms of piety current in the Eleventh Century than would his counterpart of the Eleventh Century in the forms of the Twelfth. The great break occurred in the transition from the one to the other century. This change took place only in the West where, sometime between the end of the Eleventh and the end of the Twelfth Century, everything was somehow transformed. This profound alteration of view did not take place in the East where, in some respects, Christian matters are still today what they were then and what they were in the West before the end of the Eleventh Century. This is a statement that becomes clearer the better one knows the facts. It is indeed very serious, for it concerns precisely the moment when the schism asserted itself in a way that has been without a true remedy up to now. It seems impossible that this be a purely exterior and fortuitous coincidence."

[115] Elizabeth A. Clark, "From Patristics to Early Christian Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies,* ed. S. A. Harvey and D. G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7–41.

[116] See John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: Pickering, 1878), 136–137.

It is quite clear that, for Newman, Augustine's judgment is to be preferred to that of his predecessors because it offers a reasonable alternative to their confused notions. The emphatic statement about Augustine's "ruling" on theophanies having been "received since his date" implies that an obvious theological consensus exists—evidently, a "consensus" that is wittingly or unwittingly leaving out four centuries of pre-Augustinian authors, but also the writers in the Christian East.[117]

It is noteworthy that Lebreton's article on Augustine's exegesis of theophanies constituted a response to the theological challenge launched by the publication of a voluminous dossier of passages illustrating the christological understanding of theophanies in the first five centuries, at the end of which the author, dom Georges Legeay, had made clear his preference for "the sentiment that was nearly unanimous in the fathers of the first four centuries of the Church" over against the views of Augustine.[118] Such explicit theological bias is still present in Basil Studer's fundamental study, where one reads about Irenaeus's "*much too* realistic understanding of theophanies," or that Hilary "ascribed *too* great of a reality to the theophanies of the Son," or that "they [the Nicenes] reserved the manifestations *too* exclusively for the Son and at the same time saw them as being in *too much* of a continuity with the Incarnation."[119]

The theological assumptions inherited from Augustine, transmitted through academic and theological formation, are still operative in both ecclesiastical and academic circles. Perhaps this explains why a tradition as ancient, widespread, adaptable, and resilient as that of christophanic exegesis is almost invisible in scholarship; why, among authoritative scholarly treatments of the fourth and fifth centuries, it is usually only studies of Augustine that pay any attention to

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[117] Alexander Golitzin, "The Form of God and Vision of the Glory: Some Thoughts on the Anthropomorphite Controversy of 399 AD," Seminar on Jewish Roots of Eastern Christian Mysticism, Marquette University, accessed November 18, 2021, http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/morphe.html; Romanian translation: "'Forma lui Dumnezeu' şi 'vederea Slavei'. Reflecţii asupra controversei 'antropomorfite' din anul 399 d. Hr.," trans. I. Ica Jr., in *Mistagogia: Experienta lui Dumnezeu in Ortodoxie* (Sibiu: Deisis, 1998), 184–267, at 204: "his [Augustine's] treatment [of the theophanies] is strikingly different again and, indeed, marks a genuine revolution, if not an actual rupture, with regard to prior traditions in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Numidia, Palestine, Syria, and Greece."

[118] "Il nous est, ce semble, permis de préferer, à l'opinion de saint Augustin, le sentiment à peu près unanime des Pères des quatres premiers siècles de l'Eglise." Georges Legeay, "L'Ange et les théophanies dans l'Ecriture Sainte d'après la doctrine des Pères," *Revue Thomiste* 10 (1902): 138–158, 405–424; 11 (1903): 46–69, 125–154. The quotation is from *Revue Thomiste* 10 (1902): 405.

[119] "*allzu* realistisches Verständnis der Theophanien"; "schrieb den Theophanien des Sohnes eine *zu* grosse Wirklichkeit zu"; "diese [Nizäner] die Erscheinungen *zu* ausschliesslich dem Sohne vorbehielten und sie zugleich mit der Menschwerdung *zu* sehr in einer Kontinuität sahen." Studer, *Zur Theophanie-Exegese Augustins*, 82, 37 (emphasis added).

christophanic exegesis—and then only to discuss how this theological Neanderthal was driven to extinction by the massive paradigm change coming from Hippo.

Conclusions

I hope that the foregoing pages have highlighted a problem worth our attention. Christophanic exegesis is not a second-century creation, shaped by polemical necessity, but an expression of the religious experience and witness of the earliest Christians ("the Lord is Jesus, Jesus is the Lord); it has lent itself to being effectively "weaponized" in a variety of polemical contexts along the centuries (anti-Jewish, anti-pagan, anti-dualistic, anti-monarchian, anti-subordinationistic); it has proved capable of surviving past the fourth century and was then disseminated in the hymnography, iconography, and hagiography of the Christian commonwealth.

If, despite its presence in a vast number of diverse Christian sources, the christological exegesis of biblical theophanies seems to have vanished from the sight of scholarship, it is because the discipline of patristics was conceived among scholars who had been shaped by Augustine, and was born wearing Augustine's reading lenses. The effect of these lenses was that the theological gaze moved away from theophanies, so that the latter only registered in the margins of the spectrum of relevance.

"Missing theophanies" in scholarly accounts of the Christian theological tradition has serious consequences. One such consequence is that the insistent recourse to theophanies in so much of Byzantine festal hymnography and some Western hymnody and liturgy appears as a somewhat bizarre, archaizing feature, implausibly resuscitating the interests of Justin or Irenaeus in the compositions of Romanos the Melodist and John Damascene. More importantly, however, a dissonance obtains between the patristic authors and their scholarly interpreters in the field of patristics. Removing Augustine's lenses and retrieving this significant part of the unbroken Christian tradition would help recover and strengthen the conviction that Christian dogmatics is anchored in the living experience of Israel's walk with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Lawgiver and "God of our fathers." With face turned toward theophany, biblical exegesis can once again become mystagogy: an account of and a guide into the experience of God.

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Communing with the Betrayer: The Presence and Significance of Judas at the Last Supper among Patristic Sources

Charles R. Schulz

Introduction

"Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he gave it to the disciples . . ." Ask which disciples and the usual and quick answer is the twelve apostles. This is certainly the dominant answer given by the traditional artistic presentations of the scene, for example, by Fra Angelico (1440), Leonardo da Vinci (1498), Lucas Cranach the Younger (1565), and Tintoretto (ca. 1592). The Gospel of John, however, reports that Judas left at some point during the meal to betray the Lord (John 13:30). In fact, arguments about who rightly receives the Holy Supper often appeal to the "fact" that Judas either was or was not present.[1] What does the tradition of the church say to this question? As the early church fathers took disparate positions on the question, we find that they did so to draw important spiritual and pastoral conclusions from the presence or absence of the betrayer at the first Lord's Supper. Goran Sekulovski, who has

[1] A quick internet search illustrates how this question is yet alive for Christians today, including among the Reformed, Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans. See, respectively, Joseph R. Nally Jr., "Did Judas Take Communion?" *Thirdmill*, accessed May 19, 2020, http://thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/40562; Robin A. Brace, "Did Judas Take Communion before Betraying Jesus?" UK Apologetics, November 30, 2011, http://www.ukapologetics.net/11/judascommunion.htm; Ryan Erlenbush, "When a Priest Refuses Communion to a Public Sinner," EWTN, March 29, 2012, http://newtheologicalmovement.blogspot.com/2012/03/when-priestrefuses-communion-to-public.html; William P. Terjesen, "Crypto-Calvinists and Open Communion," accessed February 14, 2016, http://www.ourredeemerlcms.org/crypto%20calvinism.pdf. Interest in this question in the Reformation period is reflected by Heinrich Bullinger, who desired to demonstrate both that Judas participated in the Lord's Supper and that he did not thereby receive Christ's true body and blood because he did not attain to the benefits of union with Christ. Heinrich Bullinger, "Ob Judas der Verrätter im Abendmal noch am Tisch gesessen sei als der Herr Jesus das Sacrament seines Leibs und Bluts den Jüngern geben: Und ob ers auch Jude geben hab," in *Heinrich Bullinger Werke* (Zug: Inter Documentation Co., 1985), Microfiche, 2–3. The Lutheran Confessions twice describe Judas as a recipient of the Lord's Supper (FC SD VII 33, 60). Although these references presuppose that Judas communed, they do nothing more than use the reference as an illustration, as Judas here is simply a type of unbeliever who "receives" (present tense) Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, although to his harm.

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provided an overview of the history of interpretation, notes this pastoral aim, particularly in John Chrysostom.[2] A fuller consideration of the patristic passages will demonstrate that contextual pastoral concerns help to account for differences in interpretation in the church's first six centuries.

The Testimony of Scripture

To determine whether Judas received the Lord's Supper at its institution, the church fathers had to handle an ambiguity in the scriptural witness.[3] The Synoptic Gospels narrate Judas's preliminary visit to the priests before the Supper (Matt 26:14–16; Mk 14:10–11; Lk 22:3–6). John first tells of the devil's success in convincing Judas to betray the Lord in the context of the Supper. Matthew and Mark place the Twelve at the table; Luke identifies the guests as the apostles—John, as disciples (Matt 26:20; Mk 14:17; Lk 22:14; Jn 13:5). John, who does not record the words of institution, reports the foot washing and then the Lord's announcement that the betrayer is in their midst. This climaxes in the question of the betrayer's identity from the beloved disciple and Jesus' reply that it is the one to whom he gives the morsel of bread. Upon receiving the bread from Jesus, Judas departs, hearing the Lord's charge, "What you are going to do, do quickly"[4] (Jn 13:27). The text does not indicate whether the morsel was itself the Supper or whether the Supper took place before or after the departure.

Complications arise in any attempt to harmonize John with the other Gospels. Matthew and Mark locate the prediction of the betrayal and the interaction between Jesus and Judas before the Supper; Luke reports the prediction after the words of institution but then ambiguously states that "the disciples" began to question one another (Lk 22:23), leaving us to wonder whether Judas himself was yet present at this point. A full conflation of the Gospels could order the events as follows: the foot washing, the first discussion of the betrayer with a question about his identity, the indication of Judas with the morsel, the departure of Judas, the words of institution,

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[2] Goran Sekulovski, "Jean Chrysostome sur la communion de Judas," *Studia Patristica* 67 (2013): 311–321.

[3] Sekulovski, after noting the disparate accounts of the evangelists, concludes that the biblical data "nous obligent à reconnaitre la participation de Judas dans le mystère eucharistique." Sekulovski, "Jean Chrysostome sur la communion," 313. "This conclusion disregards the complexity of the accounts which he himself indicates, but appears to rest on the presumption that Judas's ordination to the apostolic office took place at the Last Supper (note 2) and that the whole of The Twelve must have been present at the Institution of the Eucharist" (321).

[4] 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.

the second discussion of betrayal, and further questions by the disciples about his identity. The plausibility of this ordering is challenged by the necessity of positing a second general inquiry about the betrayer after the first had been answered, at least for John and possibly Peter, too, by the passing of the morsel. Conversely, John is the only evangelist who describes the departure of Judas from the Twelve. The other Gospels indicate his presence at the table and then, as if he had sneaked away at some unknown point, he appears leading the crowd to the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus (Matt 26:47; Mk 14:43; Lk 22:47). Adding to the confusion, the text between the institution of the Supper and the betrayal occasionally makes reference to "all the disciples," "his disciples," and "the disciples" being present at the Mount of Olives even as Judas rendezvoused with the Jewish authorities (Matt 26:35, 45; Mk 14:32; Lk 22:39, 45). Even John, who has Judas depart, refers to the remaining assembly as Jesus and "his disciples" (Jn 18:1), though one is obviously absent.

Modern Evaluations

Modern commentators interpret the data from the Gospels in disparate ways. Raymond Brown acknowledges that the word used for the morsel given to Judas (τὸ ψωμίον) is later used in Greek Christianity to refer to the eucharistic host; nevertheless, he denies this meaning to John due to the lack of an institution narrative. Rather, he reads John as "describing the dipping of the herbs in the *haroseth* sauce, an action that took place early in the Passover meal before the main course with its blessing of the bread and of the third cup of wine."[5] Brown interprets the handing of the morsel to Judas as either a "basic gesture of Oriental hospitality" or "a special act of esteem whereby a host singles out a guest whom he wishes to honor."[6] As for Judas, "his acceptance of the morsel without changing his wicked plan to betray Jesus means that he has chosen for Satan rather than for Jesus."[7] Kasper Bro Larsen agrees that John's narrative does not depict Judas as receiving the Eucharist. Positing conflicting reports between the evangelists on this issue, he highlights the differing authorial intentions in the divergent arrangements of the material—Matthew and Mark were perhaps reflecting early Christian liturgical discipline by "suggesting that Judas as an outsider was expelled before the meal," whereas Luke "sharpens the point that Jesus was betrayed by one of his own by

[5] Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII–XXI*, Anchor Bible Commentary 29A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 578.

[6] Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 578.

[7] Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 578.

having Judas participate," and John does not address participation "due to the absence of the Eucharist."[8]

On the other hand, Michael W. Martin has recently argued that Judas functions in John's Gospel as an extreme representative of the secessionists from the Johannine community. This device of using a figure to represent a group, called *genus syncrisis*, was taught in the schools of the day, as evidenced in the basic textbooks of rhetoric (*progymnasmata*). Among the parallels between the secessionists and John's Judas that Martin finds is the "rejection of the Eucharist."[9] As part of his evidence, he reads 1 John 5:6 as sacramental—"This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood"—and he points to the defection which followed the bread of life discourse in John 6. Significantly, this defection concludes in John 6:66 with a reference to Judas as one akin to the defectors. Martin observes that Irenaeus argues against similar opponents whose Christology also led to a rejection of the Eucharist.[10] Judas's departure from the Passover Supper into the night in John 13 thus echoes the secessionists' departure from the Johannine community and their rejection of its eucharistic celebrations. In addition to the connection with the defection occasioned by the bread of life discourse, Martin further sees an implicit opposition between the character of Judas and the Eucharist in two other scenes: (1) Judas opposed the honor which Mary lavished upon Jesus' body at the supper earlier in Holy Week, and (2) in John 13:10–11, Jesus distances Judas from the purifying effects of the foot washing (which Martin reads as an indication of the benefits of the Holy Supper). Finally, Martin points to the psalm prophecy of the betrayal, which he translates, "The one who *chewed* my bread has lifted his heel against me" (Ps 41:9). This singular recurrence of the verb τρώγω connects the table fellowship of the betrayer with Jesus' command to "chew" his flesh in John 6.[11] Cumulatively, Martin's interpretive argument would lead one to conclude that Judas could only fulfill the prophecy of betrayal if he participated in the meal of Christ's body and blood. Per Martin, Judas's presence at, participation in, and departure from the eucharistic

[8] Kasper Bro Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 164.

[9] Michael W. Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison in the Fourth Gospel*, New Testament Monographs 25 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 142.

[10] Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison,* 142–144. In the opening scenes of *The Gospel of Judas*, Jesus comes upon the disciples as they are participating in a rite of "thanksgiving" or Eucharist. He laughs at them "because this is how your god [will be] praised." The opposition of the gnostic author to the sacrament is clear. See Marvin W. Meyer, *The Gospels of the Marginalized* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 85.

[11] Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison*, 148.

meal furthers an important function of the Gospel in its polemic against the secessionists. Their parallel trajectory marks them as faithless and self-condemned followers of Judas.

This sampling of modern scholarship has served to demonstrate how questions over the presence of Judas at the Supper have continued without resolution. Modern skepticism regarding the historical veracity of the Gospel narratives has shifted the discussion to the pastoral intentions of the supposedly anonymous Gospel authors and editors in their differing community contexts. Consequently modern scholars tend to eschew clear assertions about whether Judas actually communed. Nevertheless, the clear testimony of the early church indicates that the canonical Gospels were written by apostles and their associates. Founded on eye-witness accounts, the Gospels depict nothing other than the real words and deeds of the Lord Jesus.

Patristic Positions

Modern divergence about whether the Gospels report the Lord Jesus communing his betrayer only continues a long history of conflicting answers to this question. As we survey the early fathers, we find that they, too, differed among themselves and, in so doing, drew important theological and pastoral conclusions from their positions.

As the earliest one recorded to address the question, Tatian had to resolve the problem for the sake of constructing his harmonized narrative of the Gospels in the *Diatessaron*.[12] He placed the conversation about the identity of the betrayer at the table of the Supper before the institution of the sacrament.[13] Furthermore, between the "it was still night" of Judas's departure and the "while they were eating, Jesus took bread" of the institution narrative, he inserts John 13:31–32 to interpret the moment: "Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.'" This placement of this passage may look forward to the Eucharist as an expression of the glory of the Father and of Jesus. More likely, however, it functions as it does in the Gospel of John as a reference to the approaching passion. Thus, Judas's movement toward betrayal initiates the sequence of events that culminates in the crucifixion. Placing Jesus' words here reveals him as accepting, welcoming, and even controlling his mission as the Savior whose death brings life to the world.

[12] Sekulovski astutely indicates that the awkwardness of explaining the story of Jesus' betrayal by one of his closest associates moved various early authors like Justin, Hermas, and Clement of Alexandria quietly to avoid the topic. Sekulovski, "Jean Chrysostome sur la communion," 313.

[13] Tatian, "The Diatessaron of Tatian," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Allan Menzies (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 10:112 (hereafter ANF).

In Tatian's ordering, there is no further discussion of the betrayer after the institution narrative, though the predictions that the disciples will abandon their Lord and that Satan will sift Peter follow directly. Tatian accomplishes several things with his ordering of the words and events: Judas clearly removes himself before the Holy Supper is distributed, Christ remains in control, and the outcome, even of Judas's betrayal, serves the glory of God and of his Christ.

