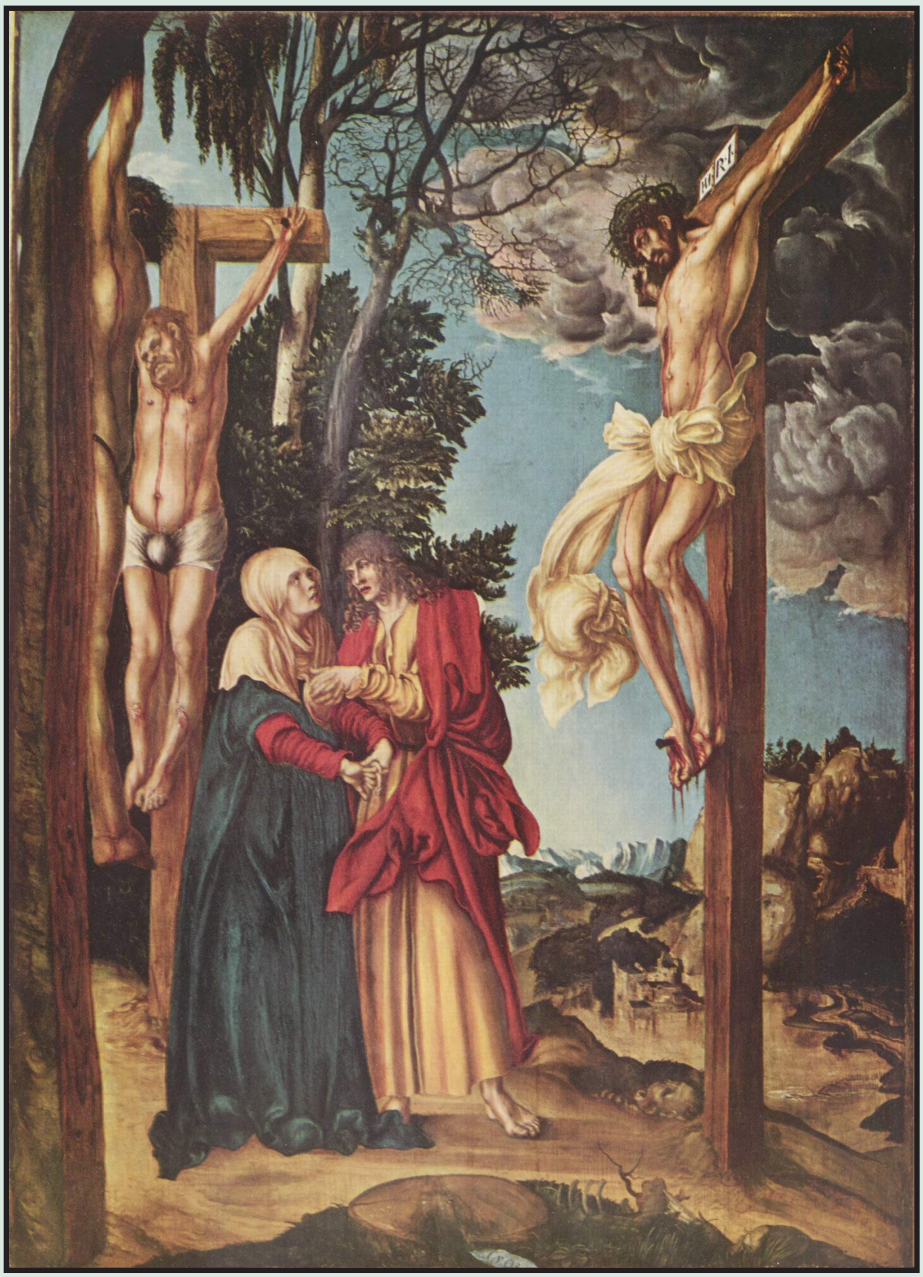
LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



Assessing Erlangen

EASTERTIDE 2013 VOLUME XXII, NUMBER 2

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εἴ τις λαλεῖ,
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LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. *Logia* considers itself a *free conference in print* and is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. At the heart of our journal we want our readers to find a love for the sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God, not merely as rule and norm, but especially as Spirit, truth, and life that reveals Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we confess the church, without apology and without rancor, only with a sincere and fervent love for the precious Bride of Christ, the holy Christian church, "the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God," as Martin Luther says in the Large Catechism (LC II, 42). We are animated by the conviction that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession represents the true expression of the church that we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LSB	*Lutheran Service Book*
LW	*Lutheran Worship*
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	*Service Book and Hymnal*
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
Triglotta	Concordia Triglotta
TLH	*The Lutheran Hymnal*
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	*Luthers Werke,* Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]
Kolb-Wengert	Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

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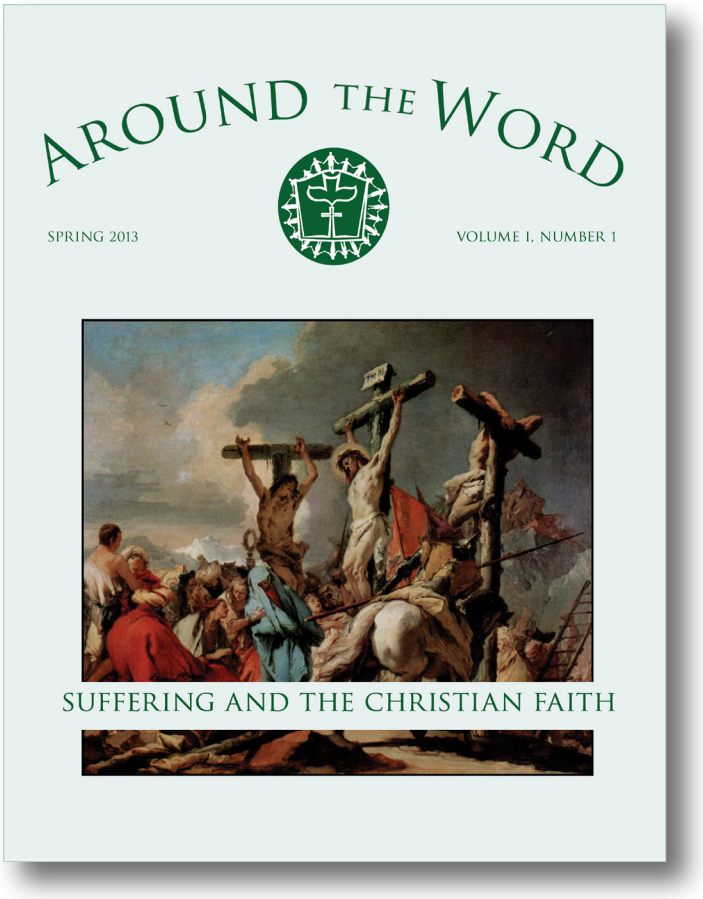

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Spring 2013

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Paul Althaus

A Representative of the Erlangen School

Reinhard Slenczka

As you are coming to the motherland of the Reformation, you will observe that reformation is not only a once-and-for-all event in the history of a church, but it is a necessity within the church ever new. Abuses, errors, and temptations are always new, and the struggle between the true and the false church remains a sign of the church in her existence until the end of this world. Therefore the apostle admonishes the congregation in Rome, as well as us today here and now: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed (Latin: *reformamini*) by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will" (Rom 12:2). Conformance and accommodation to the world is the permanent temptation for the church as well as for every Christian. Transformation, however, is God's gift and a miracle within the church and for every Christian. The Erlangen Faculty, as it existed from 1743 until 2008, is an example of this.

Karlmann Beyschlag (1923–2011) in his wonderful book *Die Erlanger Theologie*[1] characterizes the beginning of the faculty with the following words:

> As the Erlangen theologians took the datum of their personal experience as the point of departure for their theology, something surprising that never before was observed by critical reasoning happened to them: All at once—and you cannot put it in another way—they began to understand God's language in the unchangeable text of the Bible. At the same time they began to understand the almost entirely forgotten Christian confessions and Luther's language, which also was more or less forgotten. . . . That way theology was no longer historicism or morality, but they are thinking *within* God's history, not only *about* it. They judge *in* faith, not *about* it.[2]

And the miracle also was that this insight did not come out of the faculty—it was not given to so-called Lutheran theologians—but to a layman, the professor of mineralogy Karl von Raumer (1783–1865), and to the Reformed pastor Christian Kraft (1764–1845) and their home circles (*Hauskreise*).

At the beginning, the *Statutes* from 4 November 1743 declared, "No one can be inscribed in this theological Order, if he does not accept the doctrine of the evangelical church according to God's word as it is contained and proposed in the Augsburg Confession (invariata), its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord."

Nevertheless, at the beginning the faculty was rather rationalistic in the way of the time of the Enlightenment. But the *Erlanger Schule* in the nineteenth century was formed by the Awakening movement, the central point being a real experience of faith with no separation between faith and theology.

THE CATHEDRA/CHAIR OF THE PROFESSOR AND THE PULPIT/CATHEDRA IN WORSHIP BELONG INSEPARABLY TOGETHER

For a long time the theological faculty was the largest among the four classical faculties of the university, with about half or a third of all students in the university. In its so-called second blossoming during the 1920s and 1930s, Erlangen was a world-famous faculty representing Lutheran theology, still known today, among them the dogmaticians Werner Elert (1885–1954), Paul Althaus (1888–1966), Hermann Sasse (1895–1976), and Walter Künneth (1901–1997).

There are many others to be mentioned, but let us quote the professor for Old Testament, Otto Procksch (1874–1947), from his almost forgotten *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (published posthumously in 1950):

> If Christ is the center of theology then the Old Testament seems to be outside from a historical-theological perspective. . . . The New Covenant appears in confrontation with the Old Covenant and suspends it. Nevertheless it is impossible to eliminate Jesus from its final composition as he is inseparably connected with it. The historical personality, in which he is seizable for us, has its background in the Old Testament. His image grows from this background, is getting corporality and color; it breathes the atmosphere of the Old Testament.[3]

Reinhard Slenczka is professor emeritus of Systematic Theology at Erlangen University in Germany. This lecture was prepared for a German study-abroad program arranged by Concordia Theological Seminary and was presented on 2 June 2010 in Neuendettelsau.

1. Karlmann Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, Einzelarbeiten aus der Kirchengeschichte Bayerns, 67. Band (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1993).
2. Ibid., 24–25.

Where do you find such a christological-trinitarian approach to the Old Testament today?

As a criticism against the political theology of the twenties Procksch wrote: "Only if the church is not involved in politics will she fulfill her task among the peoples of the world."[4]

Confessional obligation was abolished in the 1970s as a consequence of the "university revolution."

In 2008 the theological faculty, which for centuries was the first among the four classical faculties, was transformed into a department within Philosophy. Why? Partly because of economic reasons; partly because church and theology are no longer aware of the fact that the triune God is not an invention of theologians but the origin and foundation of the whole cosmos. From this comes the responsibility of theology for all other faculties as "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do his commandments; his praise endures forever" (Ps 111:10).

"Only if the church is not involved in politics will she fulfill her task among the peoples of the world."

Today many theologians are eager to prove their esteem for science and their social usefulness by taking over methods from other faculties. Theology lost its autonomy, that is to say, the responsibility for the ontological basis for thinking and for the ethical norms in acting. Or to put it bluntly, theology is no longer understood and done as knowledge about the one triune God in his revelation in his word but rather about religion as one social and historical phenomenon among others in a pluralistic society.

Moreover, in Erlangen there came up the special local problem with the intriguing question of how to cope with the real or assumed guilt of the fathers. Some are calling this "historical pharisaism." In the foreground this refers to the relation to Nazism, for instance, the messianic mission of Adolf Hitler in the time of economic depression, the attitude against Jewish predominance in economics, in culture and politics, all under the perspective of racial anthropology, the last word in scientific research of that time. A special but very strong motive is also the question of political and social responsibility of the church in its attention to the aspirations, needs, and movements of the populace. In the deeper background there are some intriguing and burning issues like God's acting in history—an unsolved problem and task until today. Terms like *order of creation*, *natural law*, *ontology*, *metaphysics*, *cosmology* are discredited in German theology and have a negative connotation, and the insights behind them are ignored. Instead, understanding (hermeneutics) in the way of assent and activity in political and social affairs take the lead.

As for criteria in theology we are standing before the open contradiction of either Scripture and confession or political identity (left/right, conservative/progressive, and so forth). How is doctrine related to politics? What about the clear distinction between *doctrina/coelum* (doctrine/heaven) and *vita/terra* (life/earth), as Luther put it? What is the essence and the task of the church? Is it politically appealing propaganda for an afflux of membership (church/tax payers) or calling out of the world those who are elect before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4)?

The ongoing question and aim of historical research in and about Erlangen is that of the guilt and entanglement (*Schuld und Verstrickung*) of the former generation. These questions are asked by those who did not have the personal experience of temptation and persecution during the Third Reich.

In the program of the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag in Nürnberg in 1979, representatives of the faculty, students, and some professors presented a kind of public confession of sins for their faculty under the question: "How was it possible? The Erlangen judgment concerning the law excluding non-Aryans from civil service" (Arierparagraph, April 1933). This led to a deep conflict about the doubtlessly world-famous former celebrities of the faculty. On the one side was the younger generation under the compulsion to cope with the assumed guilt of the fathers; on the other side were the still-living thankful pupils and admirers of those professors. Since the latter had theology on their minds, the former felt the necessity to clean the public reputation of the faculty. As a matter of fact, Erlangen was the only faculty of theology in Germany that felt the compulsion for this kind of self-criticism, since others in which National Socialist supporters and members dominated like Göttingen, Bonn, and Heidelberg never felt the compulsion for public repentance for their predecessors.

As a consequence, Erlangen became a catchword for politically conservative, right-wing confessional theology. What those professors really did for church and theology is more and more forgotten because of this. This follows the simple rule: If the name is turned into an inflammatory catchword, you must not read or will not read what they really wrote and said.

This is in short the background that forms the basis for some impressions of one of the typical Erlangen theologians, Paul Althaus, under the following aspects of biography: the two kingdoms and *Uroffenbarung* (fundamental or original revelation).

Paul Althaus, such as his pupils Karlmann Beyschlag[5] and Jörg Baur[6] describe him, was an impressive personality in his behavior and his communication with colleagues and students;

3. Ibid., 148.
4. Ibid., 147.
5. Ibid., 149 ff.; 184.
6. Jörg Baur, "Vermittlung in unversöhnten Zeiten: Zum Gedenken an Paul Althaus," *Kerygma und Dogma* 34 (1988): 168–92.

"he lived what he taught." He had a considerable afflux of students. His pupils characterize him as a demanding and inspiring teacher, but at the same time a pastor, a soul carer, and an impressive preacher, serving as university chaplain for long years even after his retirement.

Here we have the characteristic of this epoch of the Erlangen school: the renewal of the theology of experience (*Erfahrungstheologie*), which, in spite of all differences, unites Werner Elert and Paul Althaus. What does this mean? Both had the experience of serving as army chaplains during World War I. They were nationalists but not National Socialists. Elert lost his two sons in World War II, Althaus one of his sons. Both represent in their theology the fundamental relation between worship and theology (which was strictly denied by liberals like Adolf von Harnack [1851–1930] in his *History of Dogma*). Both were doing theology in research and teaching in a wide range of the theological disciplines.

For Althaus, rebirth is not at all a datum of psychological or mere existential experience; rather, as he puts it, rebirth is not an empirically experienced datum from which you may draw conclusions to the transcendent origin, but a Christian believes to be reborn as and because he believes in Christ.[7] What is Christian comes from Christ.

Referring to reformation in a widely circulated early booklet called *The Cemetery of Our Fathers* and meditating about the hymns about dying and eternity, Althaus writes:

> The reformation came up at the frontier to death. . . . Praying is as serious as dying. You will understand this in the right way from the perspective of dying only. . . . That is why the experience of justification for Luther's Christendom is a continuous anticipation of death. . . . It is the special value of reformation Christendom that justification is understood from the perspective of dying.[8]

In Althaus's research work and in his publications you will see the wide range of at least three disciplines. He started his academic career (doctorate and habilitation) with a dissertation about "Die Prinzipien der deutschen reformierten Dogmatik im Zeitalter aristotelischer Scholastik" ("The Principles of German Reformed Dogmatics in the Age of Aristotelian Scholasticism").[9] This refers especially to the relation between theology and philosophy, the relation between reason and revelation, and finally the question of certainty and assurance. Among other interesting information in this dissertation, Althaus mentions that he sees "a fundamental biogenetic law in the history of human thinking (*Geistesgeschichte*)." (By the way, as for me, I do not believe in a Darwinism of human thinking.)

In 1922 (this occurring not as it mostly happens with theologians at the end of their career, but with Althaus at the beginning of his career), he published his *Die letzten Dinge: Lehrbuch der Eschatologie* ("The Last Things: A Compendium of Eschatology"). Only ten years before, just before World War I, Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) had announced in his dogmatics lectures, "The bureau of eschatology is closed."[10] What an error! The book became a continuous bestseller, and the ninth and last edition was published in 1970.

"It is the special value of reformation Christendom that justification is understood from the perspective of dying."

In this book we can observe an interesting development in Althaus's theological thinking: In the first editions he shows the relationships between Christian eschatology and secular elements of eschatology in the general "experience of definite or absolute values" (*Erfahrung letzter Werte*). But later in the fourth edition from 1933 onwards he came to a clear distinction between philosophy and theology in the field of eschatology, saying: The reality of God which we experience in faith can never be subordinated under the terms and the experience of values and norms. Otherwise we would not keep in mind the fact that God is living, a personality.[11] But Althaus is still aware of the necessity to think about the relation or coexistence of Christian eschatology and the expectations in human thinking and acting.

In the field of exegesis, Paul Althaus regularly offered a lecture on Romans. His commentary on Romans was first published in the series Neues Testament Deutsch in 1932. The last revised edition appeared in 1966. Even today this commentary is a real help for preachers as well as for the congregation. After World War II, during the short time when he was suspended from office, Althaus published his dogmatics, *Die christliche Wahrheit* ("Christian Truth"), in two volumes in 1947 and 1949, later consolidated into one volume. This also became a bestseller. The eighth edition was published in 1969. After his retirement, he published his rich investigations on Luther: *Die Theologie Martin Luthers* (1962; sixth ed. in 1983) and *Die Ethik Martin Luthers* (1965). If you want precise information with excellent documentation, you must know these books. I do omit the different collections of sermons and articles, but this may suffice to show how Althaus was most productive in exegesis, in church history, and in dogmatics.

I want to draw your attention to just two problems with which Althaus struggled, and which really must be a task for us today, especially as they are more or less pushed aside and

7. Paul Althaus, "Erfahrungstheologie," in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957–1965), 2:553.
8. Paul Althaus, *Der Friedhof unserer Väter*, 4th ed. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1948), 22.
9. 1914, reprint 1967!
10. Baur, "Vermittlung," 172.
11. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge: Lehrbuch der Eschatologie*, 18.

neglected rather than discussed or even solved. One of them is "God acting in history"; the other is "revelation, creation, conservation, the question of *Uroffenbarung* or *Grundoffenbarung* or *Schöpfungsoffenbarung*" — original revelation, fundamental revelation, or revelation in creation.

From the Old and the New Testament we learn how God is acting in history, guiding and preventing, blessing and punishing. God's action refers not only to his own people but to all mankind in general and to the whole cosmos. Whether or not we are aware of this, it is a difficult and controversial question, because God's acting includes not only insight and obedience from our human side, but also obstinacy and disobedience and therefore grace and punishment from God. In the practice of Christian life, this includes prayer, praise, and intercession (see the Psalms!). In consequence of this there can be truth and error, and this is connected with human hopes and disappointments. Only looking back in history may we recognize how and where God has acted and at the same time how and where the preachers and teachers of the church did err or were right. Especially in German theology, there are good reasons to avoid this problem and at the same time to criticize those who tried to understand the signs of the time.

From the Old and the New Testament we learn how God is acting in history, guiding and preventing, blessing and punishing.

As an example of this mostly forgotten task, we can look at the book *Die deutsche Stunde der Kirche* ("The German Hour of the Church") (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1933; 2nd ed., 1934) with some quotations. Here are the contents of Althaus's book: (1) The "Yes" of the church to the German new era; (2) Experience of the people and revelation; (3) History of the people and history of salvation; (4) Third Reich and God's kingdom; (5) Nomos and gospel; (6) God and people; (7) The position/attitude of the church in the life of the people/ nation.

Here is a quotation from chapter seven:

> We must say: Prayer and hope of Christians, if we understand this in the right way, are more secular (worldly) than we were used to express it in our preaching for a long time; political expectations go deeper, they are more comprehensive, more eschatological than the immediate aims and the foreground seem to show. They have a messianic tendency.
>
> But is this not just the illusion against which Christian proclamation must fight relentlessly? There is no doubt that political messianism during the last year among its clerics and its in no way few faithful adherents turned into a substitute for faith in Jesus Christ, a secular faith of salvation, which faith in Jesus Christ must recognize as a death enemy (*Todfeind*) the same way as it was with the Emperor's cult for ancient Christianity. But it does not suffice that our theology opposes its "No" to this political messianism, to this secularized eschatology. That way we are not doing justice to the problem of religious nationalism as well as before to religious socialism. Both, however, are in their appearance a product of the antichrist and an attack against Jesus Christ. But if we want to overcome them, we must discover the place on which they are living from a truth that was silenced for a long time in our church's proclamation of God's kingdom. We must meet the wrong messianic inflation of political expectation and experience by discovering the true and pure relation between political welfare (*Heil*) and salvation in Christ, between national resurrection and the resurrection of Christ.

In the background of this we must see what was called political religion in the time of the Weimar republic with its struggle between different parties with their ideologies and confessions.

Althaus turns to his student audience and to German youth with their almost religious expectations for the Third Reich, referring to the impression that there is a hidden relation between God's kingdom and the engagement for a solution in the disastrous economic and political depression of that time. For this he introduces a distinction between the "first and the second word" (*erstes und zweites Wort*).

> The first word of our preaching cannot be to call the young generation away from the Third Reich and to God's kingdom, which is entirely different from it. A thousand times we made the mistake, to preach the second word before the first word. That is why the second word became not only incomprehensible but false.

Similar reflections we find also in Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945) in these years, especially with the distinction of *letzte* ("last") and *vorletzte Dinge* ("prelast things")[12] and what became a slogan later: *religionslose Verkündigung* ("nonreligious proclamation").

In conclusion Althaus says: "The first word must be: The Reich (kingdom) is accomplishment of creation, fulfillment, and restoration of this life, answer to our questions, and salvation for our bodily and political miseries. Every historical liberation and recovery therefore is a previous indication, a hint to God's kingdom." The second word should be: "Earthly regeneration is a parable, but just alone a parable of the things to come."

The struggle to cope with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) led to a continuous opposition within German church and theology after 1945, which may be difficult to understand from the outside. At the beginning is a December 1939 letter from Karl Barth (1886–1968) to the then-president of the Protes-

12. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethik* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1953), 75 ff.

tant French Church Federation, Charles Westphal (1896–1972), published only in 1945. It contained a strong accusation against Luther's doctrine about the two kingdoms and the relation of law and gospel as one of the reasons for National Socialism. The decisive sentence is this:

> Germany suffers from the heritage of the greatest Christian German: Martin Luther's error concerning the relation between law and gospel, between secular and spiritual order and power, by which its natural paganism was not so much limited and refrained but rather much more ideologically transfigured, confirmed, and corroborated.[13]

This "very" strong and most effective criticism against Lutheran theology, especially as it is represented by the Erlangen school, means that political attitude and consequences are the outcome of false theology. The point of this reproach is that for Lutherans there is not only a distinction, but a separation, between law and gospel and between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, so they lost the impulse for political responsibility and resistance.

This (Barthian) position is contained in the second thesis of the Barmen Theological Declaration from 1934, that "Christ is the unique God's word as it is witnessed in Holy Scriptures which we are to trust in life and death, and there is no other source for revelation in 'events, powers, figures and truths besides this one word of God.'"

In his criticism, Althaus called this a *christomonism*. In consequence this means that there is no distinction between God's three priestly mandates and offices of church, politics, and family (*ordo triplex hierarchicus*). There is also no distinction between the use of law theologically (*usus sanctus/theologicus*) and politically (*usus politicus/civilis*).[14] Let us remember that there is an elementary difference, namely, that the holy or theological use of the law is always connected with the gospel and therefore with confession and remission of sins, whereas under the political use there is not confession and remission of sin but the accusation and the execution of the sinner only—and the sinner, of course, is always in need of the other.

The possible consequence of this could, but must not be, that the first and the third article of faith with their contents are pushed aside.

The question that never was discussed is, however, What happens if you do not accept Holy Scripture as the one, inspired, and infallible word of God, active in law and gospel? As this is an entirely indisputable attitude and conviction among modern theologians, you will end up inevitably in a position in which historical developments and social movements are taken as criteria and norms for church and theology. As they are taken for the context of interpretation, they are in fact the norm and rule to judge over Scriptures but not through Scriptures (Jas 4:11–12).

The holy or theological use of the law is always connected with the gospel and therefore with confession and remission of sins.

We have two documents to examine the two positions after 1945. One of them is the *Stuttgarter Schuldbekenntnis* ("Stuttgart Confession of Guilt") from 18 October 1945. This was an act of confession and absolution between churches, representatives of the World Council of Churches and the reorganized Council of Evangelical Churches in Germany (Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland). Similar acts took place not only with the church in Germany but from and between other churches also.

The other document is the *Darmstädter Wort des Bruderrates der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland* ("Darmstadt Message of the Fraternal Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany") from 8 August 1947, which was an admonishment to get rid of political errors and their origin in wrong theology by neglecting the "right for revolution," or the "admonition of economic materialism of the Marxist doctrine," for instance. Finally there was the appeal to "be aware of your responsibility which all and everybody bears for building up a better political order, serving justice, welfare, interior peace, and reconciliation of peoples."

The aim therefore is to avoid repeating the guilt of the fathers. The basic conviction of this attitude is that politics is the criterion for true or false theology. The task of the church, according to this conviction, is the restoration of society in accordance with God's design (the well-known program of the "Social Gospel").

From the opposite side other theologians did not refer to political mistakes but to a weakness in faith and obedience among Christians. Edmund Schlink (1903–1984), in *Der Ertrag des Kirchenkampfs* ("The Outcome of the Church Struggle" [1946/47]), wrote:

> When this fateful ideology broke in (Christians) simply did not take notice of the fact, that this talking about the

13. Karl Barth, *Eine Schweizer Stimme, 1938–1945* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1945), 113. *Harald Diem* (1913–1941) refers in his dissertation "Luthers Lehre von den zwei Reichen" to the origin of this idea in the book by Arno Deutelmoser, *Luther, Staat und Glaube* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1937), in which is to be found the line of development from Luther through Nietzsche to the Third Reich from the perspective of the German Christians (*Deutschen Christen*). See Gerhard Sauter, ed., *Zur Zwei-Reiche-Lehre Luthers*, Theologische Bücherei, Bd. 49: Systematische Theologie (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1973), 7–8, 43.
14. For this see Reinhard Slenczka, "Usus politicus legis—Das universale Gesetz und Gericht Gottes: Probleme theologischer Rechtsbegründung," *Zeitschrift für evangelisches Kirchenrecht* 55 (2010): 374–401.

> Almighty and Providence had nothing in common with the living God, the Father of Jesus Christ, but in reality was opposed to him. . . . For them Christ was not any longer a reality within the congregation but was transformed into a mere and empty idea.

And the Erlangen theologian Walter Künneth (1902–1997), in *Der große Abfall: Eine geschichtstheologische Untersuchung zwischen Nationalsozialismus und Christentum* ("The Great Apostasy: A Historical-Theological Investigation on the Relation between National Socialism and Christendom"), wrote in 1947, "We are obliged to think about this theme, because with deep sorrow we observe how the same thinking as it was in the time of National Socialism enslaves still today the souls of humanity."

The problem is that the true God is not accepted and acknowledged in the evidence of his works.

The contradiction in short is this. One side understands the guilt as apostasy from faith, with a call for repentance. On the other side is the understanding that wrong politics came about because of wrong theology. Therefore political activity, preferably extraparliamentarian, is the program, beyond the necessity to get democratic legitimation, not to speak of theological legitimacy. Even to the present day these are the two incompatible factions in German theology and church, the last predominating in many respects.

How did Althaus understand revelation, creation, conservation—the question of *Uroffenbarung* or *Grundoffenbarung* or *Schöpfungsoffenbarung* (original revelation, fundamental revelation, or revelation in creation)? In order for us to understand what Althaus means by using this term *Uroffenbarung*,[15] we should keep in mind that this term is in no way a new invention but a classical topic in dogmatics. You find it in August Vilmar's (1800–1868) *Dogmatics*,[16] and there it refers to the classical distinction between *revelatio specialis* (in Holy Scriptures) and *revelatio generalis* (that is to say, fragments of knowledge of God in nature and human thinking). This is based upon Romans 1:16 ff. and Acts 17. In the gospel of Jesus Christ God's righteousness and God's wrath is revealed at the same time: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made" (Rom 1:19–20). It is quite clear: God's eternal power and deity is visible in the works of his creation. That way God is recognizable; nevertheless he is not recognized in praise and thanks—in prayer.

Here the problem is not a *theologia naturalis*, recognition of God in creation, in nature, but the problem is that the true God is not accepted and acknowledged in the evidence of his works. The consequence of this is, however, that instead of the Creator, created things in their fascination become godly power. Punishment follows, and this is evident first of all in sexual and moral perversions.

There could and must be much discussion about Althaus and Karl Barth. I have the impression that neither understood the other, not because of theological but because of political differences: conservative rightist Lutheran versus progressive leftist Reformed.

But what Althaus means, following Vilmar and all classical and true theology, is that from Scripture we are aware how God is working and witnessing about himself in "the existence of mankind" (Acts 17), in history, in human thinking. This is an ontological reality; it is in being, not in our imagination. But—and this I want to underline very strongly following Romans 1—recognition of God is not an empty thing of feeling and experience, but of adoration and prayer, that is to say, of worship. God's word teaches and admonishes us very strongly that in all situations and things we may and shall turn to God in prayer and praise because there is nothing outside of his existence, action, and knowledge. As Luther underlines in his famous *De servo arbitrio*, "It is necessary for salvation for a Christian to know that God knows nothing accidentally only but that he with his unchangeable, eternal, and infallible will provides, decides, and executes all things" (WA 18: 615.12–14; cf. AE 33: 37). This is Romans 8:28: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose."

For this I will give one of the most controversial Erlangen examples: In the *Ansbacher Ratschlag* from 1934, which is taken as a specimen for Erlangen theology, they said, "As believing Christians we give thanks to God that he gave to our people in its distress the Führer as a pious and trustful governor (*Oberherren*) and that he (God!) will prepare through the National Socialist order of the state 'good discipline' and honor." If we remember the depressive political and economic situation of these years until 1934, we certainly will understand this sigh of relief. If we are looking back from what was done and revealed after 1945, this was a terrible error and blindness in political judgment—or we could better say in political prophecy.

But the theological problem goes much deeper. Must we not according to Holy Scriptures confess and recognize that God is active in all that is and happens in this world created by him, be it by Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Stalin, Hitler, Mao Tse Tung, Mrs. Angela Merkel, and President Barack Obama? This is not a question of political judgment, but of faith and prayer. For this let us hear an example from Scriptures, Acts 4, when the apostles came back from court to the congregation and reported what had happened:

15. Paul Althaus, *Die christliche Wahrheit*, 6th ed. (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1963), §§ 4–11.
16. August Vilmar, *Dogmatik* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1874), 1:145.