Less than a century after Tatian comes Origen's careful treatment of Judas. In contrast to much of the tradition both before and after, Origen depicts Judas as an initially good disciple who only at the end suffers a satanic attack, temptation, possession, and finally fruitless remorse.[14] The pertinent passage in Origen's "*Commentary on John*" clearly identifies the "morsel" as the eucharistic host but leaves undetermined whether Judas ate it:

> Jesus says, "Upon dipping the morsel" and He grants that it be taken in the bowl. For so you will understand that "upon dipping the morsel" as meaning there was no delay in taking it. Then it is said, "He gives it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. And after the morsel Satan then enters into him." "After the morsel" indicates that it is not quickly eaten by Judas, since Satan entered into Judas anticipating the benefit of the morsel, so that Judas would not be helped by Jesus' gift of the morsel, for it had beneficial power for the one using it. But Satan, having put it into his heart to betray his teacher, was afraid lest, through benefit of the morsel, the plot would be cast aside from the one in whom it was cast. Anticipating that Judas would take the morsel, he entered at the same time, even when it was said, "What you do, do quickly." Having taken the morsel, Judas "immediately went out." So, not unreasonably, it can also be said at this point that the case is as the one who eating the bread of the Lord or drinking his cup unworthily eats and drinks to his judgment, since the singular great power in the bread and in the cup produces the better [effect] for one with a better disposition but works judgment for the worse. Thus, the morsel from Jesus was of the same character for the one to whom it was handed as for the rest of the apostles when He says, "Take, eat." To those [it worked] for salvation but to Judas for judgment since after the morsel Satan entered into him. Let the bread and the cup be understood rather simply according to the more common view of the Eucharist, but for those who have learned to listen more deeply [let it] also [be understood] according to the more divine promise about the nourishing word of truth. Thus, by example, I would say that bread which is very nourishing in a physical way strengthens the vitality within one,

[14] For a careful reading of Origen's evaluation of Judas, see Samuel Laeuchli, "Origen's Interpretation of Judas Iscariot," *Church History* 22 (December 1953): 253–268.

> leading to health and vigor. Even so, a true word given to a sick soul not fit for such food often destroys it and the soul's condition becomes worse. And so even to speak the truth is perilous. This is what I would say about the morsel which, dipped, "He gives to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot." And we have given a reason for each case, whether it is necessary to say that he took it and ate it or whether Satan, entering into Judas, prevented him [from eating].[15]

Our understanding that Origen posits Judas's reception of the Eucharist rests on this line: "Thus, the morsel from Jesus was of the same character for the one to whom it was handed as for the rest of the apostles when He says, 'Take, eat.'"

It is the beneficial effect of the morsel that Satan attempts to thwart by suddenly entering Judas and preventing the consumption. If he could not prevent it, he would at least rob the recipient of its benefit. "Not unreasonably" does St. Paul's warning against unworthy reception (1 Cor 11:29) and the judgment it entails apply in this context. Thus Origen envisions two potential cases: no reception due to satanic intervention or unworthy reception due to Judas's unfitness.

As Laeuchli summarizes Origen's understanding of the role of Judas, it is clear that Origen anticipates a number of themes that would develop in the church's exegesis, but he does this in his own way. Psalm 41:9 foretold the betrayal of Christ with the words, "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me"; its fulfillment demonstrates the authentic identity of Jesus as the Christ, but for Origen it also demonstrates Judas's own initial faithfulness, who had to be a friend to betray his Lord.[16] Judas will fall under Satan's power, but Origen describes a fall of two stages: first, Judas succumbs to the thought of the betrayal, and then he yields to a full possession by Satan. Origen adds that the fall from grace devolved not so much from Judas's greed as from his lack of faith because he did not employ "the shield of faith" which could have quenched "the flaming darts" of satanic attack (Eph 6:16). The betrayal accomplished, Satan departs from Judas and leaves him in shock and bitter remorse.[17] It is the reception of the morsel, however, that brings the final phase of the divine economy[18]; it is also the moment of Judas's final loss of all the benefits of Christ, for by taking it unworthily, he is now bereft of his discipleship.[19] Laeuchli concludes that Origen's exegetical concerns in this case demonstrate a willingness to accept ambiguity and

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[15] Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 31.306–312 on John 13:30. "Origenes Werke: Der Johanneskommentar," in *Die Grieschiche Christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, vol. 10 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), 467–468, accessed February 4, 2016, https://books.google.com/books?id=6NkYAAAAYAAJ. The translation is my own.

[16] Laeuchli, "Origen's Interpretation of Judas Iscariot," 255.

[17] Laeuchli, "Origen's Interpretation of Judas Iscariot," 256, 259.

[18] Laeuchli, "Origen's Interpretation of Judas Iscariot," 265.

[19] Laeuchli, "Origen's Interpretation of Judas Iscariot," 257.

paradox rather than any need to unify the texts within a doctrinal system. The divine plan, Judas's sin, the plots of the high priests, and satanic initiative each receive credit for the betrayal of Christ.[20] The tensions inherent in this reading are simply left to stand. The coherence of Origen's reading rests in the pastoral concern for depicting inner spiritual life with its urgent opportunities and threatening dangers. The details of Judas's rise and fall serve as a cautionary tale for his students.

In the fourth century, Hilary of Poitiers (ca. 315–ca. 367) offered a brief comment on whether Judas received the Lord's Supper in his *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. He surmises that Judas did not commune:

> Judas did not take the body of Christ. After these things Judas is indicated as a traitor, without whom the Passover was consecrated with the cup taken and the bread broken: For he was not worthy of communion of the eternal mysteries. For it is understood that he immediately withdrew from this place [the upper room], because it tells that he returns with the crowds. Nor could he who was not going to drink in the kingdom well drink with the Lord: because [the Lord] promised that all who then were drinking from the fruit of this vine would drink afterward with him (Matt 26:29).[21]

The logic of the argument is based first on the unworthiness of Judas to receive the sacred meal, then on the logistics of Judas's movements that night, and finally on the promise of Christ to those present that "I will . . . drink [this fruit of the vine] new with you [plural] in my Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29). For Hilary, this promise implies that all those present would attain to heavenly glory. Hilary does not need to explain that Judas received the Holy Communion unworthily nor what Christ's motive would have been in giving it to him. Precisely following Matthew, the subject of his commentary, and not glancing at Luke or John, he concludes that Judas was not there for the institution of the Holy Supper. Two other mid- to late fourth-century works, *The Commentary on the Diatessaron* by Ephrem the Syrian and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, likewise deny the presence of Judas during the reception of the Eucharist.[22]

In contrast to Hilary, Chrysostom (347–407) accepts that Judas communed along with the rest of the disciples. In his preaching on the Gospel of Matthew,

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[20] Laeuchli, "Origen's Interpretation of Judas Iscariot," 265.

[21] Hilary of Poitiers, "Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei," in *Patrologia cursus completus: Series latina*, 217 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1844–1864), 9:1065 (hereafter PL). Translation is the author's own.

[22] Ephrem de Nisibie, *Commentaires de l'Évangile concordant ou Diatessaron* 13:3 (Sources chrétiennes [Paris: Cerf, 1943], 121:333); *Apostolic Constitutions* II, VI 30, 2 (SC 329:391).

positions we have already seen reappear in his exploration of Judas's reception of the Lord's body and blood:

> Ah! How great is the blindness of the traitor! Even partaking of the mysteries, he remained the same; and admitted to the most holy table, he changed not. And this Luke shows by saying, that after this Satan entered into him. Satan did not underestimate the Lord's body, but thenceforth laughed to scorn the traitor's shamelessness.[23] For indeed his sin became greater from both causes, as well in that he came to the mysteries with such a disposition, as that having approached them, he did not become better, either from fear, or from the benefit, or from the honor. But Christ forbad him not, although He knew all things, that you might learn that he omits none of the things that pertain to correction. Wherefore both before this, and after this, He continually admonished him, and checked him, both by deeds and by words; both by fear and by kindness; both by threatening and by honor. But none of these things withdrew him from that grievous pest.[24]

Here Chrysostom does not hesitate to bring Satan's possession of Judas into close connection with Judas's reception of the Eucharist. Whereas Origen would leave the question of Judas's reception open and, as we will see, Augustine could distinguish between the morsel and the Eucharist itself, Chrysostom makes the reception of the Eucharist and the possession by Satan sequential steps in the same movement. He mistakenly attributes this succession of events to Luke, rather than to John, for it is Luke who reports Satan's entry into Judas *before* the Supper, not after the morsel, to explain Judas's initiative in meeting with the priests (Lk 22:3–6). Chrysostom also echoes Origen in stating that it is the unworthy condition of Judas's soul and his unworthy reception that gave entrance to Satan. Yet Christ's action reveals his loving motive in leaving nothing aside that might effect Judas's rescue from his self-chosen path of destruction.

In his homilies on John, Chrysostom remains consistent in describing the relationship between Jesus and Judas in those last hours. Christ does everything to win Judas back—he washed Judas's feet and shared his meal with him,[25] he honored him with the chosen morsel,[26] and he spoke to him such words as were "capable of softening even a stone."[27] Yet, all of this did not turn Judas. In fact, he persisted on

[23] ὁ Σατανᾶς, οὐ τοῦ σώματος καταφρονῶν τοῦ Δεσποτικοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἀναισχυντίας καταγελῶν τοῦ προδότου λοιπόν (PG 58:737, 40–41).

[24] Chrysostom, "In Matt. Hom." 82, *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), 10:490 (hereafter *NPNF*[1]). Translation slightly modified.

[25] Chrysostom, "Hom. 71," *NPNF* [1] 14:263–264.

[26] Chrysostom, "Hom. 72," *NPNF* [1] 14:271.

[27] Chrysostom, "Hom. 65," *NPNF* [1] 14:211.

his path toward becoming the "worst of sinners": "He [Jesus] had reason to despise [Judas] most of all, because, in spite of being a disciple, and a companion of His table and hospitality, and an eye-witness of His miracles, and so highly honored, he committed the most serious offense of all."[28] Thus, in addition to using Judas as a warning against unworthy reception, Chrysostom employs the example of Christ to urge his hearers likewise to exercise humble service to all without qualification.[29]

Not long after Chrysostom, Augustine deals with question of Judas's reception in two places in his *Tractates on the Gospel of John*. First, in Tractate 59, he writes:

> [Jesus] knows whom he has chosen to be associated with himself in blessedness. Of such [Judas] is not one, who ate his bread in order that he might lift up his heel upon him. The bread they ate was the Lord himself; he ate the Lord's bread in enmity to the Lord; they ate life, and he punishment. "For he that eats unworthily," says the apostle, "eats judgment unto himself" [1 Cor 11:29]. "From this time," Christ adds, "I tell you before it comes about; that when it is come to pass you may believe that I am he," that is, I am he of whom the Scripture that preceded has just said, "He that eats bread with me, shall lift up his heel upon me."[30]

In contrast to Origen's hesitation on the issue, Augustine's position is clear, particularly since he references the obviously eucharistic passage in 1 Corinthians 11. Judas received the Lord's Supper,[31] but he did so unworthily and hence to his "punishment" and "judgment."[32] The presence of Judas at the meal in general is instrumental to the fulfillment of the psalm-prophecy, that the one eating bread with the Messiah would betray him. That bread, however, was not mere bread but, as Augustine identifies it, "the Lord Himself," the consecrated host of the Holy Eucharist. This contrast between Judas's "unworthy reception" and the blessing

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[28] Chrysostom, "Hom. 70," *NPNF*[1] 14:251.

[29] Chrysostom, "Hom. 71," *NPNF*[1] 14:261. Sekulovski observes how Chrysostom desires to warn his hearers against unworthy reception, but it is also important to note how Christ's relationship with Judas provides a positive model for the Christian's response to difficult people. Sekulovski, "Jean Chrysostome sur la communion," 317.

[30] Augustine, "Tractate 59 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:308.

[31] In opposition to the Donatists and in order to illustrate that the presence of someone unclean does not make the whole church unclean, Augustine maintains the same position in "Contra Petilian," when he asks rhetorically, "Was not that supper of so great a sacrament clean and able to give peace, which He distributed to all before [Judas'] going out?" Augustine, "Contra Petilan" 2.22, *NPNF*[1] 4, accessed February 18, 2016, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.i.html.

[32] Augustine underlines Judas's unworthy reception: "What he got was good, but to his own hurt he received it, because, evil himself, in an evil spirit he received what was good." Augustine, "Tractate 61 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:312.

which belonged to the rest leads Augustine to a reflection on John 13:18, "I know whom I have chosen." He joins it together with John 6:70, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil." Augustine ruminates about the mystery of Christ's call to Judas: "Was it that he also was chosen for some purpose, for which he was really necessary; although not for the blessedness . . . ?"[33] More than any before him, Augustine is willing to envision Judas's treacherous role as the fulfillment of God's predestined purpose for him, although here he does no more than raise the suggestive question.[34]

More significant in the tradition of answering this question, however, is Augustine's lengthier treatment in Tractate 62, which moved none other than Aquinas to concur that Judas was present to receive the Holy Supper.[35] Augustine's reflections begin with the potentially offensive concurrence of the reception of the morsel with the entrance of Satan into Judas. "Was this the worth of Christ's bread?" Augustine asks on behalf of his interlocutors.[36] Akin to Origen, Augustine's first response is that the character of the recipient determines the benefit or the harm which a gift may bring. In fact, good gifts may do the wicked harm (and here he again cites 1 Corinthians 11 and the danger of unworthy reception of the Eucharist) and, on the contrary, a "messenger of Satan" may serve God's purpose for a saint, as Paul discovered (2 Cor 12:7–9). However, in this passage Augustine clarifies that the "morsel" which identified Judas and occasioned the entrance of Satan was not itself the Lord's Supper. Following the order found in Luke, Augustine explains, "We are to understand the Lord had already dispensed to all of them the sacrament of His body and blood when Judas was also present, as very clearly related by Saint Luke."[37] At this point, Augustine does not explain why Luke's chronology is determinative for him.

In this context, Augustine also explores Judas's motivations and the consequences of his actions. As is typical for the tradition, he states that Judas

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[33] Augustine, "Tractate 61 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:307.

[34] Similarly, Augustine clearly states the Lord's mastery of Judas and his use of Judas's betrayal for his own good purposes in Tractate 55: "'[Jesus] knowing that the Father has given all things into His hands.' And therefore also the traitor himself: for if He had him not in His hands, He certainly could not use him as He wished. Accordingly, the traitor had been already betrayed to Him whom he sought to betray; and he carried out his evil purpose in betraying Him in such a way, that good he knew not of was the issue in regard to Him who was betrayed. For the Lord knew what He was doing for His friends, and patiently made use of His enemies: and thus had the Father given all things into His hands, both the evil for present use, and the good for the final issue." Augustine, "Tractate 55 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:300.

[35] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Third Part, Question 81, Article 2, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed on February 18, 2016, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.TP_Q81_A2.html.

[36] Augustine, "Tractate 62 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:312.

[37] Augustine, "Tractate 62 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:313.

betrays Christ because he "thought only of his money gain."[38] In the course of the meal, Judas compounds his sins, adding ingratitude to his greed. The consequence is destruction for Judas but salvation for the faithful. Thus Augustine interprets Christ's final word to him, "What you do, do quickly" as an expression of Christ's eager zeal for the work of salvation to be done, foretelling, indeed, "evil to Judas, and good to us."[39] Judas goes, ironically, not to deliver up Christ, for Christ delivers himself up; Judas goes to the loss of his own soul.

Augustine draws a principle for the church from Christ's dealings with Judas—that Christians should not be overzealous in attempting to purify the church, for this will only disturb the church and put authentic Christians at risk: "The Lord, by His own perturbation of spirit, thought proper to indicate this also, that it is necessary to bear with false brethren, and those tares that are among the wheat in the Lord's field until harvest-time, because when we are compelled by urgent reasons to separate some of them even before the harvest, it cannot be done without disturbance to the Church."[40] Clearly, the presence of Judas at the holy table is useful for Augustine in his polemics against the Donatists and their efforts to maintain a pure Church.

Cyril of Alexandria agrees with his contemporary Augustine that Judas received the Holy Eucharist, but he identifies it with the morsel Christ handed to Judas. The key to the identification is that Cyril refers to it with the term he employs for the Eucharist—εὐλογία or "blessing."[41] The two key texts are as follows:

> Satan entered him completely after the giving of the piece of bread. Now let no one suppose that the piece of bread was the reason that the traitor received Satan. We will not reach such a level of madness or be so bereft of common sense that we imagine that the blessing (εὐλογία) was given as an occasion for the entrance of the evil one.[42]

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[38] Augustine, "Tractate 62 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:313.

[39] Augustine, "Tractate 62 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:313.

[40] Augustine, "Tractate 60 on the Gospel of John," *NPNF*[1] 7:310–311.

[41] This point is made by the translator, David Maxwell, in his footnotes. See Cyril, *Ancient Christian Texts*, ed. Thomas C. Oden and Gerald L. Bray, vol. 2., *Commentary on John*, trans. David R. Maxwell, ed. Joel C. Elowsky (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 130. Sekulovski argues that Cyril counts only eleven disciples at the Last Supper, but for that he depends on a dubious text, the remnants of his Commentary on Matthew in the catena tradition. Sekulovski, "Jean Chrysostome sur la communion," 314. Cf. Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature: A Literary History*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, vol. 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 543.

[42] Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 129.

> Now the traitor was not ashamed of the rebuke, which was as yet uttered quietly and secretly, nor was he embarrassed by the invincible might of Christ's love, nor his honor and glory and grace, nor the blessing (εὐλογία) that he received from Christ.[43]

Much like Origen, Cyril is concerned to develop a proper understanding of the spiritual condition of Judas's soul and Satan's influence upon him. On the one hand, the "mystical blessing" of the Eucharist would have been an "effective antidote to the murderous poison of the devil"[44]; on the other hand, Cyril views the unworthy and ungrateful reception of the morsel as the occasion of Satan's entrance. Christ would lovingly and graciously honor Judas, but Judas clung to his plot of betrayal.[45] In fact, Satan's concern is that Judas might change his mind; as a result, he possesses him to hasten the deed, "He was probably afraid of his repentance as well as the power of the blessing,[46] lest this, shining like light in the heart of that man, might persuade him to choose to do good or at least give birth to an honest mind in a man who was seduced into betrayal."[47] These thoughts perfectly parallel Origen's.

From this narrative, Cyril adds the pastoral admonition that the case of Judas is a warning for his audience lest they allow sin to lead them astray:

> Yes, we should rush to cut [sin] off as the beginning of bitterness, and we should want our mind to be untroubled by it. Otherwise, we should know that Satan will prevail little by little with his flattery, and we will experience the same kind of result that the psalmist speaks of: "Before I was humbled, I went astray." Before we succumb to the final sin, first we go astray by assenting in our thoughts and receiving the sin with honor, thereby providing a place for Satan to enter. The case of the traitor will be a type and image for us of the whole matter.[48]

"Before I was humbled, I went astray"—here, the "humbling" referenced in Psalm 119:67 is not the gracious work of God to produce humility but the debasing humiliation caused by a definitive fall into sin. The initial occasions of "going astray," such as Judas experienced in allowing sin more and more room in his desires and thoughts, made an opening for Satan. Again, like Origen, Cyril envisions stages of Judas's fall, thus not only humanizing the paradigmatic betrayer but employing him as a lesson which relates to all of his hearers, even those who have not yet sinned

[43] Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 130.
[44] Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 130.
[45] Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 129–130.
[46] Eucharist.
[47] Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 133.
[48] Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 130.

scandalously. Even small sins show a kinship with and a movement toward Judas's dastardly deed.

With Cyril and Augustine, we see an increasing tendency to locate Judas at the Supper and among the recipients. As our final witness to this trend, Pseudo-Dionysius, writing around 500[49] describes the Divine Service as follows:

> For the most sacred chants and readings of the Oracles teach them a discipline of a virtuous life, and previous to this, the complete purification from destructive evil; and the most divine, and common, and peaceful distribution of one and the same, both Bread and Cup, enjoins upon them a godly fellowship in character, as having a fellowship in food, and recalls to their memory the most Divine Supper, and arch-symbol of the rites performed, agreeably with which the Founder of the symbols himself excludes, most justly, him who had supped with him on the holy things, not piously and in a manner suitable to his character; teaching at once, clearly and divinely, that the approach to divine mysteries with a sincere mind confers, on those who draw nigh, the participation in a gift according to their own character.[50]

Here, it is the celestial table from which Judas is excluded, precisely because he had indeed "supped with Him on the holy things" on earth but in an impious manner. Again, each communicant receives the gift "according to their own character." Judas was of such a character that the Holy Meal could only bring him harm.

Conclusion

The following table summarizes the positions taken by the Fathers who have been reviewed:

[49] Kevin Corrigan and L. Michael Harrington, "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, September 6, 2004, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pseudo-dionysius-areopagite/.

[50] Ps-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* III III 1, accessed February 16, 2016, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_14_ecclesiastical_hierarchy.htm#c3.2.

Church Father	Did Judas Commune?	Conclusions
Tatian	No	When Judas departs, Jesus declares that he is about to be glorified. Christ is going to the cross.
Origen	Perhaps	Judas received the morsel but may not have eaten it because Satan had entered him. If he did, he did so unworthily.
Hilary	No	Judas was neither worthy nor had opportunity to commune. Christ promises that all those communing with him will enter the kingdom.
Chrysostom	Yes	Judas communes unworthily; Christ's love for him models humble service toward all people.
Augustine	Yes	Satan enters Judas, who has communed unworthily. Christ exemplifies the patience we should have toward the "tares" in the church.
Cyril	Yes	Satan enters Judas, preventing the benefit of the blessed host; Judas's fate is a cautionary tale of the danger of sin's consequences.
Ps-Dionysius	Yes	Judas communes unworthily amid the earthly rites but is excluded from the heavenly archetypes. Those of sincere mind receive the blessing.

The ante-Nicene fathers typically concluded that Judas had not communed,[51] while the post-Nicene fathers after Hilary universally concluded that he had, albeit unworthily. The entrance of Satan at the moment of communion or, at least, in the context of Holy Communion is recognized as problematic (note Cyril's objections to the thought the host would have occasioned this). As a solution, Judas himself must provide the cause for the deleterious results, either on account of his lack of faith (Origen) or his greed (Augustine) or his ingratitude (Chrysostom). Throughout, Christ is depicted as seeking Judas's restoration. The gifts and grace he

[51] Commenting on John 13:11, the sixteenth-/seventeenth-century Jesuit Cornelius a Lapide identifies another ante-Nicene father who holds this same view: "Cyprian, however, in his treatise on the Washing of Feet, says that Judas was not present at the washing, nor, consequently, at the Eucharist." Elsewhere he admits that he is not certain of the authorship of the treatise on foot washing. I have not been able to locate his source, as no current editions of Cyprian's work include such a title. Cornelius a Lapide, "The Great Biblical Commentary," accessed February 18, 2016, http://www.catholicapologetics.info/scripture/newtestament/13john.htm.

extends toward this end, however, are rebuffed, thus worsening Judas's spiritual condition. The case of Judas then becomes a cautionary tale on the danger of sin, either of some specific vice (e.g., Chrysostom) or of sin in general (e.g., Cyril).

What occasioned this shift in the tradition of the church? It is reasonable to suggest that in the "church of the martyrs" the dangers and discipline of communing with the church made it difficult to imagine that Jesus would have welcomed Judas to the same holy table as those who would give their lives for him. Afterward, in the "imperial church" after the society had become sufficiently Christian (around 400), it became pastorally expedient to utilize the image of a communing Judas as a warning against the careless communing which the pastors deemed more pervasive. Similarly, it appears that Augustine found Jesus' patient acceptance of Judas's presence at the communion to be an expedient contrast to the overzealous Donatists. For all those who identified Judas as a communicant, he came to illustrate, by negative example, the awesome seriousness of right reception. One who partook of the sacred mysteries only to become possessed by Satan and betray his Lord served to heighten the point Paul made about the disobedient Israelites in the wilderness: "All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased" (1 Cor 10:3–5). None of the patristic commentators considered it good for the betrayer to receive the sacrament. If Judas communed with the rest of the disciples, it was because his betrayal was not yet public. The question of whether the betrayer communed underlined for the early church fathers and underlines for us the care pastors and their people need to take in distinguishing between those who should and should not be admitted to communion, and in the proper use of the sacrament.

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The Burden of Kneeling: The Bavarian Kneeling Controversy and the Debate between Ignaz von Döllinger and Adolf von Harless

James Ambrose Lee II

Introduction

In March 1844, Rev. Wilhelm Redenbacher (1800–1876), pastor of Jochsberg in Middle Franconia, was officially suspended from his pastoral office, following a months-long legal investigation into his conduct as a pastor. Eight months later, Redenbacher was found guilty of "disturbing the peace through a misuse of religion" and sentenced to one year in prison. The specific grounds for his investigation, suspension, and removal was that through various tractates and homilies, Redenbacher had regularly condemned the Bavarian Royal Decree issued by the Ministry of War dating from August 14, 1838; and more problematically, Redenbacher had even gone so far as to advocate for active disobedience to the royal decree. Although King Ludwig I (1786–1868) eventually commuted Redenbacher's sentence, he was still sanctioned by the state, prohibited from serving in the pastoral office in the Kingdom of Bavaria.[1] The royal decree that had elicited Redenbacher's response, which was so caustic that it resulted in his removal from office, was the so-called "kneeling order" of King Ludwig I. The kneeling order required all soldiers, regardless of religious confession, to kneel during the consecration when attending a Roman Catholic Mass, during eucharistic processions and benedictions, when escorting a Roman Catholic priest carrying the eucharistic host, upon encountering a priest carrying the host in a monstrance, and during the various church parades that required soldiers to enter a Roman Catholic church and attend Mass.[2] While Ludwig's royal decree was only a directive to the Bavarian military, its

[1] See Ernst Dorn, "Zur Geschichte der Kniebeugungsfrage und der Prozess des Pfarrers Volkert in Ingolstadt," *Beiträge zur bayerischen Kirchengeschichte* 5 (1899): 1–36, 53–74.

[2] "§1864. (Militärische Ehrenbezeugungen, insbesondere bei katholischen Gottesdiensten während der Wandlung und bei Ertheilung des Segens betr.)," in *Fortgesetzte Sammlung der im Gebiete der inneren Staats-Verwaltung des Königreichs Bayern bestehenden Verordnungen von 1835 bis 1852,* neue Folge 3 (Munich, 1853): 63–65. On September 7, 1839, an additional decree was issued that gave more detailed orders regarding the conduct of soldiers at the participation of

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promulgation eventually provoked a robust Protestant opposition that resulted in an acrimonious strife between the predominately Catholic administration of Bavaria and its minority Protestant population. This discord between the Bavarian state and the Bavarian Protestant Church, commonly referred to as the "Kneeling Controversy" (*Kniebeugungsstreit*), lasted until December 1845,[3] when Ludwig I eventually rescinded the 1838 kneeling order, restoring the precedent prior to 1838, where soldiers would simply respectfully incline their heads, rather than kneel.[4]

An examination of Protestant criticisms levelled against the kneeling order reveal that the primary line of attack that the Protestants advanced against the state administration was legal, not theological. Protestants framed their opposition as a constitutional matter, arguing that Ludwig's order was an open violation of the

church parades, including the command to kneel. See, "§2089. (Das Verhalten bei Kirchenparaden betr.)," in *Fortgesetzte Sammlung*, 331–333.

[3] While the kneeling order may be identified as the catalyst that ignited the hostilities between Bavarian Protestants and the state administration, it is necessary to realize that throughout the 1830s confessional tensions had been steadily mounting between the Bavarian confessional Lutheran revival and the growth of ultramontane Catholicism in southern Germany. Immediately prior to the issuing of the kneeling order, confessional polemics were exchanged between the ultramontanist *Historisch-politischen Blätter für katholische Deutschland* and the confessional Lutheran *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche*, both of which were established in 1838. As the Kneeling Controversy intensified, both journals featured prominently in the publication of Lutheran and Roman Catholic polemical writings.

One must also observe that following the eruption of the Kneeling Controversy, a host of other dissensions arose between the Protestant Church and the state. These conflicts included the following: the state's prohibition of the establishment of new Protestant congregations; the proscription of the Protestant Gustav-Adolphus Society and the reception of any funds distributed by it; the forbidding of private Protestant liturgical services where no Protestant congregations existed; and the allowance for Roman Catholic clergy to catechize underage youth, often orphans of Protestant parents, even when such youth had already been confirmed in a Protestant congregation. Following the unsuccessful efforts of the General Synods of Ansbach and Bayreuth, these complaints were published in Switzerland in 1846. Even after the Kneeling Controversy reached a resolution, the relations between the state and Bavarian Protestants remained fraught on account of the other complaints. See *Die Beschwerdevorstellungen der Mitglieder der protestantischen Generalsynoden in Bayern vom Jahre 1844 und die hierauf ergangen allerhöchsten Entschließungen* (St. Gallen and Bern: Verlag von Huber und Kompagnie: 1846); Friedrich Julius Stahl, *Rechtsgutachten über die Beschwerden wegen Verletzung verfassungsmäßiger Rechte der Protestanten im Königreiche Bayern, insbesondere Beleuchtung des Verhältnisses zwischen dem Staatsgrundgesetz und dem Konkordat* (Berlin: E. H. Schroeder, 1846).

[4] A historical point often raised by the defenders of the kneeling order, in response to Protestant voices who requested a return to the previous form of military salute prior to Ludwig's 1838 order, was that the practice of inclining the head had only been common in the Bavarian military since 1803, when it replaced the earlier practice of kneeling. Therefore, it was argued, Ludwig was not introducing a novel form of military salutation, but only restoring an older precedent. For example, see Ernst von Moy de Sons, *An den Hochgebornen Herrn Grafen Carl von Giech. Sendschreiben von Professor von Moÿ, die Kniebeugungsfrage und die Gewissensfreiheit betreffend* (Regensburg: Verlag von Georg Joseph Manz, 1845).

Bavarian constitution. Specifically, the Bavarian Constitution of 1818 and two accompanying religious edicts from 1819 enshrined the "complete freedom of conscience" to all Bavarian inhabitants, while protecting them against coerced participation in religious confessions and rites, secured legal parity for Lutheran and Reformed minorities, and granted them the free exercise over "inner ecclesial matters," while subordinating them to the state regarding all "external ecclesial matters."[5] Protestants consistently decried the kneeling order as an infringement against their constitutionally established rights of the freedom of conscience and the free exercise of religion.[6] Perhaps the most famous example illustrating this argument was made by the Erlangen theologian Adolf von Harless (1806–1879), serving as the elected faculty representative at the eleventh meeting of the House of Representatives (*die Kammer der Abgeordneten*) of the Bavarian Assembly of the Estates (*Ständeversammlung*) on January 10, 1843.[7] On the floor of the Assembly of the Estates, Harless presented a petition calling for the revocation of the kneeling order, wherein he called upon the House of Representatives to defend the freedom of conscience, "the highest good" according to the Bavarian constitution. The command to kneel was a coerced participation in religious practices that Protestants had always considered objectionable, thereby violating their constitutional freedoms. Harless besought his fellow representatives to defend the constitutional freedoms "of all citizens without distinction of faith or social status."[8]

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[5] "Staatskirchenrechtliche Artikel der Verfassung des Königreichs Bayern," "Edikt über die äußern Rechtsverhältnisse der Einwohner des Königreichs Bayern, in Beziehung auf Religion und kirchliche Gesellschaften," and "Edikt über die inneren Kirchlichen Angelegenheiten der Protestantischen Gesammt-Gemeinde in dem Königreiche" in *Staat und Kirche im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert. Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts*, vol. 1 *Staat und Kirche von Ausgang des alten Reichs bis zum Vorabend der bürgerlichen Revolution*, ed. Ernst Rudolf Huber and Wolfgang Huber (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1990), 126–139, 650–653.

[6] See James Ambrose Lee II, "Issues in Religious Freedom: The Cologne Affair and the Kniebeugungsstreit," in *The Oxford History of Modern German Theology*, vol. 1, 1781–1848, ed. Grant Kaplan and Kevin Vander Schel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022 forthcoming).

[7] Harless's 1833 appointment to the University of Erlangen was a turning point for Bavarian Protestantism in the nineteenth century. Harless was instrumental in inaugurating the confessional Lutheran reform of the Erlangen theology faculty—the so-called *Erlangen Schule*—which would become the theological center of confessional Lutheran theology throughout Bavaria. He also established the Lutheran theological journal *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche* and served as its first editor. Harless exercised great influence as a theologian and leader of the neo-Lutheran revival in Bavaria, serving as the president of the Bavarian Protestant Upper Consistory, and throughout Germany, presiding over the 1867 *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz*. For a brief overview, see Lutz Mohaupt, "Adolf von Harless (1806–1879)," in *Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians*, ed. Matthew L. Becker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 143–176.

[8] *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Abgeordneten der Stände-Versammlung des Königreichs Bayern im Jahre 1843. Amtlich bekannt gemacht*, vol. 2, containing Protocols X–XVI (Munich, 1842): 1–227, especially 103–105. For Harless's own account, see Adolf von Harless, *Bruchstücke*

The kneeling order's infringement upon the constitutional rights of Bavarian Protestants remained the central point of criticism levelled by Protestant opposition. However, the protracted character of the controversy gave rise to other arenas of conflict. As one might expect from a military order that prescribed the kneeling of Protestant soldiers during various Roman Catholic eucharistic rites, a logical subject of debate was the theological dimensions of Ludwig's order. This became more prominent following Harless's address at the Assembly of the Estates. Implicit within the Protestant argument that the royal decree transgressed the constitutionally protected rights of the freedom of conscience and the exercise of religion was the claim that the order mandated a particular religious act on the part of the Protestant soldier. Coerced participation in a foreign religious ceremony transgressed the soldier's freedom of religious exercise; and the order violated the soldier's conscience by coerced participation in a foreign and objectionable ritual, undermining the soldier's own religious convictions. However, as witnessed in Harless's argument at the Assembly of the Estates, the theological aspect of the argument was invoked in service to the overarching assertion of the Protestant argument. In fact, he sought to circumvent a theological disputation, desiring to prosecute the case chiefly on legal grounds as defined by the Bavarian constitution. Harless did not want to transform the nature of the controversy from arguing the unconstitutionality of the order, to debating the "dogmatic and religious reasons" why this order was offensive for a Protestant soldier.[9] Strangely, there was almost a point of ironic agreement with the state on the desire to avoid a religious confrontation. In fact, the position of the state administration was that there was no religious or theological dimension to the order. Both King Ludwig I and Karl von Abel (1788–1859), the ultramontanist Minister of the Interior, insisted that the military order only prescribed an external movement of the body.[10] In this context,

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aus dem Leben eines süddeutschen Theologen: Neue Folge (Bielefeld und Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1875), 45–80. Heckel, Harless's biographer, also offers a useful summary of the Kneeling Controversy. See Theodor Heckel, *Adolf von Harless: Theologie und Kirchenpolitik eines lutherischen Bischofs in Bayern* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1933), 337–398.

[9] *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Abgeordneten*, 103.