> When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.' For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." (Acts 4:24–28)

Likewise in Isaiah 43:13: "Yes, and from ancient days (before the first day was) I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"

In conclusion, what can we learn and take with us for our theological responsibility and teaching today? There is always the temptation not only among us, but first of all within us, to substitute theological judgment and criteria with political options and emotions. This comes quite naturally from our striving for well-being and welfare. This inclination will be inevitably stronger as we lose Holy Scripture as the inspired and infallible and unchangeable word of God, active in law and gospel. For this Luther admonishes his congregation in a sermon on John 14:23–31: "Therefore value God's word more than your feelings."[17]

17. WA 21: 476.1: "[Christus spricht] Darum lasset doch mein Wort mehr gelten denn euer Fühlen."

The main responsibility of the Christian congregation is not political prophecy and evaluation, but it is prayer and intercession before God. In this the Christian congregation is irreplaceable for this society and this world.

Political judgment of Christians is restricted to the criteria of God's law, referring to obedience and disobedience in the given situation for the best and the perseverance of society. Today, however, we have before us the idea that the norm for ethical and political judgment is not God's word as revealed in Holy Scripture, but the situation and majority vote of church bodies, mostly following or being afraid of the court of political publicity.

Through the concentration upon questions of understanding (historical hermeneutics) and human subjectivity, we have lost sight entirely of the ontological reality of God's acting not only on our globe but in the whole nature and cosmos, in good and bad, in understanding and hardening, in success and in adversities.

The Epistle for the Sunday of Holy Trinity sums up what God says and does in his word:

> For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all. O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. (Rom 11:32–36) LOGIA

Paul Althaus

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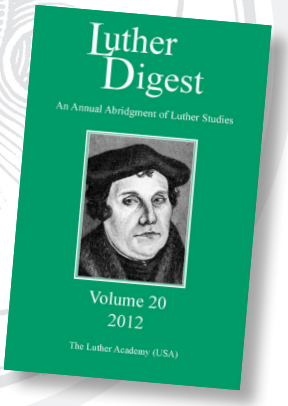

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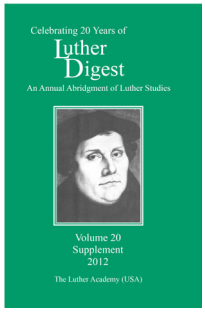

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Heilsgeschichte and Atonement in the Theology of J. C. K. von Hofmann

An Exposition and Critique

Jack Kilcrease

Although Johannes Christian Konrad von Hofmann (1810–1877) has frequently been forgotten by twentieth-century Lutherans, his significance continues to be felt.[1] Hofmann's emphasis on the definitive nature of history for the theological enterprise finds an echo in the writings of Oscar Cullmann[2] and Wolfhart Pannenberg.[3] His reinterpretation of Luther's theology of atonement as primarily centering on the conquest of demonic forces set the scholarly trajectory for Gustaf Aulén and several other twentieth-century Luther interpreters.[4] Lastly, in his atonement theology, Hofmann greatly influenced both Aulén—that is, in his treatment of the subject in his dogmatics[5]—and the American Lutheran theologian Gerhard Forde.[6]

In the following essay our goal will be to give an explanation of key themes in Hofmann's theology. Beginning with briefly describing Hofmann's early life and influences, we will then move on and give an exposition of the two most important aspects of his theology: his doctrines of *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) and atonement. Finally, we will end our discussion by briefly critiquing Hofmann's theology. In short, Hofmann's approach is ultimately unsatisfactory because it fails to take key themes of historic Lutheran confessional theology seriously. To many these failures can be primarily traced back to Hofmann's Heilsgeschichte theology and its related Schleiermacherian–Pietist fixation on religious experience as a determinative criterion for the establishment of Christian doctrine. Although such criticisms are not without merit, we will argue that, at a deeper level, these problems are rooted in Hofmann's rejection of the orthodox Lutheran understanding of the full communication of the divine attributes within the hypostatic union (*genus majestaticum*) and its related doctrine of the omnipresence of the risen Christ. Therefore his distortion of the distinction between law and gospel, and his rejection of the orthodox Lutheran doctrine of atonement, both follow from this faulty Christology.

HOFMANN'S EARLY LIFE AND INFLUENCES

Hofmann was born in 1810 in a lower-middle-class home in Nürnberg to Lorenz Hofmann and his fourth wife, Eva Dorthea Buchner Hofmann.[7] Early in his life, Hofmann's father died and his mother was forced to take over the family business. In spite of the grueling hours that she worked maintaining the family business and caring for Hofmann and his numerous siblings, his mother found time to be heavily involved in a Lutheran Pietist movement emanating from Wittenberg.[8] She

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1. See discussion of Hofmann's theology in the following works: Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background and History*, New ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 593–601; Karlmann Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1993), 61–83; Matthew Becker, *The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes von Hofmann* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004); Matthew Becker, "Appreciating the Life and Work of Johannes v. Hofmann," *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (2003): 177–98; Matthew Becker, "Hofmann as Ich-Theologie? The Object of Theology in Johann von Hofmann's *Werke*," *Concordia Journal* 29 (2003): 265–93; Matthew Becker, "Hofmann's Revisionist Christology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (2003): 288–328; Matthew Becker, "The Self-Giving God: The Trinity in Johannes von Hofmann's Theology," *Pro Ecclesia* 12 (2003): 417–46; Gerhard Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate: An Interpretation of Its Historical Development* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 12–36; Lowell Green, *The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching, and Practice* (Fort Wayne, IN: Lutheran Legacy, 2010), 105–33; Martin Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis und Erlanger Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1984), 20–23, 76–78, 113–17, 124–25, 182–86, 218–34, 254–71; Robert Schultz, *Gesetz und Evangelium (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1958),110–20*. In my writing of this piece, I am particularly indebted to the work of Becker and Forde. Not only did they give me much insight into Hofmann's thinking, but their work directed me to the most important sections of Hofmann's works. This article is partially based on chapter five of my doctoral dissertation, "The Self-Donation of God: Gerhard Forde and the Question of Atonement in the Lutheran Tradition."
2. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, trans. Floyd Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950); Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, trans. Sidney Sowers (London: S.C.M. Press, 1967).
3. See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, trans. Lewis Wilkins and Duane Priebe (Philadelphia: Westminster Press,1968); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Revelation as History* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).
4. See Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 107–8; Lennart Pinomaa, *Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology*, trans. Walter J. Kokkonen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 46–57; Philip Watson, *Let God Be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 116–25.
5. See Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), 199–210.
6. See Gerhard Forde, "The Work of Christ," in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 2:5–104; Gerhard Forde, "Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ," in *A More Radical Gospel: Essays on Eschatology, Authority, Atonement, and Ecumenism*, ed. Mark Mattes and Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 85–97.
7. Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 3; Green, *The Erlangen School,* 105. For the standard biographies of Hofmann, see Heinrich Schmid, "Zum Gedächtnis an Hofmann," in *Vermischte Aufsätze von Professor von Hofmann: Eine Auswahl aus der* Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche, ed. Heinrich Schmid (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1878), v–xxiii; Paul Wapler, *Johannes v. Hofmann: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der theologischen Grundprobleme, der kirchlichen und der politischen Bewegungen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Adolf Deichert, 1914).
8. Becker, *The Self-Giving God,* 3.

regularly attended Bible studies led by the local pastor Johann Gottfried Schöner and participated in his pietistic cell called the *Christentumsgesellschaft* (Society of Christianity).[9] Such pietistic influences provided by Hofmann's mother were reinforced in his early education at the Melanchthon *Gymnasium* in Nürnberg.[10] The school offered an education that was a synthesis of classical humanism—the emphasis of the school was on classical languages at which Hofmann excelled[11]—and Lutheran Pietism.[12] For this reason, it may be safely surmised that Lutheran Pietism played an early and significant role in the life of the young Hofmann. Such a pervasive influence seems clear, even in spite of his reported initial lack of zeal for the faith.[13]

Hegel, Schelling, and Kant represent important influences on Hofmann's development.

In 1827 Hofmann briefly attended Erlangen, where he studied under Christian Krafft, who inculcated in the young Hofmann an appreciation for the importance of a deep study of the Scriptures.[14] Krafft also spurred him on to a deeper personal piety.[15] Both of these factors would later influence his choice to write biblical commentaries as part of his larger theological project. Another significant influence on Hofmann comes from his engagement with the German Idealist philosophers who at the time dominated the University of Berlin.[16] Hofmann moved to Berlin to continue his studies in 1829. Despite his initial lack of interest in their thought, Hegel, Schelling, and Kant represent important influences on Hofmann's development.[17] Particularly in the philosophy of Hegel and Schelling, history is seen as an eschatological process of divine and human self-development. Although it is, of course, difficult to draw straight lines between these influences and Hofmann's writings, such themes are clearly present in his later theology. The Reformed-Pietist father of Protestant Liberalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher, also stands as a major figure in the intellectual milieu of Hofmann's student days in Berlin. In spite of the fact that Hofmann did not favor Schleiermacher as an exegetical theologian,[18] aspects of Schleiermacher's theology of consciousness appear to have exercised an influence on him.[19]

At Berlin the thinker whom Hofmann found the most intellectually enticing was the Lutheran historian Leopold von Ranke.[20] Ranke's historical method relied on a strict empiricism. In this regard, Ranke's method broke with the then pervasive influence of Hegel's philosophy of history, which he believed destroyed the relevance of human agency by causing the empirical and concrete reality of the historical process to become "circumscribed by a concept"[21]—that is, Hegel's notion of history as the self-realization of the *Geist*.[22] Nevertheless, Ranke did not deny the meaning and providential unity of history. On the contrary, he saw it as an unfolding of God's plan for humanity. In fact Ranke held that God's nature, will, and purposes could be directly read off the empirical process of history.[23]

After completing his academic degrees, Hofmann spent time at Erlangen as a professor before teaching at Rostock between 1842 and 1845.[24] Although he was very fond of Rostock and received a warm reception there, he eventually returned to Erlangen[25] where the Neo-Lutheran Renaissance led by Adolph Harleß and a number of other luminaries—von Frank, Delitzsch, Zezschwitz, Hoefling, Theodosius Harnack, Thomasius, and so forth—was well underway. Neo-Lutheran theology as it was practiced at Erlangen during the nineteenth century attempted not merely to revive the classic Lutheran theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but also to reapply it—and in some cases to reinterpret it—in light of modern German philosophical and cultural movements, notably German Romanticism and Idealism, as well as newer historical research and exegesis. Throughout the nineteenth century and moving on into the mid-twentieth century, Erlangen became a hotbed of Neo-Lutheran theology.[26] Considering Hofmann's upbringing in the Bavarian Lutheran Church, as well as his interest in the new intellectual movements permeating Germany, it is not surprising that he found a convivial intellectual environment among the theologians of Erlangen.

HEILSGESCHICHTE, SCRIPTURE, AND THE STRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Having reviewed Hofmann's early life and influences, we now turn to his understanding of Scripture, revelation, and Heilsgeschichte. In order to do this, we will primarily examine his

9. Green, *The Erlangen School,* 106.
10. Ibid.
11. Becker, *The Self-Giving God,* 3–4.
12. Ibid., 3.
13. Green, *The Erlangen School,* 106–7; Wapler, *Johannes v. Hofmann*, 11.
14. Green, *The Erlangen School,* 106–7.
15. Wapler, *Johannes v. Hofmann*, 16.
16. Green, *The Erlangen School,* 107–8; Becker, *The Self-Giving God,* 5–7.
17. Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 6, 102–20.
18. Ibid., 5.
19. Ibid., 35, 40.
20. Ibid., 7; Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis*, 124–25.
21. Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, trans. and ed. Georg G. Iggers, Wilma Iggers, and Konrad von Moltke (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), 27.
22. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).
23. See brief comments in Ranke, *History*, 100. See discussion of Ranke and his historical method in Frederick C. Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 253–88. Also see discussion in Becker, *The Self-Giving God,* 7, 91–102; Green, *The Erlangen School,* 107–8.
24. Becker, *The Self-Giving God,* 7–8; Green, *The Erlangen School,* 108.
25. Becker, *The Self-Giving God,* 8–9; Green, *The Erlangen School,* 108–9.
26. Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 8–9. For sources on the Erlangen school, see the following works cited previously: Karlmann Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*; Lowell Green, *The Erlangen School*; Martin Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis*; and also Friedrich Kantzenbach, *Die Erlanger Theologie: Grundlinien ihrer Entwicklung im Rahmen der theologischen Fakultät 1743–1877 (München: Evang. Presseverband für Bayern, 1960);* Schultz, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, 98–120.

book *Biblische Hermeneutik*, the content of which we will occasionally clarify with reference to some of Hofmann's other works. This work is based on a series of lectures delivered by Hofmann to his students at Erlangen in 1860.[27] In this work Hofmann argues that the Bible is a historical document that must be understood on the basis of empirical historical methods: "The Scripture is not a text book teaching conceptual truths but rather a document of an historical process, and . . . has originated within the history recorded therein."[28] At the same time, Scripture must be regarded as the document from which the church derives its identity and its concrete experience of God's reality and truth.

Hofmann begins by arguing that the Scriptures have been abused throughout the ages by a lack of attention to their concrete historical nature. This is primarily the fault of the Church Fathers and the medieval theologians who understood Scripture on the basis of allegory and often times reduced it to a sourcebook of dogma.[29] During the Reformation, Luther and his colleagues returned the historical-literal sense of Scripture (*sensus literalis*) to its primacy and briefly restored the true sense of the Bible to the church.[30] Unfortunately, Protestant orthodoxy moved the study of Scripture back again to the previous state of affairs through the doctrine of plenary and verbal inspiration.[31] This needlessly burdened the Bible with the abstract dogma of inerrancy and made it an infallible textbook of abstract doctrines, rather than a concrete product of the history of human interaction with God through the history of Israel and the early church.

At this point it should be noted in passing that in dealing with the question of inerrancy and verbal inspiration, Hofmann displays Ranke's disdain for anything but strict empiricism. In other words, he regards any intervening concept that guides one's interpretation of Scripture — that is, the supposition of verbal and plenary inspiration — as being distorting. Of course, orthodox Lutheran theologians would counter that the doctrine of inspiration is not something imposed on the text, but rather found within it (for example, 2 Tim 3:16). Similarly, most contemporary philosophers and historians would consider Hofmann's and Ranke's belief in a strict empiricism to be both impossible and naïve. Put bluntly, all interpretation entails presuppositions.[32]

According to Hofmann, the abstract commitments of Protestant orthodoxy were unfortunately counteracted by the equally problematic rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hofmann here mentions Immanuel Kant and David Friedrich Strauss.[33] Contemporary Rationalists were just as problematic as their Protestant scholastic predecessors. Just as the latter came to the text of Scripture with the preconceived dogma of scriptural inerrancy, so too the former have come to the text with their rationalistic prejudice against miracles and prophecy. Hence, biblical scholars like Strauss have explained Scripture, which is a historical document, as "mythical"[34] purely on the basis of their philosophical prejudices.

Hofmann argues that the Scripture is not a text book teaching conceptual truths.

Having considered both the dogmatic ditches of rationalism and scholasticism in tandem, Hofmann now moves to a discussion of what he considers to be a proper understanding of the Bible. According to our author, we must understand that the "Holy Bible bears authoritative testimony to the historical development which has taken place in the Church."[35] By "the Church" it appears that Hofmann means, in typical Lutheran fashion,[36] to refer to the whole people of God throughout the ages. Therefore such a description includes ancient Israel as well.

Through the communal history of the people of God, God works out his purposes for humanity. In Hofmann's earlier work, *Der Schriftbeweis*, he claims that this purpose is the creation of a universal community of love and fellowship with God.[37] He describes the gradual development of such a community as beginning with Abraham and his family, later expanding into the transfamiliar community of the nation of Israel and then finally becoming a universal and transnational phenomenon in the church. In later life, he even went so far as to claim, in defiance of AC XVII, that this would be consummated in Christ's millennial rule on earth.[38] It should be noted that Hofmann's view of history here in many respects echoes that of Hegel, who also believed that the goal of history was the creation of an ideal community, that is, the Sittlichkeit com-

27. Johannes von Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, trans. Christian Preus (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), xi. This work is a good and somewhat abridged translation of Hofmann's *Biblische Hermeneutik (Nördlingen: Beck, 1880)*.
28. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 204.
29. Ibid., 4–9.
30. Ibid., 9.
31. Ibid., 10.
32. See similar claims from one of Bultmann's more lucid moments: Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?" in *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann, trans. Schubert Ogden (New York: Meridian, 1960), 289–96.*
33. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 12–13. See Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore Greene and Hoyt Hudson (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1960); David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, trans. George Eliot (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
34. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 13.
35. Ibid., 28.
36. Luther and the Lutheran scholastics both considered the church to be an order of creation established in the Garden of Eden; see AE 1: 92–97. Also see Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Hay and Henry Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 604–23.
37. Johannes von Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed. (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1857–1860), 1:22.
38. Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 230–31.

munity.[39] Similarly it should be observed that this interest in the establishment of authentic community is common to the thought of many of the early nineteenth-century Romantics.[40]

Although these purposes of God represent the meaning of all history, they are not the result of simple, natural historical development. Hofmann writes:

> Like the Church and that development, the Scripture is not the result of the historical growth of mankind but the work of God. Within human history, its specific function is to serve the realization of God's ultimate purpose both for history and in conflict with it.[41]

In this sense, while Heilsgeschichte is characterized by gradual development, it is also, in a sense, disruptive in that it represents God's disruption and "conflict with" the natural development of human history and its possibilities. In light of this fact, Hofmann characterizes this history as "miraculous" (*wunderbar*):

> All those historical events and results which are the realization of God's ultimate purposes, that is, Holy History and its effects, we call "miracle," because they stand in opposition to the natural development of man. . . . Scripture shares in this "miracle" of Holy History. Not only is it given to be the standard of the actual life of the Church, but it also belongs to the miraculous history of the Church. Scripture is a "miracle" both in its origin and in its content because it is the document of Holy History.[42]

Hence, for Hofmann, the Bible's account of salvation history as a "miraculous" development that disrupts limited human possibilities, due to finitude and sin, finds its confirmation in the religious consciousness of the individual Christian. Just as the history of salvation disrupts the continuity of purely temporal development, so too, conversion to faith in Christ disrupts the human person's previous existence under sin.[43] For Hofmann, Christianity is "the relationship between God and man which has been mediated through Jesus Christ"; it "did not originate from the nature of this world as given through creation and perverted by sin."[44] Hofmann writes that we can know this because we are absolutely certain of Christ's personal presence as mediated by faith: "The Christian is more sure of Christ, in his past work and active presence, as the one who personally mediates his relationship to God, than of anything that is perceptible and given to his senses."[45] For this reason, the Christian becomes aware that the content of the Scriptures authentically communicates God's reality and works because they bear witness to Christ and mediate the experience of Christ: "In accordance with that fact, he evaluates the witness which Scripture bears to the history which forms the basis of that awareness and of which he [the Christian] is the result."[46] Hofmann holds that religious experience is of the utmost importance for the verification of the truth of Christian dogma. He goes so far as to say—in a famous and often quoted saying—"I the Christian am the material of the science of my theology."[47]

The miracle of conversion and regeneration directs the believer to the community of the church and the Scriptures, wherein Christ is the culmination of a "chain"[48] of ever-increasing miracles:

> Since Scripture is the document of Holy History, its content too must be miracle. Since basically Christ is the content of this history, He is the absolute miracle. All miracles in the Bible, both those that point towards Him and those which He performs Himself, must be understood and with reference to Him. . . . But since we understand and evaluate this history (whose product and testimony is Holy Scripture) in light of Jesus, the individual miracle has to be interpreted as part of an historical process of which Christ is the center. A Biblical miracle remains unintelligible and lacks true value for theological understanding when treated by itself and apart from the special place and significance for Holy History.[49]

In that Christ is the supreme miracle, he is the end product of salvation history and its great miracles. Hofmann argues that the chain of miracles that constitute salvation history begins with creation *ex nihilo* and moves on through the calling of the patriarchs and the establishment of the Israelite kingdom.[50]

For this reason the experience of conversion and faith in Christ is not that of the lonely individual, but is mediated through the participation of the believer in the ecclesiastical community. As we observed above, the experience of the faithful person within the church of God in Christ only makes sense if the whole miraculous chain of historical development presented in the Bible is, in fact, a generally accurate—though certainly not inerrant—description of the history of the people of God. In other words, if the chain of events were inaccurately presented in Scripture, the religious experience of the Christian would be either radically different or nonexistent. Therefore Hofmann relies on the continuity of historical-communal development to explain the link between the believer and the person of Christ. Hofmann referred to the total factual life situation of the Christian as the *Tatbestand*.[51] Karlmann Beyschlag is therefore correct in asserting

39. See discussion in Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 376–88.
40. See discussion in Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), 31–33.
41. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible,* 28.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 30.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 1:10; translation my own.
48. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 31.
49. Ibid., 31–32.
50. Ibid., 32.
51. See Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 34–50.

that Hofmann's theology primarily functions by "discerning a correlation between personal religious experience and historical revelation."[52]

We should stop at this point of our exposition to note that Hofmann's accent on the importance of religious experience bears not only a strong resemblance to the Pietism of his youth, but also to the modified, rationalistic Pietism of Friedrich Schleiermacher. As we have already observed, not only did Hofmann encounter Schleiermacher and his work during his sojourn in Berlin, but Schleiermacher's presuppositions regarding the importance of religious experience in establishing the truth of Christian doctrine were highly influential among theologians of all stripes throughout nineteenth-century Germany.

In his second edition of *Der christliche Glaube* of 1831, Schleiermacher sought to reconcile Christian doctrine with philosophy and the advances of learning brought on by the Enlightenment. To do this, he made all Christian doctrine depend on inferences drawn from varying states of religious consciousness.[53] In particular, Schleiermacher accepted Kant's supposition that because the mind imposes its own categories of analysis upon the senses, human beings cannot know things in themselves (*Ding an sich*) but only things insofar as they have effects on our consciousness.[54] For this reason, Schleiermacher insists that theological statements must center on our consciousness of God and not on abstract propositions.[55] This being said, it is indeed possible to make true theological statements about the being of God or the "state of the world," as he puts it, as long as they are based on inferences from our religious experience.[56]

Conversely, propositional statements that do not correlate to or explain states of religious consciousness are worthless abstractions. The most famous example of this principle is Schleiermacher's consignment of the doctrine of the Trinity to a brief appendix at the end of the *Glaubenslehre*, wherein he expresses his belief that the ancient heresy of Modalism might be a better guide for interpreting the New Testament statements regarding the Father, Son, and Spirit than the Nicene Creed.[57] Schleiermacher's reasons for this marginalization of traditional doctrine of God are clear. Since — as we will observe below — the foundational experience of the divine is one of absolute dependence on God's reality as the unitary ground of all being, the doctrine of the Trinity must ultimately lack value. If religious experience is merely that of the creature's dependency on the Creator, then it is impossible to correlate directly such a consciousness to God's internal Trinitarian relations.

Schleiermacher rejected the orthodox Christian dogma of the two natures.

Schleiermacher's deduction of Christian doctrine from religious experience represents a complex process that draws on many assumptions that few contemporary readers will find convincing. According to his *Glaubenslehre*, within our normal experience of the world there is "reciprocity"[58] between a *sense of freedom* we possess toward various objects and *a sense of dependency* toward the same. No matter what the object of experience that one encounters, there is necessarily an element of both sensations. These secondary sensations contrast with the most primal experience of humanity, that of "absolute dependence." When humans have such an experience, the reciprocity between freedom and dependency breaks down and the feeling of pure dependency becomes manifest.[59] Because of the profound contrast between the feeling of absolute dependency and normal human experiences of the world, we are able to differentiate this sensation as representing our "consciousness of God."[60] Although the human feeling of dependency on God is universal, it is not consistent or perfect in its intensity. Moreover as our consciousness matures we come to recognize a certain frustration in the development of this religious sense. This is due to sin, which is by definition "everything . . . that has arrested the free development of God-consciousness."[61]

For this reason, humanity is in need of redemption through Jesus, who was a human being who possessed perfect and uninterrupted God-consciousness.[62] While Schleiermacher rejected the orthodox Christian dogma of the two natures, he viewed the traditional doctrine of the divinity of Christ as pointing to Jesus' God-consciousness, which constituted a divine element within him. Possessing a superabundance of God-conscious-

52. Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, 63; translation my own. See similar description in Kantzenbach, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, 192. See overall description of Hofmann's understanding of salvation history and experience in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 31–88; Green, *The Erlangen School*, 110–21; Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis*, 124–35.
53. See Thomas Kelly, *Theology at the Void: The Retrieval of Experience* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 15. Kelly writes: "This is the key to the appeal to human experience in the defense of religion. He will try to reimagine and ground religion *within a Kantian construct*. Whatever objective data are dealt with by the mind are experienced through the forms and concepts conferred by the subject. But Schleiermacher goes even further by grounding his method in the human experience of God that occurs in the interiority of the subject and is accessible through simple reflection on the fact of existence. This becomes the comprehensive principle by which religion is redefined. It is this appeal to inner experience that made Schleiermacher's apology for religion so effective" (emphasis added).
54. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 74, 87, 149, 172–73. See a critique of modern Kantian epistemology in theology in Paul Hinlicky, *Paths Not Taken: Fates of Theology from Luther through Leibniz* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 43–86. Helmut Thielicke has traced back the theology consciousness to Descartes. See comments in Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith*, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974–1982), 1:38–64.
55. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. and ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: T & T Clark, 1928), 125–28.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 738–51.
58. Ibid., 14.
59. Ibid., 16–18.
60. Ibid., 25.
61. Ibid., 271.
62. Ibid., 361.

ness, Christ communicated it to the church, which then in turn transmits it to those who subsequently associate themselves with the visible congregation of the faithful. The fact that we receive a constant increase in our God-consciousness within the visible community of the church confirms Jesus' historical reality. When left to itself, human nature lacks the possibility of an uninterrupted development of its God-consciousness. This being the case, logically there must have been a human being at some point in the past who possessed perfect and uninterrupted God-consciousness that he transmitted to the church. Otherwise, the intensification of God-consciousness that persons within the church experience would be inexplicable, since the increase of God-consciousness in the church must have a source. Since the source according to the witness of the New Testament is Jesus, the present community's experience coheres with the historical record.[63]

Lutherans have historically confessed that the "finite is capable of the infinite" (finitum capax infinitum).

As can be observed, Hofmann's emphasis on the foundational nature of religious experience for Christian doctrine strongly mirrors Schleiermacher. Moreover, much like Schleiermacher, Hofmann views religious consciousness as being intelligible only as the basis of a previous historical process. For this reason, both Hofmann and Schleiermacher argue that the unbroken chain of the church's religious consciousness is the medium through which the believer is united to and becomes conscious of Christ and his saving work. The major difference between the two theologians is that because Schleiermacher believed Christian experience was exclusively that of the experience of God-consciousness in association with Christ, he rejected the authority of the Old Testament, since it deals with the experience of the Israelite people prior to Christ.[64] By contrast, as we noted earlier, Hofmann viewed the people of Israel and the church existing within the same continuous process of Heilsgeschichte.

What is evident from both of these approaches is an attempt to verify the truth of Christian doctrine in a manner that nineteenth-century Germans—trained in both Pietism and Enlightenment reason—would find credible. Beyond this, though, one may detect in both treatments the consequences of rejecting historic Lutheran claims regarding the communication of attributes within the hypostatic union. According to orthodox Lutheran teaching, the human Jesus receives the fullness of divine glory through his anhypostatic participation in the hypostasis of the Logos (*genus majestaticum*; see FC SD VIII; *Triglotta*, 1041).[65] For this reason, Lutherans have historically confessed that the "finite is capable of the infinite" (finitum capax infinitum) in contrast to the Reformed and Roman Catholic insistence that the "finite is not capable of the infinite" (*finitum non capax infinitum*).[66] Beyond the clear Scriptural support for this proposition (Matt 28:18; John 3:13; Phil 2:6; Col 2:3, 9), the Lutheran theologians have insisted that because God's infinite majesty contains within itself infinite possibilities, it must also include the possibility of making the finite capable of receiving itself.[67] The ultimate consequence of this teaching is that the humanity of the risen Jesus is not confined to heaven but is present in a mysterious sense with his church in the word and the sacraments.[68] The believer therefore need not seek confirmation of the reality or truth of the gospel beyond the word and the sacraments within which Christ is active and present, communicating his truth and benefits to faith.

As we have seen, it is fairly clear that Schleiermacher would reject such an account of Christology. Due to his Reformed background—Schleiermacher came from a family of Reformed Pietists[69]—and acceptance of a mystical quasinaturalistic account of Jesus' divinity (if one indeed may call it that), it is clear that he never would have accepted the notion of the omnipresence of Christ according to both natures. This background sheds light on his understanding of the believer's link with Christ through the church's mediation of religious experience. Lacking a belief in the possibility of the risen and omnipresent Christ's personal presence in word and sacrament, Schleiermacher must rely on the chain of communal religious experience passed on from generation to generation to create a connection with the Messiah.

63. Ibid., 362–65.
64. Ibid., 608–11.
65. See discussion in the following sources: Paul Althaus, *Die christliche Wahrheit: Lehrbuch der Dogmatik* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1952), 448–53; Johann Baier, *Compendium theologiae positivae*, ed. C. F. W. Walther (Grand Rapids: Emmanuel Press, 2005–2006), 2:52–70; Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 241–46; Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics, trans.* Joel Fredrich and others (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999–2009), 3:89–99; Nicolaus Hunnius, *Epitome credendorum*, trans. Paul Gottheil (Nuremburg: U. E. Sebald, 1847), 104–7; Leonard Hütter, *Compendium locorum theologicorum ex Scripturis sacris et libro Concordiae: lateinisch, deutsch, englisch*, trans. Henry Jacobs (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Verlag, 2006), 2:928–32; Johann Gerhard, *On Christ*, trans. Richard Dinda, Theological Commonplaces: Exegesis IV (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 203–87; Christian Luthardt, *Kompendium der Dogmatik* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1893), 201–4; John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 27-–83; Alexander von Oettingen, *Lutherische Dogmatik: System der christlichen Heilswahrheit* (München: Beck, 1897–1902), 2.2:83–85; Friedrich Philippi, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre* (Gütersloh: G. Bertelsmann, 1870–1901), 4.1:260–76; Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951–1957), 2:152–242; Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881), 1:319–28; John Schaller, *Biblical Christology: A Study in Lutheran Dogmatics* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1981), 68–78; Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, 314–15.
66. R. Michael Allen, *Reformed Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2010), 19–22.
67. David Scaer, personal conversation.
68. Classical defense of this position is Johannes Brenz, *De personali unione duarum naturarum in Christo, et ascensu Christi in coelum, ac sessione eius ad dextram Dei patris: qua vera corporis et sanguinis Christi praesentia in Coena explicata est, et confirmata* (Tübingen: Morhard, 1561).
69. Jonathan Hill, *The History of Christian Thought* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 226–28.

In Hofmann we find a similar, though not identical, understanding of religious experience and community. Therefore, it should not be surprising that Hofmann also rejects the orthodox Lutheran understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Being less radical in his revisionism than Schleiermacher, Hofmann wished to maintain the Trinity and the two natures. Nevertheless, he also was intent on combining this with the newer metaphysical thinking gleaned, yet again, from German Idealism. In the process, Hofmann reveals his deep discomfort with and his implicit rejection of, the Lutheran *capax*.