[10] Even though the decree was issued at the order of King Ludwig I, Abel was frequently the object of Protestant outrage throughout the midst of the controversy. While Abel was not responsible for the order, his fingerprints marked the various state machinations at preserving the order and obscuring the official avenues for the expression of Protestant complaints. Moreover, Abel was also responsible for the other circumscribing measures that the state issued against its Protestant population. From the perspective of the Bavarian Protestants, the ultramontanist Abel was the primary antagonist behind the state's increasingly restrictive posture toward the Protestant Church. See Heinz Gollwitzer, *Ein Staatsmann des Vormärz–Karl von Abel 1788–1859. Beamtenaristokratie – monarchisches Prinzip – politischer Katholizismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck

the Bavarian state authorities asserted that bending the knee was nothing more than a particular form of military salutation. Therefore, the accusations that the order violated the Bavarian constitution were regarded as ungrounded.[11]

The remainder of this essay examines one of the theological disputes that arose in the midst of the Kneeling Controversy. Shortly after the 1843 meeting of the Assembly of the Estates, two anonymous letters appeared that pilloried the Protestant position, taking direct aim at Harless. The author of the anonymous *Sendschreiben* ("Open Letter") was the then-ultramontane church historian Ignaz von Döllinger (1799–1890).[12] Harless quickly responded to the anonymous *Sendschreiben* with his own highly polemical riposte *Offene Antwort* ("Open Answer"). Two additional tractates appeared in the same year: Döllinger's *Der Protestantismus in Bayern und die Kniebeugung* ("Protestantism in Bavaria and Kneeling") and Harless's *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern und die Insinuationen des Herrn Prof. Döllinger* ("The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and the Insinuations of Prof. Döllinger").[13] The exchange between Döllinger and Harless that emerged in response to Ludwig's kneeling order offers an insightful vantage point through which to consider the particular confessional postures taken by Roman Catholics and Lutherans during this period of ultramontanist growth and development and Lutheran renewal within Bavaria. In the wake of the popularity of

& Ruprecht, 1993), 215–235; 429–444; Hanns–Jurgen Wiegand, "Der Kampf der protestantischen Landeskirche Bayerns gegen die Unterdruckungsmanahmen des Ministeriums v. Abel (1838–1846) und dessen Bedeutung für die kirchen- und staatsrechtliche Doktrin Friedrich Julius Stahls," in *Kirchen und Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Martin Schmidt and Georg Schwaiger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 84–125.

[11] Up until the withdrawal of the order, the state continued to insist that the original kneeling order only prescribed a form of military salutation, that it was only concerned with "the external bodily movements" and not with matters of faith. See "§1867. (Die bei dem k. Heere vorgeschriebene Salutationsform vor dem Sanctissimum der katholischen Kirche betr.)," in *Fortgesetzte Sammlung*, 66–67.

[12] At the moment when Döllinger entangled himself with the Kneeling Controversy, he had not yet abandoned his ultramontanist leanings. But a few years later, in 1847, Döllinger's thought begins to shift, gradually resulting in his rejection of ultramontanism, his protest of the First Vatican Council's stance on papal infallibility, culminating in his excommunication in 1871. See Thomas Albert Howard, *The Pope and the Professor: Pius IX, Ignaz von Döllinger, and the Quandary of the Modern Age* (New York: Oxford, 2017).

[13] See [Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung der Protestanten von der religiösen und staatsrechtlcihen Seite erwogen: Sendschreiben an einen Landtags-Abgeordeneten I. II.* (Munich: J. Palm'schen Hofbuchhandlung, 1843); Adolf von Harless, *Offene Antwort an den anonymen Verfasser der zwei Sendschreiben die Frage von "der Kniebeugung der Protestanten" betreffend* (Munich: J. Palm'schen Hofbuchhandlung, 1843); Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern und die Kniebeugung: Sendschreiben an Herrn Professor Harless* (Regensburg: G. Joseph Manz, 1843); Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern und die Insinuationen des Herrn Prof. Döllinger," *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche,* neue Folge 6 (1843): 241–324.

the genre of theology known as symbolics or *Konfessionskunde*—as recently popularized through the heated exchange between the Tübingen theologians Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) and F. C. Baur (1792–1860)[14]—the Döllinger-Harless debate provides another perspective into this increasingly polemical period. Moreover, as a dispute that arose in response to the kneeling order, Harless and Döllinger approached the subject with an eye toward sixteenth-century Roman Catholic-Lutheran polemics. Of particular significance were the Lutheran Confessions' understanding of the Roman Catholic theology of the Mass, and Formula of Concord X and the legacy of the Adiaphoristic Controversy. These two themes guide the following examination into the writings of Harless and Döllinger.[15]

Döllinger's Attack

Responding to Harless's impassioned speech at the Assembly of the Estates, Döllinger asserted that Protestants had misunderstood the nature of the order. He agreed with the rationale of the Protestant complaint regarding forced religious act: no one, not even a soldier, should be coerced to perform a religious act. But is that what the order mandated? If bending the knee was an act that was exclusively a religious action intrinsically connected to a religious meaning, then it would be inappropriate to ask or expect a Protestant soldier to perform it. One example of such an act would be making the sign of the cross. In this instance, signing oneself in the shape of the cross is an action inextricably bound to a religious meaning. It is

[14] For a recent investigation into the polemical exchange over Möhler's famous *Symbolik*, see Grant Kaplan, "What Has Prussia to Do with Tübingen? The Political-Ecclesial Context of Möhler's Symbolik," *Pro Ecclesia* 27, no. 1 (2018): 81–112.

[15] The various exchanges between Harless and Döllinger touched upon a variety of subjects that this article will not address. From the perspective of this author, one of the most engaging topics was Döllinger's pointed attack against the then-current state of Bavarian Protestantism. He mocked the disarray of Protestantism and its complete laxity in matters of doctrine, specifically critiquing its tolerance of liberalism, rationalism, and pantheism, all while maintaining an unrelenting antagonism toward Roman Catholicism. Döllinger also accused Lutherans of hypocrisy, showing that Lutherans willingly repudiated the historic confessions of the Lutheran Church through fellowship with the Reformed. Döllinger claimed that this undermined the Protestant invocation of the Confessions in protesting the kneeling order, since fellowship with the Reformed was an explicit compromise of the same confessional texts. This line of argumentation positioned Döllinger to land his greatest rhetorical assault: since Bavarian Lutheranism intentionally and publicly compromised its confessional integrity through tolerance of false doctrine and Communion fellowship with the Reformed, there can be no talk about the existence of a "Lutheran" church. Already at the time of the Reformation, Luther and even Melanchthon—before his turn toward Calvinism—had condemned certain practices that contemporary Bavarian Lutherans willingly tolerated. See Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern,* 10–11.

not an ambiguous action that witnesses to a religious belief. Therefore, an order prescribing its performance would be inappropriate. One would be able to complain that his freedoms of conscience and exercise of religion had been violated. But kneeling is an act dissimilar to making the sign of the cross. It is an ambiguous action; a simple external act and movement of the body, without "a pure religious character." Neither for Roman Catholics nor for Protestants is kneeling itself unequivocally religious. As an ambiguous action, the meaning of a specific act of kneeling is contingent upon external circumstances—in the instance of the kneeling order, either an explicit command by the Bavarian state or the internal disposition of the soldier performing the action. According to the order, the state administration had not prescribed an internal posture of faith, a specific religious belief, or an act of piety and devotion. On the contrary, the order only mandated an external movement of the body, a simple external act of salutation. For Döllinger, while kneeling in itself is ambiguous, the state's explicit order shapes the meaning of the action. According to the state, in the context of the order, kneeling is only a military salutation.[16]

The Same Thing Is Not the Same

While the order itself only required a religiously indifferent movement of the body, Döllinger recognized that the interior disposition of the soldier also played a determinative role, thereby creating the possibility for the same ambiguous action to accrue different meanings. In obedience to the order, when a Roman Catholic soldier kneels, as "one who has faith, as a member of the Catholic congregation," since he already possesses an interior disposition of faith and devotion toward the eucharistic host, the action of kneeling simultaneously becomes "an external sign of true devotion." He kneels as a soldier and as a Roman Catholic. With the requisite disposition, kneeling as an "act of the body" and an "act of the spirit," becomes "one spiritual-corporeal activity of the whole man."[17] Conversely, since a Protestant soldier lacks the appropriate disposition of faith, it is only possible for him to kneel as a soldier in obedience to the order. Absent the necessary interior disposition, kneeling remains only an act of the body. Therefore, it is illegitimate for Protestants to claim that the kneeling order is a violation of their freedom of conscience and religion, because neither has the state ordered a religious act, nor does the Protestant soldier possess the faith necessary for kneeling to become a religious action in this situation. Thus, Döllinger concluded that even though a Roman Catholic and a

[16] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 33.
[17] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 31.

Protestant soldier both kneel in obedience to the same order, it is not the same thing—*duo si faciunt idem, non est idem*.[18]

In using the terminology "indifferent action" (*indifferente Handlung*), Döllinger was engaging the Protestants' use of the Formula of Concord's category of adiaphora or "middle things" (*Mitteldingen*). Like the Formula, he recognized that certain things were indifferent in themselves. Döllinger even conceded that in specific circumstances an act, indifferent in itself, could forfeit its inherently indifferent status, becoming "a burdening of conscience" upon the individual. As an illustration, presumably alluding to the Interim Controversy, Döllinger passingly mentioned an effort during the "early years of the Reformation" when an attempt was made to mandate the reintroduction of the adoration of the sacrament. But despite obvious similarities, he argued that the two cases were not commensurate. Contrary to the arguments proffered by the Protestant Count Karl von Giech (1795–1863), the current state of affairs was not one that demanded an "unambiguous confession of faith" regarding indifferent things during times of persecution.[19] Döllinger found the suggestion itself preposterous. One could neither legitimately claim that this was a period of persecution, and one could hardly consider the Bavarian state to be an "enemy" of Protestantism. His most penetrating insight was what he considered to be an inconsistent application of the category. In rejecting the kneeling order, the Protestants were requesting a return to prior precedent, where, instead of kneeling during the specific eucharistic rites, soldiers were only required to bow their heads, an act not found objectionable by Protestants. But if these bodily actions were themselves ambiguous, and both had been used in the same liturgical and eucharistic contexts for the same purpose, why was one indifferent action deemed intolerable, while another indifferent action was acceptable? Should not the same principle be applied to both? Moreover, in his reading of the Adiaphoristic Controversy, Döllinger concluded that his Protestant contemporaries would not

[18] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 31.

[19] In 1841, Count Karl von Giech anonymously authored the first tractate that denounced Ludwig's kneeling order, arguing that it was a violation of the Bavarian constitution and represented the intrusion of the state into the matters of the church. Eventually, Giech became embroiled in a debate over the kneeling order with the Roman Catholic Ernst von Moy de Sons (1799–1867), the Munich professor of constitutional law and philosophy of law. See [Karl Grafen von Giech], *Die Kniebeugung der Protestanten vor dem Sanctissimum der katholischen Kirche in dem bayerischen Heere und in der bayerischen Landwehr: Materialien zur Beurtheilung dieser Angelegenheit vom Standpunkte der Glaubenslehre, des Staatsrechts und der Geschichte* (Ulm: Verlag der Stettin'schen Buchhandlung, 1841); Giech, *Antwort an den Verfasser der Schrift: "Offenes Sendschreiben von einem Katholiken an den Verfasser der Schrift: Zweites offenes Bedenken, die Kniebeugungsfrage u.s.w. betreffend" von dem Verfasser dieses zweiten offenen Bedenkens Karl Grafen von Giech* (Nuremberg: Verlag von Johann Adam Stein, 1845).

find a sympathetic voice among their Lutheran forefathers. If the Lutherans of the sixteenth century held that the imposition of wearing a surplice was "an antichristian abomination," would they not consider the bowing of the head to be as objectionable as kneeling?[20] In other words, if this were truly a context that demanded a clear and unambiguous confession, if the circumstances had rendered an indifferent action no longer indifferent, demanding its rejection, how could Protestants such as Harless content themselves with the substitution of another indifferent action, intended for the same purpose? Would not a time of confession require the rejection of both?

Döllinger assessed that the entire Protestant classification of indifferent things was arbitrary and inconsistent. The Protestant idea of adiaphora lacked a definitive criterion and method of application. From his perspective, the qualification of something as indifferent occurred solely through capricious determination. Döllinger scoffed at Harless for what he considered to be an inconsistent and disingenuous discussion about kneeling and indifferent actions, where one moment Harless considered these subjects from a "theoretical dogmatic-liturgical standpoint," but in another instance from the standpoint of "practical life":

> From a dogmatic-liturgical standpoint, kneeling for a Protestant is no sign of faith; rather it is an indifferent thing that may be exercised or omitted according to the desire or custom of the individual congregation. But if a Protestant positions himself in the daily standpoint of practical life and he enters into a Catholic church, then suddenly he discovers characteristics of the act of kneeling which were completely unknown to him before, and now he sees that, in kneeling, he has truly represented the sign of a specific doctrine of faith.[21]

Even more critical than his mockery, Döllinger claimed that Harless had exploited the concept of adiaphora as a parliamentary tactic for his argument. In his life as a professor of Protestant theology, he had readily admitted that kneeling was an indifferent act that could be practiced or omitted; but when arguing on the floor of the Assembly of the Estates, kneeling had suddenly become a sign of faith that had to be denounced.[22]

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[20] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 34–35; Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*, 28–29.

[21] Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*, 40.

[22] Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*, 40.

Where Is the Lutheran Presence?

More consequential than his response to Protestant recourses to adiaphora, Döllinger excoriated Harless, accusing him of lying for an explanation that he had offered at the Assembly of the Estates regarding the Protestant practices of kneeling. In the conversation that followed the presentation of his proposal, Harless had insisted that it was impossible for Protestant soldiers to obey Ludwig's kneeling order without compromising their faith. In order to justify his position, Harless had argued that for Protestants there exist both "positive and negative external signs of [their] confessional faith." As "a positive external sign" of the Protestant faith, kneeling is a confession that Protestants make "only at the reception of the Lord's Supper, as before the Lord who is present in the reception."[23] Conversely, even the omission of kneeling operates as a "negative external sign of our confession of faith," as a testimony of the Protestant confession vis-à-vis other confessions of faith. Therefore, kneeling is an action whose performance or omission witnesses to the Protestant confession of faith. For this reason, obedience to the order would compromise one's faith.

Döllinger accused Harless of perpetuating three lies. First, it was not true that Protestants only knelt during the reception of the Lord's Supper, as kneeling "before the Lord who is present in the reception." It was common for Lutherans to kneel during the recitation of the words of institution. In fact, among some Lutherans a novel practice had emerged where Lutheran pastors knelt during the consecration while reciting the *verba domini*.[24] Second, Döllinger noted that some Protestants did not kneel at all, opting to stand for the reception of the sacrament. He even referenced an anomalous example cited by the seventeenth-century theologian Johann Brunnemann (1608–1672), who had reported occurrences where men would stand at distribution, while women would kneel. Third, since it was common for Protestants to stand while receiving the Sacrament of the Altar, it could not be true that the omission of kneeling functioned as a "negative act of confession." If the absence of kneeling was itself a confession of faith—as Harless had claimed in defending the Protestant refusal to kneel at a Roman Catholic Mass—then every Protestant who stood to receive the Lord's Supper was making "a confession of their unbelief regarding the presence of Christ."[25] If no consensus of practice was found

[23] *Verhandlungen der Kammer der Abgeordneten*, 215. "Das positive äussere Zeichen unseres Glaubens besteht darin, nur beim Empfange des Abendmahls, als vor dem im Empfange gegenwärtigen Herrn, zu knien."

[24] Here Döllinger distinguishes between the theology and practices of the Lutheran and Reformed churches. [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 38.

[25] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 42.

among the Protestants of Germany, Döllinger concluded that Harless's arguments were disingenuous. He could argue for neither a positive nor a negative understanding of kneeling for Protestants.

In his assessment of Harless's supposed three lies, Döllinger further accused him of a falsehood regarding the nature of the Protestant belief in the presence of Christ in the Supper. Döllinger believed that he had located Harless within an intra-Lutheran controversy over the nature of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. Döllinger observed a trend in Lutheran theology, beginning with Melanchthon, that restricted the bodily presence of Christ to the moment of the believer's reception, thereby "giving up Luther's firmly held teaching of the presence of the body of Christ in the Supper, affected by and prolonged through the consecration."[26] Parsing his language regarding the bodily presence of Christ, since Harless had stated that Protestants knelt at the reception of the sacrament as "before the Lord who is present in the reception," Döllinger concluded that Harless had followed Melanchthon's sacramental theology in restricting Christ's bodily presence to the moment of reception, rather than following the consecration. By identifying a receptionist conception of the sacramental presence, Döllinger believed he caught the Protestant opposition in a web of self-contradiction that also undermined their own objections. Beyond breaking with Luther, Harless and modern Lutherans were guilty of an inconsistent liturgical ritual that contradicted their own theology. If Christ's presence only occurred upon reception, then the practice of kneeling at any moment other than reception—such as during the consecration or even during the distribution before the "moment of the authentic eating of Christ"—undermined the claim that Protestants only kneel before the present Lord: "How are you now able to say that at the Lord's Supper the Protestant kneels as before the Lord who is present in the reception?"[27] This evidences either inconsistency, gross ignorance, or disingenuousness. Moreover, Döllinger concluded that restricting the presence of Christ to the reception of the Lord's Supper also invalidated the argument that Ludwig's order resulted in coerced participation in Roman Catholic eucharistic adoration and worship. If Protestants did not believe that Christ was present in the consecrated elements, they could not argue that they were forced to take part in an act of adoration or devotion. If Christ is absent from the element of bread before reception, then kneeling may be considered nothing more than a sign of honor, no different than bowing or removing one's hat.

Having investigated Harless's arguments against the kneeling order, Döllinger assessed Protestant outrage as "artificial and deliberate," nothing more than their

[26] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung*, 39, 45; Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*, 44–45.

[27] Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern,* 45.

attempt to exploit an inconsequential matter for the purpose of gaining power within the state. Harless trafficked in falsehoods and half-truths, lacking a unified ground for opposing Ludwig's order. The justification for refusing to kneel appeared to be nothing other than Protestant anti-Catholic capriciousness, whose theological basis, absent a legitimate foundation in a Protestant theology of the Lord's Supper, amounted to little more than "since the Catholics kneel, we will not kneel."[28]

Harless's Defense

Döllinger's essays struck a blow against Protestant opposition to the kneeling order. Döllinger had claimed that their objections were ungrounded, inconsistent, and insincere, motivated more by prejudice than either theology or alleged violations of constitutional freedoms. In addition to countering Harless's argument, Döllinger also mocked Harless for his supposed ignorance of Lutheran theology and history. Harless quickly penned his *Offene Antwort* in response to the Munich church historian's *Sendschreiben*, followed by *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, answering Döllinger's *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*.[29] The tone of his writings matched Döllinger's own caustic rhetoric, lampooning him for his anonymity, making light of his own ignorance of Lutheran history, and questioning Döllinger's inability to understand the Lutheran position on indifferent things.[30] But Harless's main objective was the defense of the Protestant dissent against the order; in particular, validating the argument that he had made at the Assembly of the Estates.

A Sacramental Confession

Harless conceded that Döllinger was correct in observing that there was no single Protestant posture for receiving the sacrament. In some congregations, it was common for parishioners to kneel, while in other congregations they stood. Additionally, Döllinger was also correct in stating that Lutherans will also kneel outside of the reception of the Lord's Supper. In fact, he admitted that he himself

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[28] [Döllinger], *Die Frage von der Kniebeugung,* 37–42; Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*, 21–24, 37–47.

[29] Harless was not the only Protestant who answered Döllinger. The German philologist Friedrich Thiersch (1784–1860), the so-called "Praeceptor Bavariae," penned his own comprehensive response. See Friedrich Thiersch, *Über Protestantismus und Kniebeugung im Königreich Bayern: Drei Sendschreiben an den Herrn geistlichen Rath und Professor Dr. Ignaz Döllinger*, 2 vols. (Marburg: Bayrhoffer'sche Universität-Buchhandlung, 1844).

[30] Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 11, 24; Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern," 281–290.

attended a church where it was custom to receive the sacrament standing, and that he had reintroduced the custom of kneeling, not for the Lord's Supper but for the reception of Holy Absolution.[31] Nevertheless, these concessions do not invalidate the distinction between positive and negative external signs of faith. One cannot conclude from the existence of diverse practices that kneeling at the Lord's Supper is never anything more than an indifferent action. When Protestants kneel at the reception of the sacrament, it is a confession of their faith. Similarly, in attending a Roman Catholic Mass, when a Protestant refrains from kneeling, in this context this omission is similarly a confession of Protestant belief vis-à-vis the theology and practice of the Roman Catholic Mass. The environment is not incidental in the determination of one's actions. Kneeling itself is not always a confession of faith in the bodily presence of Christ, and its omission is not always a negative confession; but when Protestants kneel at a Protestant service of the Lord's Supper, or refrain from kneeling at a Catholic Mass, these actions serve as positive and negative external signs of a Protestant confession of faith.[32] The inherently indifferent character of kneeling is determined by the nature of the environment wherein it takes place, becoming a witness to the specific beliefs of the community. Within the various Roman Catholic eucharistic services, a Protestant soldier must ask himself, "*May I also participate in making this sign*? Is it not an expression of a completely different faith than mine? Do I not deny the confession of my faith when I participate in making a form of the confession of a faith which stands in contradiction with the content of my faith?"[33]

If a Protestant soldier were to kneel at a Catholic Mass, this action would be seen as an indication of a positive external sign of faith, that is to say, as a confession of faith on behalf of the Protestant. But if Protestants—at least Lutherans—and Roman Catholics both believe in the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament, how would kneeling undermine the Protestant confession of faith? Could it not stand as a joint witness to the bodily presence of Christ, unless, as Döllinger claimed, Protestants had abandoned Luther's view of the consecration and restricted Christ's presence to the moment of reception? Curiously ignoring Döllinger's accusation of holding to a Melanchthonian understanding of the presence of Christ, Harless argued that as an external act of confession, neither kneeling nor the bodily presence of Christ could be considered apart from the larger theological context of the Roman Catholic theology and practice of the Mass, specifically the sacrifice of the Mass. A

[31] Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 17.

[32] Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 18–21.

[33] Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 19. "*[D]arf ich denn dieses Zeichen auch mitmachen*? ist es nicht Ausdruck eines ganz andern Glaubens, als des meinigen? verläugne ich nicht das Bekenntniß meines Glaubens, wenn ich die Bekenntnißform eines Glaubens mitmache, welcher mit dem Inhalt meines Glaubens in Widerspruch steht?" (emphasis original).

part could not be isolated from the whole.[34] Within the context of the Roman Catholic theology and practice of the Mass, one could not separate the consecration from the whole body of Catholic eucharistic theology—and the center of Catholic eucharistic theology is the doctrine and practice of the sacrifice of the Mass.[35] Drawing upon FC SD VII, Harless critiqued the Roman Catholic theology of the Mass, conceptualized and offered as a sacrifice, as a comprehensive departure from Christ's institution of the sacrament, or as the Smalcald Articles labelled the sacrifice of the Mass, "the greatest and most terrible abomination."[36] For Harless, the conceptualization of the Mass as a sacrifice did not represent a minor error or aberration; it shaped the entire theology and practice of the Roman Catholic Mass. For this reason, the Confessions held that the Roman Catholic Mass was "a transformation and perversion" of the sacrament instituted and mandated by Christ.[37]

If the sacrifice of the Mass constituted a transformation from the instituted testament of Christ into the "highest and most considerable" of the "papist idolatries," then this metamorphosis would result in consequences that affect the entirety of the sacrament. The doctrine permeates all of its members. This is why Harless held that one could not consider the consecration or the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament in isolation from the whole doctrine. Harless formed his

[34] The closest that Harless comes to addressing Döllinger's accusation is a passing statement about the relationship between a Protestant understanding of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and the practice of kneeling before the reception of the sacrament, such as during the consecration. In such an instance, the meaning of the act of kneeling would not change, kneeling would "*always signify only one and the same thing*," which apparently would be a confession of the Lord who is present in the reception. See Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 18 (emphasis original).

[35] According to Tridentine thought, the consecration was not simply an element within the larger sacrifice of the Mass; rather, the consecration was an essential feature that effected the sacrifice. According to the *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii tridentini ad parochos*, the reason for the separate consecration of the bread into the body and of the wine into the blood is that it "more greatly recalls" (*magis referatur*) the separation of the body and blood of Christ during His passion. Therefore, as a distinct act, the consecration of the wine into the blood is a remembrance of the effusion of Christ's blood. It is uncertain if Harless is specifically referring to this aspect of the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of the consecration. Nevertheless, it is clear that he understood that the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass affects the entire theology of the Mass, including the consecration. See *Catechismus ex decreto Concilii tridentini ad parochos Pii Quinti Pont. Max. Iussu Editus. Ad Editionem Romae A.D. MDLXVI Publici Iuris Factam Accuratissime Expressus. Cum S. Rev. Consistorii Catholici Per Regnum Saxoniae Approbatione* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1856), 190.

[36] SA II II 1; 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), 301.

[37] Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 17–20; Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern," 249–252.

criticism based upon FC SD VII 83–85, that the entirety of Christ's institution must take place. Apart from the observation of the whole institution, no sacrament is present. Harless used this principle in order to evaluate the consecration and the bodily presence of Christ in the Roman Catholic Mass:

> Or should it have remained unknown to Prof. Döllinger that all of the confessional writings of our Church unanimously teach that the testament of the Lord Jesus Christ may not be changed, [and] that in the Roman Catholic mass an unholy transformation and perversion of this testament occurs? [Should it have remained unknown to him that] in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Jesus Christ are there for the use and reception and their presence is not dependent merely on the words of institution, but rather dependent upon the whole institutionally-determined action taking place? [Should it have remained unknown to him that] therefore, a true action of the Lord's Supper and its divine mystery by no means exist without the distribution and reception of the elements, according to the institution; and conversely, the doctrine of the ever-repeated sacrifice of Christ in the mass, which is affected **ex opere operato**, with and in its consequences, must be called un-Christian and idolatrous?[38]

For Harless, the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament was dependent upon the entire institution of the sacrament, not simply the result of the consecration in isolation from the rest of the institution. The recitation of the words of institution were no less necessary than the distribution and reception of the consecrated elements. The recitation of the words of institution without the distribution and reception of the sacrament, and when the eucharistic elements are offered to God as a bloodless, propitiatory sacrifice, was a perversion of the Lord's Supper.[39] Similarly,

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[38] Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern," 250–251. "Oder sollte es dem Herrn Prof. Döllinger unbekannt geblieben seyn, daß alle Bekenntniß-schriften unserer Kirche einstimmig lehren, daß das Testament des Herrn Jesus Christ nicht geändert werden dürfe, daß in der römische-katholischen Messe eine heillose Veränderung und Verkehrung dieses Testamentes stattfinde, daß Leib und Blut Jesu Christi im Abendmahl nur für den Genuß und Empfang da sind und ihre Gegenwart nicht blos von den Einsetzungsworten, sondern davon abhängt, daß die *ganze Handlung einsetzungsmäßig* stattfindet, daß demnach eine wirkliche Abendmahlshandlung und deren göttliches Geheimniß ohne einsetzungsmäßige Spende und Empfang der Elemente gar nicht besteht, und daß umgekehrt die Lehre von einer immer wiederholten Opferung Christi in der Messe, welche **ex opere operato** wirkte, mit und in ihren Konsequenzen unchristliche und abgöttisch genannt werden müsse?" (emphasis original).

[39] This is the same point that a fellow Protestant defender, pastor Georg Hermann Trenkle, articulated in his own response to Döllinger. Trenkle argued that, "For the *Consecratio* in itself, according to our dogma, has no independent meaning isolated from the rest of the action of the Lord's Supper. Without relationship to the ensuing *dispensatio* and the real beneficial reception, the consecration would even remain completely without its end, and therefore even without its

eucharistic benedictions, the celebration of Corpus Christi, and other processions and parades that exhibited the consecrated host represented liturgical innovations and abuses if for no other reason than that they lacked the distribution and reception of the sacramental elements.[40] From this perspective, if a Protestant soldier were to kneel at a Mass or eucharistic benediction, he would not simply be witnessing to a shared confession in the bodily presence of Christ, but Harless argued that the Protestant would be participating in a liturgical action that compromised his own confession of faith. Coerced participation would be a violation of one's conscience, let alone the constitutional rights of the freedom of conscience and the exercise of religion.

Harless held that the Roman Catholic Church, in altering the nature of the Lord's Supper, had compromised the sacrament, since it had undermined Christ's institution. Harless refrained from concluding that the Roman Catholic Mass was absent of the bodily presence of Christ. Such a pronouncement would have been beside the point. Harless's goal in his dispute with Döllinger—and in the larger debate about the kneeling order—was to demonstrate that despite some commonalities, the doctrine and practice of the Roman Catholic Mass represented a comprehensive perversion of Christ's testament. To be sure, like Roman Catholics, Lutherans believed in the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament and even knelt as a confession of their faith, but this was a different confession and practice than Roman Catholic doctrine and practice:

> [Our] faith is not at all a belief in what is believed in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass and of the consecration and what is actually confessed in the mass. In the Roman Catholic mass kneeling is an expression

fruit." See Georg Hermann Trenkle, *Die Kniebeugungsfrage mit Rücksicht auf die Döllinger'schen Streitschriften* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1844), 18.

[40] It is important to recall that prior to the liturgical reforms of the twentieth century, attendance at Mass was not frequently accompanied by the distribution and reception of the sacrament. Although the Council of Trent had encouraged more frequent Communion, yearly reception remained the norm for most Roman Catholic laity. In fact, when laity would desire to receive the sacrament during Mass, the distribution of Communion occurred within a separate rite inserted into the order of the Mass. According to Andreas Heinz, this practice evidences that "In post-Tridentine liturgical praxis, we see a theology that to a large extent has lost sight of the relation between the celebration of the Eucharist and its reception." See Andreas Heinz, "Liturgical Rules and Popular Religious Customs Surrounding Holy Communion between the Council of Trent and the Catholic Restoration in the 19th Century," in *Bread of Heaven: Customs and Practices Surrounding Holy Communion: Essays in the History of Liturgy and Culture*, ed. Charles Caspers, Gerard Lukken, and Gerard Rouwhorst (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995), 119–143, 125.

> of a faith which stands in contradiction with what we Protestants believe regarding the Lord's Supper.[41]

The theological differences overshadowed similarities in both doctrine and practice. Specific commonalities could not be the basis for a shared theological and liturgical witness. Harless could argue that the level of difference between the two confessions regarding the Lord's Supper was so great that kneeling would constitute an explicit undermining of a Protestant soldier's confession of faith.

The End of Adiaphora

Harless readily conceded that kneeling in itself was an indifferent act, neither commanded nor forbidden, one that Protestants had used and continued to use as a witness of their faith. Since it was not commanded, however, it could also be omitted without compromising one's faith, as attested to through historical and current examples of Protestant practice. What Döllinger had failed to understand—or simply feigned ignorance of—were the circumstances wherein an indifferent act ceased to be indifferent. Based on FC X and St. Paul, Harless specified two specific conditions when "middle things indifferent in themselves" cease to be indifferent: either when the thing itself is in a situation that would result in a denial of faith, and when the indifferent thing would offend (*ärgern*) one's brother. In other words, context has a determinative role in relationship to adiaphora. The free performance or omission of an indifferent act forfeits its indifferent character when an unambiguous (*rund*) confession is demanded. Unequivocal confessions are no less required during periods of trial and temptation (*Versuchung*), as in times of persecution. An order of the state that not only prescribed kneeling but mandated the performance of kneeling within specific Roman Catholic eucharistic contexts, according to Harless, constituted the creation of a condition that compromised the character of an indifferent act.[42] As Harless had demonstrated, the nature of the differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies and practices of the Lord's Supper prevents a Protestant soldier from participation in the prescribed rites without compromising his own faith. Set within the context of a Roman Catholic Mass or eucharistic procession, kneeling may not be considered as a mere military salutation comprised of bending the knee; nor may it be considered as a mere indifferent act that the church may freely adopt. Before a priest reciting the words

[41] Harless, *Offene Antwort*, 18–19. "[W]elche Glaube ganz und gar das nicht glaubt, was in der *römische-katholischen Lehre vom Meßopfer und von der Wandlung geglaubt und in der Messe thatsächlich bekannt wird, und daß bei der römisch-katholischen Messe das Kniebeugen Ausdruck eines Glaubens ist, welcher in Widerspruch mit dem steht, was wir Protestanten vom Abendmahl glauben*" (emphasis original).

[42] Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern," 287–290.

of institution as part of the sacrifice of the Mass, or when exhibiting the consecrated host in a monstrance before the eyes of the faithful in a ritual that exceeds the purpose of Christ's institution, bending the knee ceases to be an indifferent movement of the body. Rather, it becomes a specific bodily expression of devotion and adoration that is alien to a Protestant confession. The state's imposition of these acts in these environments only further evacuates any claim of indifference.

In response to the claim that the order concerned itself only with the mandate of a military salutation, a simple external movement of the body, Harless used Döllinger's own thought to elucidate the error of this position. Döllinger had admitted that one of the benefits of this order was that it created great "liturgical unity and uniformity" between the military and the rest of the congregation.[43] Based on his own interpretation, Harless held that it was not possible to hold that the order only commanded the performance of a military salute. The "unity and uniformity" that the order established was liturgical. Parishioners kneeling during the consecration or at a Corpus Christi procession did not consider themselves performing a military salutation, but rather an act of devotion. Therefore, Ludwig's prescription to kneel may not be interpreted merely as "a purely military" act. The performance of the order even gives the appearance that the soldier is "actively participating" in a liturgical rite. Accordingly, the command to kneel at a Roman Catholic Mass or eucharistic procession violates the conscience of a Protestant soldier by forcing him to participate in religious ceremonies—or, at the minimum, it gives the appearance of participation and agreement—at odds with his confession, undermining his faith.[44]

Historical Observations

By December 1845, when Ludwig I had officially rescinded the kneeling order, the exchange between Harless and Döllinger had already abated. In fact, they were no longer key figures in the debate. For his part in the controversy, Harless's re-election as the university representative to the Assembly of the Estates went

[43] Döllinger, *Der Protestantismus in Bayern*, 46–47.

[44] Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern," 290–296. Harless argued that this is the reason why inclining the head is preferential to kneeling. Certainly, both actions are in themselves indifferent, and both are used in liturgical contexts; however, kneeling gives the appearance of an "active participation" in the various Roman Catholic rituals, while inclining one's head allows for a "passive expression." As an already acceptable liturgical expression for Roman Catholics, the selection of the inclination of one's head would provide a middle ground that both Protestants and Roman Catholics could perform, without compromising their respective confessions. Harless states that this would be a kind of concession necessary in a bi-confessional state.

unconfirmed. Even more significantly, he lost his faculty position at the University of Erlangen on March 25, 1845.[45] Ironically, even Döllinger merited some frustration on the part of Ludwig. Despite his public campaign against Protestant objections to the kneeling order, Döllinger came to the conclusion that the order needed to be revoked. According to his biographer, to the annoyance and frustration of Ludwig, Döllinger argued that if the Protestants interpreted the order as prescribing coerced participation in a religious ritual, its revocation was necessary.[46]

This essay has considered the Kneeling Controversy by focusing on the debate between Ignaz von Döllinger and Adolf von Harless. It further restricted itself to their discourse over the Lord's Supper and adiaphora. When reflecting upon the Kneeling Controversy, it is necessary to remember that this literary exchange only provides a narrow perspective into a much more complicated controversy that pitted the Bavarian Protestant minority against the Roman Catholic King of Bavaria and his ultramontane interior minister. Moreover, looming over the entire period was the threat of political revolution. While one may consider the theological dimensions of this episode, such consideration offers only a narrow view of the issues. It would be a gross misinterpretation to conclude that the Kneeling Controversy only constituted a theological debate between Bavarian Catholicism and Protestantism.

Harless and Döllinger frequently invoked the sixteenth century throughout the course of their antagonistic exchange. Both theologians drew upon the past in their attempt to justify an argument by locating it within the thought of the sixteenth century, or to demonstrate its error by showing its disparity. Harless and Döllinger each recognized that Luther, the Lutheran Confessions, and the theological disputes of the sixteenth century held some degree of authoritative significance and that the weight of their argument would be bolstered if they could deploy the voices of history on their side of the dispute.[47] This essay concludes by offering observations regarding the relationship between the two periods of controversy. Attention is first given to the Lord's Supper and will conclude by addressing the issue of adiaphora.

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[45] Harless was removed from his faculty position at Erlangen and transferred to Bayreuth as the second pastoral consistorial counselor. See Heckel, *Adolf von Harless*, 392–398.

[46] See Johann Friedrich, *Ignaz von Döllinger. Sein Leben auf Grund seines schriftlichen Nachlasses*, vol. 2, Vom Ministerium Abel bis zum Ablauf der Frankfurter Zeit 1837–1849 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1899), 198.