Hofmann's account of the incarnation falls into the category of what was known in the nineteenth century as "Kenotic Christology."[70] According to the theologians professing this theology, the traditional Christology, which had assumed that the incarnation did not alter the being of the second person of the Trinity, was hopelessly flawed and led inexorably to a form of Docetism. For this reason, broadly speaking, these theologians claimed that in becoming incarnate the Son had in some sense contracted or partially divested himself of his divinity. Such a modification of the divine being was often referred to—using the traditional genera language of orthodox Lutheranism—as the *genus kenoticum* or *tapeinoticum*.[71] As we will observe below, this argument was in part made possible by the German Idealist claim, present in Hegel and Schelling, that God is mutable and therefore changed and evolved through time.[72]

The two most famous proponents of kenotic Christology are Gottfried Thomasius, an Erlangen colleague of Hofmann and later opponent on the issue of atonement, and Wolfgang Gess. Whereas Thomasius satisfied himself with the proposition that Jesus had lost his divine power, that is, omnipotence, omnipresence, and so forth, in the incarnation, while retaining his moral qualities,[73] Gess even more radically insisted that the Logos had in some sense contracted to the finite dimensions of a human soul. Reduced to this level, the second person of the Trinity had served in the place of the soul of the human Jesus.[74]

Beyond their obvious desire to avoid what they perceived as the creeping Docetism of traditional orthodoxy, the two aforementioned treatments also make clear the implicit assumption that God in his infinite glory cannot communicate himself to the finite. Consequently he must modify his being in some way to make possible his translation into the finite. Seen from this perspective, these accounts of the incarnation represent a wholesale rejection of the Lutheran capax. This being said, it must be cautioned that these thinkers, particularly those like Hofmann and Thomasius who viewed themselves as Lutherans, did not intend this. Nevertheless, it must ultimately be admitted that whether or not they intended such a denial of the Lutheran *capax* in theory, they definitely did so in practice.

These accounts of the incarnation represent a wholesale rejection of the Lutheran capax.

In his treatment of the incarnation, Hofmann makes claims similar to those advanced by his colleague Thomasius.[75] In becoming human, Jesus remained the second person of the Trinity, while losing his divine attributes of glory: "We can . . . say that Christ has emptied himself of the divine glory, omnipotence, omnipresence and that out of a God has become a human being."[76] Although Christ lost his divine power, the inter-Trinitarian relationship of love between himself and the Father remained and developed over the course of his earthly life.[77] The goal of the development of this perfect fellowship of love between Jesus and the Father was the actualization of such a relationship between God and humanity. Soteriologically and eschatologically, this relationship serves as the archetype and ground of all proper human relationship to God, and therefore grounds the fellowship of the new humanity with God as to be found in the community of the church.[78]

Given Hofmann's belief that Christ realized the perfect fellowship of love between God and humans while at the same time divesting himself of divine majesty, his reliance on the continuity of the church's communal religious experience becomes highly intelligible. Lacking the full glory of divinity—since he has eliminated it in the incarnation—in his humanity, the earthly Christ cannot directly make his historical life and its saving reality contemporary to the believer. He must therefore

70. See Martin Breidert, *Die kenotische Christologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1977); David Brown, *Divine Humanity: Kenosis Explored and Defended* (London: SCM Press, 2011); David Law, "Kenotic Christology," in *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology*, ed. David Fergusson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 251–79; Thomas Thompson, "Nineteenth-Century Kenotic Christology: The Waxing, Waning, and Weighing of a Quest for a Coherent Orthodoxy," in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God, ed. C. Stephen Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74–111; Claude Welch, God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology: G. Thomasius, I. A. Dorner, A. E. Biedermann (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965); Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972–1985), 1:233–40.*
71. See brief discussion in Brown, *Divine Humanity*, 232–33.
72. See confessional Lutheran critique in Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:292–96.
73. Gottfried Thomasius, *Christi Person und Werk: Darstellung der evangelisch-lutherischen Dogmatik vom Mittelpunkte der Christologie aus* (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1886–1888), 2:411–12. See a discussion of Thomasius in the following sources: Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*,14–19, 24–26, 29–31, 83–85, 93–98; Green, *The Erlangen Theology*, 139–48; Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis*, 246–54; Law, "Kenotic Christology," 255–58; Thompson, "Kenotic Christology," 78–85; Welch, *Protestant Thought, 1:235–40*.
74. Wolfgang Friedrich Gess, *Christi Person und Werk* (Basel: Bahnmaier, 1870–1887), 3:345–410. Also see brief summary in Law, "Kenotic Christology," 263–73; Thompson, "Kenotic Christology," 87; Welch, *Protestant Thought, 1:234*.
75. For a discussion of Hofmann's Christology, see the following: Matthew Becker, "Hofmann's Revisionist Christology"; Breidert, *Die kenotische Christologie,* 161–84. Some theorize that Thomasius's idea of the incarnation was actually influenced by Hofmann.
76. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 2.1:212; quoted in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 181.
77. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 1:154.
78. Johannes von Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 1st ed. (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1852–1855), 1:45.

rely on the continuity of the church's religious experience as the spiritual and historical link between himself and the believer.

Hofmann does not appear to have rejected the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence.

This being said, it should of course be observed that Hofmann does often speak of the glorification of Christ, that is, the return of his glorious attributes to his divine nature upon his ascension, and his continuing presence within the Christian community.[79] Nevertheless, in many of his writings he identifies such a presence solely with the Holy Spirit as a surrogate for Christ in a manner somewhat reminiscent of the Reformed tradition:

> But in order for [Jesus] to impart the life of his Spirit to his members, he had to leave the world and go to the Father, and thereby exchange the limits of the immanent life for the communion of the transcendent life of the Father: the outpouring of the Spirit was the expansion of the transcendence which he had entered.[80]

Hofmann does not indicate in any of his statements that he believes that God's glory has been hypostatically communicated to Christ's human nature, even in the state of exaltation.[81]

In light of this, Matthew Becker correctly observes that Hofmann does not accept the traditional Lutheran belief in the absolute omnipresence of Christ's human nature: "Christ's presence is not ubiquitous: His Lordship over the world is only gradually spreading through the immanent Spirit through the Church."[82] Although Hofmann does not appear to have rejected the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence,[83] statements such as the ones cited above suggest that he might have viewed the real presence as being mediated by way of the agency of the Holy Spirit, much like the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions.[84] Nevertheless it should be cautioned that the role of the Spirit in this regard is not entirely clear and therefore Christ's substantial presence in the Lord's Supper may simply represent an inconsistency in his system.

In a manner reminiscent of Vatican II,[85] Hofmann characterizes the church itself as the most basic sacrament from which the others are derived.[86] This is the case because, as we have seen, fellowship with the community itself and its religious experience communicates the presence of Christ through the Spirit. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are described primarily as antitypes of the types of circumcision and the Passover, rites connected with communal membership in Israel.[87] The New Testament's characterization of the sacraments as unity with Christ's historic existence — that is, baptism as dying and rising with Christ as in Romans 6; the Lord's Supper as the reception of his sacrificed body and blood as indicated by the words of institution — are decidedly missing.

From this two things are clear. First, Hofmann views participation in the historic continuity of the church community to be salvific. Therefore, for him, the sacraments primarily function as a means of sealing a person within the church and its collective redemptive fellowship with God. This is clear from his understanding of the sacraments as being chiefly parallels for rites that performed that task in ancient Israel. Secondly, in that he views God as limited by time and Christ as limited by the ontological distance between heaven and earth, Christians are united with Christ's historical existence through the sacraments only in the sense that they come to participate in the communal situation of grace that was brought about by Christ.

Not only did Hofmann hold that the second person of the Trinity was changed through the incarnation, but also, much like Schelling[88] and Hegel,[89] he sees history as the arena within which the whole Godhead evolves. Contrary to the tendency of traditional Christian theology, Hofmann argues that anthropomorphic expressions found in the Bible

> cannot be reduced to expressions of the eternal unchangeableness of God. For the result of such reasoning is that the diversity of God's inner life and His dealings with this world no less than the diversity or the successive character of that which takes place in Him, would disappear in His eternal self-identity.[90]

We must therefore recognize that there "is a history of a reciprocal interchange of life and mutual relation between God and mankind, and thus an historical nature of God which is no less evident than His eternal self-identity."[91]

According to Hofmann, although the divine relationships in the Trinity certainly do exist transcendently, they neverthe-

79. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 30.
80. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 1st ed., 1:169; quoted in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 194.
81. Despite his serious problems, Thomasius at least held that the theandric person of Christ was present with the church on earth. Moreover, the *genus majestaticum* was operative in the state of exaltation. See Thomasius, *Christi Person und Werk*, 1:331.
82. Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 194.
83. Ibid., 209.
84. See history and description in John McKenna, *The Eucharistic Epiclesis: A Detailed History from the Patristic to the Modern Era* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2008).
85. See *Lumen Gentium*, 1, in *The Basic Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996), 1–10.
86. Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 206.
87. Ibid. Of course, theologically the New Testament authors agree that the sacraments are antitypes in this fashion, as seen for example in Colossians 2:11–12 and Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper in the midst of Passover. Nevertheless, they are not exclusively so, and such a theme is relatively minor throughout the Bible.
88. See, for example, Friedrich Schelling, *The Ages of the World*, trans. Jason Wirth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).
89. See the aforementioned Hegel, *Phenomenology*.
90. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 48.
91. Ibid., 48–49.

less also develop through the historical process of salvation. He writes:

> [God is] that community of Father and the Son in the Spirit, as it represents itself in the Heilsgeschichte, i.e., the Father is the one [who is] always prior, the Son is the one [who is] always coming, the Spirit is the one [who is] always present. In other words, the Father is the one [who is] always acting upon the world, the Spirit is the one [who is] always acting in the world, the Son is the one [who is] letting himself act in the world.[92]

Therefore, states Hofmann, "the Bible speaks only of the eternal relationships in God as historical, and . . . the Bible does not designate this relationship as an eternal relationship but as an historical relationship," and "apart from [this historical relationship] a person does not have the right to turn the representations of the [historical] directly into representations of the eternal."[93]

Hofmann therefore seems in part to anticipate Karl Rahner's later principle of the absolute identity of the immanent and economic Trinities.[94] In time, God does express who he is in eternity by working out his purpose of love and the internal Trinitarian relationships. Nevertheless, it must also be said that by entering into time God's being takes upon itself a new character as it evolves through its struggle to establish a universal community of love. In this, Hofmann rejects the historic Christian doctrine of divine immutability in favor of German Idealism's belief in divine mutability and self-development by means of the historical process. By this process, God's eventual goal is to draw the church, which he has established, into his own fully developed life of triune love. Therefore by entering into the historical process and allowing himself to be affected by it, the triune God descends into a sort of *kenosis* with a redemptive goal.[95] Through this divine *kenosis*, creation comes to recognize that "God [is] the immanent ground of life, and God [is] the archetypal goal of the world."[96]

In anticipation of our discussion of atonement in the next section, the reader should observe two things about Hofmann's insistence on the principle of divine evolution through salvation history. First, much like his treatment of Christology, the *kenosis* and evolution of God through the historical process suggest that the infinite God is incapable of entering into the finitude of the world without modifying the fullness of his glory in some way. In this, the Lutheran *capax* is again implicitly rejected. Earlier orthodox Lutheran theologians accepted—along with the tradition of the ancient and medieval church—that although God was infinite and immutable, he was, in some mysterious sense, able to act within the world without compromising his changelessness or his other glorious attributes.[97] By contrast, Hofmann does not appear confident in this fact and, therefore, must abandon traditional metaphysics in favor of a new account of the divine being.

Hofmann holds that God can simply displace his relationship of wrath by simply evolving past it.

Secondly, it should be observed that divine evolution means that through the course of salvation history God moves past certain stages in his reality and on to new ones. Therefore, according to Hofmann, the character of the God of the New Testament era is not absolutely identical with that of the Old. Once a new dispensation has been reached, the old character of the deity is modified and a new one emerges. To qualify this, it should, of course, be observed that Hofmann held that God's Trinitarian identity and purpose, that is, the creation of the universal community of love, did not ultimately change. Nevertheless, as we will see in the next section dealing with atonement, Hofmann holds that God can simply displace his relationship of wrath found in the Old Testament era by simply evolving past it in his choice to actualize himself as exclusively a God of love in the person of Jesus.

HOFMANN'S DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

In this section we will complete our discussion of Hofmann's theology with a review of his theory of atonement. Hofmann began to express his discomfort publicly with the confessional Lutheran teaching regarding substitutionary atonement toward the end of his first period at Erlangen in 1842.[98] Later, upon his return in 1845, he would become embroiled in a debate on the subject with a number of his Erlangen colleagues, notably Thomasius[99] and Theodosius Harnack,[100] as well as other theologians including F. A. Philippi,[101] the exhaustive details of which are beyond the bounds of our present study.[102]

In his lectures of 1842, Hofmann claimed that the orthodox Lutheran doctrine of atonement dissolved the concrete histori-

92. Christoph Luthardt, "Aus J. Chr. K. Hofmann's Vorlesung über Dogmatik," *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben* 10 (1889): 51; quoted in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 144.
93. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 1:206; quoted in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 145.
94. See Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Continuum, 1986), 21–24.
95. Becker's characterization (see Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 173–203).
96. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 1:37; quoted in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 144.
97. See several examples in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, 129–35, 189–213.
98. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 36–37.
99. Gottfried Thomasius, *Das Bekenntniss der lutherischen Kirche von der Versöhnung und die Versöhnungslehre D. Chr. K. v. Hofmann's* (Erlangen: Theodor Bläsing, 1857).
100. Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlösungslehre*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969). Theodosius Harnack's study of Luther and his discovery of the doctrine of the hidden God were responses to Hofmann's theology and his interpretation of Luther.
101. F. A. Philippi, *Herr Dr. von Hofmann gegenüber lutherischen Versöhnungs- und Rechtfertigungslehre (Erlangen: Theodor Bläsing, 1856).*
102. See summary in Becker, *The Self-Giving God*, 194–203; Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 12–78; Hein, *Lutherisches Bekenntnis*, 254–71.

cal life and death of Jesus into an abstract doctrine foreign to the Bible.[103] It did not represent the logic of the Scripture, but rather represented an alien concept of justice, wherein God gives everyone what they deserve.[104] It assumes a quantitative understanding of justice and its restoration, that is, infinite death repairs the infinite debt of sin.[105] In light of these difficulties, the view of atonement found in the Lutheran symbolic writings and later Protestant scholastic theologians needed to be completely revised and reformulated. Hofmann believed that this particular task had fallen to him.[106]

According to Hofmann, sacrifice did not represent a payment for sin, but rather signified God's gracious pledge.

Hofmann's mature atonement theology coheres perfectly with his understanding of Heilsgeschichte. As we have previously observed, Hofmann held that salvation history was a process wherein God worked to evolve an increasingly inclusive universal community to share in the loving communion of his Trinitarian life. For Hofmann, God's most primal and eternal will was to establish a relationship of love with humanity. Divine wrath entails a negative relationship of alienation from God and, therefore, it is not as primal as his love: "[God's] wrath is not something eternal, *but a historic relationship of God*."[107] Because fallen humanity is alienated from God's love, it necessarily enters into a state of revolt when confronted by divine grace. Historically this revolt has found its expression in the persecution and martyrdom of those who represent God and his plan for humanity, that is, the prophets of the Old Testament. Christ's death was therefore the culmination of salvation history in that he was the supreme martyr among a succession of martyrs beginning with Abel.[108]

In the Old Testament period, God's sending of prophets and other holy people to be martyred was intended to reveal two main things. First, as previously noted, it revealed that God's gracious will of love remained ever present in spite of human resistance. Nevertheless it also functioned as a means of revealing the sin of those who perpetrated such violence. Recognizing their sinful actions against those who were God's servants, the evil of the unrighteous would exhaust itself in the death of the martyrs and thereby bring about repentance and a desire to do the good.[109]

Hofmann attempted to expand his idea of martyrdom as a means of subjective moral influence to the biblical practice of sacrifice as well. According to Hofmann, sacrifice did not represent a payment for sin, but rather signified God's gracious pledge of himself to humanity. In many of the sacrifices practiced by the patriarchs, the killing of the animal in the sacrificial ritual reaffirmed human dominion over creation, given in Genesis 1 and reaffirmed by animal sacrifice after the flood in Genesis 9.[110] Similarly, Leviticus spoke of sacrifices of atonement "covering" the sinner through the blood of the animal. Hofmann interpreted this to mean that through engaging in the sacrifice, one publicly witnessed to the fact that he had received the reconciliation offered to himself by God.[111] For this reason, sacrifice did not actually pay for sins, but publicly confronted people with their sin while at the same time giving them a visible sign of divine love and grace.

In turning to the death of Christ, Hofmann also sought to reinterpret statements made by the New Testament authors regarding its substitutionary nature and redemptive significance. When discussing Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," Hofmann argued that this should in no way be understood as suggesting substitutionary atonement:

> The self-offering of Jesus unto death corresponds to the inceptive enabling of redemption for the New Testament congregation. On this basis, nothing should be taught regarding an atoning power of the death of Jesus. . . . For those to whom he [Paul] was writing it needed only to be known that the enabling of the new fellowship between God and mankind, which first took place between God and Israel, was fulfilled in the death of the mediator.[112]

Elsewhere, Hofmann interprets Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:14 that Christ "died for all" as being merely for the good of all.[113] When discussing the apostle's assertion that "if righteousness came by the works of the law, Christ would have died in vain" (Gal 2:21), Hofmann states that here the apostle merely means that salvation comes through the fellowship with God established by Christ's death, rather than legalistic deeds.[114]

Overall, when faced with the extremely difficult task of reinterpreting Paul's statements regarding atonement, Hofmann argues that all scriptural passages that attach salvific significance to Christ's death must be understood as referring to its subjective moral effect, rather than to its role as an objective payment for sin. As we have seen before, this is determined by

103. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 36–37.
104. Ibid., 37.
105. Ibid., 38.
106. Forde helpfully directs us to Paul Wapler, "Die Genesis der Versöhnungslehre Hofmanns," *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift 25 (1914): 167–205. There is an appendix with some of the above mentioned lectures included.*
107. Johannes von Hofmann, *Theologische Ethik* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1878), 35; emphasis added; translation my own.
108. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis, 1st ed., 2.1:115–40.*
109. Ibid., 2.1:139.
110. Ibid., 2.1:143–50.
111. Ibid., 2.1:154. See summary in Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate, 41–43.*
112. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 2.1:323; quoted in Green, *The Erlangen School,* 123.
113. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 2.1:325.
114. Ibid., 2.1.331. See commentary and discussion of these passages in Green, *The Erlangen School*, 123–24.

several aspects of Hofmann's thought. First, there is a rejection of the idea of punitive wrath. Of course, Hofmann did believe that sin created the objective reality of alienation between God and humans. Nevertheless, Hofmann primarily sees such alienation in relational terms, rather than in punitive and legal ones. If God wishes to change his relationship with humans, he need only reverse the situation by coaxing humans out of their alienation, rather than objectively paying a debt that they owe.

Secondly, in keeping with this first point, since for Hofmann God is mutable, he is capable of simply moving past his previously negative relationship with humanity and creating a new one by an act of fiat. By contrast, a belief in *lex aeterna,* or "eternal law," was part of the assumptions underlining the orthodox Lutheran teaching regarding atonement.[115] For example, Johann Baier stated,

> By the Law is understood the eternal and immutable wisdom and decision of God concerning those things which belong or do not belong to the rational creature, as such, united with His will, that they may or may not be done.[116]

Since God is eternal, he possesses an eternal statutory will that is identical with the commandments that he reveals through nature and the supernatural revelation of Scripture. God cannot deny himself (2 Tim 2:13) and, therefore, reconciliation must involve not simply a movement towards sinful humanity in grace, but also the fulfillment of his punitive justice in the form of the substititionary death of Christ.[117] For Hofmann, the mutable God can simply abandon his old alienated relationship with humans and evolve into a new relationship of grace, irrespective of whether the law is fulfilled or not.

In turning to the exact details of Hofmann's atonement doctrine, we see that all of the aforementioned theological assumptions are operative. Much like the Old Testament prophets before him, Christ entered into creation as a revelation of God's eternal love and desire for communal fellowship.[118] As a result, Jesus suffered opposition from the fallen creation in its most extreme form.[119] In this, Christ not only suffered opposition from sinful humanity, but also from Satan and the other forces of darkness. In their fallen state, humans had become ensnared in the devil's power. For this reason, Christ must not only conquer human sin, but also the power of Satan and his minions.[120] Because God the Son identified with those suffering from the extreme alienation of sin, it might even be said in this sense that Christ also suffered the wrath of God.[121] In spite of this extreme alienation and opposition from the dark forces of the old creation, Jesus is triumphant, and, therefore once and for all, God's reality was actualized as loving for humanity. Ultimately then, Christ did not effect "an objective transaction, fulfillment of an abstract demand according to the scheme of forensic justice [that is, substitutionary atonement] but a historically new creation."[122]

As we have previously observed in our discussion of Hofmann's Christology, by the power of his resurrection and his sending of the Holy Spirit, Christ brings about a community of love. In this community, the relationship that the Father possesses with the Son becomes available to those who participate in it.[123] This means that the purpose of Christ's death is the actualization of a new historical situation in the life of the people of God. In light of this fact, it should be noted that Hofmann's description of Jesus as a figure who suffers persecution in order to move along human communal progress is not unlike the Romantic idea of the artistic or scientific genius — often called a Promethean figure — who suffers to drive forward human civilization.[124]

For Hofmann, the mutable God can simply abandon his old alienated relationship with humans.

Such an account of the work of Christ also has some interesting effects on Hofmann's understanding of the distinction between law and gospel, as well as the nature of the Christian life. Contrary to the teaching of orthodox Lutheran theology,[125] Hofmann does not regard the law and gospel as two distinct words through which God acts on his creatures in the present age. Rather, because the divine being has developed within history, the law and the gospel are seen as distinctive life forms appropriate to the people of God within the respective Old and New Testament periods.

The first stage of Heilsgeschichte was the Old Testament dispensation of law. God called Israel and formed its distinctive national life on the basis of the law.[126] Though the law and its legalistic works did not affect reconciliation between God and humans, it did helpfully point ahead to the final reconciliation in Christ.[127] Whereas in the Old Testament era human beings entered into fellowship with God by adhering to

115. See summary in Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 3–9.
116. See Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, 232
117. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 3–9; Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, 342–70.
118. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 1:40–42.
119. Johannes von Hofmann, *Encyclopädie der Theologie: nach Vorlesungen und Manuscripten herausgegeben von H. J. Bestmann* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1879), 84–85.
120. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 2nd ed., 1:441–51.
121. Ibid., 1:47.
122. Ibid., 2.1:57; quoted in Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 46–47.
123. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, 1st ed., 1:45.
124. Gerald Gillespie, "Prometheus in the Romantic Age," in *European Romanticism: Literary Cross-Currents, Modes, and Models*, ed. Gerhart Hoffmeister (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 197–210.
125. See the classical expression in C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981). Also see the insightful, yet in some ways less orthodox, treatment in Werner Elert, *Law and Gospel*, trans. Edward Schroeder (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967).
126. Hofmann, *Encyclopädie der Theologie*, 77–78.
127. Ibid., 79–81.

the law, during the present New Testament period Christ has become the basis of the divine-human relationship realized in the church.[128] Unfortunately, Israel made the law an end in itself and therefore failed to understand that the deeds of the law were only meant to point to the coming Christ. In this, Israel slipped into legalism.[129]

Hofmann's doctrine of atonement endangered justification by faith by making the work of Christ primarily about moral influence.

For this reason, when Paul contrasted law and faith, he meant merely to oppose "legalistic actions" to "an attitude which is contrasted with a legalistic outlook."[130] He did not mean to contrast two words, one that demands and the other that promises. Rather, the gospel is a new ethos of love, effected by Christ within the community. To the extent that the Christian lives out of his experience of the love of Christ and his sanctification, the Spirit guides him and he does not need any other written code: "The Spirit of Christ instructs as to what he [the Christian] must do, and motivates him to do it, and that which he then does is undeniably correct."[131] For this reason, the ethos of the gospel now means that the Christian lives under what Gerhard Forde refers to as a new "internal law."[132]

Again, as we noted in an earlier part, the problem of the law and atonement are dealt with by Hofmann by positing that within the historical process God has simply evolved past these realities and replaced his negative relationship with humanity with one of pure love and grace. In that God's being is mutable and subject to time, his relationship of wrath has been safely consigned to the past. In the unifying principle of love, the two words of law and gospel dissolve into a unitary principle of divine love.[133]

A BRIEF CRITIQUE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO HOFMANN'S THEOLOGY

In this final section, we will offer a critique and constructive response to the aspects of Hofmann's theology that we have reviewed above. In his own time, Hofmann was a quite controversial figure, even among his own colleagues at Erlangen. For Thomasius and Theodosius Harnack, as well as F. A. Philippi of Rostock, Hofmann's doctrine of atonement endangered justification by faith by making the work of Christ primarily about moral influence.[134] Other critiques of Hofmann focused on his abandonment of the Lutheran law-gospel dialectic in favor of a unitary principle of love. Robert Schultz, and in a somewhat similar manner Fredrich Baumgärtel, have made this charge in their works.[135] Lastly, Franz Pieper found what he called Hofmann's *Ichtheologie* extremely problematic. For Pieper, Hofmann's emphasis on religious experience and abandonment of the inerrancy of the Bible made his theology hopelessly subjective. This is the case even though Hofmann had clearly attempted to anchor the subjectivity of religious consciousness in the objectivity of history and community.[136]

Though we do not have the space to examine these critiques of Hofmann's theology in detail, we may say, based on our earlier investigations, that they are in a qualified sense generally on target. Like many of his contemporaries, Hofmann's theology relies on religious experience to do much of the hard lifting of the verification of the truth of Christian doctrine. This is, for the most part, untempered by his appeal to history and community. It is the consciousness of religious experience that allows the Christian to judge the veracity of the communal history presented in the Scriptures. For this reason, for Hofmann the ultimate source of all authority is human religious experience and not the word of God.

Such a focus on religious experience, as well as Hofmann's corresponding notion of Christian conduct being formed by a new inner law of the Spirit, smack of what Lutherans have historically called "enthusiasm." In the Smalcald Articles, Luther famously described enthusiasm as tied up with the origin of all sin (SA, III, VIII; *Triglotta*, 495–96). The essence of this phenomenon is the human being's focus on the inner experience of the Spirit as the basis of our understanding of God and his will.

Such reliance on our own divinized inner thoughts and feeling is problematic not because it subverts our ability to find a proper intellectual foundation for our abstract theological projects. Rather, as for Luther, the chief concern of the theologian is to break the cycle of self-justification by learning to distinguish properly law from gospel. Enthusiasm is problematic because it attempts to silence God's objective address to the sinner in law and gospel. As long as individuals judge themselves by their inner self-estimate, then they may see themselves as righteous and in no need of a savior. When humans move out from their own self-centered existence and begin to listen to who they are according to God's dual address, such self-justification is no longer possible. According to the law, they have not obeyed God's commandments and neither could they ever have.

128. Johannes von Hofmann, *Die Schutzschriften für eine neue Weise, alte Wahrheit zu lehren* (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1856–1859), 2:95.
129. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 30–32.
130. Hofmann, *Interpreting the Bible*, 186.
131. Hofmann, *Theologische Ethik*, 78; translation my own.
132. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 33.
133. Green's and Robert Schultz's critique. See Green, *The Erlangen School,* 124. Also see Schultz, *Gesetz und Evangelium, 110–20.*
134. See works cited in footnotes 99–101.
135. Fredrich Baumgärtel, *Verheissung: zur Frage des evangelischen Verständnisses des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1952). Green, *The Erlangen School*, gives a short summary of the critique on page 118. Baumgärtel is mainly concerned with the dialectic of law and grace through the history of Israel leading to Christ.
136. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:6.

Similarly, according to the gospel and its preaching of the cross, the hearer comes to recognize the depth of sin, which is so deep and terrible that the divine Son of God has had to suffer the infinite judgment of God's wrath. Luther writes:

> In addition, it follows that our sins are so great, so infinite and invincible, that the whole world could not make satisfaction for even one of them. Certainly the greatness of the ransom — namely, the blood of the Son of God — makes it sufficiently clear that we can neither make satisfaction for our sin nor prevail over it. . . . *But we should note here the infinite greatness of the price paid for it*. Then it will be evident that its power is so great that it could not be removed by any means except that the Son of God be given for it. Anyone who considers this carefully will understand the one word "sin" includes the eternal wrath of God and the entire kingdom of Satan, and that sin is no trifle.[137]

For real justification, we must live outside of ourselves in the person of Christ through faith. Enthusiasts recoil from these truths and divinize their own thought and feeling to protect themselves against it.

In this sense, Hofmann's preference for the Heilsgeschichte and its verification by religious consciousness may be read as an attempt to silence the voice of the law. In order to do this, Hofmann rejects God's punitive justice, despite its ubiquity in Scripture (Deut 32:41; Rom 2:6; 12:19; 2 Tim 4:14). In Hofmann's thinking, there is objective divine wrath in the form of a real alienation within the divine-human relationship, but for him such wrath is safely tucked away in the old dispensation. Though sin and its negative effects have continued this side of the millennial kingdom, the alienation and wrath of God are divided from the contemporary believer by the gulf of historical time. In fact, Christ himself is also historically divided from the believer by the gulf of history, but this is no matter. Christians at present may luxuriate in their current interior experience of divine love as mediated to them by the historical community of the church. God has, in a sense, "gotten over" the law and its condemning effects.

Nevertheless, this sort of theology does not really solve the problem of the law. As Paul shows, God's wrath remains ever present under the thin veil of his creation (Rom 1:18). It is also present in the word of law that confronts the creature through the preaching office (Rom 2–3). God is not limited by time and neither can his will and presence as law be limited to a particular historical era. Being built into the structure of the world, God's law is pervasive and cannot be escaped; the claim that it can be avoided by a particular theory about historical development is pure illusion.[138] This is the fundamental flaw of Heilsgeschichte theology. It seeks to box God and his law into a particular historical era, when this is self-evidently not possible.

The irony of the Heilsgeschichte theology is that in limiting God to time and consigning the threat of the law to a different dispensation, it also shuts up Christ — the only true solution to the problem of the law — in the historical past. Nevertheless, just as God in his glory and power in the law cannot be segregated from human existence, neither can the risen Jesus — who participates in the same divine power — be boxed out of human existence. Indeed, Christ himself promises to be ever present with his church because he has received the fullness of divine glory (Matt 28:19–20). He promises that when the church gathers around his name — that is, the means of grace to which his name is attached — his reality will be truly present there with them (Matt 18:20). In this, those who hear the proclamation of grace presented to them in word and sacrament will also hear the very voice of Christ through these means: "One who hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16). It was Luther's great theological insight that he recognized this fact. Indeed, as Oswald Bayer has shown, it was the recognition that the word of absolution was identical with the very presence of Christ justifying the sinner that finally brought about the so-called Reformation breakthrough.[139]

Hofmann's preference for the* Heilsgeschichte *may be read as an attempt to silence the voice of the law.

In this we observe that the risen Christ is limited by neither time nor space and, therefore, may save his people in the midst of the old age of sin, death, and the law. This dual presence of God under the forms of law and gospel determines, to use a Trinitarian metaphor, Christian existence as one within the *perichoresis* of the ages. There is no orderly development in Christian existence, as in Heilsgeschichte. Rather, this side of the final kingdom of glory, there is a continuous dialectical interplay within the individual believer of the realities of the fall, redemption, and the last judgment. Being addressed by God's word of law and grace, the believer lives between the ages, caught up both under the weight of the rotting corpse of the old creation and the in-breaking of the new resurrected life. According to Bayer's interpretation, this truth finds an important expression in the writings of Luther:

137. AE 26: 33; emphasis added. Also see similar comments in Chemnitz, *Two Natures*, 148; and David Chytraeus, *A Summary of the Christian Faith (1568)*, trans. Richard Dinda (Malone, Tex.: Repristination Press, 2000), 37–38.

138. Gerhard Forde, "Fake Theology: Reflections on Antinomianism Past and Present," in *The Preached God: Proclamation in Word and Sacrament*, ed. Mark Mattes and Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 215. Forde correctly writes: "Antinomianism is fake theology." In other words, since the law cannot be escaped, antinomianism does not achieve anything that theology is supposed to solve.

139. Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas Trapp (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 52–53; Oswald Bayer, *Promissio: Geschichte der reformatorischen Wende in Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 240–41.

> Luther's apocalyptic understanding of creation and history opposes modern concepts of progress. For Luther, the only progress is return to one's baptism, the biographical point of rupture between the old and new worlds. Creation, Fall, redemption, and completion of the world are not sequential advance, one after the other, but perceived in an intertwining of the times.[140]

The Christian lives through Christ, who contains within himself the *perichoretic* unity of the ages. Luther writes: "We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and the neighbor. He lives in Christ through faith, and in his neighbor through love" (AE 31: 371). Christ is the son of Adam and takes upon himself the condemnation and sin of Adam's race (Rom 5; 2 Cor 5:21). At the same time, Christ is the second Adam and the divine Son of the Father, who actualizes the new age of righteousness by the power of his active obedience and resurrection (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15; AE 26: 277–78). In that Christ unites within himself sin and righteousness, death and life, he prefigures the *simul* of Christian existence.[141]

Christ is not bound to time or space, and, therefore, the saving presence of his one sacrifice may be present to Christians throughout time.

The Christian's existence in Christ therefore hangs suspended between the old and new ages. In the waters of baptism the Christian is united to Christ's death and resurrection. Even as the believer daily falls into sin, baptized ones may ever return to the present reality of their baptism through faith (LC IV; *Triglotta*, 733–43). Indeed, as we have seen, Christ and the reality of his life are not constrained to the succession of time, and therefore the Christian united with him through baptism and its promise lacks this constraint as well. There is no need to enter into penance in order to repair one's baptism, as in the Roman Catholic tradition.[142] Such a concept assumes that the reality of baptism is separated from the Christian by an unbridgeable gulf of time. Consequently one needs to find alternative means to actualize the same redeeming reality in the present.

Similarly the Christian has access to forgiveness through the very presence of Christ's sacrificed body and blood in the Lord's Supper. In the words of institution, Jesus describes his mysterious physicality in the Supper as the presence of his sacrificed body on the cross.[143] The essence of Old Testament sacrifice was the separation of body from blood (Lev 17:11) and, therefore, to speak of one's own substance as separated ("this is my body," "this is my blood," and so forth) is to speak of them as something sacrificed. Again, Christ is not bound to time or space, and, therefore, the saving presence of his one sacrifice may be present to Christians throughout time (Rev 13:8). David Scaer writes:

> What men view as historic crucifixion, God views as everlasting sacrificial atonement. What God views as eternal sacrifice, the church receives as sacrament. Sacrifice and sacrament describe the same "thing" but from different perspectives. Crucifixion and atonement are not two different events, but one event viewed from two different perspectives, human and divine. The Lord's Supper is the presentation of the sacrificial atonement among Christians at worship.[144]

Therefore the act of "remembrance" is not remembrance in the sense of a mnemonic aid, but in the Old Testament sense of God's own promise being placed before one's eyes (Exod 2:24). In that the Christian orally receives Christ's sacrificed body and blood and the promises attached to them in the Lord's Supper, they receive the forgiveness of sin and the promise of the resurrected life that have become actual in Christ's person.

CONCLUSION

Although there is little that the confessional Lutheran can find theologically useful in the theology of Hofmann, his thought is extremely interesting and rich and, therefore, wonderful food for thought. His life and works are a fascinating blend of several intellectual currents in nineteenth-century Germany—Romanticism, Pietism, German Idealism, Neo-Lutheranism, and so forth. Moreover, the theological errors in Hofmann's thought serve as a proper catalyst for enabling confessional Lutherans to clarify their own principles. As we have seen, this is particularly true with regard to the Lutheran commitment to the truth of the gospel and the promise of Christ's saving presence in word and sacrament. LOGIA

140. Oswald Bayer, "Martin Luther," in *The Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Carter Lindberg (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 51–52.
141. See comment to this effect in Erich Seeberg, *Luthers Theologie: Motive und Ideen* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1929–1937), 2:8.
142. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 224–26, 322–31.
143. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1966), 222. Jeremias writes that Jesus "is applying to Himself terms from the language of sacrifice. . . . Each of the two nouns [*body* and *blood*] presuppose a slaying that has separated flesh and blood. In other words: Jesus speaks of himself as a sacrifice."
144. David Scaer, "Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45 (1981): 48.

The "Third Use of the Law" and Werner Elert's Position

Lowell Green

The problem of the *tertius usus legis* is not simply a matter of whether the Christian follows the Ten Commandments as his rule for life. Instead, the so-called Third Use is part of the total question of whether there is to be a distinction between law and gospel or only a coordination between law and gospel. The whole area of justification and sanctification, of the Christian ethos, of catechetics and homiletics, and of liturgics, will be vitally affected by the decisions we make as to whether there is a third use of the law that serves a didactic purpose and instructs the Christian about what he should do and leave undone in such a way that it does not accuse him of sin. To orientate ourselves in these matters we need to go back to the age of Martin Luther to see how this problem emerged and how it was solved in the past.

CONCEPTS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LAW IN EARLY LUTHERANISM

Martin Luther's Concept of Two Functions of the Law

Luther taught two functions of the law: the civil function, which provided peace and order and which belonged to the state; and the theological function, which showed the believer his sin and his need for the forgiveness of sins through Christ. Although there is a passage in his theses against the Antinomians in which he appears to embrace a third or didactic use, this statement has been shown to be an interpolation from the *Loci* of Melanchthon and is therefore a noteworthy rejected reading.

Luther's own position is clearly portrayed in the Small Catechism. He teaches that all the commandments are contained in the First, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And this means, "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." In Luther's explanation to each of the other nine commandments, he asks, "What does this mean?" and he replies: "We should fear and love God." If one fears and loves God, then one will keep the commandments; if one transgresses a commandment, then that commandment becomes the accusing voice of God, convicting of sin. Pastors and teachers should instill in their young people the realization that each commandment means "We should fear and love God, that . . . " The temptation must be avoided to reduce the catechizations of the Ten Commandments into casuistry; catechization should instead hold to Luther's insistence that all the commandments are contained in the words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and that the other nine commandments are illustrations of the first one, in which God holds an unconditional claim to our loyalty. Luther gives his position in his hymn of 1524, "Dies sind die heilgen zehn Gebot" (*EKG* 240; *TLH* 287). (Unfortunately *The Lutheran Hymnal* has distorted the first stanza as follows: "That man a godly life might live, / God did these Ten Commandments give . . . " This is not at all a translation of Luther's original: "Dies sind die heilgen zehn Gebot, / die uns gab unser Herre Gott . . . "). Luther teaches that whenever the law teaches it also accuses of sin. This comes out in stanza 11: "Die G'bot all uns gegeben sind, / daß du dein Sünd, o Menschenkind, / erkennen sollst und lernen wohl, / wie man vor Gott leben soll. / Kyrieleis." This is another way of saying that any *usus didacticus* necessarily includes the *usus elenchticus*: That the law always accuses of sin.[1]

Philipp Melanchthon's Development of Three Functions of the Law

Where did this theological term, *usus legis*, come from? In checking the various Latin dictionaries regarding the usage of men such as Thomas Aquinas, one finds that the term is absent. I discussed this terminology with my good friend and fellow Melanchthon scholar, Ralph Keen, who is a professor at the University of Iowa and has a thorough knowledge of the Latin classics. Keen wrote me, in an e-mail in September 2004, that the term does not seem to appear in medieval theology and that he thinks that Melanchthon, who was perhaps the greatest Latinist of his time, had invented the term for his own use. Melanchthon was well acquainted with Cicero, who had employed the word *usus* rather extensively as legal terminology. As a legal term *usus* meant for Cicero so much as the use or enjoyment of a particular thing. In the Middle Ages it had held the connotation of "custom." Keen used these homely examples. *Usus* can

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1. It is rather striking that in contrast to his sermon "Wie der Christ sich zu Mose schicken soll," where he said that the commandments were given only to the Jews on Mount Sinai, he writes instead in his hymn: "Dieß sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot', / Die uns gab unser Herre Gott / Durch Mosen, seinen Diener treu, / Hoch auf dem Berg Sinai. / Kyrieleis!"

mean custom. For example, it is the custom of the Keens to eat cheese. In classical jurisprudence, *usus* means the right to enjoy. For example, Ralph Keen has the use (the right to enjoy) all of the cheese in the house. In classical everyday language, *usus* means the purpose of a thing. For example, Ralph Keen's use of cheese is for the purpose of receiving calcium. As the word *usus* was introduced by Melanchthon in connection with law and gospel, it had the connotation of purpose or application of the law in society or in the life of the individual.

The* tertius usus legis *became characteristic of Melanchthon's understanding of the place of the law in the life of the regenerate Christian.

There was no trace of either the term or the concept of a "third use" in the first edition of Melanchthon's *Loci communes* of 1521. It first appeared in the second edition, the *Loci theologici* of 1535, where he wrote:

> The third office of the law in those who, having been justified by faith, is this, that it teaches them concerning good works which ones are pleasing works to God, and it commands certain works in which one's obedience to God is put into practice.[2]

From this time, the *tertius usus legis* became characteristic of Melanchthon's understanding of the place of the law in the life of the regenerate Christian.

The Position of the Calvinists and the Reformed on the "Third Use of the Law"

Whereas Luther wrote that the chief function of the law is the *usus theologicus* or *usus paedagogicus*, that is, the law accusing us of sin, John Calvin instead made the *tertius usus legis*, that is, the law telling us what we should do or leave undone, the chief or proper function of the law. This played itself out in the famous "blue laws" that sought to regulate the behavior of the citizens. Long lists of casuistry of what was permitted or forbidden arose. This led to the almost hypocritical self-righteousness of those who by good works sought to make sure their predestination. This mentality ruled in Puritan England and New England and in places such as the Netherlands. The sad thing is that in the Netherlands, after the yoke of Puritan blue laws was cast aside, antinomianism and libertarianism set in to fill the vacuum that remained. Today the Netherlands is possibly the most immoral country in Europe. As it says in Oliver Wendell Holmes's famous poem, "The Deacon's Masterpiece," the one-hoss shay has collapsed completely. The route of legalism and third-use ethos ended in failure. Nevertheless there are Lutherans, particularly the Pietists, who still want to travel that failed route today.

The Position of the Lutheran Confessions Regarding the Functions of the Law

During Luther's lifetime, the First Antinomian Controversy took place. Johann Agricola (1494–1566) had objected to a statement by Melanchthon that insisted on the importance of preaching the law. Agricola insisted that the law belonged in civil government, not in the preaching of the Church (" . . . aufs Rathaus, nicht auf den Predigtstuhl," for example, in Joest, 47). Luther participated in several "Antinomian Debates" in which he put down the contentions of Agricola. After several years of controversy, Agricola left Wittenberg and took a position under the Elector of Brandenburg.

The Second Antinomian Controversy broke out in the controversy between the Crypto-Calvinists and the Gnesio-Lutherans over whether good works were necessary for salvation. Jakob Andreae, the author of FC VI, had taught in one of his "Six Christian Sermons" that the law exists also for the regenerate to teach them the good works they should do to please God; here the law is not a demand but a proclamation of the will of God. The Gnesio-Lutherans who rejected the position of both Andreae and the Crypto-Calvinists in favor of a Third Use included Luther's old friend, Nikolaus von Amsdorf, Andreas Poach, Michael Neander, and Andreas Musculus, among others. FC VI was the effort to work out the differences between Andreae and Musculus, both of whom were coauthors of the Formula of Concord. This is why the FC does not insist on teaching the Third Use of the law but only reports it as a problem that was resolved between Andreae and Musculus.

The principal axiom of the Lutheran Symbols is the phrase in the Apology, *lex semper accusat*. The Confessions know of no "friendly use" of the law that shows the believer his virtue rather than his guilt. Although the "Third Use" is discussed as a problem in the sixth article of the Formula of Concord, it is never enjoined as a necessary teaching. After all, this article was written as a sequel to Article V, "On the Proper Distinction of Law and Gospel."

The Impact of the Concept of a "Third Use" upon Lutheran Catechetics

The Erlangen professor of practical theology Gerhard von Zezschwitz criticized those who taught Luther's Catechism in a legalistic manner and added the following lines:

> The Palatine or Heidelberg Catechism places the same legalistic thesis at the start. And in the explanation it favors the later Reformed practice, placing the law (Ten Commandments) after the Faith (The Creed), the "thou shalt"

2. "Tertium officium legis in his, qui sunt fide iusti, est, ut et doceat eos de bonis operibus, quaenam opera Deo placeant, et praecipiat certa opera, in quibus oboedientiam erga Deum exerceant" (*CR* 21:394).

> after the Christian state of redemption, Moses after Christ: what a confusion! Nowhere else does the thorough working of the principle of justification for doctrine as a whole appear with such clarity according to form and arrangement of the material as here (in Luther's Catechism). For the Reformation stands or falls with this article.[3]

Thereby von Zezschwitz warned against the pedagogical practice of presenting first the Creed and then the Ten Commandments, as has been done in some recent catechetical systems in America. Even the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has published catechetical lessons that start with the Creed, what we should believe, and then go on to the Ten Commandments, how we should live and please God. This is an un-Lutheran corruption of the Small Catechism. Luther had it right in the first place.

Every time that the parish pastor starts to teach the First Chief Part of the Small Catechism to the young people, he is faced with the question of how to deal with the so-called Third Use of the law. If he presents casuistry instances in teaching the Ten Commandments, he is coordinating law and gospel instead of distinguishing them.

The Impact of a "Third Use of the Law" upon Lutheran Liturgics

In classical Lutheranism, the divine service is called by its Latin terminology, *cultus Dei*, "God's service." Friedrich Kalb describes in his book *Die Lehre vom Kultus der lutherischen Kirche zur Zeit der Orthodoxie* how the seventeenth-century orthodox Lutheran theologians such as Abraham Calov construed that the *cultus Dei* was a part of natural law given already before the fall in paradise, and that therefore the divine service remained as a part of the law that was valid also for the regenerate.[4] Kalb comments as follows:

> This coupling of cultus and law already in the original state of man before the fall is very significant. So early as Melanchthon's Loci the cultus is one of the three natural laws. The Divine Service is really given to people only in the form of the law. When already our first parents in their state of innocence could get no further without the law as a rule and mirror, then naturally also the regenerate have need for the law as the norm for the Divine Service. The third use of the law is therefore already prepared for.[5]

Kalb notes that in this case the *tertius usus legis* becomes the presupposition for the divine service. He writes that Luther stated his position in the Lectures on Genesis. There, the discussion of Genesis 2:16–17 (WA 42: 79–83) says repeatedly that man in the state of innocence before the fall was not at all subject to the law, but that God had given Adam the admonition or command that he should keep the sixth day as a day of rest in which he was to consider the goodness of God and render him praise and thanks.[6] Accordingly, Kalb properly concludes that when the Orthodox Lutheran theologians insisted that cultus Dei was part of the law and that as such it was given to Adam before the fall, they were departing from Luther and opting for the position of Melanchthon. Kalb writes that the Old Testament Jew hoped that by performing cultic rituals he might render satisfaction and achieve justification, but that the New Testament shows that "every legalistic cultic contribution is shown by the gospel as a wrong conclusion, as an erroneous way."[7] However, Kalb notes that, instead of following the New Testament's antithetic rejection of the Old Testament cultus, the Orthodox dogmaticians sought a mediating way in which the New Testament cultus was somehow under the law and was discussed under the first three commandments of the Decalogue.

ELERT'S TEACHING ON LAW AND GOSPEL AND THE USES OF THE LAW

Any attempt to explain Elert's position on the third use of the law will run afoul if the scholar overlooks the context of Elert's system. To establish the context we need to explore the system behind Elert's book *Das christliche Ethos* (1949). The book is divided into three main parts: Ethos under the Law, Ethos under Grace, and Objective Ethos. Under Part Two, Ethos under Grace, there is a discussion of "The Invisible Struggle," in which he discusses Two Ways and Two Times" (§ 44), followed by "Two Kingdoms" (§ 45); this prepares for the "third use of the law" (§ 46). Elert's procedure is somewhat analogous to Luther's concept of the believer as *simul justus et peccator*, in which Luther taught that the believer really lives in two worlds. Elert introduces his own position with the remark,

> Ethos under the law and ethos under grace are not coordinated like two stations on life's way. The old man and the new man are not chronologically separated from one another, but the dividing line runs longitudinally through our whole life.[8]

3. Gerhard von Zezschwitz, *Die Christenlehre im Zusammenhang*, 1, *Die zehn Gebote und der erste Glaubensartikel* (Leipzig: J. C.Hinrichs, 1880), 11.
4. Friedrich Kalb, *Die Lehre vom Kultus der lutherischen Kirche zur Zeit der Orthodoxie* (Berlin: Lutherisches VerlagsHaus, 1959), 23.
5. Ibid., 24; Friedrich Kalb, *Theology of Worship in 17th Century Lutheranism*, trans. Henry P. A. Hamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 21.
6. Kalb cites WA 42: 80.4; the author cannot find Kalb's citation in WA 42, but Kalb is right in asserting that Luther presents this thought repeatedly in the entire section of the Genesis Lectures.
7. Kalb, 25.
8. Elert's concept of "two ways" is strikingly in accord with Luther's postil on Ephesians 4:22–28 in WA 22: 311–22 and Lenker 9:304–16; I found this in Walch 12: 1196–1213. Here Luther describes the old man and the new man. "True Christians are those who are created through faith in Christ" (Walch 12:1205). Thus Ephesians 4:24, "That ye put on the new man . . . ," (Walch 12: 1202 ff.) is one of the "ethical imperatives" of which Elert writes. This sermon of Luther is cited in SD VI, 9. Luther mentions the Ten Commandments here, not as rules to be followed, but as evidence whether one belongs to the old or the new man. Inevitably this would lead

The two natures remain in an invisible struggle with each other. The Christian also lives in two times: chronological and kairological. Chronological time has to do with the clock or the calendar; kairological time has to do with God's time, the time when God visits us or when God strikes.

> In this sense the kairos of our life is the point of time in which God steps before us in a way where we can no longer evade him. . . . The decision of faith is removed from chronology by the kairological factor, in that faith affirms kairos but unbelief denies it in favor of a merely chronological course of life.[9]

So the Christian in his outward life stands in chronos but in his inner life he stands in kairos. This leads into the topic of the "Two Kingdoms" (§ 45)—the civil rule and the rule of grace. The civil powers stand only under the law and not the gospel (otherwise one holds to theocratic enthusiasm); but the church proclaims both the law and the gospel. The problem of the so-called third use of the law comes out of this duality of law and gospel. The Christian stands under two times. As he stands under grace, the law has no application to him; but since he is *simul justus et peccator*, the law affects him as a sinner. Therefore the law not only teaches him what God would have him to do but it simultaneously shows where he has failed, and thereby the law accuses him of sin. Elert insists over and over that there is no *usus didacticus* without an *usus elenchticus*: *lex semper accusat*!

> The Christian lives under law and gospel, which means that he is simultaneously in two times (chronos and kairos) and in two kingdoms, the secular order which is built upon natural law (the Decalogue) and the *Regnum Christi*, which proclaims the gospel. He is paradoxically a sinner and a saint: as a sinner he lives under the accusations of the law but as a saint he is under the gospel, which declares him righteous for Christ's sake.

The main concern of Elert was that the law must never be blunted; it must never be robbed of its accusatory character. But if he questioned a didactic use of the law that does not expose sin, this does not mean that Elert in any way, shape, or form was an antinomian. For Elert, the law was the first and inseparable part of the pair, law and gospel. If one does not preach the law, he cannot proclaim the gospel because the gospel is the answer to the accusations of the law.

It was this that led to Elert's acrimonious exchanges with Karl Barth, whose theology Elert considered to be basically antinomian. Barth had written that the law is only "the needful form of the gospel," whatever that means. Especially in the controversies with Barth in the 1930s over the orders of creation,[10] Elert insisted that Barth had emasculated the law and muted its demands. Elert thought that in Barth's system, the law became something that the believer himself could fulfill. This Barthian error was then carried over into the Barmen Declaration, which became the identifying mark of the so-called Confessing Church, and later of EKD, the Evangelical Church in Germany. And therefore Barth, in depriving the law of its accusatory voice, had hindered the struggle of Elert and others against the teaching on the law of Hitler's German Christian supporters. Deprived of a real and commanding voice of the law, the churches that confronted the lawlessness of Hitler's reign were left without any real resource as they fought for their very lives during the Third Reich.

In 1934 Elert addressed this issue when he published a pamphlet entitled *Bekenntnis, Blut und Boden* ("Confession, Blood, and Ground"). Some people who never bothered to read the book thought that this was a concession to Nazi ideology. But it was in reality quite the reverse. Already he declares:

> Whoever thinks that our criticism of Barmen is an option for the German Christians is in error. We dispute the right of Barmen to be a confession and the claim of the German Christians that they have a franchise on the blood and ground of the German people.

And stating that he would make no concessions on either side, he cited the words of the rationalist Paulus, who said he would make no concessions "unless use were made of the manner of Herr Schelling in Berlin to make himself unassailable by the help of the police."[11]

Elert went on to explain that *Blut und Boden*, that is, blood and the earth—our inheritance or family relationships as well as the place in which we live—have to do with natural theology. Natural theology stands in drastic opposition to our Christian faith, and we must be skeptical regarding any natural theology that claims to be a source of positive knowledge of God because it can only lead to our ruin. God's revelation of salvation in Christ, his Son and our Lord, tells us that he does not desire our ruin, and that he did not call us into this life in order to put us to death, but in order that he might call us through death into the new life. It tells us that God does not desire a conflict with us but instead reconciliation. And in that we receive this message to us, Christ becomes our peace.[12] Flesh and blood and earth all belong to the law rather than the gospel. "Through the works of the law shall no flesh be justi-

to the *usus elenchticus* as one notes in one's own life how much one has failed to live in the fear and love of God. A Rörer copy of the sermon on 3 October 1535, WA 41: 438–43, shows how varied is the form in Walch 12 and WA 22.

9. Elert, *Das christliche Ethos* (Tübingen: Furche-Verlag, 1949), 376–77.

10. Regarding the *Ordnungen*, Elert distinguished several meanings. In regard to *Schöpfungsordnungen*, it meant a S*einsgefüge*, not a *Sollgefüge*. "Was Gott schafft, erhält und regiert, soll nicht so sein, sondern es ist so" (Elert, *Ethos*, 112). It is not an imperative but an indicative.

11. Werner Elert, *Bekenntnis, Blut und Boden: drei theologische Vorträge* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1934), 3.

12. Ibid., 16–17.

fied before God. For through the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16). That is the indispensable service which the law must contribute to the gospel. For only sinners, and furthermore those who know that they are sinners, can experience the grace of God."[13]

Elert reiterates his position in *Das christliche Ethos*: the believer lives simultaneously in two times and two kingdoms. The two times are the time of grace and the time of retribution. The two kingdoms are the reign of grace and the reign of judgment. "The question of a third use of the law recapitulates once more the problem of our entire Ethics. God's judgment of man that is here in question is twofold. As the law it is condemnation; as the gospel it is enduing with grace. Both judgments apply, but one refutes the other." Here is no mere dogmatic playing with words. This divergence in the divine judgment controls practically, in this way or that way, the life of every Christian. Elert points to the divergence of two ways, two times, and two kingdoms. "The teaching of a third use of the law is the attempt to even off the divergence. This attempt will always be undertaken where one looks for a moralization of the world in God's plan of salvation."[14] But in such moralizing attempts, the law always gets the upper hand in the distinction of law and gospel. The gospel becomes merely a way of helping out. In such a case, "the gospel only legitimizes the notion that the believers can accomplish that which without its help they could not accomplish—the fulfilling of the divine commandments. For this purpose the law must also tell them 'what they should do.' That is the task of the third use. It evens off the divergence: Whatever in the law conflicts with the gospel—its threats, its condemnation, its demands for restitution—is overcome through Christ and is put away. Now the law has become only a rule for living."[15] "The Christian cannot withdraw himself from the *usus politicus*, for he lives out his faith and preserves it in the natural orders. . . . But because, in order to be able to live under grace, we dare not for a moment forget that we are sinners, therefore the law must ceaselessly exercise on us its *usus proprius* or *theologicus* (that is, its accusing work)."[16]

Elert finds that rather than Melanchthon's position, Luther's position of the twofold use of the law prevailed in the Formula of Concord. There it says, "Christ himself takes the law in his hands and expounds it spiritually. He uses the law in order to convict us of our sinfulness (SD v, 10)."[17] Elert now turns to the "two times" (as we discussed them above) in reference to Luther's great Commentary on Galatians: "The two times of law and gospel are not chronological portions of our lives which follow one another, but refer in each case to the so or so qualified totality of life. Insofar as it is flesh, it is under the law; but insofar as it is of the Spirit, it is under the gospel" (Quatenus est caro, sub lege est, quatenus Spiritus, sub Evangelio est [WA 40, I: 526.31]). "If I look at myself, it is all flesh, that is, all sin. If I look upon Christ, I am totally holy and pure and know absolutely nothing concerning the law" (WA 40, I: 537.24). But because the Christian also always remains flesh, the "chronological totality of this earthly life is also (kairologically) 'time of the law.'" But by the intervention of Christ this time is also again limited by the (kairological) time of grace, "which under the conspectus of the eternal Christ explodes that chronological time and is eternal."[18] Elert continues:

> Flesh and spirit are not related to each other like two chronological periods of our life, and they are also not two parts, but instead two sides of one and the same personality. This doubleness has its reason not in the circumstance that the person is partly a sinner and partly not a sinner, but rather that he finds himself in God's field of vision, who judges him according to the law but afterwards bestows mercy upon him.[19]

Regarding Luther's exposition of the Sixth Commandment, Elert points out that here there is no benign use of the law that solely informs us what we should do. Elert insists:

God's judgment of man that is here in question is twofold. As the law it is condemnation; as the gospel it is enduing with grace.

The Sixth Commandment does not say whether or whom one should marry, a question that in obedience to God requires an answer; nor does it give any kind of answer to the thousands of practical questions for marital and family living. It says only that a marriage which has been contracted shall not be broken.[20]

Elert writes:

> This commandment applies beyond all doubt also to Christians but not to one who has been "born again" because this person would certainly not commit adultery, but it applies to the old Adam, to the flesh, from which the Christian is also never free. The law addresses this old Adam in the Christian with threats and punishment. We can never read the Decalogue as though the threats did not stand

13. Ibid., 17.
14. Elert, *Ethos*, 393.
15. Ibid., 394.
16. Ibid., 386–87.
17. Ibid., 387.
18. Ibid., 389–90.
19. Ibid., 390.
20. Ibid.

therein. The law of God is and remains a punitive law also when it is spoken to the Christians. When the *tertius usus* would say that we could hear the law at times without the threats, that is a pure fiction. There is no situation in which its function of accuser is not exercised. Consequently the *usus proprius* that oppresses the conscience cannot be split off into a harmless *tertius usus*.[21]

Elert now turns to SD VI, 17, which teaches that the regenerate person, "who has been newly born through the Holy Ghost and freed from the law . . . is no longer under the law but under grace."[22] The Formula avoided Melanchthon's understanding of a *tertius usus legis* and went back to Luther's position of a twofold use. Regarding the question of what meaning the law has for the regenerate, Elert writes that the Formula has a twofold usage: a narrow and a broad concept. Let us review these in turn.

Because the new person lives with the old person in a personal union, the* tertius usus *refers to the person who is caught up in the invisible conflict.

(1) In the narrow sense is understood persons "who have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost and set free from the law. . . . [They] are no longer under the law but under grace" (SD VI, 17). When such regenerate persons are understood in this narrow sense, nothing more is needed to fulfill the law. The law no longer accuses them with its curse nor torments them with its compulsion.

Moreover it does not need to drive them because without all teaching, admonition, cessation, or driving of the law, they do that which they ought to do according to God's will; it's just as the sun, moon, and heavenly bodies follow their appointed course . . . so (the regenerate persons) do according to the order of God that which God has once given them to do. "Without all teaching"—the law has no informative task further to fulfill. That is the judgment against Melanchthon who ascribed a teaching function of the law especially to those who had been justified. And it was decisive for Luther who wrote: If I gaze upon Christ, I know absolutely nothing of the law.[23]

(2) The broad sense. Elert now goes on to explain that the Formula of Concord teaches something different regarding the regenerate Christians in the broader sense, that is, in their actual earthly situation. "'The old Adam hangs upon them until they go to the grave and therefore the struggle continues in them between the Spirit and the Flesh' (SD VI, 18). On account of such fleshly desires they need not only the law's daily teaching and admonition, accusations and threats, but also very often the punishment, that thereby they may be encouraged and led to follow the Spirit of God" (SD VI, 9).

Elert's position is clearly stated in the following lines.

To be sure the Formula of Concord further teaches that also the 'regenerate' need the law and also instruction from the law, that it may teach them certain works, but: "The law prescribes good works also to the faithful, that it may show and point out, as in a mirror, that the works that we do in this life are imperfect and impure" (SD VI, 21).

Elert concludes:

In other words: There is no purely informative function of the law for the regenerate in his actual earthly situation, neither for the Old Adam in him, nor in so far as he really performs the 'good works' of the law. To accuse of sin is the proper office of the law (SD VI:14). Whoever hears the law of God, on that person it carries out this accusative function (or *usus elenchticus* as the later dogmaticians wrote). *Lex semper accusat*, Melanchthon had written in the Apology. The *usus didacticus* of the later dogmaticians in the sense of mere information is a pure abstraction which, if it is raised to a practical norm, can only lead to the *pestilentissima securitas* of the Pharisees.[24]

The law according to its *usus spiritualis* applies to *de justificandis, non de justificatis* (thus Luther, WA 40/I: 528, 14) that is, it does not apply to the new person but only to the old man. But because the new person lives with the old person in a personal union, the *tertius usus* refers to the person who is caught up in the invisible conflict. In a functional respect it is not distinguished from the *usus spiritualis* (*proprius, theologicus*).[25]

In his essay on "Gesetz und Evangelium" of 1949, Elert insists that the law must be preached in the church today and explains:

It doesn't serve for the construction of the new man but rather for the destruction of the old man. It must ceaselessly tell us that we lie when we say that we have no sin. It unceasingly exercises the principle function (*usus proprius*) because it always accuses (*semper accusans*) and because it can't ever be anything else. To be driven by the spirit means not only to be driven by Christ but also to be driven unto him because we are unceasingly troubled by the ac-

21. Ibid., 391.
22. Ibid., 392.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 393.
25. Ibid.

cusations of the law. The proper function (*usus proprius*) of the law is, in the language of the old dogmaticians, the accusatory function (*usus elenchticus*) and therefore it is always the pedagogical function (*usus paedagogicus*) that drives us to Christ.