[47] The invocation of the sixteenth-century confessional writings was usually restricted to the Lutheran Confessions, but at least on one occasion, in arguing against the doctrine and practice of the sacrifice of the Mass, Harless made a passing reference to the Heidelberg Catechism. See Harless, "Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern," 251.

Melanchthon's Sacramental Presence

Whether intentional or not, in accusing Harless of adopting an understanding of the consecration according to Melanchthon's interpretation, in abandonment of Luther's teaching on the *verba testamenti*, Döllinger had identified a long-standing controversy within the Lutheran Church regarding the relationship of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and the consecration. Early within Lutheran history, two schools of thought emerged over the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament.[48] The first identified the words of institution as consecratory, that the words of Christ, proclaimed in the recitation of the institution narrative in the Divine Service, effect the sacramental presence of Christ. The second school of interpretation deemphasized the consecratory efficacy of the words of institution, relocating them to a broader understanding of the sacramental "action" or "use" comprised of blessing (with the words of institution), distribution, reception. Within this theological framework, the bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament is dependent upon the entire sacramental action; no element of the institution (blessing, distribution, or reception) may be omitted. Pertinent to the subject at hand, the absence of one of the sacramental actions—especially the reception—

[48] While over fifty years old, Edward Peters's doctoral dissertation still represents the most thorough study of the origins and trajectories of these two different interpretative schools within Lutheranism. Beginning with Luther and Melanchthon, Peters follows the paths of these different approaches to the Sacrament of the Altar through the rest of the sixteenth century and up through the seventeenth century. Peters demonstrates that already with Luther and Melanchthon, an implicit disagreement developed in their respective understandings of what constituted the sacramental action and on the relationship between the bodily presence of Christ and the sacramental action. Following this theological rationale, the Melanchthonian school determined that the presence of Christ was contingent upon the entirety of the sacramental action. Although Luther himself had argued that the entire sacramental action was necessary, the Melanchthonian school of interpretation rejected belief in the bodily presence of Christ before the reception of the elements. Prior to the completion of the sacramental action, there was no presence of Christ, and Christ's presence terminates at the completion of the action. For the adherents of this position, after the distribution of the elements any elements that remained were no longer the body and blood of Christ. Some even held that it would be permissible to take the former elements home to consume as common bread and wine. The authors of the Formula of Concord dually affirmed the consecratory efficacy of the words of institution, while situating the *verba domini* within the whole sacramental action, and concluded that "nothing has the character of a sacrament outside of the use" (FC SD VII 86). This prohibited the separation of the consecrated elements apart from the Divine Service, thus condemning the Roman Catholic practices of sacramental processions and the adoration of the sacrament outside of the context of the Divine Service. Peters further demonstrates that despite the position of the Formula of Concord, already by the end of the sixteenth century, the Melanchthonian school of interpretation not only persisted, but eventually became standard. See Edward Frederick Peters, "The Origin and Meaning of the Axiom: 'Nothing Has the Character of a Sacrament outside of the Use,' in Sixteenth-Century and Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Theology" (ThD diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1968).

would undermine the integrity of the sacrament, thereby negating the bodily presence of Christ. The bodily presence of Christ is not present in the elements of bread and wine until the final action (the reception); and upon completion of the sacramental action, the bodily presence of Christ ceases, even in any elements that had been consecrated for the purpose of distribution and reception, if they were not distributed. Due to the understanding of the relationship between the bodily presence of Christ to the entire sacramental action, particularly the act of the reception of the sacramental elements, this second manner of interpretation—the so-called Melanchthonian school—came to be identified for circumscribing the presence of Christ to the moment of distribution and reception; hence the moniker "receptionism."

According to Edward Peters, by the seventeenth century the Melanchthonian understanding of the sacramental action, including the consecration and the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, had largely overtaken the view of the consecration and the bodily presence held by Luther, Chemnitz, and the Formula of Concord.[49] In this era, the Formula of Concord's language of sacramental use was frequently interpreted in such a way as to identify the bodily presence of Christ with the completion of the act—consecration, distribution, and reception—with great significance placed upon the reception, since it completed the sacramental action, resulting in the bodily presence of Christ, whose presence was coextensive with the act of reception.[50]

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[49] See Roland Ziegler, *Das Eucharistiegebet in Theologie und Liturgie der lutherischen Kirchen seit der Reformation: Die Deutung des Herrenmahles zwischen Promissio und Eucharistie* (Göttingen: Edition Ruprecht, 2013), 80–103; Dorothea Wendebourg, *Essen zum Gedächtnis: Der Gedächtnisbefehl in den Abendmahlstheologien der Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 139–243; Hermann Sasse, "The Lutheran Understanding of the Consecration (1952)," *We Confess Anthology*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 113–138; Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Nihil Rule Revisited," *Lutheran Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 269–285; Teigen, *The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Brewster, MA: Trinity Lutheran Press, 1986).

One example of a seventeenth-century Lutheran presentation of this Melanchthonian understanding of the Lord's Supper is found in the collections of sermons on the Augsburg Confession by the Leipzig pastor, professor, and superintendent August Pfeiffer (1640–1698). In his sermon on the Lord's Supper, Pfeiffer preached that in place of a "*transubstantio* or a transformation" there is a "*communicatio,* a fellowship" of the blessed bread and wine by "means of communication of the body and blood" of Christ. The fellowship "happens in the *moment* that [the blessed bread and wine] are eaten and drunk by the *communicanten*." If the pastor were to drop a host or spill wine on the ground before the time of consumption "that would occur not to the body and blood of Christ, but rather only to the bread and wine." See August Pfeiffer, *Der wolbewährte Evangelische Aug-Apfel/ Oder Schrifftmässige Erklärung aller Articul Der Augspurgischen Confession, Als des Evangelischen Glaubens-Bekäntnüsses* (Leipzig: Johann Herbord Kloß, 1685), 580.

[50] It is important to note that in this understanding of the Lord's Supper, where the action of reception assumes a causal role in effecting the bodily presence of Christ, similar causality is not

By the nineteenth century, one sees that this Melanchthonian interpretation of the Lord's Supper even persisted among representatives of the confessional Lutheran revival in Germany. In his *Katechetisches*, an explanation of Luther's Small Catechism, Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872), Harless's fellow Bavarian and confessional Lutheran, explained that one could not follow the Roman Catholic practice of withdrawing the distribution of the chalice from the laity out of fear of spilling the chalice. Löhe held that this fear was baseless,

> Because the Almighty Lord unites His blood with the wine which is *drunk*, but not with the drop of wine that is spilled. *This* error of the Romans occurs when one believes that in the Lord's Supper there is merely blood and only an empty form of wine, so that what is spilled must be blood.[51]

It appears that Löhe believed that since Lutherans rejected belief in an immutable transformation of the substances of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the bodily presence of Christ only occurred in the specific elements that were received and consumed. Since a conversion of substances did not transpire, this meant that any elements outside of the act of reception—whether they were dropped or spilt, or the *reliquae*—only remained bread and wine.

Or consider another representative of this period of confessional awakening, the Marburg professor August Vilmar (1800–1868). In his posthumously published *Lehrbuch der Pastoraltheologie*, Vilmar taught that the words of institution recited during the Divine Service "do something to the bread and wine"; they are not merely a "designation" or "setting apart" of the elements, let alone is their recitation seen as historical or instructional. Rather, when the pastor speaks Christ's words, "Christ, through the words of institution—spoken through the pastor, not as a man, but as the instrument of Christ—repeats what He did at the first Supper: making bread and

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attributed to the faith of the recipient. Faithful reception is essential in order to receive the sacramental benefits (such as forgiveness of sins), but not in effecting the presence of Christ. Lutheran theologians who held this interpretation of the sacramental action continued to insist upon the *manducatio impiorum*. Reformed theologians, who rejected belief in the bodily presence of Christ but insisted that outside of its use there is no sacrament, denounced the *manducatio impiorum*, arguing that apart from faithful reception there is no sacrament. See Peters, "Origin and Meaning," 451–455.

[51] Wilhelm Löhe, "Katechetisches: Fragen und Antworten zu den Sechs Hauptstücken des Kleinen Katechismus Dr. M. Luthers (1845)," in *Gesammelte Werke* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1958), 3.2:420–495; 490. "877. Warum kann das aber nicht sein? Weil der allmächtige Herr sein Blut mit dem Weine, der **getrunken** wird, vereinigt, nicht aber mit dem Tropfen Weins, der verschüttet wird. **Der** Irrtum der Römischen muß kommen, wenn man glaubt, daß im Abendmahl bloß Blut sei und nur leere Weinsgestalt daneben, so daß, was verschüttet wird, Blut sein müsse" (emphasis original).

wine to be the bearers of His body and blood."[52] But in addressing any potential *reliquae*, Vilmar taught that the remaining consecrated elements are no longer the body and blood of Christ: the elements that have been consecrated "cease" (*fällt*) to be consecrated "when the consumption of that which was needing to be consumed and the drinking of that which was needing to be drunk is not completed" and the consecrated elements "return to their natural state." In fact, Vilmar went as far as to suggest that the remaining Communion hosts could be "crumbled" into soup for the poor and that some of the wine could be given to nourish the sick.[53] In discussing the collection of crumbs that fell from the consumed Communion hosts or wine spilt from the chalice, although reverently handled (collected with a corporal and burned, or soaked up with coal), Vilmar only referred to them as crumbs and wine. In light of his position on the *reliquae*, it is clear that Vilmar considered these elements only to be bread and wine. Although they were consecrated and intended for reception, these fragments fell outside of the sacramental act, and therefore, like the remaining consecrated bread and wine, ceased to be the body and blood of Christ. Therefore, in summary, while Vilmar could hold that the consecration itself effected the sacramental presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine, this presence was circumscribed by the sacramental act. The words of institution did not impart a consecration that extended beyond the distribution of the elements.

Was Döllinger's accusation correct? Had he rightfully identified Harless as a representative of a Melanchthonian interpretation of the bodily presence of Christ? Was Harless a receptionist? This question cannot be definitively answered at this time. The sentence that Döllinger dissected is itself ambiguous, neither unequivocally confirming nor disproving Döllinger's accusation, since both interpretations held that Jesus is present in the reception of the sacrament. In other

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[52] August Vilmar, *Lehrbuch der Pastoraltheologie* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsman, 1872), 120. "Es wird etwas an dem Brode und Wein gethan (nicht bloß *in abstracto* 'die Elemente zu etwas bestimmt, getermt'). Die Lehre der lutherischen Kirche ist entschieden von Anfang an gewesen und geblieben bis auf den heutigen Tag: **es müßen die Einsetzungsworte wiederholt werden, welche der Herr Christus gesprochen hat: durch die, selbstverständliche nicht von dem Pastor als Mensch, sondern als Organ Christi ausgesprochenen Einsetzungsworte wiederholt Christus das, was er bei dem ersten Abendmal gethan hat: macht Brod und Wein zu Trägern seines Leibes und Blutes**" (emphasis original). Also see Peters, "The Sacraments and Sacramental Actions in the Works of August Friedrich Christian Vilmar," (STM thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1958), 51–71.

[53] Vilmar, *Lehrbuch der Pastoraltheologie*, 124–125. In addressing what to do with the *reliquae*, Vilmar commented that it is not proper for the church wardens (*Kirchenältesten*) or the treasurers (*Kassenmeister*) to consume the remaining wine either at the altar or the parsonage. Rather, if the wine has not been placed "in tin" (*in Zinn*)—perhaps either referring to consecrated wine, or wine placed in a tin or pewter flagon—it is to be set aside to be used for the Communion of the sick. Wine that was "in tin" should be given to the sick for their nourishment.

writings where Harless addressed the Lord's Supper, determining his position proves equally difficult. The only work where Harless comes close to discussing the topic is the essay "Die Bedeutung des heiligen Abendmahls für das Heilsbedürfniß der Christen" ("The Significance of the Holy Supper for Christians' Necessity of Salvation"). Although this work chiefly engaged the relationship between John 6 and the Lord's Supper, at one point in contrasting the relationship between a sacramental and spiritual eating of Christ, Harless, invoking FC SD VII 86, asserted that the most essential mark of differentiation is,

> [T]hat the Lord makes the presence, the administration, and the reception of His body and blood in the sacrament *not dependent on the faith in the word of promise by the one receiving [the sacrament]; but rather [He makes it dependent] upon the power of the words of institution spoken over bread and wine, the earthly bearers of his presence, [and] without any other and further mediation, He offers His body and blood for oral partaking and enjoyment*. Whether you believe or not, in and with the completion of the sacramental action, and with the reception of the bread and wine, the Lord administers His body and blood. Here, neither your faith nor the Holy Spirit, but rather the immediate reception of the body and blood is the mediation of fellowship with Christ. For what is dependent upon the faith of the one receiving the Lord's Supper is not the reception of the body and blood of the Lord, but rather the blessing of this reception in the faithful appropriation of Christ, who gave His body and shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins.[54]

Harless follows the Formula in holding that the words of institution are the cornerstone for the Lord's Supper. The entire sacramental action—including the bodily presence and the distribution—is dependent upon the power of Christ's

[54] Harless, "Die Bedeutung des heiligen Abendmahls für das Heilsbedürfniß der Christen," in *Die kirchlich-religiöse Bedeutung der reinen Lehre von den Gnadenmitteln: Mit besonderer Beziehung auf das heilige Abendmahl: Drei Abhandlungen von Dr. A. von Harless u. Dr. Th. Harnack* (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1869), 84. "Das allerwesentlichste Unterscheidungszeichen besteht vielmehr darin, daß der Herr die Gegenwärtigkeit, das Darreichen und Empfangen seines Leibes und Blutes im Sakrament *nicht von Glauben des Empfängers an sein Verheißungswort, sondern von der Kraft seines über Brod und Wein, den irdischen Trägern seiner Gegenwärtigkeit, gesprochenen Stiftungswortes abhängig macht, und ohne alle andere und weitere Vermittlung seinen Leib und sein Blut in mündlicher Nießung darreicht*. Ob du glaubst oder nicht—in und mit dem Vollzug der sakramentlichen Handlung und in und mit dem Empfang von Brod und Wein reicht der Herr seinen Leib und Blut dar. Und nicht dein Glaube und nicht der hl. Geist, sondern der unmittelbare Empfang von Leib und Blut ist hier die Vermittlung der Gemeinschaft mit Christo. Denn was von Glauben des Abendmahlsempfängers abhängig ist, das ist nicht der Empfang des Leibes und Blutes des Herrn, sondern der Segen dieses Empfanges in der gläubigen Aneignung Christi, der zur Vergebung unserer Sünden für uns seinen Leib gegeben und sein Blut vergossen hat" (emphasis original).

words. But while elevating the *verba domini*, Harless refused to isolate them from the whole sacramental action. As seen in his discussion with Döllinger, the entire institution is necessary for the Lord's Supper, not simply the words of institution. It seems that Harless considered the words of institution to be the primary cause of the bodily presence, but this must occur alongside of the distribution and reception. The causal efficacy of the words of institution have been established within the whole sacramental action. The respective parts of the sacramental action may not be held apart from each other.

The question of Harless's alleged receptionism remains unclear. It is possible to interpret Harless in agreement with Luther and FC SD VII. Namely, the words of institution are the agents by which the body and blood of Christ are brought about, but they are not to be severed from the entire use of the sacrament. To divorce the consecration and bodily presence of Christ from the administration and reception of the sacramental elements would result in a violation of Christ's institution. However, one may certainly interpret Harless's statements as reflective of a receptionist point of view. The bodily presence of Christ is not brought about until the sacramental action is completed in the reception. Consistent with this interpretation, Harless would probably agree with Löhe and Vilmar regarding the status of spilt Communion elements and the *reliquae*. In light of the fact that Harless did not expressly denounce Döllinger's interpretation of his words, and given the position reflected in his contemporaries, it appears probable that Harless's theology of the Lord's Supper followed a receptionist understanding of the relationship between the bodily presence of Christ and the reception of the sacramental elements.

Adiaphora Revisited

At various points throughout their exchange, Harless and Döllinger each utilized the category of adiaphora in order to validate their position. Döllinger also mocked the distinction, lambasting it as capricious, while Harless argued that Döllinger had either failed to understand the complexity of the teaching of indifferent things, or simply affected ignorance. In addition to these reasons, the context that produced the order makes the Kneeling Controversy an interesting historical case study to set alongside the sixteenth-century Adiaphoristic Controversy that resulted from the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims. A brief comparison of both controversies provides interesting points of dissimilarity and similarity that help elucidate the nature of adiaphora.[55]

[55] For more information about the interim and Adiaphoristic Controversies, see Wade Johnston, *The Devil behind the Surplice: Matthias Flacius and John Hooper on Adiaphora* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2018); Irene Dingel, Johannes Hund, Jan Martin Lies, and Hans-Otto Schneider, *Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim: Der interimistische Streit (1548–1549)*

There are numerous differences between the two controversies, but perhaps the most important differences concern the respective subjects and intentions of the initial orders that elicited the controversies. The Augsburg Interim was addressed to the various territories that constituted the Holy Roman Empire, more specifically the territories that had initiated evangelical reforms within their lands, those recently routed by Charles's imperial forces. Although it was only a stopgap anticipating the more comprehensive work of the Council of Trent, its intention was to restore the political and ecclesial unity of the empire under emperor and pope. Ludwig's kneeling order lacked the scope, force, and intention of the interim. It was restricted to the Bavarian armies. Similarly, Ludwig's order was not intended for the dissolution of Bavarian Protestantism. While opponents declared that the order undermined the integrity of Protestantism and violated its constitutional right of self-governance over inner ecclesial affairs—as guaranteed by the "Edict over Inner Ecclesial Matters"[56]—it is hard to substantiate an argument that the order constituted a direct assault against the integrity and autonomy of the Bavarian Protestant Church. Although the order was a coercive imposition upon Protestant soldiers, one cannot easily make the case that Ludwig's order was an affront to Protestant worship itself, let alone a persecution of the Bavarian Protestant population. It neither dictated the character of Protestant worship nor the governance of Protestant churches.[57] In contrast, the Augsburg Interim concerned itself with clear and distinct proscriptions of Evangelical teaching and practice, combined with prescriptive measures deemed offensive from an Evangelical perspective. It was similarly argued that the conciliatory efforts that the Leipzig Proposal proffered were no less threatening to Evangelical Christianity.[58] Therefore, within the territories of the Holy Roman Empire that had adopted the Reformation, the imposition of the disputed adiaphora were a direct affront to Evangelical theology, practice, and conduct of the Christian life. At best, from the perspective of the authors of the Leipzig Interim, the acceptance of the adiaphora was intended to

(Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Irene Dingel, Jan Martin Lies, and Hans-Otto Schneider, *Der adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012).

[56] "Edikt über die inneren Kirchlichen Angelegenheiten der Protestantischen Gesammt-Gemeinde in dem Königreiche," in *Staat und Kirche*, 650–653.

[57] However, when considered alongside subsequent orders from the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior, one is able to see why Bavarian Protestants complained that the state was enacting legislation to circumscribe Protestantism within the state. See above, n. 3.

[58] See "The Augsburg Interim" and "The Leipzig Interim," in *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 144–182, 183–196. See also Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Lutheran Press, 2011).

conciliate the emperor; at worst, from the perspective of the Augsburg Interim, the adiaphora signalled the dissolution of evangelical Lutheranism and the restoration of the Roman Church.[59]

Despite these significant differences, the Kneeling Controversy provides numerous observations that are illustrative for reinforcing the definition of adiaphora as understood during the Adiaphoristic Controversy and later adopted by the Formula of Concord. These observations seem especially necessary in a day when the word *adiaphora* is frequently invoked in any discussion of ceremony and ritual, with little to no regard for the historical circumstances that gave rise to this teaching.[60]

In his writings against the Adiaphorists, Flacius distinguished between "true" and "false" adiaphora, a distinction taken up in FC SD X.[61] This distinction proves helpful in considering the Kneeling Controversy. According to Flacius, a true adiaphoron refers to a ceremony or practice, neither commanded nor forbidden by God, that the church freely chooses for herself. True adiaphora may not be imposed upon the church against her freedom. According to the understanding of adiaphora defined by Flacius and the sixteenth-century Gnesio-Lutherans and enshrined in FC X, only the church has the right to freely impose upon herself ceremonies that are indifferent in themselves. When the church's freedom is compromised, even if the ceremony or custom is truly indifferent, or even if it would promote good order, it cannot be considered a true adiaphoron. The wearing of a surplice, the use of candles, fasting, and kneeling were things truly indifferent in themselves. In fact, their use could even promote good order, instruct in reverence, and edify the congregation. As Flacius himself commented,

> [E]ven though one should at this time envisage such [true] adiaphora as are not only in and of themselves entirely free on account of their nature, but also

[59] The preface to the Augsburg Interim is explicit in its purpose to remove all discord—created by the Evangelicals—and that except in the matters of clerical marriage and Communion under both kinds, the proposal "does not vary from our true Catholic religion and ecclesiastical doctrines, statutes, and ordinances." See "The Augsburg Interim," 146–148.

[60] A recent example that illustrates such a candid decontextualized understanding of adiaphora were the 2009 "Theses on Worship" that were approved by the Council of Presidents of the LCMS. While the word *adiaphora* only appears twice, the entire document is informed by a conception of adiaphora wholly unaware of its particular historical circumstances, which are essential for a proper understanding and application of the teaching of FC X. See "Theses on Worship Produced by the LCMS on Council of Presidents," https://michigandistrict.org/resources/theses-on-worship/. For a critical response to these theses, see Holger Sonntag, *The Unchanging Forms of the Gospel: A Response to Eight Theses on Worship* (Minneapolis: Lutheran Press, 2010).

[61] FC SD X frequently mentions "true" (*rechte/vera*) and "not true adiaphora." See FC SD X 7–8.

> would be Christian and useful, still one should not at this time introduce [them] into the church, since they bring with them such great, horrible harm.[62]

Good and desirable ceremonies are to be spurned if imposed upon the church. Both circumstances reveal that an essential character of true adiaphora is the church's ability to freely adopt for herself ceremonies and practices that are neither commanded nor forbidden by God, and that promote good order and the edification of the faithful. Forced imposition at the hands of the state results in a change of character. In these circumstances, one is no longer free to consider indifferent ceremonies as true adiaphora.

Flacius also held that it is essential that true adiaphora serve for the edification of the faithful. Ceremonies and ritual are to instruct and support the faithful in the Christian faith. However, the promotion of good order itself is not a sufficient justification for the establishment of true adiaphora. First, it must be something that the church freely decided upon for herself. Good order cannot be a coercive measure enacted upon the church. Finally, but no less important, is that each potential adiaphoron must be considered in light of its immediate context and circumstance. Although a particular ceremony or ritual could be truly indifferent, and even be long attested to throughout earlier ecclesiastical history, more recent perversion would render it no longer indifferent.[63] For Flacius, "the circumstances surrounding" any potential adiaphoron play a definitive role in distinguishing between true and false adiaphora.[64]

Döllinger's alleged confusion over the manner of evaluating adiaphora makes sense if he was either unaware or unable to differentiate true and false adiaphora. Absent this distinction, Protestant objections might appear capricious, engendered more by anti-Catholic sentiment than theological criticism. Indeed, within the context of a Protestant Divine Service, kneeling at the consecration and at the reception of the Lord's Supper was a true adiaphoron. As an act indifferent in itself, neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture, the church may freely choose to impose upon herself this practice. The institution of kneeling would even serve to edify Christians regarding the nature of the Sacrament of the Altar and promote true

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[62] Matthias Flacius Illyricus, "A Book about True and False Adiaphora, wherein Almost the Entire Business of Adiaphora Is Explained, against the Pernicious Band of Adiaphorists," in *Adiaphora and Tyranny: Matthias Flacius Illyricus on Christian Resistance and Confession in the Adiaphoristic Controversy*, ed. Wade R. Johnston, trans. Herbert C. Kuske (Saginaw: Magdeburg Press, 2011), 165–299; 251.

[63] Flacius, "True and False Adiaphora," 211.

[64] See Wade R. Johnston, "These Adiaphoristic Devils: Matthias Flacius Illyricus *In Statu Confessionis,* 1548–1552" (MA thesis, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2013), 57. See also, Johnston, *The Devil behind the Surplice*.

faith and reverence on the part of the receiving Christian. As a discipline, kneeling would promote good order, reverence, and piety. Within this environment, kneeling would exemplify the opinion of Flacius, "Whatever proceeds in an orderly fashion in the church also proceeds properly, and whatever proceeds in an orderly and proper fashion in the church serves for edification. Indeed the entire benefit and ultimate purpose of ceremonies can be comprehended under edification."[65]

In light of Flacius's categories of true and false adiaphora, one is able to see how Harless and his Bavarian contemporaries assessed the matter of the kneeling order and why Bavarian Protestants could not bend the knee. Just as the various ceremonies contained in the Augsburg Interim, the acts of kneeling that Ludwig's order prescribed could not be considered merely "middle things." The most obvious reason for this judgment was that Bavarian Protestants considered the kneeling order to be a violation of the church's freedom to determine her own ritual. These debates about adiaphora were not simply intra-ecclesial affairs; rather, they concerned the relationship between church and state. The catalyst of both controversies was the state. The church found herself as the recipient of state-imposed legislation regarding ecclesial ceremonies. What Oliver Olson pithily observes about the sixteenth-century controversy was still applicable three hundred years later: *"The adiaphora controversy can be understood only if it is seen primarily as a quarrel about the relationship between church and state."*[66]

Even though the controversial order concerned only the military, the Bavarian Protestant population interpreted it as a violation of the constitutionally established right protecting the church's freedom regarding doctrine and practice, as well as an affront against the protection of the individual free exercise of religion. In its imposition by the state, it violated the church's freedom to establish her own ceremonies. Moreover, kneeling at a Roman Catholic eucharistic service would not serve to edify the Christian congregation. It would create confusion and undermine the gospel and orthodox doctrine and practice. It would introduce scandal, first to the soldiers forced to participate in the prescribed acts, but also among fellow Protestants. Finally, it might also result in indifference to orthodox teaching and practice. Rather than promoting true unity, established in doctrine, it would establish a feigned unity in ceremony and ritual. Just as Flacius and the Gnesio-

[65] Flacius, "True and False Adiaphora," 190. Another pertinent statement from Flacius on the benefit and purpose of true adiaphora: "Finally, there should be in the churches and the divine service all seriousness, propriety, austerity, and nothing flippant, frivolous, sensuous, or lewd. On the contrary, everything should certainly proceed in such a way that one may thereby perceive a Christian heart and as if it were taking place in the presence of God and his holy angels" (199).

[66] Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 156.

Lutherans had protested against the alleged adiaphora of the interims, this false adiaphoron would serve to promote Roman Catholicism and the papacy.

Conclusion

The Kneeling Controversy is a fascinating study in nineteenth-century Lutheranism. Sacramentally, it is one step in extending Peters's conclusion about the seventeenth-century ascendency of the one-time minority position, by illustrating the persistence of Melanchthon's receptionist understanding of the bodily presence of Christ into the nineteenth century. The debate between Döllinger and Harless documents the resilience of the receptionist doctrine, and how it became a liability to nineteenth-century Bavarian Protestantism, as Döllinger argued that a receptionist interpretation of the Sacrament of the Altar demonstrated the theological rift between sixteenth- and nineteenth-century Lutheranism. Even a Roman Catholic church historian could recognize that the doctrine of receptionism was not representative of Luther's theology of the Lord's Supper—an observation lost on many generations of Lutherans.

Harless and the Kneeling Controversy also provide a much-needed perspective from which to consider the nature of adiaphora, perhaps even offering a necessary corrective to contemporary misinterpretation. For Harless and nineteenth-century Bavarian Protestants, simply because something was deemed "indifferent" did not entail that one was granted absolute freedom with respect to the "middle thing" in question. Adiaphora is not a synonym for *carte blanche*. Certainly, kneeling was an act that was inherently an adiaphoron; but by no means was kneeling merely indifferent or inconsequential. "Adiaphora" was not an incantation whose invocation immediately resulted in incontrovertible and unbridled freedom. Nor was the status of adiaphora an essential characteristic. Context and circumstance were not accidental in adjudicating whether something was truly indifferent. The performance of an indifferent thing, within different contexts, may result in equivocal confessions. The classification of adiaphoron was not an immutable judgment that deemed an act or rite essentially indifferent. It is essential to remember that the label "adiaphora" does not grant uncircumscribed license to be deployed at the whims of an individual or community. Within a society that values autonomy and negative freedom as inalienable rights, contemporary Lutherans have an uphill battle in order to reclaim the confessional meaning of adiaphora. Contextualizing adiaphora in Lutheran history may be the best method at recovery.

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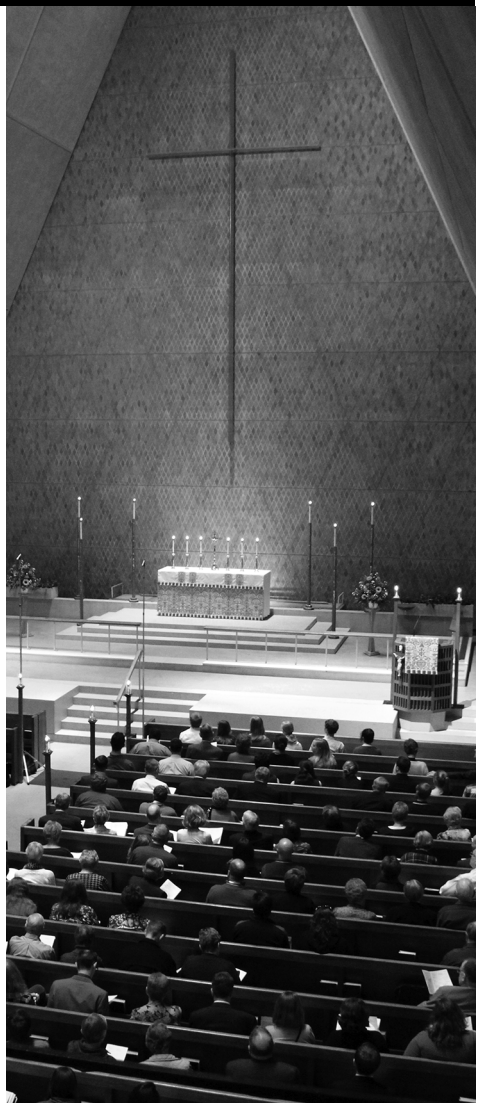

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Theological Observer

Fatherly Spiritual Leadership

The loss of many young people from congregational memberships over the last fifty years has triggered various reactions and programs to reverse this trend. Significant attention and energy has been directed toward various church growth plans, ranging from alternative liturgical ceremonies, novel orders of service, and the inclusion of popular music styles in the Divine Service, to social events intended to retain or attract people of post-confirmation age all the way into their thirties or forties. In spite of these efforts, correction of the demographic downturn in congregational attendance and membership has been unsuccessful.

Regardless of what else one might think of these efforts, one of the ways they miss is by aiming at a demographic that is already too old. The general direction of a child's worldview, while still immature, is already largely established at around age 10. Pastors have long recognized this in their confirmation classes: most confirmation students don't change radically during the course of confirmation education. They may learn quite a bit, but their attitude and orientation to the Scriptures is already largely in place when they walk into their first class in sixth or seventh grade.

Because of this, pastors also recognize that catechesis must find its roots and ongoing sustenance in pious practices in the home. As a result, many pastors have encouraged and seen a revitalization of household piety within their congregations. Such piety may include daily hearing of Scripture, singing of hymns, prayer, and reflection on and application of the word of God as assisted through the Small Catechism or similar prayer book. When the word of God is heard, sung, prayed, and lived in faith and love, children are markedly impressed by the importance of Christian faith and life, both as it is lived day to day and as it finds its culmination and lifeblood in the Divine Service each Lord's Day.

Such an awareness of the importance of home catechesis and piety is growing in many places, and should be further encouraged and taken up where it has not yet been. This practice assumes and expects the active role of parents in home catechesis. While success rates vary in getting parents involved, pastors can begin in two ways: first, by modeling this kind of catechesis in their own homes and leading it when others are visiting or when they are visiting members in their homes; and second, by explicitly and actively teaching and encouraging a core group of member households also to practice it. As these other households also take up and grow in

their practice of regular prayer and catechesis, word will spread to other households, further encouraging them.

Fathers are particularly central to this catechesis, and pastors and congregations should emphasize and even focus on their spiritual leadership in the home. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph 6:4).[1] Without a doubt, both fathers and mothers catechize. The admonition for fathers does not exclude mothers, but impresses upon fathers the seriousness and vitality of their role.

In this light, congregations should be aware of a particular American heritage that subtly and implicitly marginalizes the father's role in the home. Ann Douglas in *The Feminization of American Culture*[2] identifies the nineteenth-century transition of men working in the home to working outside of the home in factories, offices, and other company locations as a significant contributor to what she calls the "sentimentalization" of American culture. Prior to industrial and economic developments, the household was the center of economic activity, and both husbands and wives contributed robustly to economic production. With economic life centered in the home, both men and women worked together as partners, in household organization, work, education, nurture, leisure, and—most importantly—in catechesis and prayer.

The departure of men from the household to the company may have given men a leg up in income, but it also shifted men away from ongoing and fundamental influences on household culture. The dissolution of a common working environment pushed husbands and wives into different contexts, isolating them and breaking down their partnership. What has long been interpreted as an advantage to men—working outside the home—actually served to marginalize husbands and fathers from an integrated place in the home, and the household from his vital leadership.

The gradual movement in the nineteenth century of production and material income from the home to the company also meant that women took on a new kind of cultural influence. Relieved to some extent from preindustrial demands of domestic production, some women turned their energies to new, refined feminine virtues, such as temperance, elegance, demureness, and sentiment. Such virtues were promoted through the expansion of popular writing in this time period. Any piety practiced in the home became more associated with the wife's role—newly

[1] Scripture quotations are from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

[2] Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977).

refined and sentimentalized—in contrast to the man's role of business and politics out in the world.

Even the so-called "Muscular Christianity" of the Victorian era was not a reaction to the sentimentalization of Anglo-American society, but a partner with it. This "Christianity" was hardly concerned with doctrine and piety, but with patriotism and civic duty (so that one could engage one's business or political opponents with courtesy), the care and protection of women (keeping up the domestic-social divide), and athleticism (the masculine counterpart to the elegant beauty of the ideal woman). The result by the end of the nineteenth century was an underlying social antipathy between the sexes, with women having captured the sentimentalized domestic sphere of life and men the modern, industrial, economic sphere.

These developments have had lasting effect, in that life outside the home (work and activity) remains sharply divided from life inside the home (rest and recovery), now also for wives and children (in school and other organized activities). The bifurcation of home and work life has resulted in the radical individualization of the lives of those who occupy the same household, with family members interacting less and less with one another in meaningful ways. Family devotions or catechesis, where they occur at all, are nevertheless often at the behest of the mother, due to the vestigial association of piety with the refined, feminine, domestic life.

I can hardly suggest turning back time, of course. But the first step in any change is recognizing deficiencies that need to be addressed. A truly powerful revitalization of catechesis and piety in the home must account for the breakdown of domestic life brought about by the sea change in American economic society. Husbands and fathers must be explicitly aware of the ways they are drawn away from household life, and they must make conscious choices to restore their presence and leadership in the home, especially in catechesis.

The point of all this is not to pit men against women, husbands against wives, fathers against mothers. The contemporary world has already done this. Rather, we should see that in making a helper meet for Adam, the Lord expected husbands and wives to partner in their tasks, following the loving, sacrificial leadership of the husband. Such a partnership may be revitalized with fathers taking up again their place in domestic life, especially in the catechesis of the family. Husband and wife are not to become one flesh only to divide their lives so drastically that each goes his own way, so that the primary domestic task of nurturing spiritual life is forgotten and lost.