OTHER WRITERS WHO IN GENERAL SUPPORT ELERT'S POSITION ON THE THIRD USE

Elert had personally recommended that I read the writings of Hans Emil Weber. Although Weber likely was not familiar with our citations from Elert, he nevertheless writes some pertinent remarks. Weber thinks that early Orthodoxy had strayed from Luther's insights and wandered into Melanchthon's thought patterns. Weber adds:

> It must be shown whether Lutheran Orthodoxy thought this matter completely through—that God deals with a man and not merely to him or over him [emphasis mine]. Only when one knows how God deals with a man in law and gospel can one first know what is meant by sin and what it means to be a sinner; this is not the case with the theologian who only looks at the fact that God places a man under his law and judges him. This is why the discovery of the living word of God was the discovery of man's existence under sin. In that God deals with a man in wrath and grace, he reveals how a man's law of being stands in connectedness with God. Sin is the disturbance and destruction of a man's law of being and is therefore his departure from God. A man stands in the original depravity, in inherited lust, whenever he conducts his life without fear of God, without trust in God, and without love for God—in unbelief, scorn, hate, flight from God, service of idols, blindness, and despair; in this manner he has fallen prey to concupiscence, fleshly lusts, and all the corruption of nature that beclouds our understanding.
>
> But man cannot flee from God. He remains under God's demand and God's judgment. Wherefore man's relation to God can only be restored by an experience of divine wrath, that is, that he internalizes the wrath of God in his own innermost connection with God and thereby understands wrath as a sensus irae (the sensation of divine anger) toward the man himself. This "reformational" understanding must be kept intact in the exposition of sin in dogmatics. . . . Neither Flacius nor his opponents nor the "orthodox theologians" who settled the controversy rightly knew how to draw in the reformational insight. It was from this that the controversy became overly complicated and the resulting decision was unsatisfying.[26]

The whole underlying problem in the discussion of the uses of the law relates to the question, "In what does sanctification of the believer consist?" The great confessional Lutheran theologian from Finland, Lennart Pinomaa, supported the position of Elert when he wrote as follows:

> [Luther's] later theology however shows a distinct aversion to all detailed scrutinizing of holy living. It is difficult to speak of progress, for there is no such thing as growth of the old man in holiness and perfection. The old man in us must be put to death daily and the new man arise, as the Small Catechism puts it. Our natural life is the life of the old man. No form of cure will make the old man into the new. It remains old to the very end. As Luther sees it, the Christian must judge himself once and for all. The new man lives in us only as the alien righteousness of Christ. . . . But under the conditions of this present life Christ does not control us so completely as to make it unnecessary for the old man to go through daily mortification. The new man never becomes a creature whom we might touch and see.[27]

CONCLUSION

It is time to draw the loose ends together. I conclude with the following observations. (1) Article VI of the Solid Declaration does not require us to teach a *tertius usus legis*. Its purpose was only to settle differences between two of its authors: Jakob Andreae and Andreas Musculus. In the end, both men were able to find their position expressed and both signed the Formula of Concord. (2) Although Elert does not wish to teach the third use, he does not explicitly reject it. (3) The third use can be dangerous in Lutheran teaching. It can lead to moralistic and legalistic developments in the life of the individual and the church. (4) Rightly seen, the third use is only the second use applied to the regenerate Christian believer. (5) Where a third use is taught, it must recognize that when the individual sees his life in the law's mirror, he will always and inevitably see that he is still a sinner and that he lacks perfection. If a third or didactic use of the law is taught, it becomes antinomian if it is used in such a way that the law no longer accuses.

It is unwise to become hung up on theological terminology. Rather than to wrangle over terms such as third use, it is better to say what one means in other words. It is important to remember that sanctification does not consist in the sum total of "good works" that the individual accomplishes, but rather that he sees Christ working within him to do and to will according to his own good pleasure (cf. Phil 2:13). LOGIA

26. Hans Emil Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus* (Gutersloh: Bertelsmann, 1937–1951), I/2: 6–7.

27. Lennart Pinomaa, *Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology*, trans. Walter J. Kukkonen (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 68.

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The Third Use Revisited

Scott R. Murray

Lowell Green, in his essay printed in this issue of Logia, *argues that the third use of the law is rightly seen as the second use applied to the regenerate Christian. He also contends that the third use of the law can lead to moralistic and legalistic developments. Green draws these points from his understanding of Werner Elert's position on the third use of the law. As this issue is devoted to "Assessing Erlangen," we do well to evaluate these claims. Scott Murray addresses these arguments, and others, in an essay delivered at the 2005 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions at Concordia Theological Seminary, the same symposium at which Green was to present his essay but was unable to do so due to sickness. We reprint excerpts from Murray's essay here.*[1]

—The Editors

Just why is the term the "third use of the law" so widely maligned? Why is it that the doctrine from the Formula of Concord can be so heartily rejected? Why is it that the question "Do you still teach a third use of the law?" is the theological equivalent of "When did you stop beating your wife?"? Why is it that opponents of the third use of the law put quotation marks around the term "third use" of the law? These quotation marks mean the same thing as the quotation marks around a sign at a Klu Klux Klan rally that reads "Everyone Welcome." It is something nobody could believe. It is dismissively denominated the "so-called third use of the law." What are we afraid of, "third" or "use"?

Opponents of a denomination of the third use of the law presume that the formulators of Concord introduced at best a useless distinction and at worst a pernicious one by defining a third use of the law. Matthew Becker considered it Judaistic[2] and Gerhard Forde called it "the serpent's story."[3] I struggle with these accusations on several levels. First, on the level of logic, I have a hard time believing that the formulators introduced a distinction without a difference. Many who deny a third use of the law argue that the third use is merely first or second use for Christians. This makes the distinction provided by the Formula of Concord quite useless. Historically speaking, the formulators of Concord were masters of careful distinctions and would not have readily imposed a useless complication or meaningless distinction on a work intended to build doctrinal harmony among Lutherans. I doubt that they made this most fundamental logical and theological error in such a carefully crafted work. It would not be an impossible error, of course, but it is incumbent upon those who presume such an error to prove their case. In my opinion, that has not yet happened.

Second, most critics of the teaching about the third use of the law from the Formula of Concord simply presume that it is anti-gospel and a reimposition of the law into the article of justification, despite the specific statements of the Formula of Concord to the contrary. The third use of the law is condemned by those who presume that the third use is the law's backdoor into the gospel. If the third use of the law brings the law back into the gospel, then it should be called the "serpent's story" and condemned with every breath in us as anti-gospel and opposed to Christ and the chief article of our faith.

Can the third use be used to "sneak the law in the back door" or tame down the law to a manageable size, what Gerhard Forde calls "covert antinomianism"? Certainly. The Missouri Synod's bronze age, contemporary "life-style" preaching, head-counting evangelism, or a book on the "three-part goal of the Gospel: obedience, outreach and living to the glory of God"[4] would give us plenty of support for this view. These actions, however, hardly invalidate the Formula's position. *Abusus non tollit usus*. The contention of the opponents of Article VI amounts to the presupposition that it overwhelmingly tends to reimpose the law upon the conscience and cannot be correctly understood, no matter what intention the original formulators might have had in mind in this article.

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1. Scott Murray, "The Third Use of the Law: The Author Responds to His Critics," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 72 (2008): 99–118. We are grateful to Scott Murray and *Concordia Theological Quarterly* for giving us permission to reprint excerpts from this article.
2. Matthew Becker, Review of Law, Life, and t*he Living God*, by Scott Murray, http://www.crossings.org/thursday/2003/thur110603.shtml (accessed 3 October 2012).
3. Gerhard O. Forde, *A More Radical Gospel: Essays on Eschatology, Authority, Atonement, and Ecumenism*, ed. Mark C. Mattes and Steve D. Paulson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 145.
4. Philip M. Bickel and Robert L. Nordlie, *The Goal of the Gospel: God's Purpose in Saving You* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 95–118. See the scheme for preaching "God's commands as our guide for Christian living, showing us the obedience in mission commitment which our Savior seeks from us, so that God may be glorified" (112).

A great deal of the argument about the third use necessarily revolves around the differences between Melanchthon and Luther on the one hand, and Luther and the Formula of Concord on the other.[5] Why is the Formula of Concord taken for such an obvious betrayal of Luther's doctrine of justification, as a re-entry of the law into the gospel? Forde repeats the famous quotation of Luther from his preface to Romans showing what Forde called Luther's (and Paul's!) changed tropology. By tropology Forde means an overarching theme or motif whereby mere ethics is superseded by the eschatological movement from life to death in baptism. In this tropology justification is the end of the law. Here is how Luther puts it: "Faith is a divine work in us that changes us and makes us to be born anew of God. It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men . . . " (AE 35: 370–71). It is so obvious from the quotation that righteousness begins and ends with grace and that faith does good works without being told. Yet that same quotation is prominently featured in the Formula of Concord (SD IV, 10). Could it really be that the formulators of Concord featured Luther's view that the gospel is the end of the law and that ethics could not proceed apart from faith, but then proceeded to betray that view with a simplistic reinjection of the law into Article VI of the Formula of Concord, without being aware that it represented such a betrayal and, indeed, an adoption of "the serpent's story"? This presumes a degree of theological illiteracy on the part of the formulators.

Critics of the third use do not reject separate uses of the law.

It is not as though critics of the third use reject separate uses of the law. They will indeed champion the separate and distinct first and second uses of the law. Gerhard Forde represents most eloquently this point of view, which is now being carried on and ably developed by his students, such as Mark Mattes.

> One who has been grasped by the eschatological vision looks on law differently from one who has not. But this is not to say that one sees a 'third' use. What one sees is precisely the difference between law and gospel so that law can be established in its first two uses this side of the eschaton.[6]

For Forde there are distinguishable first and second uses of the law. But how are they distinguished? Is it merely the distinction between law and gospel, or something more?

With this said, it does not solve the problem of what "use" means in the Formula of Concord. The term "use" is misleading to moderns. It smacks of ethical self-determination against which the Formula of Concord is battling.[7] So how does the Formula use the term? When talking about receiving the holy Sacrament, Luther calls it the "use" of the Sacrament,[8] as does the Augsburg Confession, where it can mean something like "purpose" (AC XIII). Here "use" means reception. Its function revolves around how it is received, not how it is preached or "used." It must be said that "use" does not indicate that there are various kinds of law, one used this way and another that, just as there are not different sacraments of the altar although there might be different uses for the Sacrament (even to life and to death). Therefore, we do not "use" the law. It remains God's to use and ours to proclaim.[9] The uses of the law are a description of what the law actually does. So John Pless in *Handling the Word of Truth* seeks to help the reader distinguish between two kinds of proclamation, law and gospel, and not different laws nor among different uses of the law.[10] For Melanchthon the characteristic distinguishing phrase is "the law and the promises" (Ap IV, 183). He does not speak of distinguishing among the uses of the law. . . .

The threefold use in Melanchthon[11] arises from the question:

> What is the *use* of the law, if the works of the law do not merit the remission of sins, or if we are not righteous by the law? At this point we need to understand that there is a triple use or three offices for the law.[12]

The Lutheran basis for offices includes the concept that one may hold several offices at the same time (pastor, father, and

5. See Louis Smith, Review of *Law, Life, and the Living God*, by Scott Murray, *Lutheran Forum* 37, no. 3 (2003): 67. For a helpful view of the relationship between Luther and Melanchthon, see Ken Schurb, "Philip Melanchthon, the Formula of Concord, and the Third Use of the Law" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2001).
6. Gerhard O. Forde, "Eleventh Locus: Christian Life," in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 2:450.
7. Reinhard Hütter, *Bound to Be Free: Evangelical Catholic Engagements in Ecclesiology, Ethics, and Ecumenism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 120–21.
8. "This example of the disciples must stimulate us to hear, believe, and accept God's Word gladly, to receive absolution, and to make use of the Sacrament" (AE 22: 229).
9. Gerhard Ebeling contends that the term *usus legis* in Melanchthon refers to the law's functions or effects (Gerhard Ebeling, "On the Doctrine of the *Triplex Usus Legis* in the Theology of the Reformation," in *Word and Faith,* trans. James W. Leitch [London: SCM Press, 1963], 74–75).
10. See John Pless, *Handling the Word of Truth* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 35–41.
11. Melanchthon himself only used the term a couple of times in his 1521 *Loci* and it was absent from the 1535 *Loci*. See Ebeling, "*Triplex Usus Legis*," 62–64; Timothy Wengert, *Law and Gospel: Philip Melanchthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997);* and Schurb, "Philip Melanchthon."
12. Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci Communes,* quoted in Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (Frankfurt and Wittenberg, 1690), 97. Preus translates *officia* as "duties" ("offices" is my translation) in his translation of Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 2:437.

husband). The offices of the law may have multiple functions: to keep outward discipline, to accuse, and to instruct at the same time. These functions are all in God's power to unfold when and where it pleases him. For Melanchthon the law has a single use, the title of the locus on the three uses of the law is called *de usu legis*.[13] In the Chemnitz commentary on Melanchthon's *Loci* of 1543, the title of the section is also singular: *de usu et fine legis*.[14] Chemnitz speaks of a "triple use of the law," not three uses.[15] So the Latin text of the Formula reads, *triplex esse legis divinae usum* (SD VI, 1). Thus there is no thought of a third law or of our using the law in a third way. . . .

Louis Smith was absolutely correct in saying that it is not just a matter of semantics when the claim is made that the third use of the law is merely the first and second uses for Christians.[16] William Lazareth certainly concurs on this point:

> At best, if consistently understood as the Pauline *nomos,* the Law's "third use" in Article VI can rightly refer only to the legitimate application of the first two uses to the *persisting sin* ("like a stubborn, recalcitrant donkey") of imperfect Christians, as well as elsewhere to non-Christians. However, that is not a new "third use" in kind, but solely a different area of the first two functions implementation.[17]

There is something instructive about the almost humorous muddling of the uses of the law, "the third use is the first use for Christians," or "the third use is the second use for Christians."[18] First, there is no consensus as to which the third use would be. Is it merely first use for Christians or is it second use for Christians? Like playing musical chairs, then can it also be said that the first use is the third use for unbelievers (and so on)? More seriously, this points out the likelihood that the distinction resides in the impact the one law makes, rather than the various manipulations to which the law might be susceptible. The fact that various "uses" of the law look and sound the same should be no surprise. The numbering of the law, even as first and second, never has been about differing content. The re-creation worked by Christ functions to change how sinners hear and respond to the law within the new creation.

Perhaps Piotr Malysz has put his finger on a large measure of the problem for those who struggle with the third use of the law when he points out that the third use of the law must "be something more than arbitrary legalism that comes after the Gospel and is then ineptly justified by an appeal to the mysteries of God's will."[19] If the law only brings wrath, it appears as a raging and nonrational power, intended merely to burn down human pretensions to self-justification. The question can never be the meaning or justice of the law, only its terrifying result of bringing God's wrath into the world. Under this schema the law does indeed have the appearance of arbitrariness. It is not correct to presume for the second use of the law that sort of arbitrariness. There is, after all, only one and the same law. The law only appears arbitrary to us because of the fall. The fall means that the old Adam will always feel the lash on his back and taste the salty sweat of his brow. There was nothing arbitrary about the primal command not to eat of the tree in the garden, even if Adam and Eve did not understand why God gave it.[20] Where law only as an outbreak of divine wrath can be countered, the chances for an informative function of the law become far better. . . .

There is something instructive about the muddling of the uses of the law.

Theology must not deteriorate merely into a battle over words, although the sound form of words is an essential inheritance of the faith that was once confessed at the Lutheran Reformation in the confessional writings of our church. In my opinion, the term *third use of the law* is privileged vocabulary. It is the church's language. Could it be used as a slogan to cover up legalism? Certainly, but all doctrinal formulae are susceptible to such abuse. This does not invalidate their use. The crux, however, of the argument is: What is the correct meaning of the third use? In the end, I still do not know what a repudiation of the third use of the law gets you, especially if everyone has mutually agreed not to shoot their allies. LOGIA

13. Melanchthon, *Loci Communes,* quoted in Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1690), 97.
14. Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1690), 98.
15. For example, Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (1690), 98–100; SD VI, 16. The term *usus legis* actually shows up as a theological category for the first time in Luther's commentary on Galatians.
16. Smith, Review of *Law, Life and the Living God,* 65.
17. William Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 243.
18. Piotr Malysz, "The Third Use of the Law in Light of Creation and the Fall," in *The Law in Holy Scripture: Essays from the Concordia Theological Seminary Symposium on Exegetical Theology*, ed. Charles Gieschen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 236.
19. Ibid., 235.
20. See Luther's discussion of this command in AE 1: 53–154.

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Franz Delitzsch and The Psalms

Jacob Corzine

The most common description of the Erlangen Theology in the nineteenth century has it built on three pillars: experience, Scripture, and confession.[1] Likewise, the concept of salvation history is rightly attributed to the theologians of the old Erlangen school, in particular to its best-known representative, J. C. K. von Hofmann.[2] This article seeks to take a closer look at the exegesis of Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890), a theologian whose influence was in some ways perhaps even more significant than that of Hofmann. Delitzsch was equally entrenched in the presuppositions and ways of thinking of the Erlangen school, and so this article will begin by coordinating the importance of the Erlangen addition of experience to the already existing Lutheran *norma normans/norma normata* scheme of Scripture and Confession with the concept of salvation history. This discussion will lead quickly into the question of the certainty of faith, which is most comprehensively parsed in Erlangen by the last Erlangen systematician of the nineteenth century, Franz Hermann Reinhold von Frank.[3] Frank's analysis is paralleled in Franz Delitzsch's Old Testament exegesis, and one particular aspect of this will be analyzed on the basis of the Psalter, with a particular eye toward the unique consequences of the Erlangen approach for the exegesis of the Psalms. The conclusion will attempt briefly to uncover what drove Franz Delitzsch to the—one may well say—"hermeneutic" that he applies, as well as what consequences this has for the exegetical result.

EXPERIENCE AND SALVATION HISTORY

In the early nineteenth century, the challenge of Rationalism—namely, how one could justify founding absolute, eternally valid truths upon contingent historical events—elicited answers from all over the theological world. Among these answers was that of the Erlangen school, but Schleiermacher's redefinition of dogmatics as the systematization of faith[4] and Ritschl's utter rejection of metaphysics[5] may also be regarded as theological responses to Rationalism. The question was ultimately a question of certainty: how could the certainty of a truth (such as the loving grace of God) be established on the basis of an historical event for which, when it is called into question, one can offer no definitive proof?[6] The effort to reestablish Christian certainty on ground unshaken by Rationalism is precisely what led to the Erlangen school's recourse to experience.

When the Erlangen theologian speaks of experience, he means the individual Christian's experience of rebirth or conversion. This experience is conceived of as something common to all Christians (although entirely unknown to non-Christians) that is characterized by the recognition of one's own sinfulness, on the one hand, and of the grace of God, on the other.[7] The experience comes to be through the means of grace given to the church, the word and sacraments; however, it is not the water or preaching that defines the experience but rather the new knowledge of, and faith in, God's grace that comes to be therein. This experience plays for the Erlangen theologians a role parallel to that of reason in Rationalism in that it is commonly recognized and accepted, and that in this community, it is undeniable. For the Erlangen theologian, this experience can no more be denied than the sunrise or the eating of a meal, for it is a personal experience that does not require the verification of an external authority.

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1. Karlmann Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1993), 24–26; Martin Hein, *Lutherische Bekenntnis und Erlanger Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert*, Die lutherische Kirche, Geschichte und Gestalten, Bd. 7 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1984), 82–96, especially 96; Emanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie: im Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegungen des europäischen Denkens* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1960), 5:416.
2. Matthew L. Becker, *The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes von Hofmann* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).
3. On Frank, see Lowell C. Green, *The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching, and Practice* (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy, 2010), 199–211.
4. Thus the title of Schleiermacher's dogmatics published first in 1821/22: *The Christian Faith*.
5. Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972–1985), 2:1–2.
6. It must be said that, even as Rationalism was developing and testing the abilities and bounds of reason, historians were developing their own discipline and discovering, for example, that it is better to speak in terms of the probability of an historical event having occurred as recorded rather than in terms simply of truths and deceptions.
7. Franz Delitzsch, *Der tiefe Graben zwischen alter und moderner Theologie: Ein Bekenntnis* (Leipzig: Centralbureau der Instituta Judaica, 1888), 9.

This understanding of experience is what, in turn, allows it to be an objective source of verification. In particular, experience serves in the Erlangen theology to verify those events of the faith that, because of their historical and not purely rational nature, cannot be verified through normal modernist scholarly methods. In other words, the Christian can be completely confident that Jesus Christ died and rose because he knows that the grace of God he has experienced depends on those historical realities. They are verified on the basis of their results.[8]

> ***This series of events is what is referred to by the Erlangen theologians as* salvation history.**

On the one hand, experience steps in, in the Erlangen theology, where reason proved inadequate. On the other hand, the Erlangen theology does not simply represent the preservation of traditional dogmatics but is in itself no less a modernist approach to theology. This act of verification, which is borne on the shoulders of experience, was performed in Lutheran Orthodoxy by the Scriptures, on the basis of the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy. In that time, the inspiration of Scripture as revelation and its inerrancy was its verification.[9] In Erlangen, verification is pulled out between the Christian and the Scriptures — into the experience they create as a means of grace, and revelation is shifted behind them — to the history of which they are a record.

This starkly modified understanding of revelation changes it from a collection of teachings that are collected in Scripture to a series of events that are recorded in Scripture: this series of events is what is referred to by the Erlangen theologians as *salvation history*. The events are revelatory in that with each successive salvation-historical event in the Old Testament, more was revealed to the Old Testament believers about their pending salvation. Each revelatory event builds on the knowledge of faith assembled out of the ones before it, so that a progression of revelation — and consequently a growth in the content of the faith of Israel — can be marked over time. These events, together understood simply behind the concept "salvation history," all serve the historical preparation of the world and of Israel for the coming of Jesus Christ. In this sense, each of them is understood as a necessary part of the history that preceded the incarnation and is thus verified by the same thing that verified the incarnation itself: the Christian's experience of rebirth. In that, experience verifies the history recorded in Scripture; it also provides the foundation for exegesis of Scripture based on the confidence that the content of the Scriptures is true.[10]

The consequences of the place of experience and salvation history in the Erlangen theology for the doctrine of the Scriptures are not insignificant, for even as they provide a new modernist grounding of the certainty of faith that is — to the modernist Christian — at least potentially viable, they sacrifice the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy and relegate the question of the authenticity of the biblical texts to the category of insignificant side questions.[11] The full consequences of these theological decisions, which could only fairly be measured on the basis of the material dogmatics that results, are not the subject of this inquiry. But turning now to the concept of Christian certainty as such in the Erlangen theology, it should be possible to begin building a fuller picture of the unique form that this theological approach exhibits, and then, on the basis of the Psalms, what consequences this has for Christian exegesis.

THREE OBJECTS OF CHRISTIAN CERTAINTY

In his *System of Christian Certainty*, Frank distinguished three types of objects of faith, regarding which the Christian has certainty: transcendent, transeunt, and immanent. Transcendent objects of faith are those that "according to their essence and existence" are "beyond the subject," that is, the Christian. These are the events of salvation history, that is, the events of the revelation of Christ, culminating in and thus including the incarnation itself together with the crucifixion and resurrection. Transeunt[12] objects of faith are those which create the bridge between the transcendent events of revelation and the subject who, though believing these events, did not experience them first hand. These are the church, the word of God, and the sacraments, all things that, even as they connect the believer with Christ, are themselves objects of faith. Frank describes them as acting as "the line of connection between the transcendent factors and the immanent *Tatbestand*[13] of the Christian consciousness," as they "mediate the transfer of the (in-themselves) transcendent realities in their effect on the subject." This leads to the third sort of object of faith and thus certainty, the immanent. This refers to the experience of rebirth, for which there is

8. Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, 23–25.
9. Robert D. Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 76–78.
10. Siegfried Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch: Leben und Werk*, 2nd ed. (Gießen: Brunnen, 1991), 334–48.
11. Already in his first Genesis commentary, Delitzsch is explicitly unconcerned that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch might be in question. He is similarly relaxed about ascribing some Davidic psalms to others who followed David and parts of the book of Isaiah to prophets in Isaiah's school. Franz Delitzsch, *Die Genesis ausgelegt* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1852), 27–28; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. David Eaton (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887–1889), 1:8–17; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. S. R. Driver (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1892), 38.
12. From the Latin *transire*, meaning to "go over" or "cross."
13. Becker, *The Self-Giving*, 12.

no need "for the in-itself certain subject to go outside of itself." This description of the Christian experience of rebirth makes it into something for which the Christian requires no assurance from an outside authority: he is as certain of it as of any other experience that he has had.[14]

A nearly identical approach to the faith of Old Testament believers is recognizable in Delitzsch's exegetical work. In his *System of Christian Apologetics*, he divides the Old Testament into three different kinds of writings: "books of history," "prophetical writings," and "fruits of subjective piety and pious knowledge."[15] Recalling that the Scriptures are not immediate revelation for the Erlangen theologians, but rather records of revelation, we find here records of (1) transcendent historical events, (2) transeunt mediating prophecy, and (3) immanent faith experience. This becomes very concrete when one considers Delitzsch's three most important commentaries on, respectively, Genesis, the history work; Isaiah, the book of the prophet; and the Psalms, the prayers of Old Testament believers. It is also no great surprise, but rather a satisfying consistency, when one recalls Delitzsch's approach to Jewish missions: it must be shown that the faith of the Old Testament rightly culminates in Christianity and not taught that Christianity is a break from Judaism.[16] So Delitzsch uses the same categories for the certainty of faith as Frank, but instead of applying them to the Christian faith, he applies them to the Old Testament faith. This is possible because he believes it to be the same faith, only at a different time and thus at a different stage of development.[17]

The implications of this comprehensive approach to exegesis of the Old Testament are significant. Works of history (Genesis, in particular) are investigated with a particular interest in understanding the events to which the text bears witness, for these are the events of salvation history. To use Frank's language, these events are the transcendent objects of the Old Testament faith: not every Old Testament believer witnessed them firsthand, but for every Old Testament believer, they had salvific significance. As such, in these works, which are records of these events, the events themselves are the thing of interest to the Christian exegete, and his task is to elucidate them in a manner that fits them into the revelation of salvation history that culminates in Jesus Christ.

Prophetic works (for Delitzsch, Isaiah is the example par excellence) have, under this scheme, a character other than, but not unrelated to, the character of the works of history. Again, they function as a record, but not of historical events per se; rather, they have contemporaneous and future events as their object of divinely inspired prophecy.[18] Old Testament prophecy connected Old Testament believers to God's revelation of their salvation. It announced its coming and interpreted it so that they would not only have a *fides historica* but also appropriate that historical revelation for themselves, that is, have a faith that was *fiducia*. It was, in Frank's language, *transeunt*. The Christian exegete has a different task here: not the task of elucidating the place of the historical event in the whole of salvation history, but rather of understanding what connection is being made through the prophecy—what in particular the Old Testament believer is being led to believe in. Again, since that faith is the same as the Christian faith, this has bearing also for the Christian and is not just Old Testament history.

The divine events of salvation history and divine mediation through prophecy led to a subjective appropriation of faith.

Finally, Delitzsch's commentary on the Psalms works with them under the category of "fruits of subjective piety." In other words, the Psalms are Old Testament–era expressions of personal faith. David and others—who by means of the mediation of prophecy believed not only that the events of salvation history had occurred but that they also meant his or their personal redemption—brought the reality of this experience or subjective piety to expression in the Psalms. As with Genesis and Isaiah, the Psalms are not, for Delitzsch, the result of immediate divine inspiration; rather, the divine events of salvation history and divine mediation through prophecy led to a subjective appropriation of faith. And this particular faith of David—not particular because it was different from the faith of the other Old Testament believers, but because it was his personal faith—speaks in the Psalms, bearing witness to what David believed and how it came to bear in his own life. The consequences of this understanding of the Psalms for Christian exegesis become now our main focus.

14. It should be noted that the *intra se* character of the immanent objects of faith does not imply a denial of the Lutheran *extra nos*. The immanent objects alone do not describe the faith of the Christian, but only one part of it, inseparable from the others (Max Keller-Hüschemenger, *Das Problem der Heilsgewißheit in der Erlanger Theologie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Ein Beitrag zur Frage des theologischen Subjektivismus in der gegenwärtigen evangelischen Theologie*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums, Bd. 10 [Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1963], 58).
15. Franz Delitzsch, *System der christlichen Apologetik* (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1869), 393–94.
16. Wagner, *Franz Delitzsch*, 149–66.
17. Ibid., 388–91.
18. This is one of the places where Delitzsch markedly distinguishes himself from his historical-critically minded colleagues. Although he definitely works critically, Delitzsch not only affirms the possibility of prophecy before the event but also maintains a developed understanding of divine freedom that allows God to intervene supernaturally in history through prophetic inspiration.

FRANZ DELITZSCH'S EXEGESIS OF THE PSALMS

Delitzsch divides the Psalms into five categories: (1) *directly eschatologically Messianic*; (2) *typically Messianic*; (3) *typico-prophetically Messianic*; (4) *indirectly eschatologically Messianic*; and (5) *eschatologically Jehovic*.[19] In this division, another distinction that Delitzsch makes through the Old Testament, between the Messianic and the Jehovic, is evident. Before proceeding then to analyze the criteria according to which Delitzsch distinguishes four categories of Messianic psalms, it will be helpful to look at this distinction that separates out the Jehovic psalms right from the beginning.

> ***These psalms are* eschatologically *Jehovic, because they deal with the "advent of Jahve."***

Essential to Delitzsch's understanding of the Old Testament is that the whole revelation contained therein points toward and indeed itself moves toward its culmination in the revelation of the God-man, Jesus Christ. The recognition of this—this knowledge of faith—is what makes Christian exegesis of the Old Testament truly different than any other, and it is rooted in the particular article of faith of the two natures in Christ. Delitzsch believes in the continuity between the Old Testament faith and the Christian faith but understands the Old Testament faith as still in development in terms of its content, even as God's revelation of salvation is not complete until the incarnation. This is the lens through which he reads the Old Testament: the two realities of the divine and human natures are being revealed over the course of time. The divine nature in Christ is seen in the promises of salvation through YHWH; this is for Delitzsch the line of promise from above. At the same time, he also sees the promises of the Messiah who will come out of the people of Israel; these speak to the human nature in Christ and are from below. Since for Delitzsch revelation is always also historical, it ought not be surprising that the convergence of these two promises in the faith-knowledge of Israel corresponds with their convergence in history, that is, when God becomes incarnate in the man Jesus Christ.

This distinction is no less true in the Psalms than anywhere else:

> For the proclamation of redemption contained in the Old Testament runs on two parallel lines: the one has as its termination the Anointed of Jahve, who rules over all nations from out of Zion, the other, the Lord Himself, sitting above the Cherubim, to whom the whole earth pays homage. These two lines do not meet in the Old Testament; it is the history of the fulfillment of prophecy that first makes it clear that the Parousia of the Anointed One and the Parousia of Jahve are one and the same. And of these two lines, the divine is the one that predominates in the Psalms; the hope of the psalmists, more especially after the kingdom had ceased in Israel, is generally directed beyond the human mediation directly towards Jahve, the author of redemption.[20]

Thus Delitzsch begins by distinguishing two categories: Messianic and Jehovic. The former are those psalms that express the psalmist's faith in the promise of the Messiah whom God will raise up out of Israel; the latter are those which express his faith in the promise of redemption through YHWH. These psalms are *eschatologically* Jehovic, because they deal with the "advent of Jahve" and the "consummation of His kingdom." This category is right for most of the psalms.[21]

Setting these aside leaves the other four categories of psalms that are all, for Delitzsch, Messianic. The psalms that come into question, namely, those that express faith in the Messiah being raised up in Israel, are distinguished according to two criteria: first, whether, in expressing his faith, the psalmist describes something that can only be understood in direct reference to Jesus Christ, or whether it also can be adequately understood in connection to the psalmist and his time; then, whether the subject of the faith expression is the psalmist's own life, or the object of his hope beyond his own person. These criteria—each with two options—produce four categories of psalms. The first criteria might be labeled by the term "connection to Christ" and can be direct or indirect. The second might be called "object of faith expression" and can be personal or external. This creates four sorts of Messianic psalms, which are then Delitzsch's four categories. Each may be considered more closely.

Delitzsch begins with the psalms that are direct and external. These are the psalms he calls *directly eschatologically Messianic*, which are, for all intents and purposes, equivalent to classical Old Testament prophecy, differing from it only in their lyric form. They express faith in the promised Messiah who has not yet come, a faith that is not connected by the psalmist to an historical figure that he already has in front of him, that is, a

19. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 1:91–95.

20. Ibid., 1:91. Surburg completely misses this when he writes: "Delitzsch rejected the concept of the Messiah as the central theme controlling the Old Testament. He claimed that the concept of God's rule was the organizing theme of the Old Testament." In fact, even though, as the above quotation shows, Surburg's first statement is true (although the implicit critique is misplaced), Delitzsch's late work on messianic prophecies actually subsumes both lines of progression under the messianic umbrella. Raymond F. Surburg, "The Influence of the Two Delitzsches on Biblical and Near Eastern Studies," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 47 (1983): 230; Franz Delitzsch, *Messianic Prophecies in Historical Succession*, trans. Samuel Ives Curtiss (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1891), 10.

21. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 1:94–95.

particular king. As such, they can be directly connected by the Christian exegete to the only true Messiah, Jesus Christ, without any risk of the accusation of having done violence to the historical text by removing it from its original context.[22]

Next, Delitzsch discusses the so-called *typically Messianic* psalms, presumably because of their significance in the Psalter, but for the sake of understanding his categorization, we will direct our attention next to the psalms that are *indirectly eschatologically Messianic*.[23] These psalms express the same hope of the coming Messiah as in the directly eschatologically Messianic psalms but distinguish themselves from those in that the psalmist actually connects that hope to a contemporary, namely "the king" (Ps 45:1; 72:1). Of course, the Christian knows what the psalmist did not: that the promises will remain unfulfilled by that king, so that "in the mouth of the church" these psalms become "eschatological hymns." This, of course, is the nature of the "violence to the text" mentioned above. A purely historical exegesis would force one to recognize that these psalms represent a human faith in an earthly king and not be troubled that this hope went unfulfilled. For Delitzsch, however, since the faith of the Old Testament *is the Christian faith*, it cannot go unfulfilled even though its particular expression at a time or place might be in error. Thus, since these psalms, though communicating an error, still grow out of the one true faith, they can be appropriated by others who share that faith; in this way their "exposition as eschatological hymns" is justified. Through the distinction between divine revelation and the expression of faith in the Psalms, Delitzsch believes himself able to give full attention to the historical context of these psalms with respect to the king without sacrificing a christological interpretation.[24]

Thus far the *eschatological* Messianic psalms. That these psalms earn this title only in Christian exegesis becomes especially evident in the *indirectly eschatological* Messianic psalms, for only when the faith of the psalmist is seen as something that exists independent of him, that can be possessed and even misinterpreted without being invalidated, can the faith that the psalmist incorrectly places in the king be legitimately remapped, that is, corrected to apply to the advent of Jesus Christ. The typical psalms distinguish themselves from these in that their content is not the hope of faith, but the experience or life of faith.

Those psalms, then, that are personal (in that they bring the psalmist's life of faith to expression), and indirect in their connection to the Messiah, are called *typically Messianic* by Delitzsch. Their messianic character is grounded in the typological nature of history itself:

> The progress of history, and more especially of the history of redemption, is also typical; and the life of David, not only as a whole, but also most surprisingly even in individual traits, is a *vaticinium reale* of the life of Him, whom prophecy regards as David raised up again as it were in a glorified form, and whom it therefore directly names *my servant David* (Ezek. xxxiv. 23 f., xxxvii. 24 f.) and *David their king* (Hos. iii. 5; Jer. xxx. 9).[25]

These psalms are messianic in that they describe traits of the life of the Messiah in the life of another, premessianic, figure. That figure—be it David or another psalm writer—is not the Messiah, and if the psalm is only interpreted in relation to him, its messianic character will not become evident. But if the exegete attains to the "organic view in history,"[26] the typology—that is, the prophetic history that accompanies the prophetic word of the eschatologically Messianic psalms—then the messianic character of these psalms will also become accessible to him.

The distinction between the* typically Messianic *and* typico-prophetically Messianic *psalms is a fine one but not insignificant.

The distinction between the *typically Messianic* and *typico-prophetically Messianic* psalms is a fine one but not insignificant. This final category—for those messianic psalms that are direct and personal—exists for the case that the life and experience of faith described by the psalmist can be easily applied to the life of Christ but seems not to remain within the realm of the life of the psalmist. Delitzsch describes the psalmist as being "raised above the limits of his own individuality and time" and uttering "regarding himself hyperbolic expressions, which were not to become full historical truth until they became so in Christ."[27] Such psalms are typical in form but eschatological in their content. In this sense they, like the directly eschatological Messianic psalms, need not be transplanted into a christological context by the Christian exegete but raise questions of fulfillment that are first answered by a christological approach.

CONCLUSION

By way of analysis, a number of observations could be made on the basis of what has just been described, but one is particularly central: if one may speak of a particular approach to

22. Except, of course, in that the Christian exegete admits the possibility of future prophecy at all. The freedom from this risk exists in theory more than in practice. Ibid., 1:91–92.
23. Delitzsch does not provide a list anywhere of the psalms in their respective categories, but in this case he does point out that only two psalms fall into this category: Psalms 45 and 72. Ibid., 1:70.
24. Ibid., 1:94.
25. Ibid., 1:92.
26. Ibid., 1:93. Delitzsch notes that this very perception was lacking among the "older theologians, especially the Lutheran."
27. Ibid.

Old Testament hermeneutics in the work of Franz Delitzsch, it would be one driven by the struggle to do historical-critical exegesis that is nevertheless decidedly Christian, characterized by a decidedly christological foundation in the doctrine of the two natures in Christ. This holds true in Delitzsch's work for the entire Old Testament, but here the focus will remain on the Psalms.

Delitzsch's exegesis was expressly rooted in the doctrine of the two natures in Christ.

In applying this hermeneutic, Delitzsch is consciously avoiding allegorical interpretation as a path to the Christian meaning in the Old Testament text.[28] He regards the allegorical approach to Scripture as ahistorical, as it projects the knowledge or content of New Testament faith back into the Old Testament, where it is not entirely false but at any rate had not yet been revealed. Where this is done, Delitzsch (but not only Delitzsch, of course: this is the essential critique historically focused exegetes of the modern era level against premodern exegesis) maintains that the historical context is ignored by the exegete, as it has no connection to the meaning of the specific text. Delitzsch lived in the midst of the rise of modern historical methodology, and his rejection of allegorical exegesis was, in that sense, no great intellectual or theological accomplishment. If there is a genius in Delitzsch, it is in finding a way to interpret the Old Testament as a Christian without removing it from its purely historical context.

Delitzsch's basic presupposition is the progress of history: the revelation of Christ happened piece by piece over time in the Old Testament era (a development of the revelation of salvation) and was accompanied by a corresponding growth in the content of faith in Israel (a development of the knowledge of salvation and the appropriation of that knowledge *pro me*). Historical and prophetic works in the Old Testament give the Christian access to the former development; the Psalms allow one to observe the latter development. The perfection of the development of the revelation of salvation is the incarnation of Christ; the perfection of the revelation of the knowledge of salvation is the Christian faith. Both are present in the Old Testament, but in earlier, not false, but incomplete, forms. This is why Delitzsch can say that the Old Testament faith is the same faith as the Christian faith, even though it is obviously different: it became the Christian faith in the same way that a child becomes an adult: the two are clearly different, but are nevertheless in their essence the same.

This understanding of progress in history is what allows Delitzsch to read the Old Testament with the eyes of (Christian) faith, without risking coming under the ban of premodern ahistorical exegesis. He is reading it with the same faith as those people who lived it but with a more complete understanding of that faith. In particular, this is where the doctrine of the two natures of Christ becomes so central: the Messianic and Jehovic prophecies that run through all the Old Testament, when taken together, point toward Jesus Christ with remarkable clarity, but only for the Christian who believes that Christ is the Savior of the world, the fulfillment of the Old Testament, God-in-the-flesh, born of Israel and the only-begotten of the Father. So one sees Delitzsch finding the two natures in Christ throughout the Old Testament but always as also in the Psalms: the two natures are never together, for the ultimate convergence of these two lines of promise is in the incarnation, not before.

It remains to consider why Delitzsch, even as he rejects allegorical exegesis, does not shy away from typology. This, however, is a unique characteristic of his psalm exegesis — indeed of his messianic psalm exegesis — and not a characteristic of his work in the historical or prophetic works. This is with good reason: the Psalms are a record of the same faith as possessed by the Christian who reads them today. Where they, therefore, errantly place that faith in David or another king, the faith is not invalidated; it rather remains the true faith, which is actually to be directed at Christ, as the Christian does. The typological exegesis serves, therefore, not to make David messianic, but to draw attention to the continuity of the faith between the Old Testament believers and Christians. It is this unique characteristic of the Psalms as expressions of faith (as noted above, Delitzsch calls them "fruits of subjective piety") that leads to their uniquely typological exposition.

To say that Delitzsch's exegesis is not without its challenges would be a gross understatement. He was, in his own day, read by everyone and accepted by no one: too much a historical critic for the conservative school gathered around Hengstenberg, and too much the Christian for the prevailing critical exegetes of his day. Today's exegetes amazingly continue to read him, and — what is less amazing — continue to level the same critiques. Whatever the final judgment, however, if one would do justice to Delitzsch, it must be recognized that his exegesis was expressly rooted in the doctrine of the two natures in Christ. This, he believed, allowed a christological exegesis of the biblical text that could not be written off as arbitrarily allegorical but as rooted in the same Old Testament history to which that text bears witness. LOGIA

28. Franz Delitzsch, *Die biblisch-prophetische Theologie: ihre Fortbildung durch Chr. A. Crusius und ihre neueste Entwickelung seit der Christologie Hengstenbergs* (Leipzig: Gebauer, 1845), 33–34.

Sermon for Rogate Sunday on James 1:22–27

Werner Elert

Translated by Adam Koontz

"Be doers of the word and not hearers only!" James 1:22

The sentence sounds so self-evident that one could simply add nothing to it. One could also turn it into "Be doers of the word and not preachers of the word only!" That also is self-evident. The deeds of a preacher agree with his words. Certainly we all, the preacher just as his hearers, experience this word as an accusation.

Not only we, though, but also the sharp eye of the observer, of the critic, of Christianity sees that now here something does not add up. What is said among you, taught among you, for example, of love—"love is patient and friendly, love does not hurry, love does not engage in wantonness, it does not puff itself up"—that is all very beautifully said. But sadly the deeds of the Christians appear otherwise. Between word and deed stand contradictions that make the entirety of Christianity unbelievable.

We will let that be seriously said and not prettify it. We must indeed be attentive that these contradictions between word and deed do not limit themselves to the Christians. How many grand programs for social, political, and economic life have already taken the world—from Plato to Hitler, from Karl Marx to Stalin—on this side and on that side of every iron curtain. They all found inspired hearers, and still one must state that the reality never accorded with the ideal. For if the achievement had fit the program, then there would no longer be any need among humankind: no homelessness, no injustice, no angst, no sickness anymore.

Obviously the world reformers would justify themselves by this: "Yes, if we'd had enough time!" But that is now obviously a universal law without exception that no time for it is permitted to humankind. *Now* it is tested, whether the deed fits the word. In this now the human need that now cries out for salvation meets up with the judgment of the divine judge who does not test what you could have done tomorrow but what you did or did not do today.

The accusation that lies in the word "Be doers of the word and not hearers only!" arrays itself against the Christians. But it meets in the Christians the human beings we all by nature are. It encounters the state of things that characterizes the entirety of humanity: the contradiction between hearing and doing, between talking and doing, between willing and doing, of which none can absolve himself.

James, the "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Jas 1:1), catches sight of the reason for these unholy contradictions in that we only use the word said to us to see ourselves reflected in it. "But who looks into the perfect law of freedom and therein perseveres and is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer, he will be saved in his deed!" (Jas 1:25).

The Perfect Law of Freedom Is Fulfilled Through Service of God

"Who looks into the perfect law of freedom." It is good that James says "the perfect law of freedom." We will not therefore exchange it for other laws of freedom, for instance with the liberation law of 1945 or with the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany of 1949,[1] that also want to be laws of freedom but to which some imperfections still cling. But we shall look into the "*perfect* law of freedom."

This perfect law of freedom differentiates itself from others firstly in that it is very simple. Taken exactly, it contains only a single paragraph. "Whoever among you who lets himself think he serves God . . . " And further: "A pure and undefiled service of God before God the Father is this . . . " The perfect law of freedom is fulfilled through service of God. That indeed sounds like a new contradiction. Service of God? Service is certainly no freedom! Yet if we once accepted that we should really need only to serve God, it would be in another sense a great liberation. "You cannot serve God and Mammon," says Jesus (Matt 6:24). Between service of God and service of Mammon one must choose. Whoever serves God serves not Mammon. Service of God is freedom from service of Mammon. That is truly no little thing. Must not the entire world appear differently if there were no more service of Mammon at all? If there were no competition, no more contest of peoples for the earth's treasures? It would be a true liberation. The entire world would exhale. The perfect service of God would bring freedom from Mammon's servitude, in which all peoples, all of us, lie in chains.

Werner August Friedrich Immanuel Elert (19 August 1885–19 November 1954) was a German Lutheran theologian and professor of both church history and systematic theology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. This sermon was dated 22 May 1949 but was not delivered due to sickness.

1. The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany went into effect on 23 May 1949, one day after that for which this sermon was drafted.

And what stands in the way of this liberation of the world? Perhaps among us today the danger of the service of Mammon is indeed no longer so great. We dance no longer about the golden calf because we don't have one anymore. It is dismantled and stuffed away somewhere. But therefore we all have another lord whom we serve, and that with great conscientiousness: that is, we ourselves. Each appears to himself as the center of the world, around which all must turn.

Who serves God serves not himself and not the world. He is free from himself and free from the world.

"Love your neighbor," says the word. Why are we hearers only and not doers of the word? Because we ourselves stand in the way of it. Each thinks, "I myself am the neighbor," also when he does not advocate for himself. This saying comes from the old Roman Terence, but sadly it goes also for us Christians. Each serves himself. If we served only God, we would no longer serve ourselves. Perfect service of God would then again be freedom. It frees us from ourselves. Perfect service of God brings then considerable freedoms. Who serves God serves not himself and not the world. He is free from himself and free from the world. A perfect service of God, says, James, "keeps itself unspotted by the world."

THE PERFECT LAW OF FREEDOM BREAKS THE LAW OF THE WORLD

But with that we have not yet completely looked into the perfect law of freedom. Perfect it can only be called when it is a law of God, according to the rule that James shortly beforehand gave: "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above from the Father of lights" (1:17).

We naturally think first of the law of God, the Ten Commandments, that he hangs over us. Above this law stand the divine threat and the divine promise: "I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, who visits the sins of the fathers on the children into the third and fourth generation. But to those who love me and keep my commandments I do good to the thousandth generation" (Exod 20:5–6). This is the law of reward and punishment. According to his deeds will each be requited. It is the law of retribution that the Old Testament people of God were also prescribed for their civil relationships: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, wound for wound, welt for welt" (Exod 21:24–25). Or: "Who sheds men's blood, his own blood shall be shed" (Gen 9:6). What a man sows, that he reaps.

This general law of retribution is the basic law by which the sin-fallen world is held in order. According to Paul in Romans 13, it shall also be wielded by the worldly authorities in that they reward the good and punish the evil. For this they do not bear their sword in vain. This law is God's order, but it is a law of force, no law of freedom. It is the law of guilt and atonement and therefore also a law of captivity. According to this law, "eye for eye." Each who is struck strikes back. According to this law we atone for our guilt through the death of our sons. According to this law sin committed in Rotterdam is requited in Dresden.[2] According to this law none of us will escape his fate. According to this law we are not free but are in the captivity of guilt and of death.

To this law Jesus Christ was also subject, "born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal 4:4). He did not want to abolish it. "I am not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it" (Matt 5:17). It met him as the law of retribution. He also atoned for guilt according to this law, indeed not his own, for he had none, but for that of the others. But he did not himself apply this law. According to the old law of retribution, he should have himself taken part in the stoning of the adulteress, for in this case stoning was prescribed by the law. But he bent down, it says, and wrote on the ground. Yet as the others were themselves made from the dust, and so they all had a bad conscience, there he said only: "So neither do I condemn you. Go forth and sin no more" (John 8:11).

That was the end of the law of retribution. Christ opposed to it the power of forgiveness. It was not only an exception; according to his own witness it was the purpose of his entire sending. The shepherd, who seeks the lost sheep, who when he finds it does not reach for the scourge to punish it, but he lays it on his shoulders and bears it home with joy. As the lost son, bowed down under the load of sin and of shame, dragged himself home again to the parents' house, the father hurries to him—no sermon of punishment, no retribution, not once a single reproof. The father has the calf slaughtered and celebrates the feast of the lost one's homecoming, the great feast of forgiveness. Just so and not otherwise does Christ act with all the guilty. The condition was ever only that they should want to be nothing other than sinners. Where he met with these sinners, he preached not judgment but grace, not retribution but forgiveness.

So did Christ break the old law of retribution. He did not revile when he was reviled. He did not strike back when he was struck. When he was crucified, according to the old law he might have reminded the Father: "Father, requite them for what they do to me—eye for eye, tooth for tooth, wound for wound, welt for welt!" But he said instead: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" (Luke 23:34). According to the law of retribution was the thief crucified beside him; but Christ opened to him the door to paradise. He opened to him the way into freedom. So did Christ become according to the word of the apostle the law's end (Rom 10:4), namely, the old law of retribution. And the Father kept faith with his Son in that he raised him on the third day.

2. The German bombing attack on Rotterdam was on 14 May 1940; the Allied bombing attack on Dresden took place 13–15 February 1945.

Here we look into the perfect law of freedom. For here are the chains torn under which the whole world lay captive. Christ did not break the law of retribution for his own benefit. He endured it, and he thereby atoned for what others owed. But he also thereby brought the call of guilt for atonement to silence. In the moment where we feel the eye of Christ directed to us, in the moment where we believe that the word "Neither do I condemn you" also goes for us — in that moment the entire law of the world breaks, the law of retribution under which all peoples lay together in sorrows and chains. That is the breakthrough to freedom.

THE PERFECT LAW OF FREEDOM SAVES IN THE DOING

We believe, if we believe in Christ, not on some sort of nebulous miracle behind which one could perhaps still place a question mark. For this looking into, this breakthrough of freedom, this breakdown of the whole old world we live out entirely and personally. We live it out in that we ourselves are not requited but are forgiven. And we live it out also if even only one single time we exercise the service of God, of which James here speaks. When a single time we bridle our tongue. When you just once do not strike back when you are struck. When you do not revile when you are reviled, in that moment when you keep silent, in that moment the whole world stands still. The eternal chain of evil and revenge, of guilt and atonement, of punch and counterpunch is torn away. In that moment when you keep silent, the angels in heaven also keep silent and are astounded by the miracle that plays out before their eyes on earth. They are astounded that a human being has looked into the perfect law of freedom and that he has overcome himself. He is free from himself. The man is saved in his deed. And his deed does not consist of great social reforms. It consists only in that he could keep silent.

The law of retribution is not only the law of guilt and punishment. It is also the law of duty and reward. This law is also the order that holds the world together. Every worker is worthy of his wage. If someone does you good, you requite him. Don't forget thanksgiving. Don't let yourself as a Christian be shamed by the pagans, but, "a pure and undefiled service of God before God the Father is this: to visit widows and orphans in their affliction." Why above all the widows and orphans? They are those to whom you can show love without their requiting you with an earthly reward. To visit widows and orphans is to forego reward. Again the angels in heaven are astounded. A man who can love without speculating about reward. He became free from himself, free from the angst of requital, free from the reckoning of payment. He is not saved because of his deed, but in his deed. The law of perfect freedom is also the law of perfect salvation. Who once has looked into the law of freedom cannot again forget it.

It is much spoken of today that for the overcoming of the general world crisis one must deploy the powers of Christendom. To this end the pope speaks. To this end the ecumenical council speaks. To this end the Christian press speaks. We come into temptation once again to begin the sermon with the word that stands at the beginning of our epistle. We other Christians should together make ourselves into an underground movement that would only live according to the perfect law of freedom. Its members would be known in that they did not strike back when they were struck, did not revile when they were reviled. One would recognize them in this: in the eternal contest of who is right, who is guilty, who is indebted, and who is not indebted, or less or more or little indebted, that they put a period behind it once and for all and from there on keep silent.

Widows and orphans are those to whom you can show love without their requiting you with an earthly reward.

In this way there arises a zone of silence, an empty space, so to speak, where every kick one gives to another becomes an air-kick because no resistance is any longer there. Of an underground movement one cannot say much. The less one says of it, the wider will the zone of silence spread out. Only in this way can one hope to take away the wind from the propeller of all peoples' tormenting machinery of competition, revenge, and retribution. But we will not again fall into the mistake of making a great program of reform out of it. "Be doers of the word and not hearers only!" Of the doing, that according to the law of freedom saves, the others notice nothing. For it consists in silence. Amen. LOGIA

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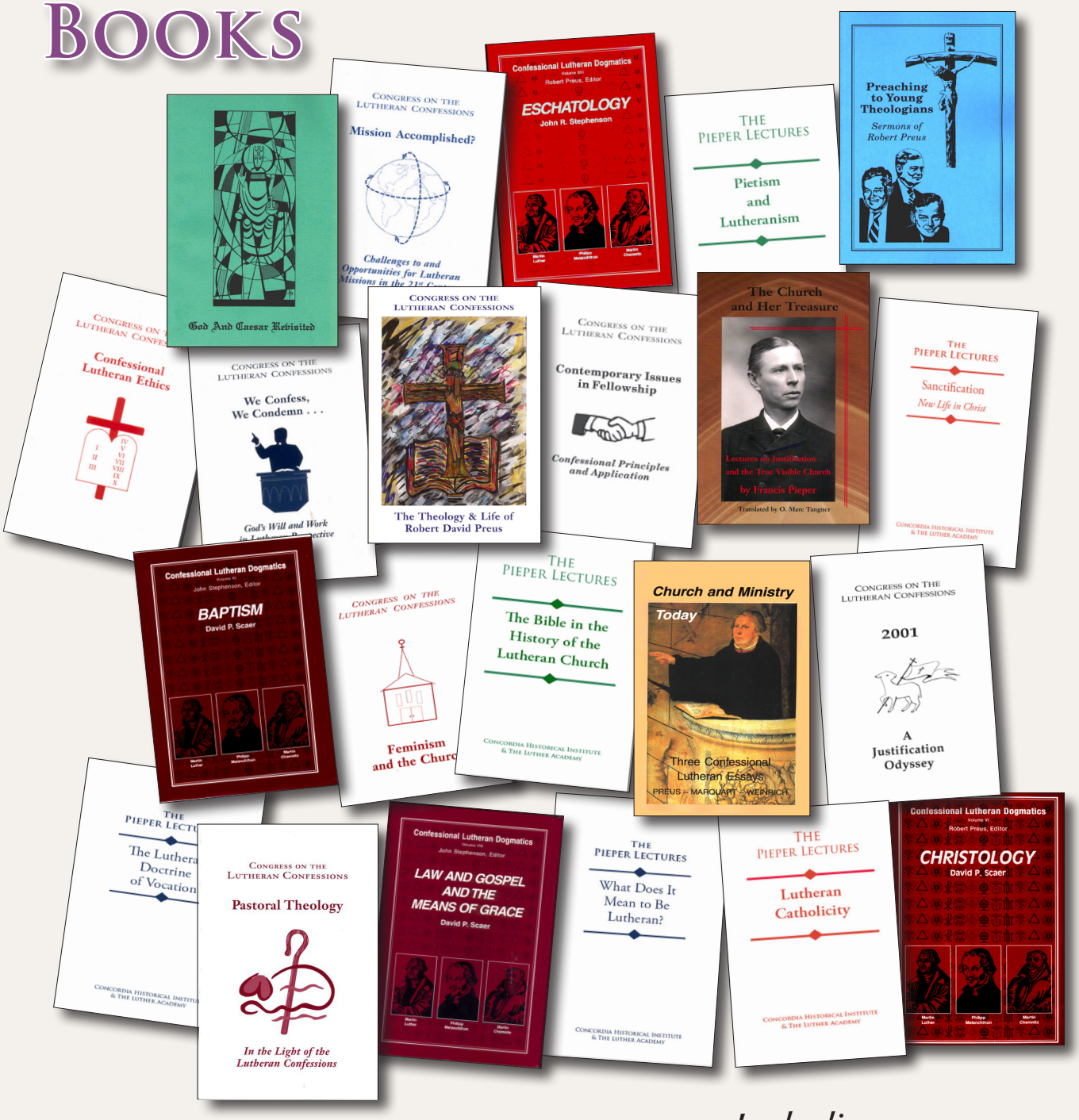

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Sermon for the Feast of the Ascension

on Mark 16:14–20

Werner Elert

Translated by Adam Koontz

APPEARANCE OF THE RESURRECTED ONE AND ASCENSION

The feast of the Ascension, dear fellow Christians, forces on us more than one difficult question. If one speaks about the Ascension with people unfamiliar with it, one frequently encounters shoulder shrugs, if not scoffing and taunting. That Jesus was born, that he lay impoverished in a stall—about that no one contends; one says, Who knows if it is true, but it is possible that everything happened like that. So also that Jesus Christ died and was crucified after he had been sentenced to death by the Roman judge. In that also one believes us. For every man must die, so it goes, so this Jesus would also have died. Yes, there are also people who cannot themselves believe in him yet are ready to allow us even our Easter faith. It is certainly scarcely apparent, they say, that the crucified one was raised again to life; nevertheless, if you believe, let nothing be said against it.

Without any understanding of it one faces the ascension of Christ. How could it be possible that a human being has gone into heaven? One asks, "What should that mean above all: gone into heaven?" Where did he go? Where is this heaven? Is he on the moon, on the glowing liquid sun, on one of the gradually cooling planets, on one of the fixed stars or those burning suns with an unchanging glow in unending distance? Or is he just over the clouds that daily pass us by and dissolve themselves quickly into rain or hail again? Where is the heaven to which our Jesus has gone up?

Dear fellow Christians, the Christian church is not entirely innocent of these foolish questions. I have read an old writing of an ancient catholic, that is, Christian theologian, in which he computes where heaven should be and how long the Lord needed to get there. He comes to the conclusion that the heaven to which the Lord Jesus is gone begins on the boundary of our solar system, namely directly beyond the orbit of the planet Saturn. And the Lord needed nine minutes to get there. Yes, when one hears that, then one can understand how the unbelievers can ask or shake their heads so derisively and faithlessly. Where, though, in reality is the heaven where Jesus is?

Here it stands: He was taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God. At the right hand of God, there is Jesus and there is heaven. So he has himself said: "I go to the Father" (John 16:10; cf. 14:12, 28; 16:17; 20:17). The Father who once allowed him to become man has taken him up again to himself in the ascension. Where is that now, where the Father is and where his Son is with him?

Dear fellow Christian, the singer of the 139th Psalm already knew the answer when he said,

> "God is over all, he hears all, he sees all. I sit or stand up and you know it. You know my thoughts from afar. I go or lie down and you are about me and see all my ways. . . . There is no word on my tongue that you, Lord, do not all know. . . . If I go to heaven, so you are there. If I bed down in hell, see, you are also there. If I take the wings of the morning and stay at the farthest sea, so would your hand lead me and your right hand sustain me."

So God is everywhere. There is no moon, no sun, no planet, no cloud, no valley, no city, no sea, where he is not. And if his Son Jesus Christ is at his right hand since his ascension, then he must also be everywhere. And so did he himself promise to his disciples. One who reads the New Testament attentively will not need to rack his brains about where Jesus Christ is staying.

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them," he promised (Matt 18:20). We also, dear fellow Christians, are here gathered in the name of Jesus. We also can be sure that he is not only very high above the clouds, not only on the boundaries of our solar system, but here, in the midst of us. "See, I am with you, every day, even to the end of the world" (Matt 28:20). He is *with us*. Not only for a while, as though now and then he must climb down to the earth; but always, every day. And with us, about us, is also God the Father at whose right hand the Son is in heaven.

Now you ask: what then above all does the ascension of Jesus mean? What does it mean that he lifted himself from the earth and at once disappeared before the eyes of his disciples?

Now, dear fellow Christian, what did it really mean that the Lord showed himself after his resurrection to his disciples? It would have been enough that he secretly left his grave on the night of Easter, and the disciples could have also believed in his resurrection if they found the grave empty and Jesus had disappeared. Yes, they could have done it. We also could have believed in his resurrection.

Werner August Friedrich Immanuel Elert (19 August 1885–19 November 1954) was a German Lutheran theologian and professor of both church history and systematic theology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg.

But what if we and what if they had done so? How was it with their faith in the resurrection of Jesus? Let the first words of our Gospel advise: "The Lord rebuked their unbelief and their hearts' hardness, that they did not believe those who had seen him risen" (Mark 16:14). So, after he was seen by a few, they did not believe in his resurrection. See, because of their and our hardness of heart it was necessary that Jesus provide the external visible proof that he lives. He needed to give testimony of his resurrection. For the same reason it was necessary that the Lord in view of a great festive assembly on his own take his leave. He would not do so silently, suddenly, never again to return; but his disciples should receive an external, inextinguishable impression of it: Now is he gone into heaven, that is, now is he gone to the Father, now is he no more bound to one specific place, but as ascended Lord is always and everywhere with us.

Why did they give over their whole life, sacrificed for the gospel?

"The blessed!" you will say. Dear fellow Christian, for them there was certainly now no doubt that Jesus is living and that he now was with his Father, there as ascended Lord for us, his believers, to act. But here now comes the most difficult question: How can we then be sure that Jesus is gone into heaven, that he is with the Father at his right hand? We, who could not be witnesses with our own eyes?

HOW DOES THE ASCENDED LORD NOW WITNESS TO HIMSELF?

Through his action in the Christian church.

One of the last words the Lord spoke to his disciples before his departure was a command: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature!" (Mark 16:15). What did Jesus mean by this gospel? Now, I think nothing else than what the word means: the good news. Namely the good, applicable-to-every-human-being news that God himself became man and that this man, namely Jesus from Nazareth, led a life of love for all people and finally from love freely died a death of sacrifice, but on the third day for the salvation of every human being was again raised by God. This joyous message the disciples were to spread into all the world; and the disciples did that. And thousands upon thousands of Christians followed upon them in the spread of this message. Already the twelve apostles were scattered over the whole earth known to that time, in order to preach the gospel as the Lord commanded.

At last Paul, eventually called by the Lord, delivered a message; but it gave him no peace. He wandered through all of Asia Minor, from Antioch to Perga, to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, preaching everywhere. And as soon as the strewn word puts down any root, just as soon it also pulls farther. The second trip led him again through Asia Minor and again to the European continent, to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea and the great world cities, Athens and Corinth. Then back to Ephesus, then to Jerusalem. Next came an equally great third world trip, all in the service of the gospel. Yes, just after he was transported as a prisoner to the capital city, Rome, and there had to lay in captivity for two years, he himself summoned his whole strength to proclaim the gospel there. Thus did every apostle. The apostle John is supposed to have acted as a preacher of the gospel in Ephesus until he was almost one hundred years old.

And now I ask you, dear fellow Christian, for what reason did they do that? Why did they give over their whole life, sacrificed for the gospel? I think they did it because their Lord commanded them. It went with them, as Peter and John said before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, "We cannot allow it that we should not speak of that which we have heard and seen" (Acts 4:20). Now, they could not do otherwise because the risen Lord commanded them.

Now I ask you further: could the Lord give this command if he were not risen and living? Still more, is it thinkable that they would have followed this order, if they had not been unconditionally certain that it was the command of a living Lord?

On a doubtful matter, dear fellow Christian, one does not stake his life. Peter, who was ashamed to admit to a servant girl that he followed Jesus; or the disciples, who locked themselves in, shut the doors behind them for fear that it would be their necks: they would never, ever have gone before an entire people, before a merciless judge, before the imperial governor, with their message if they had not experienced an hour when they could no more strive against the truth of the new life of Jesus. They followed his command because they were certain: He stands behind us. He directs the entire preaching of his gospel, he wills that all peoples get word of it and are saved through it.