Catechizing is not just enforcing memory work or saying grace at the table, although it includes such things. The Christian life of piety and catechesis depends on the eager practice of praying the word of God, by which the word fills the hearts

and minds of those in the home; teaches for understanding; moves to mercy, joy, and compassion; and finally finds activity in good works of love. Catechesis—the passing on of true piety—is a way of life that is not only taught, but modeled and practiced.

How can fathers do this under current economic and social structures and pressures? First, although many households are dispersed in various directions throughout the day, fathers can intentionally and even ritually mark the day with catechesis in the morning and the evening. Morning time in many cases can include the gathering of the household, for whom the father reads aloud the word of God. Not only does he teach it, but he also models what is done with the word by giving thanks for the new day; by asking the Lord for faithfulness, holiness, and protection; and by blessing the household as they move into their daily tasks. The evening, likewise, can be marked when all or most have returned from daily tasks, with reading, singing, and prayer for repentance, protection, and refreshment in the night. The father can lead the way by confessing any sins, asking for forgiveness, and also forgiving the sins of those with him. Before bed, the father can again gather the family, even if very briefly, to ask for Jesus' blessing and protection through the night, to model the committing of one's life and cares to the Lord.

In other times of the day, the father strives to model the character of the Christian life, such as faithfulness, courage, confession, and compassion. He is the first to confess his sins or to be open to rebuke; he is the first to exercise discipline when needed, not to exasperate or lord his authority over others, but in order to lead them into forgiveness. He is the first to forgive.

Fatherly leadership in the spiritual life depends ultimately on Christ's authorization of this office, an authorization that expects sacrificial love and catechesis in the fear and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. It lives out of Christ's institution and promises; it is invigorated by Christ's own forgiveness, love, compassion, and rejuvenation. Indeed, a father with little or no earthly status is still able to confess his faith and thereby instruct his children; it is a joyful task that he can never be stripped of, no matter how much of his earthly life and possessions are taken from him. Strengthened and encouraged by Christ, fathers should resist and flee the temptation to ignore or avoid spiritual teaching and example. Let them embrace this holy and blessed task, commissioned by Christ. Thus they can practice it with piety, courage, and deliberation.

Gifford Grobien

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Book Reviews

***Pastor Craft: Essays & Sermons*. By John T. Pless. Irvine, CA: New Reformation Publications, 2020. 539 pages. Hardcover. $22.95.**

Pastors who care for souls are in constant need of refining their craft. That craft is more specific than "continuing education." Surely, pastors need to grow in their knowledge of God's word and sound doctrine, just as surely as they must, through suffering, learn the way of the cross in the school of experience. However, to hone their craft, pastors also need other pastors to strengthen them through the ministry of the gospel, the power of the keys, and "*per mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*" or "the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers" (SA III 4). Those of us who have been blessed these past twenty years to have John Pless as a professor will know the treasures this volume contains. Those who are new to Pless will discover a fellow theologian of the cross with whom you can carry on that mutual conversation and consolation. It may seem odd that a book should serve as a conversation partner, but I think any pastor who reads Pless senses immediately that he is a guide for the pastoral life and one to whom we can return with questions about our craft and find answers. Any pastor who has gone back to read the sermon preached at his ordination or gone back to study the ordination rite to find strength to carry out his vocation will find similar resources of pastoral care here.

The book is a collection of Pless's sermons and essays, most of which he wrote in his current vocation as a professor of practical theology at Concordia Theological Seminary. It is divided into three parts. The first part is a collection of sermons that includes Pless's ordination and installation sermons for former students, as well as an anniversary of ordination sermon. These sermons address the duty and responsibility of the man in the office, but they also beautifully tie together the purpose for which Christ established the office of the ministry, namely, "that they may have faith" (AC V). They are filled with great comfort for preachers. Part one also includes several chapel sermons from CTS, occasional sermons, such as sermons for pro-life gatherings and a sermon for the dedication of his former parish, University Lutheran Chapel, on the occasion of its renovation, as well as funeral sermons for the Rev. Dr. Lowell Green, the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Korby, and Maggie Karner.

Part two is a collection of his online essays published for "The Craft of Preaching" at www.1517.org (www.1517.org/sections/craftofpreaching). These short and accessible essays revolve around the church year to help pastors prepare

for their seasonal preaching. These essays would be excellent resources for pastors who want to plan out their preaching by season or are looking for theological insights into each step of the church year. Part Three is the largest section and includes previously-published essays or presented theological papers. The subject matter of these essays reveals how Pless understands the duties and responsibilities of the pastoral office. They deal with the nature of the office of the ministry and the work of pastoral care in preaching law and gospel and administering the absolution. Pless holds up Hermann Sasse and Wilhelm Löhe as good examples of pastoral theologians and demonstrates their lasting contributions to Lutheran theology. Readers will also find essays on confessional integrity and the need for the church's clear public confession of Christ, essays on the liturgy, on doctrine, life, and the mission of the church. To name just one, his essay, "Can We Participate Liturgically in the Atonement?" is particularly helpful in critiquing some of the romantic tendencies among liturgical Lutherans that would place our action or participation in the liturgy at the center of worship. As Pless argues, "[l]iturgical forms should not simply be evaluated by standards of ecumenicity or antiquity, but by faithfulness to the gospel of God's grace in Christ Jesus given to sinners to be received by faith alone" (407).

This volume will be a great blessing to pastors and thus to the church. Educated lay people, especially elders, who want to better understand the duties and responsibilities of their pastor will also benefit greatly from this book, just as so many seminarians have benefitted from Professor Pless's faithful and patient instruction these past two decades.

Jason D. Lane

***A Harvest of Lutheran Dogmatics and Ethics: The Life and Work of Twelve Theologians 1960–2020*. Edited by Carl E. Braaten. Delhi, NY: ALPB Books, 2021. Paperback. 228 Pages. $21.00.**

Established to bring the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) into the American religious mainstream, the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (ALPB) fosters views that are more common in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) than in the LCMS. Irreconcilable are the stances on abortion, same sex marriage, homosexuality, women and transgender clergy, and church fellowship, with the ELCA in communion with nearly every major mainline denomination. These are ho-hum issues in that the pastors of one synod are rarely inclined to discuss them with those of the other. Things are pretty well-set in cement. Since

there is little more to say, it is a surprise that no LCMS theologian is included in this book. In effecting how Lutherans in America are separated from one another, perhaps no one was of more importance than Robert D. Preus. Kurt E. Marquart was well known in the LCMS for upholding its traditional theology. There is no mention of them. Irony upon irony, the ALPB, established as a LCMS auxiliary, has cut its veins to the main artery. (See *Changeless World, Changeless Christ* [ALPB 2018]). It is as if what happened in the LCMS in the 1960s and 70s never happened—but it did happen, and it shaped how Lutheranism in American is now. Here is an opportunity for a second edition without changing the title.

With that necessary prolegomenon, Braaten has produced a readable overview into theologians who, in their time, made a difference in the synods that now comprise the ELCA. R. Sponheim, Philip Heffner and Ted Peters are largley unknown in the LCMS. Robert Bertram and Edward Schroeder may still be familiar to LCMS septuagenarians and those older. Of interest is William H. Lazareth, one-time bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Synod. One evening, with members of the Fort Wayne faculty, he bemoaned the decline of his parent synod. Regarding good works, he proposed a "second use of the gospel," but could not totally reject the third use of the law, which remains cliché among up-and-coming theologians (71). He was willing to talk about coming to an accommodation on the issue. Gerhard Forde is also one of Braaten's chosen twelve and coined the phrase "radical Lutheranism," a program that offers a caricature of the Lutheran doctrine of justification that holds to the first and second uses of the law but not the third. Christians spontaneously do good works, and so there is no need for the law. God is also exempted so that justification takes place by faith in the preached word without Christ making an atonement for sin. God forgives simply because he can and is merciful (40–44). Braaten includes himself as the twelfth theologian. Self-critique is the reverse image of the one who has sin throwing the stone at himself. Theological self-flagellation is rare. His approach to his subjects is relaxed with no axes to grind, and so he gets at the core of the matter without malice. This is a delightful read. It should be noted that Braaten, along with Robert Jensen and Forde, two of his twelve subjects, was involved in the *Christian Dogmatics*, a textbook of sorts for the ELCA.

David P. Scaer

***Philologia Sacra und Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift: Studien zum Werk des lutherischen Barocktheologen Salomon Glassius (1593–1656).* By Armin Wenz. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020. 894 pp. Hardcover. $181.99.**

In this thorough and instructive monograph, Armin Wenz examines and analyzes the works of Salomon Glassius and demonstrates his enduring contributions to the field of biblical hermeneutics. The book is the fruit of Wenz's decade-long research project under Johann Anselm Steiger in Hamburg and presents Glassius as a premier representative of the Lutheran exegetical tradition in the early modern age. This work also establishes Wenz, the newly appointed professor of New Testament at the *Lutherische Theologische Hochschule* in Oberursel, Germany, as one of the world's leading scholars on Glassius and biblical hermeneutics in the age of othodoxy. Glassius's greatest contribution to Lutheran hermeneutics, and the central text in Wenz's investigation, is his multi-volume work *Philologia Sacra* (1623–1636). These volumes served as the Lutheran Church's standard text for biblical hermeneutics until the late eighteenth century. Beyond the surviving copies of his *Philologia Sacra*, Glassius's influence on the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod came by means of the *Kurfürstenbibel* or *Weimarisches Bibelwerk* (1641), which was published in St. Louis into the early twentieth century. The Bible included Glassius's editorial additions to each chapter of Holy Scripture and his instruction for biblical interpretation in the Bible's preface. Based on Paul's words to Timothy (2 Tim 3:14–17), Glassius's preface set out a clear doctrine of Holy Scripture and provided them with keys to using and applying Scripture "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

Wenz's work stands in stark contrast to modern approaches to biblical interpretation from post-Enlightenment interpreters. Generally, modern interpreters tend to fall into two common errors. Either one divests Scripture of its authority by casting doubt on its divine authorship (historical-critical), or else, in response to higher criticism, one subjects Scripture in equally rationalistic ways to proofs that demonstrate little more than the Bible's historical or doctrinal correctness. As Wenz contends in this work, both tendencies miss the true aim of Scripture, which is to bring salvation in Christ to the fallen human race. Although LCMS pastors may not be easily taken in by higher criticism, they should be aware that the latter tendency to limit our interpretation of the Bible down to the dogmatic assertion of inerrancy and the correctness of its historical facticity is, in light of this study, not Lutheran-Orthodox, but a by-product of Enlightenment thinking. Wenz argues that Glassius avoids both of these extremes by teaching the clarity of the

sensus literalis to establish divinely revealed doctrine, on the one hand, and the complexity or polyvalence of the *sensus mysticus* to illustrate the doctrine through allegories, types, and parables on the other. In Glassius's writings one finds a highly developed academic discipline for interpreting Scripture. But it is not academic philology as a theoretical science. In him, Wenz argues, all the major disciplines of theology come together for the interpretive task with the practical aim to care for and save souls.

Perhaps an initial challenge to modern Lutherans is Glassius's teaching that both the literal and mystical sense are rightly understood as the Holy Spirit's intention. He taught that the distinction between the literal and mystical sense is necessary, since the words in many passages (*verba*) are not identical to the subject matter (*res*) or the Holy Spirit's intention. According to Wenz (chapter five), Glassius's easily misconstrued statement that "the sense of Holy Scripture is twofold [*sensus duplex est*], literal and spiritual or mystical" was, in fact, his attempt to find a middle way between the extreme positions of the Calvinists on the one hand and the Roman Catholics on the other. The Calvinist interpreters, according to Wenz, asserted that there is one literal sense in every passage of Scripture, and thus the mystical sense could be little more than an application or accommodation of each literal sense. In other words, the mystical sense is never the intended sense of Holy Spirit, but is an application of the preacher drawn from the literal sense. On the other side, the Roman Catholic interpreters maintained that every biblical text has various meanings or senses, which constantly leaves in question the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture. Wenz shows that for Glassius not every passage of Scripture has a mystical sense, as Rome argued; rather Scripture itself reveals which passages should be interpreted mystically, since the significance in certain passages is not found in the words, but in the signified thing (205–207). Wenz demonstrates how Glassius's precise treatment of the biblical text leads to a greater confidence in the Bible's clarity, efficacy, and sufficiency. The book is divided into eight chapters of varying length. The longest chapters are chapters six and seven, which cover Glassius's exegetical works and his homiletical-pastoral application of Scripture (pages 251–405 and 407–762, respectively).

Chapter one offers readers an analysis of Glassius's life and work and includes a helpful overview of the current literature on Glassius. Wenz makes a convincing case for Glassius as a premier theologian in whom academic excellence, philological exactness, and dogmatic clarity are beautifully blended with pastoral care and a refined homiletical craft. In chapter two, Wenz describes Glassius's approach to theology as "sacred philology" and the use of figurative interpretation as a form of devotional literature. Wenz draws on Glassius's devotional book *Arbor vitae* (*Tree of Life*, 1629) to argue that theology as sacred philology corresponds with the aim

and goal of Scripture as "the self-mediation of God in Christ through the Spirit, in that theology intellectually and artistically lays hold of this self-mediation in its fullness and then holds it forth again and again [in preaching]" (72). Chapter three examines Glassius's doctrine of Holy Scripture and its implications for faithful interpretation in accord with the *analogia fidei*. Wenz shows how Glassius taught the authority and many characteristics of Scripture not as a wooden doctrine, but to draw out the proper relationship between Scripture and the church's proclamation through the divinely established office of preaching. "The principle," writes Wenz, "that Scripture interprets itself is not a 'self-mechanized interpretation,' since God Himself in Scripture gives to the preaching office the ministerial function of interpreting the Holy Scriptures by means of proclamation" (108–109). Chapter four describes Glassius's philological analysis of Scripture according to its own style, sacred grammar and sacred rhetoric. Chapter five is where Wenz takes up the important distinction between the literal and mystical sense of Scripture.

In chapter six, Wenz explores Glassius's exegetical works and demonstrates how Glassius's rules (*canones*) of biblical interpretation established an academic discipline in its own right that would lay the groundwork for the rhetorical application (*rhetorica sacra*) of the biblical text in the sermon. Glassius, like many other orthodox interpreters, used *collationes* or collections of intertestamental passages to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Wenz draws on many examples from Glassius which apply this intertestamental hermeneutic and build constellations of verses to interpret, for example, the names or titles of the Son of God and their significance for His person and work. The collections of Old and New Testament passages, argues Wenz, provides the interpreter of the two Testaments not merely with a promise-fulfillment motif or a reduction of the intertestamental passages down to a narrowly defined Christological interpretation, but a rich, multifaceted proclamation of Christ, His church, and the eschatological hope of all believers. For Glassius, exegesis leads to preaching in such a way that the sermon both identifies the doctrinal content of biblical passages and then amplifies the doctrine through the Bible's own interwoven narratives and rich illustrations. In chapter seven, Wenz explores primarily from Glassius's own sermons his homiletical and pastoral application of Scripture. Here one finds in great detail how the attention Glassius gives to Scripture's grammar and sacred rhetoric flourishes in his preaching. Wenz's thorough analysis is replete with biblical images, metaphors, and figures, as well as analogies from nature that Glassius had used to paint Christ before his hearers and teach the whole counsel of God.

If readers are looking for a healthy dialogue with current sources to understand where Glassius and biblical interpretation in the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy fit into modern conversations, they will have to wait until the end of the book. In the final summary chapter, Wenz engages with modern sources and makes a case for Glassius's place in the history of biblical interpretation and how the breadth of his work intersects, sometimes unexpectedly, with various scholarly conversations. For example, Wenz sees his work on Glassius intersecting with Hamann research and Johann Georg Hamann's interest in God's condescension in human language, as well as with the Stanford literary scholar, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and his book, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford, 2004). Although Wenz faithfully and thoroughly presents Glassius's work in the previous seven chapters, he misses some opportunities to build an argument from the wealth of material and to weigh Glassius against current scholarly conversations. More interaction with present scholarship throughout the book would perhaps have helped underscore the importance of the many examples that Wenz gives from Glassius's works. The goal of this monumental work, however, was to present the philological and homiletical contributions of Glassius to Lutheran theology and biblical hermeneutics. Wenz's book succeeds in giving us a great deal of Glassius and is an invaluable contribution to advanced studies in confessional Lutheran hermeneutics and preaching.

Jason D. Lane

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Books Received

Calvinism for a Secular Age: A Twenty-First Century Reading of Abraham Kuyper's Stone Lectures. Edited by Jessica R. Joustra and Robert J. Joustra. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022. 248 pages. Paperback. $28.00.

Colossians and Philemon: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching. By Adam Copenhaver and Jeffrey D. Arthurs. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministy, 2022. 368 pages. Hardcover. $30.99.

James: An Exegetical Guide for Preaching and Teaching. By Herbert W. Bateman IV and William C. Varner. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministy, 2022. 336 pages. Hardcover. $33.99.

Jonathan Edwards and Deification: Reconciling Theosis *and the Reformed Tradition*. By James R. Salladin. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022. 280 pages. Paperback. $40.00.

Reprobation and God's Sovereignty: Recovering a Biblical Doctrine. By Peter Sammons. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2022. 320 pages. Paperback. $25.99.

The Prophets of Israel: Walking the Ancient Paths. By James K. Hoffmeier. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021. 400 pages. Hardcover. $44.99.

There Is No God and Mary Is His Mother: Rediscovering Religionless Christianity. By Thomas Cathcart. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2021. 140 pages. Paperback. $19.00.

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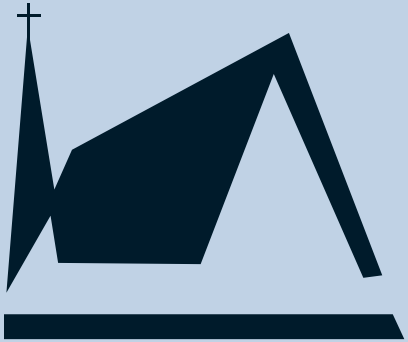

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