And here is the point where we also, dear fellow Christians, can be certain that this command to preach the gospel is given by a living Lord who in fact sits at the right hand of God. What, do you think, otherwise, pushes thousands of Christian messengers out into the tropics to blacks and Hindus, to Australians and Chinese, than the certainty of standing in the service of the ascended Lord? Yes, can we then do other than put our hand to the work through our gifts, through our prayers?

Is not the power that therein seizes us, that forces us to it, the best proof that even now that last will of Jesus going into heaven is carried out? Christendom cannot do otherwise than to preach the gospel more and more to every creature. The ascended Lord stands behind you and shows us all the way. "But they went out and preached in every place, and the Lord worked with them" (Mark 16:20). He worked with them, he works with us: an irrefutable proof that he sits as mighty Lord at the right hand of God.

Through signs and wonders.

The second proof attaches itself directly to that same thing because the ascended Lord testifies that he himself is alive. He does it through signs and wonders. He had already during his

earthly life in his own person performed powerful deeds. He had already sent the message to the doubting John the Baptist, "Go forth and say to John what you hear and see: the blind see, and the lame walk, the lepers are clean, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the gospel is preached to the poor" (Matt 11:4–5). And the Gospels report to us that Jesus' deeds accord with this message in rich measure.

What was now the distinguishing mark in Jesus' miracles? You see, dear fellow Christians, the wondrous deeds of many other people in antiquity are reported. For example, a famous wandering orator at the time of Jesus, Apollonius of Tyana, likewise in wonderful ways healed the sick, made the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers clean. One may indeed somewhat doubt the reports of this man, but in case they did so happen, by what means do then the miracles of Jesus differentiate themselves from all others? I think, added to that, that the Lord Jesus did not perform a single wonder to make himself seen, by his wonderful entrance to find outward recognition. All his miracles had, more than that, an entirely other ground: saving love. He wanted to help to relieve sorrow, and the other point hangs together with it: his miracles may not be separated from his entire calling. He was to be the Savior of all men, who would rescue and save from all sins.

Now all suffering in the world, even bodily sufferings and sicknesses, according to Holy Scripture, are a consequence of sin. So must the Lord also not only forgive sins, but also remove or at the least lessen the terrifying workings of sin on men. For that he did miracles. But then why did the Lord also here promise his disciples very similar power?

"The signs," he says, "that will follow those who believe will be these: in my name they will drive out devils, speak with new tongues, handle snakes, and if they drink something deadly, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and it will go better with them" (Mark 16:17–18). The New Testament, especially the Acts of the Apostles, reports several cases where this prophecy of Jesus to the disciples was fulfilled after his ascension. They freed the possessed of evil spirits, they prayed over the sick and so helped them to health, they spoke in foreign languages—and we should see all of that as a sign that the ascended Lord proved himself in their weakness and so testified to his own living reality.

But how does it stand today with signs and wonders? Dear fellow Christians, it is not unknown to you that there is today in Christianity a tendency that says: Where surprising, sensible signs and wonders do not happen, there is also no true faith. There are people who have come onto the scene not many years ago, also among us in Germany, who said they had the gift of speaking in tongues. They suddenly began to raise an incomprehensible sound in the assemblies and so to throw the bystanders into a devout astonishment. For, they said, the incomprehensible stammering and murmuring was a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Dear fellow Christian, then many of the best-known among these tongue-speakers confessed that they had deluded themselves. But given the case that they could not actually have done otherwise, who would have been served by this sign? Were they like the miracles of Jesus, healing the souls and the bodies of sick people? Were they done to help other people? Yes, had they been alike, would they call forth faith in the ascended Lord?

I do not know how an unbeliever through the incomprehensible murmuring and stammering of a Christian could come to faith in the ascended Lord. But I do indeed know of many so-called believers who have gone to these places where one speaks in tongues to see it. But then doesn't the earlier word of the Lord speak to that: "If you do not see signs and wonders, you do not believe!" (John 4:48)?

All his miracles had, more than that, an entirely other ground: saving love.

Is that a Christian faith, which must strengthen itself through such oddities? Yes, dear fellow Christians, let it be lamented to God that the hunger for wonders of these people brought forth is still worse. Last year in a city in Upper Silesia the child of a schoolteacher who went in these circles took sick. The child was much prayed over, as is seemly for a Christian house; but finally the child died. Then all these people came together and prayed wildly to God that he might make the child alive again. They prayed to God day and night. On the fourth day the pallbearers came to lay the child in the casket. None would stand for it. No, the child must come alive again. The police finally demanded the entombment and burial. A night's delay was requested. One beseeched God, one reminded him of his promises. He must now do a wonder. But he did not do it. The child stayed dead, and the corpse had finally to be given over to the earth.

Dear fellow Christians, one sees where the Christians' hunger for wonders leads, indeed to the worst sin of rebellion against God. They prayed over the child, when he was still sick, that God might keep him from death. God allowed him to die anyway. Then it would have been seemly for Christian people to yield themselves to God's will, to fold their hands and say with that pious man of the Old Testament: "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken, the Name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21). God allows neither a wonder to defy himself nor does he do such only for exhibition, indeed for the satisfaction of an ungodly hunger for wonders.

But then does God do no more wonders? Does then this promise of Jesus going into heaven no more apply to us? Dear fellow Christian, the one who has learned to pray can also report of wonders. Or what are the events in our lives that we are wont to call coincidences anything other than wonders? How often must we say at the turning points of our lives: Wonderful, that it has turned out so! How often all we experience, that at first perhaps we could not grasp, finally yields a unified picture in wonderful array, in which we can now recognize God's hand of wonder? Yes, how often may it happen that the sick are healed

through prayer? How often do our missionaries recount that they were rescued in the most unusual way from snakes and wild animals? The Christian who daily experiences such things will not boast of himself with such puffed-up prayers. He will in stillness thank God for it, but he will also not grumble when he perceives that God has decided something else for him.

Through our faith and also through our salvation.

But there is a wonder that every one of us can experience and must experience if he would be a Christian. This is the wonder of faith. It is a wonder because human power is not able to call forth faith. You can exert all your eloquence, you can apply all the powers of nature you have available, to bring an unbeliever to faith, but it will not work for you if God does not work faith. But what God must do so directly, we call a wonder.

You can exert all your eloquence to bring an unbeliever to faith, but it will not work for you if God does not work faith.

Take a look at the people, dear Christian, thousands around us, who have very good news from God and his Son. They have heard, if not already in the parents' house, then certainly in the school, that it is God who made this world, that he is the one who orders their life, for whom their souls are created. They hear that they like all people are sinners, the damned; that, however, God in his grace offers them forgiveness of sins, salvation from all guilt, that he appointed for them an eternal glory, if they take these gifts of God in faith. And they pass over all these things indifferently; they live for the moment, as though not also for them the hour must come when God will call them to account. They place no value in believing that; they do not want to believe.

And if we take a look at ourselves, who hopefully lay everything on believing, do not often entire days pass where we do not at all consider what Jesus Christ did for us, what stands before us at the end of this life? But that is no faith that forgets itself for whole days. Yes, do we not often grumble against God, when something does not fit our thoughts? But that is no faith, which goes to law with God out of self-interest and self-seeking. Yes, do we not at times doubt when what we must experience appears too dark, entirely incompatible with God's love? But that is no faith, which would see through all God's secrets, which will not commit itself blindly to him. If it is so, dear fellow Christian, with our souls, then it is certainly a miracle when we nevertheless reach a full, saving faith. It is a miracle that any single person despite the hardness of his heart, over which the Lord here laments, becomes believing at all.

And the greatest miracle — that of faith — includes the others so that we might be saved. Is it not a miracle that a person who doubtless sinned, that such a person nevertheless may have communion with God? That is an unheard-of miracle. And indeed the Lord here in the last hour promised: "He who believes and is baptized, he will be saved" (Mark 16:16). Then we may in faith hope for the salvation of God. But indeed, we must look at this salvation, this grace of God, as a miracle. When it is no longer for us a miracle that God pardons us; when we look at it as entirely self-evident that we are pardoned by God because we have converted ourselves, because we have at our disposal a fair share of piety; when we then want to reckon up with God how natural it in fact is that he would draw us into his communion: then we can no longer speak of faith. Faith is therefore especially necessary because the pardon of God is a miracle. If it were not a miracle, but instead self-evident, then one could recalculate it like an example problem. But that is not the case because it is a miracle.

See, dear fellow Christians, the ascended Lord testifies to himself in the most manifold ways. He had already testified of himself as the ascended Lord to the first Christian congregation, when he made his weak, frightened disciples into men of faith, men of action. He testified of himself in that he made thousands upon thousands of human souls willing even then to accept the gospel. "They went out and preached in every place," it says, "and the Lord worked with them and strengthened the word through accompanying signs" (Mark 16:20). Many Christians of that time and many Christians of the present could testify that Jesus as ascended Lord has done miracles. He has above all worked the miracle of faith in countless people. He has testified of himself in that down to today he lets the gospel be preached to every creature. Lastly, he will most gloriously testify to himself when he works the greatest miracle for us, when he despite every sin and every fall pardons us and takes us up into his glory.

So the feast of the Ascension brings us anew the certainty that he on that day has gone ahead of us to prepare us a place. He is in eternal glory with the Father, and his effectiveness at the right hand of God reaches itself to entering in before his Father for us and through the leading of our entire life taking us to himself.

Jesus Christ reigns as king,
All will to him be subject,
All God lays at his feet.
Every tongue shall confess:
Jesus shall be named the Lord,
To whom one must give honor.

Amen. LOGIA

Karlmann Beyschlag

The Last Twentieth-Century Erlangen Theologian

Armin Wenz

During the winter semester of 1987–1988 I had the privilege of witnessing the last months of the academic career of the Lutheran church historian Karlmann Beyschlag (1923–2011) at the University of Erlangen. Every Monday and every Thursday morning from November 1987 to February 1988 we students (including the present South African Bishop Wilhelm Weber) were most vividly drawn into the history of the Reformation in a manner that struck not only the hearer's mind but also his heart, his very existence. During the same winter semester I also participated in Beyschlag's "Proseminar" on the history of the New Testament canon, where we got firsthand impressions of the useful material included later in the respective parts of Beyschlag's *Dogmengeschichte*, especially concerning the relationship of the Scripture principle and the notion of dogma. It came as a great pity that Beyschlag retired already at the end of that semester on 25 February 1988. His farewell address, delivered in front of a huge audience, including the whole faculty and hundreds of students, was a very special moment.

In this address, later included in his monumental work on the "Erlangen Theology,"[1] Beyschlag introduces himself as a scholar who was engaged in "Erlangen Theology" after the very end of "Erlangen Theology."[2] Having returned from the war as a confused and disoriented young man about to go astray and to fall away from all theology, he was warmly received by his Erlangen teachers and instructed by them in a *spiritual* way (of doing theology), which he would never have found without them. At Erlangen he learned that the very foundation of theology is not some external and ideological historical skepticism, but the internal experience of the believer. This implied the indissoluble unity of the human (*humanum*) and of the divine (*divinum*) as a fundamental presupposition also for the church historian, for in this context, the Lutheran theologian experiences himself as a person to whom the earthly realm of the church opens itself up, welcoming the theologian, so to speak, into an ecclesial sphere constituted by the two dimensions of Scriptures and Confessions. The third dimension of the "Erlangen Theology" as expounded by Beyschlag in his farewell address, through which the other two dimensions receive their unique warmth and vivacity, is the perspective of eternity to which we all draw near.[3]

With this personal confession, Beyschlag in many respects mirrors the very path of the "Erlangen Theology," which came increasingly closer to correcting and overcoming the dominating shortcomings of post-Enlightenment theology—including Schleiermacher's emotional (not "experiential" in Beyschlag's sense, that is, based on the experience of the external word) theology—by rediscovering and reclaiming the biblical and confessional foundations with their specific ecclesiological context and their eschatological perspective. To understand Beyschlag's own view of the "Erlangen Theology," a glimpse into his three-volume *Dogmengeschichte* is beneficial.[4]

This *Dogmengeschichte* is dedicated to the memory of the earlier Erlangen historians of dogma, Gottfried Thomasius and Werner Elert. Thus it comes as no surprise that in many respects Beyschlag's *Dogmengeschichte* was able to fulfill the legacy of Werner Elert's later research on the history of dogma that was left unfinished by Elert himself but published posthumously in its fragmentary state.[5] In his book on the "Erlangen Theology," Beyschlag praises Elert's approach to the history of dogma—an approach that totally changed the classical perspective shaped by Harnack, Seeberg, and Loofs. Elert did not perceive the history of dogma theoretically through the eyes of a distant, objective critic, starting at the beginning and describing the later "developments," but his perspective was

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1. Karlmann Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1993), 287–88.
2. "If I had to categorize the theological position that I have represented on this faculty for over thirty years, I would have to say that I have attempted to be an 'Erlangen theologian' after the end of the 'Erlangen Theology,' this and nothing else" (Ibid., 287).
3. Ibid., 288.
4. Karlmann Beyschlag, *Grundriß der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. I, *Gott und Welt*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988); vol. II, *Gott und Mensch*, part 1, *Das christologische Dogma* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991); vol. II, *Gott und Mensch*, part 2, *Die abendländische Epoche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000).
5. Werner Elert, *Der Ausgang der altkirchlichen Christologie: Eine Untersuchung über Theodor von Pharan und seine Zeit als Einführung in die alte Dogmengeschichte*, ed. Wilhelm Maurer and Elisabeth Bergsträßer (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957). Beyschlag also constantly refers to the other great work on the early church which Elert *did* finish: *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsächlich des Ostens*, 2nd ed. (Fürth: Flacius-Verlag, 1985).

ecclesial, taking its point of departure from the outcome or result of the history of dogma and tracing these results back to their very biblical origin. This change of perspectives implies a change of paradigms, since the primary subject of the history of the church (including her dogma) is no longer the modern historian of dogma with his conceptions but the vivid figure or image of Christ himself as it is drawn by the Gospels. According to Beyschlag, Elert overcame the false opposition between the New Testament Christ and the Christ of dogma. The result was a point of view that perceived the history of dogma not as a Hellenization but as a de-Hellenization of Christendom.[6] Thus Beyschlag, in his own *Dogmengeschichte*, even more explicitly and thoroughly than Elert eliminates the notion of the history of dogma as a developmental history of progress from dark and primitive pasts to enlightened eras of modernity. "Decision" (*Entscheidung*), not "development" (*Entwicklung*), is the primary category necessary to explain the history of dogma. That means that all norms of the history of dogma have their origin in the dogmatic and biblical alternatives of "true and untrue," "sound doctrine and false doctrine," "orthodoxy and heresy." This aspect constitutes the binding quality and the timeless character of dogma, which is not tied to certain times or historical developments.[7]

In order to give an impression of what that means concerning a contemporary topic, I offer just one example from Beyschlag's chapters on the dogma of the Reformation.[8] Concerning AC XIV Beyschlag writes:

> I venture to point out that the "rite vocatus" of AC XIV is masculine. The Protestant 'women's ordination' to the spiritual office is thus not only contrary to Scripture but also contrary to the Confessions.[9]

Beyschlag, in the German discussions about women's ordination, has been criticized for this statement by those who do not want to see the reference to the male gender of the office-holder in the context of the history of dogma, where Beyschlag locates it by inner necessity.[10] For also in Beyschlag's work one finds the hint that the line of tradition in which women's ordination is located is not the one stretching from the New Testament to the Reformation, but the contrary one, namely, the Gnostic-sectarian line of enthusiasm. Beyschlag writes on AC V, the fundamental confessional text concerning the office of the ministry:

The Protestant 'women's ordination' to the spiritual office is thus not only contrary to Scripture but also contrary to the Confessions.

> What is right away significant in this formulation is that it restates the occidental conviction that reaches all the way back to First Clement, according to which the institution of the churchly office . . . enjoys priority over the gift of the Holy Spirit who works the faith. Here the Augsburg Confession leans on the catholic preunderstanding and simultaneously destroys the basis for enthusiasm.[11]

Beyschlag finished his own history of dogma with the time of the Reformation, in this respect following Harnack's conception of the history of dogma. Nevertheless, it can be shown that his approach to the history of dogma also shapes his research of the history of the "Erlangen Theology." According to Beyschlag, all attempts to explain this historical megaphenomenon in the context of nineteenth-century theology, that is, according to the notions of progress and development by pointing to dependencies of Erlangen on Schleiermacher, Hegel, or Schelling, are not convincing in the least.[12] Beyschlag instead invites his readers to search for the very theological impact (*der theologische Ansatz*) of the "Erlangen Theology." He finds this impact in the three theological rediscoveries that, on the threshold of the nineteenth century (between the dominance of Enlightenment

6. See Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, 176–77.
7. See Beyschlag, *Dogmengeschichte*, I:4; see also *Dogmengeschichte* II/1:2–3: "Contrary to the historical norm, the history of dogma can in no way be put forward as simply a progressive evolutionary continuity. Rather, your own breath first becomes noticeable there, where the forward-pressing mass of theological 'developments' (and complications) is brought forward in the moment of the crisis of faith from the *original source of Christian truth* and is made into the normative dogmatic form. In reality, all of the fundamental discoveries and decisions of the history of dogma are effected, not in a forward step of ongoing theological development, but conversely in a backward step, that is, as the incursion of the Christian source into the present church. The essential progression of the faith has always consisted in the regression to Christ" (emphasis in original)
8. See my essay "The Argument Over Women's Ordination in Lutheranism as a Paradigmatic Conflict in Dogma," *Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison and John T. Pless, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), especially 429–30.
9. Beyschlag, *Dogmengeschichte*, II/2:401, note 181.
10. See Beyschlag, *Dogmengeschichte*, I:150–51: "Yet what is 'the Gnostic' par excellence? When one asks for the basic motif, then one time and again runs into the same, ultimately defective structure. It is, with a word, the ontological negativism of the Gnostic doctrine of God, . . . the refusal of order of creation and of theology of creation, . . . in favor of a 'soteriology of self-preservation' and 'self-realization' . . . that made Gnosticism unbearable for the church."
11. Beyschlag, *Dogmengeschichte*, II/2:401.
12. See Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, 26.

rationalism and the beginnings of the Awakening movement), were expounded by none other than Johann Georg Hamann, the great opponent of Immanuel Kant. This theological impact in Hamann has three pillars that then also shape the "Erlangen Theology": (1) the experience of spiritual renewal effected by the confrontation with the biblical message over against the religiosity of rationalism, (2) the condescendence of the divine into the earthly realm of the biblical salvation history, and (3) the rediscovery of Luther as norm for confessional Lutheranism.[13]

Beyschlag shows that the first more or less complete edition of Hamann's works published by Friedrich Roth in 1821 in the geographic vicinity of Erlangen was key for the chief protagonists of the "Erlangen Theology" from the outset. But even with this starting point, the "Erlangen Theology" is a very complex part of church history, including errors and dead ends as well as internal corrections and overwhelming achievements, in both academic and confessional terms. Beyschlag draws vivid pictures of his protagonists, including especially Adolf von Harless, Johann C. K. von Hofmann, Franz Delitzsch, Theodosius Harnack, Gottfried Thomasius, Franz H. R. von Frank, Heinrich Schmid, Gustav Plitt, Gerhard von Zezschwitz, Adolf von Stählin, Theodor von Zahn, Albert Hauck, Theodor von Kolde, Ludwig Ihmels, Otto Procksch, and, finally, Werner Elert and Paul Althaus. He also includes basic data for the "less important" professors, many of whom are still worth reading in order to complete the picture. Particularly valuable are Beyschlag's many learned and interesting summaries of these theologians' main works. What finally makes his book on the "Erlangen Theology" unique in the present and for the future is the fact that it was written by an insider who not only studied under but also lived with the last generation of Erlangen theologians after the Second World War, the epoch that Beyschlag describes as the second flourishing period of the "Erlangen Theology." He then became the person who summed up their very theological legacy. It was Beyschlag's intention to make treasures that would otherwise remain hidden in distant libraries accessible even in dark and ecclesially barren times for a possible future renewal of the church in the light of the coming Christ, as he never tired of emphasizing, especially at the end of his instructive and moving books on the history of dogma and of the "Erlangen Theology." LOGIA

13. See Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, 27: "In fact, neither in Schleiermacher nor in Schelling and Hegel do the three dimensions of the 'Erlangen Theology' come together as distinctively as in Hamann: (1) the experience of 'rebirth' as an alternative to the rational religion of reason, (2) the 'condescension' (that is, humiliation) of God in the time of the biblical salvation history, (3) the recovery of Luther as the definitive norm of confessional Lutheranism."

Reviews

"It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read."
Martin Luther

Review Essay

In statu confessionis III: Texte zu Union, Bekenntnis, Kirchenkampf und Ökumene. By Hermann Sasse. Edited by Werner Klän and Roland Ziegler. Oberurseler Hefte Ergänzungsband 10. Göttingen: Edition Ruprecht, 2011.

This volume, which is the result of cooperation between Klän and Ziegler that began in the 1990s, follows the two existing volumes in the German-language series *In statu confessionis*, in which essays and other shorter writings by Hermann Sasse have been collected. It contains essays and other thus far unpublished writings from Sasse's early years (1929–1944). The complex historical situation of that time makes significant demands on the reader's historical knowledge, but the editors' copious footnotes help clear up questions posed, rather than answered, by the text. The twenty-nine texts in the volume are divided into three thematic sections ("Union and Confession," "Church Struggle," and "Ecumenism") and one nonthematic section ("Evaluations and position statements"). At the front of the volume is a short "historical-biographical introduction," providing an introduction to the essays and the questions that are important for reading them. Werner Klän concludes his introduction with the wish that the following quotation from Sasse be understood as the guiding principle of the volume: "Confessional loyalty and true ecumenism belong together." The selection and organization of texts make it clear that the editors tried to follow this principle. In the following, in order to provide at least a representative depiction of the content of the volume, I briefly summarize two of the texts the editors selected for the collection.

The first, just three pages long (80–82), bears the title "Lutheran Church and Church Governance (*Regiment*)." The index of first publications at the back of the volume indicates that the essay first appeared in 1934. Sasse deals in the essay with the consequences of an assertion, with which he also begins the essay: "Lutheranism is the only one of the main Christian confessions that does not recognize a particular external order as belonging to the essence of the church" (80). The last part, "to the essence of the church," is particularly important to Sasse. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox churches, and on the other hand the Reformed church, each recognizes its particular form of church governance—the threefold office with the principle of apostolic succession for the former and the presbyterial and synodical structure for the latter—as a nonnegotiable mark of the church. Over against all of these churches stands the Lutheran church, which counts among its marks only the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution—and no particular form of church governance. This means that the Lutheran church can live under various governmental structures; however, she is not free to concede her external government "to the state or other *worldly* authorities" (81).

That this happened in German history, in the form of church governance through territorial nobility, is not to be seen as a proof to the contrary. What then was an emergency solution had its reasons but should not have been permitted to become a permanent situation. Even though no form of church governance can guarantee the preservation of pure doctrine, some forms exist—among them, church governance through territorial nobility—that promise to destroy it in time. In 1934, Sasse was concerned that this exact thing was happening, that the *raison d'être* of the Church of the Augsburg Confession would fall away through the forced consolidation with the Reformed—something made possible by the form of church governance. In this context, Sasse says it is time to "be earnest, that only such a church regiment is bearable for the Lutheran Church, which does not contradict what our confession teaches about the church, about the unity of the church, about her spiritual office, and about her church regiment" (82). Thanks to the editors, the reader is informed about what specifically Sasse has in mind: the April 1934 attempt of the then-active Official for Evangelical Affairs in the Reich leadership of the NSDAP and Director of the Prussian Ministry of culture, August Jäger, to homogenize the German state churches as much as possible.

A second grouping of texts of particular interest comes under two titles: "Why must we hold fast to the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper?" (105–22), and "Quatenus or Quia"

(123–28). Three texts are encompassed here: first, an initial Sasse essay, then a response by a certain Pastor Höppl, and finally Prof. Sasse's answer to Höppl's objections, all from 1938. In the essay, Sasse deals with the question "Why must we hold fast to the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper?" Beginning with a quotation from Ernst Käsemann, he engages at a foundational level the ability of the so-called modern research to mediate any doctrine at all out of exegesis. Where one suggests that no modern exegete can in good conscience defend the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper on the basis of the Scripture, Sasse asks rhetorically which doctrine of the Augsburg Confession would not be subject to this judgment (111). Exegetically, he argues against Käsemann, who distinguishes and separates Pauline from Johannine from Synoptic, that it is decisive that one consider the "entire witness of the New Testament concerning the Supper of the Lord" (117). Specifically, this means drawing on St. Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper when interpreting the shorter reports in the Synoptics. If the reports in the Synoptics are perverted, such that one has a symbolic understanding, one of two things has happened: One takes either the Reformed path of a "violent redefinition" of the original meaning of St. Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper, or the path of Protestant modernism, which denies St. Paul's teaching as "false and nonbinding." Sasse, in conclusion, maintains that the approach of Protestant modernism—which destroys the unity of Holy Scripture—also destroys its authority. In this case, both Scripture and Supper have fallen, for they belong together as the center of the life and doctrine of the church (122). With this discussion, Sasse lays the foundation for what he had asserted at the beginning of the essay: the audience-member perspective of a *quatenus* ordination vow is to be equated with a Reformed understanding of confessional subscription, and although it is understandable in the individual case, it must nevertheless be carried out publicly and not secretly (106–7).

Pastor Höppl's reaction follows this essay, as Höppl feels himself challenged by Sasse's describing the *quatenus* as Reformed to choose between *quia* and *quatenus*. He holds to the *quatenus*, arguing that he permitted himself the understanding of his ordination "as ordination on Christ, the truth" (124). From this, he deduces that the *quatenus* not only follows for the Confessions, but also for the Bible. Sasse answers Höppl's objections with a threefold defense for the necessity of the *quia*. First, there is a great danger in the churches, as they are subject to the whim of theological fashion. For the sake of Christian love, Protestant pastors need to hold to their doctrinal subscription (125–26). But such a subscription cannot be mediated by an "inasmuch." In saying this, Sasse is not suggesting changing the position of the Confessions as *norma normata* into that of the Bible, which is *norma normans*, but rather that the *quatenus* must be denied wherever it is used to trivialize the question of "what we would have to do, if our Confessions did not teach according to the Scriptures" (126–27). Finally, he draws attention again to Höppl's conclusion that the *quatenus* must also apply to the Bible. If what is at stake is "the Christ, who is to be sought through the Bible," and not "the Christ, who is to be found in the Bible," then one makes his own reason into *norma normans*. From this follows "the concession of the proof via Scripture in dogmatics," and when that is lost, "the end of the Reformation" is the result (127).

The volume lacks little in terms of quality and arrangment. The printing errors are minimal (on page 228, "redargint" for "regarding"; on page 253, a missing space: "*Rechtfertigungdes*"). An index allows inquiries according to topic or person. The details of initial publication are missing from the first page of the articles, where one might expect them, but are handily gathered and arranged chronologically on a page in the back of the volume. The historical introduction mentioned above is rather short, leaving the reader wishing for more. This work, however, has been done in other places, as the footnotes in the introduction show, so that one could hardly expect the editors to repeat it. Finally, it ought not go overlooked that the volume is introduced with a foreword from the respective heads of the church bodies of the editors: President Matthew Harrison of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Bishop Hans-Jörg Voigt of the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche. It was a joy to read Prof. Sasse's texts in the volume, which, though not new, were for the most part unknown to me. They show the same theological acumen one is accustomed to expecting from Sasse. It remains only to thank the editors, who, through the publication of this volume, have made the texts more readily available.

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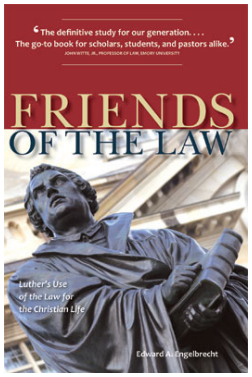

Friends of the Law: Luther's Use of the Law for the Christian Life. By Edward A. Engelbrecht. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012. 326 pages.

This book comes at the proper time in the present-day dialogue concerning the use of the law in the Christian life. As a confessional Lutheran, Engelbrecht desires to show that the functions of the law as confessed in FC VI are not contradictory to the bold assertions of Dr. Luther but rather a continual confession of the biblical doctrine of the law and also a persistent affirmation held by the church catholic. This book is not only helpful in the discussion concerning the law in the Christian life but also is beneficial as an academic contribution to Luther scholarship.

Engelbrecht asserts the fruitfulness of this work saying:

> The discoveries are possibly the basis for an entirely new consensus that sees the leading Protestant theologian

> properly not as an innovator of doctrine but as one who renewed the importance of the Law and its use in the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone. This new understanding and description of the broader historical context, if upheld, would also place Luther, Melanchthon, and the Formula of Concord nearer one another in their teaching about the Law and its use. (xv)

This being stated, Engelbrecht's book is not a dogmatic treatise over the uses of the law but rather a history of the doctrine of the office of the law. Engelbrecht examines documents beginning with Scripture and ends with contemporary scholarship concerning the law. In doing this, he does a great service to the church in investigating the history of this doctrine, bringing to light nuances that have long remained hidden in the previous scholarship.

Part one of the book is a historical overview of the teachings on the law prior to Luther, which shows influences that helped him develop his view on the office of the law. Though helpful in demonstrating linguistic similarities, when making an argument from influence, one must discuss the entirety of the authority. Engelbrecht displays Luther's numbering of the law saying, "Based on Luther's education in medieval scholastic categories, he commonly thought of the Law in a threefold way" (97). This statement follows the thought that Luther was a faithful medieval scholastic, as is portrayed in the historical overview in the summaries of Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and other scholastic theologians. However, those left out of this summary are the likes of Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Gabriel Biel, medieval mystics, early Renaissance humanists, teachers of the *via moderna,* the Augustinian framework of the *schola Augustiniana moderna*, John Huss, and so forth. Alister McGrath asserts the importance of the *schola Augustiniana moderna* on the Wittenberg reformers saying, "In many ways, the Wittenberg reformers, with their particular emphasis on the anti-Pelagian writings of Augustine, may be regarded as having rediscovered and revitalized this tradition" (see Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. [Oxford, England: Blackwell, 1999], 77). It is impossible to teach the faith within a vacuum; one must analyze influential theologians and philosophical thought. Possibly because of space and time, Engelbrecht does not cover all the various and divergent theologies, epistemologies, and philosophical schools of thought that could have influenced Luther's teaching and practice. The argument from influence is difficult to make due to the distance of time between Engelbrecht and Luther, as well as the enormity of divergent writings prior to Luther's life.

Part two is dedicated to the work of Luther. Engelbrecht is very helpful in presenting works by the blessed doctor that were either passed by or ignored in previous scholarship, especially the 1522 postils, the Antinomian disputations, and his exegesis of 1 Timothy 1:8–9. This treatment is valuable in clarifying the place of the law in the Christian life according to Luther, which covered many years and a diversity of opponents and controversies. Especially useful is Engelbrecht's consideration of the diverse contexts of these works, specifically the context of the 1531–35 Galatians lectures and the Smalcald Articles. This portion of the book concludes by showing the consistency in Luther's teaching on the law from early 1516 until his death. However, it is impossible to clarify a specific doctrine throughout Luther's life due to the great divergence in contexts. Unlike Melanchthon with the *Loci Communes*, Luther never penned a dogmatics textbook. This makes it rather difficult to clarify any one doctrine taught by Luther. Many works of Luther that would have been helpful in this work were ignored due to their popularity and previous academic treatment. Other writings such as the 1520 *Treatise on Good Works* or the 1535 disputations *Faith and Law* and *Justification* would have given further edification concerning Luther's use of the law in the Christian life. In addition to these works, *The Bondage of the Will*, a necessary document for any doctrine confessed by Luther, was completely overlooked.

Part three is devoted to looking for a new consensus. This portion deals with twentieth-century scholarship concerning the use of the law. In opposition to the popular consensus that sees only two uses of the law, Engelbrecht desires to show that Luther taught a threefold use, in continuity with the church before him. In Appendix E, Engelbrecht lists all the scholarship spanning from 1858 to 2010. However, in the book itself Engelbrecht analyzes only two major influences in the twentieth century that misunderstood the history of the dogma: (1) Gerhard Forde and (2) Philip Bickel and Robert Nordlie's 1992 publication *The Goal of the Gospel: God's Purpose in Saving You* (233–45). This section is valuable, but it requires more work. The influence and effects of Barth's theology are not discussed, nor are the works of Werner Elert and the Erlangen theologians in reaction to Barth's doctrine of the law. However, the point of this section is to display how an improper or limited reading of the history of dogma leads one toward a false assertion of doctrine. Engelbrecht is critical, but also respectful, toward Forde, allowing room for dialogue. Sadly, Engelbrecht was not able to provide a thorough study of Forde's works, and therefore the criticisms must be taken as such.

Overall, this book should be read by anyone desiring a better understanding of the discussion over the use of the law in the Christian life, be it as a preacher or as a receiver of the word proclaimed. Engelbrecht displays in this work his perspective that a continual teaching of the law within the Christian life that was held early on in the church was maintained in the Reformation by Luther, and is in need of amplification today by those who confess the Lutheran assertion of the law's usefulness for the Christian life. As Engelbrecht himself writes, more work needs to be done in this endeavor in order that we may have a clear proclamation of the gospel and therefore a biblical confession of the office and work of Jesus Christ for our justification.

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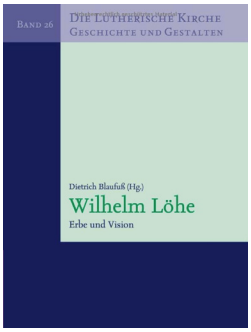


Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision. Edited by Dietrich Blaufuß. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009. 381 pages.

The year 2005 brought the formation of the International Löhe Society, which, primarily through its conferences, promotes all aspects of research on Wilhelm Löhe (14). This volume documents the second conference of the society, held in 2008 (the two-hundredth anniversary of Löhe's birth) in Neuendettelsau, which is not only the place from which Löhe's significant influence spread but also a place where it is still strongly felt today. The myriad of local institutions that contributed to the conference—and thus (indirectly) to the publication of this volume—provide incontrovertible evidence of this, and thus also of Löhe's lasting importance (17–19). All of the papers presented at the conference are printed in the volume, either in English (four essays) or in German (twelve essays). They are preceded by a German-language introduction to the volume, which reaches its high point in sections 5–8. There, the editor precisely assesses the conditions of modern Löhe scholarship as determined by the accessibility and reliability of primary and secondary sources. The essays in the volume are organized topically as follows: *divine service* (three essays), *pastoral theology* (two essays), *church and confession* (three essays), *biographical* (two essays), *diaconal work* (three essays), and *foreign missions* (three essays).

Manfred Seitz, in his opening essay on the divine service and language, attempts to show that appropriating Löhe on these topics today means a break with the influence of subjectivism in the structure of the divine service: the word spoken between God and the individual there is also that spoken between God and the "we" of the congregation and is thus to be subjected to what the whole church believes and celebrates (46). Thomas Schattauer explores the use of the concept of *communio* in Löhe's work, regarding it as the recovery of an important communal aspect of sacramental theology lost in Luther's polemical formulations, which focused on the individual forgiveness of sins. Löhe helped to see that the point of the sacrament is not doctrine, but life (62). In an intriguing essay, missionary Christian Weber teases out parallels between the twenty-first century Congo and Löhe's nineteenth-century environment in order to praise Löhe for being two things: a realist, as evidenced by his diaconal emphasis, and a visionary, as evidenced by his liturgical emphasis (72).

Klaus Raschzok's essay draws on a number of Löhe texts, mostly from 1857 to 1859, to show that by understanding the pastoral office from the perspective of the divine act of reconciliation, Löhe actually avoids a false hierarchical understanding of the office, something of which he is often accused (108). Löhe's theological legacy in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is given attention by John Pless, whose essay systematizes Kenneth Korby's appropriation of Löhe for pastoral care (121 ff.).

Wolfhart Schlichting's contribution traces Löhe's hopeful expectations for the church's future and his subsequent disappointment, suggesting that the increasing emphasis on the centrality of the Lord's Supper in Christian life is what Löhe finally perceived as the God-given progression within the church. Schlichting seeks to hold on to Löhe's optimism shown in the *Three Books*. Dietrich Blaufuß, the editor of the volume, lays a number of misunderstandings, misconceptions, and accusations to rest in his essay by showing that Löhe's theology of the Lord's Supper had, in several aspects, ecumenical character. Löhe's ecumenical approach, and not just Blaufuß's setting the record straight, adds to the strength of this essay. Rudolf Keller, in his essay on Löhe's understanding of free (nonterritorial) churches, is also concerned with correcting misconceptions, this time about Löhe's ecclesiology. He studies Löhe's relationship to the territorial church, in which he remained, and to the free Lutheran churches of his day, describing the latter relationship as a service of midwifery (189). The close relationship that he hoped to see between Lutheran congregations inside and outside of the territorial church came to only limited realization (197).

Jobst Reller's study of Löhe's early "spiritual breakthrough" uses Deinzer's biography and published journals and letters to demonstrate Löhe's somewhat typical move out of the philosophy of German Idealism by means of the knowledge of his own sin and justification by faith alone (218). Helpful is the chronological structure of his article, which aids the reader in orienting himself within Löhe's development (201). Lothar Vogel provides a closer picture of Löhe's theological coming of age, looking in particular at journals and correspondence during the years of Löhe's theological study in Erlangen and Berlin. His conclusion is clear: despite all his uniqueness and development, Löhe remained a child of his day, of the awakening (238).

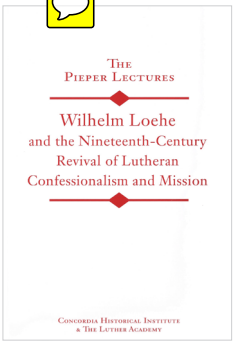
Hanz Schwarz's essay attempts to show one important element of Löhe's understanding of diaconal work: if it is to be done by the church, it must flow out of the church, for the work of love must flow out of justification and not into works-righteousness (239). To this end, his diaconal efforts were not only based in the church but also accompanied by the theological education of the diaconal workers (247). Jürgen Albert attempts a comparison of Löhe with another "father" of the diaconal movement in nineteenth-century Germany, Johann Wichern. He compares three aspects: realm of activity, concept of the office, and *diaconia*. The distinctions he draws are relativized at the end, as he suggests that in retrospect, Löhe and Wichern sought the same goal: the unity of faith and action (257). Theodor Strohm's essay attempts to demonstrate Löhe's understanding of *diaconia*, and then reflects on today's challenges in diaconal work. He regards the priesthood of all believers as the necessary foundation of the diaconal church today and suggests that Löhe also believed this (275), which contradicts his earlier assertion that Löhe derives the office of deacon (that of deaconess is derived from the vocation of women) from that of priest (269–71).

Craig Nessan's article on mission correspondence between Löhe and the Iowa Synod describes the break with the Missouri Synod and what led to the forming of the Iowa Synod and founding of Wartburg Seminary. Martin Lohrmann also deals with the Iowa Synod and the question of "open questions." His interesting article attempts to demonstrate that five major "open questions"—church and ministry, millennialism, the Antichrist, Christian observance of the Sabbath, and the question in the predestinarian controversy—were actually instigated by the American setting and were otherwise relatively foreign to German Lutheranism. Lohrmann is sympathetic with the ability of the Iowa Synod to preserve harmony by letting the questions remain "open." Dean Zweck's contribution on Löhe's influence in Australia is the final essay in the volume. He shows how Löhe's influence on Lutheranism in Australia was impersonal, and thus indirect, but nevertheless strongly theological, as it was carried there by those who had been trained in Neuendettelsau, albeit after Löhe's death.

The four essays in English are those by Schattauer, Pless, Lohrmann, and Zweck. English-language abstracts accompanying the other essays would have been helpful, and perhaps also German-language abstracts accompanying these four.

The plethora of appendices and indices at the end of the volume is nothing short of impressive. Blaufuß provides pages cataloging all the primary and secondary Löhe sources used in the essays according to topic, author/editor, and publication date. Five indices follow, allowing the reader to search according to person, author/editor, place, Scripture passage, and subject. This sort of work is rarely seen in an essay volume, but has its purpose in this one: *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision* is probably the best introduction to Löhe and Löhe research presently available, and by providing these sorts of tools, Blaufuß has helped not only to make not only the volume, but also to make Wilhelm Löhe. Perhaps the best conclusion is simply to note the topics that Blaufuß regards as still (as of 2009) outstanding in research on Löhe: his relationship to Roman Catholicism, his understanding of justification, his eschatology, and his effect on the further history of *diaconia*.

Jacob Corzine
Berlin, Germany



Wilhelm Loehe and the Nineteenth-Century Revival of Lutheran Confessionalism and Mission. The Pieper Lectures, Volume 13. Edited by John A. Maxfield. St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute and The Luther Academy, 2012. xi + 95 pages.

This six-essay collection is an important contribution to the recent renaissance in Löhe studies, evidenced, for example, by the inauguration of an International Löhe Society and also by the Missouri Synod's recognition of Löhe as one of its ad hoc founders.

Describing the relation between Löhe and the Missouri Synod, John Pless notes that Löhe contributed to the confessional orientation and missionary character of the Missouri Synod, in contrast to C. F. W. Walther, who was more instrumental in shaping the LCMS's theological core and ecclesial structure. While early Löhe missionaries had joined the Ohio Synod, they were offended with the Ohio Synod's generic formula used in the distribution of the sacrament, "Christ says, 'this is my body . . . '" (5). Half of the early Löhe men left Ohio for Missouri on this issue. However, significant differences were to divide Löhe from Walther. Löhe was uneasy about an equal representation of clergy and laity at synod assemblies, which for him indicated the impact of American democracy instead of sound theological leadership on the church (8). Likewise, for Löhe, the church's visibility was related to its invisibility like as the body is related to the soul. In contrast, for Walther, the church is primarily invisible. Hence, Walther supporters tended to accuse Löhe of "Romanizing," while Löhe saw Waltherians as overly "platonic" in their approach to the church.

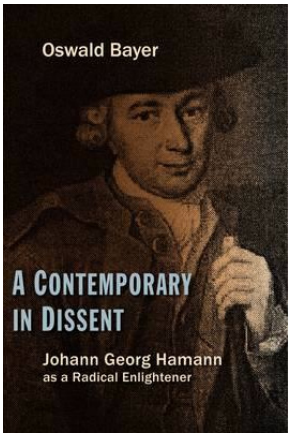
In an overview of Löhe's theology and ecclesiology, David Ratke notes the importance of word and sacrament for Löhe; apostolicity was never for him by means of an Episcopal succession but, instead, always through fidelity to the word (28). Mission for Löhe was the one church "in motion" in the world in proclamation of the gospel but also with works of mercy on behalf of the needy and poor (29). Craig Nessan reviews the relationship between Löhe and the erstwhile German Iowa Synod. Nessan notes that Löhe's missionaries in Michigan (Johannes Deindörfer and Georg Grossmann) were strongly opposed by Walther's men over whether or not the pastoral office was grounded in the congregation's selection or not. This led these pastors to leave Michigan and head for Iowa where they reestablished educational institutions (Wartburg College and Wartburg Seminary). They maintained Löhe's charge for strong parish catechesis, as well as mission to the native Americans in Wyoming, which unfortunately did not fare well.

In a brilliantly crafted essay, John Stephenson evaluates Löhe's "churchly program." He notes the influence of Pietism on Löhe (55 ff.) in which Löhe resituates Spener's proposals for church renewal, albeit intertwined with Luther's sacramental theology (62 ff.). Likewise, such Pietism also influenced Löhe's view of pastoral ministry as "cure of souls" (59 ff.). For Löhe, there was a "personal union" between Pietism and Orthodoxy. The "chief pillars" of the apostolic life that Löhe sought for the church are "discipline, fellowship, and sacrifice" (63). Samuel Schuldheisz notes the centrality of mercy for the church's mission for both Walther and Löhe: both men "teach us that it is the whole Body of Christ throughout history that engages in works of mercy toward the neighbor. God's work of mercy involves both pastor and congregation, both individual and corporate works of mercy, not only on the part of the local congregation but in the church as a whole" (85). Anthony Oliphant notes that Löhe's confessional subscription recognized the Confessions

not only as authoritative documents but ones originating in a specific time. Additionally, Löhe felt that the future could bring access to truth not fully appreciated by the Confessions. Even so, "Loehe did not seek new truth, but he states instead, 'I have a burning desire to see the old truth in new garments, but only the truth, only the truth'" (92). In fact, if the Spirit is guiding the church into new ventures, it would seem that the only Spirit Löhe recognizes is one that ever returns to the ancient church, and no other.

Even those not familiar with Löhe will find these well-crafted essays accessible. In light of secularization and pluralism, Löhe's vision of a church unified in confession, worship, and spirit is one that needs wider recognition.

Mark Mattes
Grand View University
Des Moines, Iowa



A Contemporary in Dissent: Johann Georg Hamann as Radical Enlightener. By Oswald Bayer; translated by Roy A. Harrisville and Mark C. Mattes. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012.

Johann Georg Hamann never ignored the complexities, inconsistencies, and problems that we face in this world. He never thought it was possible to define or explain everything. Yet many minds who study historical figures do try to explain everything, putting every thought and every life into this or that box. Thus there is a danger that people will take advantage of the mystifying writings and life of Hamann and explain them in a way that makes sense to them, that satisfies their own desires. Thus we end up with Hamann the irrationalist, the existentialist, the postmodernist, and even the archconservative. In these attempts to analyze and define Hamann, he is destroyed. The true strength of Oswald Bayer's book, recently translated into English by Roy A. Harrisville and Mark Mattes, is that it finds the key by which we can unlock the mystery of Hamann. This original motif allows Hamann to remain an organic whole. It is grounded in the experience of Hamann, in his repentance in London—a turn from vain speculation and to Scripture and Luther. The original motif is simply that the only absolute truth that we can know is what God himself reveals in Holy Scripture and in the incarnation. Above all else Hamann was a Christian. His living Lutheranism is the lodestone by which we can know his thought and his life.

Bayer takes this original motif and traces how it shaped the writings of Hamann. Through these writings he draws us into the conversations that Hamann had with his contemporaries, great minds such as Kant, Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Herder. Bayer introduces to us a Hamann that is not enshrined in abstract, timeless thoughts, but one that is in the midst of his own time and place, in the midst of the great conversation. In this conversation we find Hamann in dissent, speaking out against the intellectuals of his day. He does so by showing how they have destroyed what they are trying to build, how they have sacrificed what they are trying to save. Hamann rejects any simple answer, any neat distinction, any shortcut, and forces his readers to return again to the world, to history, to experience, to language in all its contradiction and messiness. Bayer rightly points out that Hamann's dissent is motivated by his desire to lead these intellectuals to the truth, that they too might repent. In this way he leads them and us into a deeper, more radical Enlightenment.

While in this work Hamann is well portrayed as a contemporary, his contemporaries often are not. The people with whom Hamann is conversing are often simplified and characterized. The differences between Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Kant are significant, and to reduce them to a unified Enlightenment mindset is untenable. It is important to remember that Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Kant were all criticizing the thought and rationality of their day and Hamann was part of that movement. Mendelssohn argued that religion had a vital role to play in the Enlightenment. Kant argued that there is no pure transcendental cognition of the world, but that all our thoughts about the world are empirical, consisting of both intuitions of the world and concepts of the mind. It is important to see Hamann thus as a contemporary in the sense that he was a supporting part of the conversation of his day and was not just in dissent. He took the questions that were being raised around him and in many ways affirmed how they were being answered by his contemporaries. It is only with this understanding that it is possible to have a full appreciation of Hamann's method of metaschematism, where he uses one passage of an author against another. In this way, he does not completely reject the work as a whole, but agrees with it in part. He engages his contemporaries in their own language, in their own thought patterns, and thus enters fully into their conversation. Affirming the common ground allows him to better instruct when he turns their conclusions against them and shows how they have been inconsistent. Hamann does not rebuke them for simply being wrong. He rebukes them for not being honest with themselves or the reader and for having the naïve self-confidence to think that they have figured everything out.

Bayer brings to us a Hamann who is our contemporary as well, a contemporary who joins us in facing many of the perplexities of our dogmatic modernity. Bayer points us, who are lost in the midst of thousands of myths, to a guide, a poet, an author, who helps us interpret the complexities and chaos that we find around ourselves and in ourselves. Bayer shows us how in Hamann the voice of Luther continues to speak out against the delusions of our age. Bayer also helps us see that Hamann is an author who is honest about the limits of his own poems and therefore is always pointing us to the true author of ourselves and creation. All reason is language; by it we create poems and

myths—and all transcendent and certainly true language, all certainly true poetry, comes only from God, the creator of heaven and earth.

Roy Axel Coats
Baltimore, Maryland

Erlangen: An American's History of a German Town. By Gary C. Fouse. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2005. Paper. 396 pages.

Erlangen, located just north of Nuremberg in the Middle Franconian region of northern Bavaria, dates its origins back to 1002. The city's Friedrich-Alexander University was founded in 1743. Gary Fouse, now a professor at the University of California in Irvine, was stationed in Erlangen as a U.S. army military policeman from 1966 to 1968. This book grew out of his interest in and attachment to the city. The author traces the history of Erlangen from its earliest days to the present, although the bulk of the volume is devoted to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

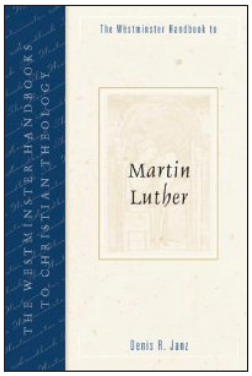
Fouse moves quickly from the medieval era of Erlangen's beginning and growth to the Reformation. The author notes that Gottfried Seitz speculates that Luther may have passed through Erlangen on his journey back to Wittenberg from Augsburg via Nuremberg and Coburg in 1518. Given the fact that Erlangen was under the rule of Nuremberg, Erlangen became a Lutheran town in the 1520s. There was significant Anabaptist activity in and around Erlangen. Fouse notes one sectarian group, the "Dreamers of Uttenreuth," led by Hans Schmid, who proclaimed himself a prophet sent by God. Erlangen was devastated in the Thirty Years' War. French Huguenots would arrive in Erlangen in 1686 even though their coming was protested by the Lutheran pastors of the city.

Originally comprising four faculties—Protestant theology, jurisprudence, medicine, and philosophy—the university was inaugurated, with an opening celebration on 4 November 1743, with sixteen professors and sixty-four students. Fouse traces the history of the university's path from the eighteenth century through the challenges posed by the Enlightenment into the twentieth century, especially concentrating on the university's fate under National Socialism. Given the author's own military background and his experience in Erlangen in the 1960s, his retelling of the twentieth-century chapter of the city's history, particularly the life of both the university and the city's years surrounding and including World War II, comprise a major section of the book. Dark aspects of the city's past are not avoided, such as the treatment of the Jews, book burnings, and the involvement of the university in Nazi-inspired eugenics research.

Erlangen: An American's History of a German Town is a multidimensional book embracing political, social, and intellectual history. While the book is no substitute for the fine studies of Karlmann Beyschlag (*Die Erlanger Theologie*, 1993) or Lowell Green (*The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching, and Practice*, 2010), Fouse does incorporate quite a bit of information on both the early and later theologians of Erlangen. Utilizing the earlier work of Lowell Green and others in *Hermann Sasse: A Man for Our Times?* Fouse sets the theological contributions of Erlangen in their historical context and notes some of the ways in which this school was a source of influence in the wider theological world. Brief biographies of such theological figures as Gottfried Thomasius, Gottlief Christoph Adolph von Harless, Johann Christian Konrad von Hofmann, Franz Delitzsch, Theodosius Harnack, Franz Hermann Reinhold Frank, Hermann Sasse, Otto Procksch, Walter Künneth, Werner Elert, and Paul Althaus are provided. Fouse briefly notes Wilhelm Löhe's connection with Erlangen, even though he incorrectly notes that Löhe accepted a call for missionary work in the United States in 1840 (64).

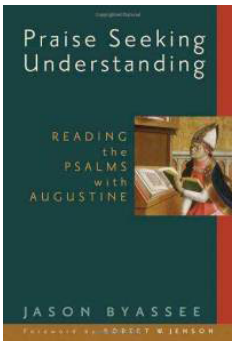
John T. Pless
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Briefly Noted



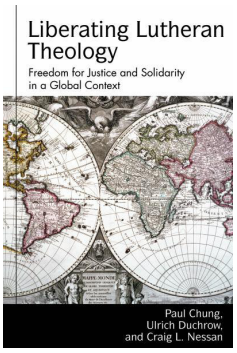
The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther. By Denis R. Janz. Louisville: Westminster/John KnoxPress, 2010. Paper. 147 pages.

Concise topical articles, alphabetically arranged from *Anfechtung* to *worship*, cover key aspects of Luther's theology. Peppered with references to Luther's own writings, Janz manages to provide readers with brief but generally helpful overviews of key words in the reformer's theological vocabulary. While not a substitute for more comprehensive and systematic treatments of Luther's thought, like those provided by Althaus, Bayer, Lohse, and others, this slim volume will assist undergraduate students and interested laity in developing a good handle on the basic contours of Luther's thinking. The book includes a bibliography and a chronology of Luther's life.



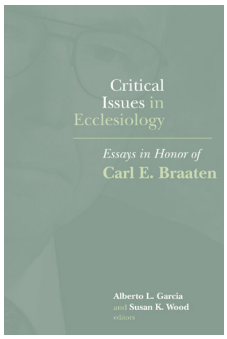
Praise Seeking Understanding: Reading the Psalms with Augustine. By Jason Byassee. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007. Paper. 290 pages.

This book is the product of the author's doctoral work with Reinhard Hütter at Duke; it also bears the marks of Byassee's efforts as a preacher who found more help in ancient commentaries than in more recent historical-critical expositions. In particular, Byassee turns to Augustine, suggesting that in him we see an indissoluble bond between Christology and exegesis, and a guide for how one today might engage in theological exegesis.



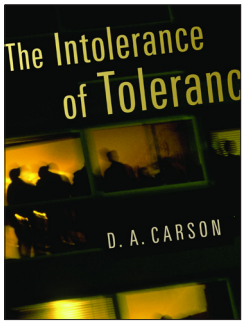
Liberating Lutheran Theology: Freedom for Justice and Solidarity in a Global Context. By Paul Chung, Ulrich Duchrow, and Craig Nessan. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011. Hardback. 292 pages.

The authors of this book seek to bring Lutheran theology into an engagement with economic, political, and the diverse cultural conditions of our world. Two chapters are devoted to a critique and reconstruction of Luther's "two-kingdoms" teaching. The first chapter provides a helpful history of "Liberation Theology" and its place in Latin American history. The fourth, "Orthopraxis and Martyrdom: The Influence of Latin American Liberation Theology on Systematic Theology in Europe and North America," provides a sampling of responses both appreciative and critical to liberation theology: Jürgen Moltmann, Hans Schwarz, Georg Kraus, John Douglas Hall, Donald Bloesch, and David Tracy. In the second part of the book, Paul Chung (Luther Seminary, St. Paul) makes his case for the inculturation of Lutheran theology into the Asian context by way of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and "*minjung* theology." The final section of the book is dominated by issues of money and property, capitalism and violence. One chapter in this section puts Luther in conversation with Gandhi. Confessional Lutherans will find little help in this volume in actually bringing authentic Lutheran theology to speak critically and constructively to ethical issues confronting humanity today. On the other hand, the book does provide a reliable window into the theological methodology in use within the Lutheran World Federation and challenges confessional Lutherans to greater clarity as they engage the world.



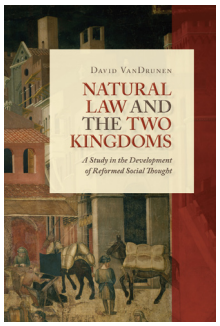
Critical Issues in Ecclesiology: Essays in Honor of Carl E. Braaten. Edited by Alberto L. Garcia and Susan Wood. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011. Paper. 239 pages.

Agree with him or disagree, Carl Braaten's theological writing is electric and engaging. His memoirs, *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian*, are a fascinating and compelling account of his journey. These last two decades Braaten has become known as a polemicist, given his sharp criticism of the decisions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America regarding homosexuality. While this festschrift does reflect Braaten's longstanding interest in ecclesiology and ecumenism, most of the essays fail to capture the luster of Braaten's own contributions. With the exception of the introduction written by his close friend and collaborator, Robert Jenson, there is little in the book that evidences Braaten's passionate critique of the church body he helped to form. Several of the chapters are noteworthy. There is an informative essay by the Baptist theologian Timothy George on "Evangelicals and the Present Ecumenical Movement." Frank Senn provides valuable historical material on the ambiguous phrase "Evangelical Catholic," while Robert Jenson explores the biblical imagery of "The Bride of Christ." The book concludes with a bibliography of Braaten's publications from 1962 to 2010.



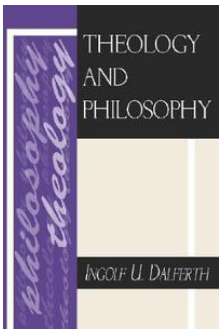
The Intolerance of Tolerance. By D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012. Hardback. 186 pages.

D. A. Carson is one of the most prolific authors in the American Evangelical camp. This recent contribution is an attempt to alert Christians to a shift that is taking place in the way tolerance is thought of in contemporary Western society. Carson rightly worries that tolerance itself is becoming rigidly intolerant of any truth claims that are exclusive. He demythologizes the claim that secularization leads to tolerance, noting examples rather of how secularism cannot tolerate biblical Christianity. Laws intended to grant greater autonomy end up, in fact, being more and more restrictive on those who believe differently. Carson suggests ways in which Christians will need to think and act apologetically in view of the "new tolerance."



Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought. By David VanDrunen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. Paper. 466 pages.

With a renewed interest in natural law among conservative Lutherans (see *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, edited by Robert Baker), David VanDrunen's impressive historical study is worthy of attention. VanDrunen situates natural law in the context of the "two kingdoms" as he seeks to demonstrate the reliance on natural law for Reformed ethics. After a thorough investigation of Calvin's use of natural law, VanDrunen moves through a meticulous analysis of the trajectory of natural law theory in Reformed Orthodoxy, early North American Reformed churches in New England and Virginia, Abraham Kuyper, Karl Barth, and the Kuyperian legacy as mediated through Herman Dooyeweerd and Cornelius Van Til.



Theology and Philosophy. By Ingolf U. Dalferth. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001. Paper. 236 pages.

I discovered this book in my search for a text to suggest to seminarians who begin the study of theology with little or no background in philosophy at the undergraduate level. Dalferth provides a concise and generally clear discussion of the interrelatedness of theology and philosophy as well as their distinctiveness. Descriptively, Dalferth gives an overview of six "models" for thinking about faith and reason: (1) The Two-Book Model (Augustine); (2) The Nature-Grace Model (Aquinas); (3) The Law-Gospel Model (Luther); (4) The Reason-Revelation Model (Enlightenment); (5) The Difference-in-Unity Model (Schleiermacher); (6) The Unity-in-Difference Model (Barth). Dalferth maintains that each of these models is faced with a common problem: "How can the internal perspective of Faith and external perspective of Reason have the same referent (or range of referents)?" (127). The remainder of the book is Dalferth's own working out of an answer to this question.

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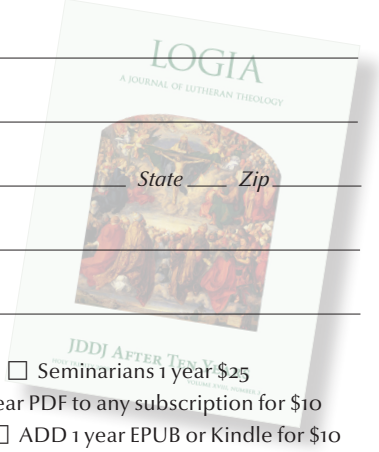

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Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

Werner Elert on Preaching and the Liturgy

The introductory comments by Theodore G. Tappert and his translation of Elert's remarks were published in Lutheran Quarterly *7 (1955): 172–73.*

The untimely death on 21 November 1954 of Werner Elert, professor of Theology in the university of Erlangen, Bavaria, is a serious loss not only to Erlangen and to German theology but also to world Lutheranism. He is perhaps best known in North America for his two-volume *Morphologie des Luthertums* (Munich, 1931, 1932). During and since World War II his Dogmatics and his Ethics were published, and more recently he devoted his considerable energy and the resources of his vast scholarship to studies in the ancient church. Elert turned in this direction in his later years because he was more and more persuaded that Protestants in general and Lutherans in particular had surrendered Patristics to Roman Catholic scholars and that the altogether natural, but apologetic, interests of these scholars colored conclusions and made it increasingly difficult to get at the truth. The first major fruit of Elert's new studies was published in his *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche* (Berlin, 1954), a study which sheds important new light on current ecumenical discussions. A few weeks before his unexpected death, at a meeting of the General Synod of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD), he participated in a discussion which preceded the adoption of the first part of a new liturgy for that church. His extempore remarks on this occasion are here translated from the *Informationsdienst der VELKD* (January, 1955) both in memory of this distinguished theologian and churchman and also on account of their significance for American as well as European Lutheranism.

"In the historical part of *Leiturgia* [see *The Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (1954): 181–82] it is asserted that Luther really did not achieve a proper understanding of public worship. When one goes on to consider the conception of worship which is set forth in this study, one finds that it rests, quite understandably and properly, on a consideration of historical development. The liturgical life of the church is of course an historical phenomenon which must be traced to its origins. Now, it is to be observed (and this can easily be established by anyone who is familiar with the literature) that the description of the beginnings of Christian worship which is offered in *Leiturgia* follows the description given by Roman Catholics on the basis of the very outstanding investigations which have been made in recent decades by Benedictines especially, and more recently also by Jesuits. Lutheran liturgiologists rest their case, insofar as the historical treatment is concerned, on these investigations. I do not intend to criticize the work of the Benedictines, for everyone knows how much thorough knowledge, how much quiet objectivity, and how little polemic is involved in it. However, we cannot and should not expect that these Catholic brethren are in a position to understand and present, even in the history of worship, what was of concern to Luther. If Luther is to be judged by the norms which are basic to the Benedictine interpretation, it can indeed be said that he did not really understand what worship is.

"Over against this charge I should assert that, if it can at all be said that Luther reached back beyond the Middle Ages to the ancient church, this was especially true in his restoration of preaching to an important and central place. The contrary opinion with regard to public worship in the ancient church is so widely held that I cannot hope to counteract it effectively in the few moments at my disposal here. But I cannot refrain from mentioning a few little things which the reader of the sources will encounter and to which the literature makes some reference. We are today given the impression that worship in the ancient church was quite exclusively liturgical—as we still find it, for example, in Eastern Orthodox churches. But in a sermon one of the ancient Church Fathers sets forth in very vivid fashion the fault he has to find with the contemporary liturgical service. The congregation is not there, he reports. The people are

wandering about outside, the boys and girls lounging about during the performance of the liturgy. They have a watchman posted at the door, however, and when the distribution of the elements in Holy Communion is about to begin, a signal is given and the young people rush into the church like a pack of hounds, snatch up the host from the clergyman's hands as a dog snatches up a piece of meat, and then depart. I am not suggesting that this sort of thing was the general practice, but it happened.

"I have a different understanding of preaching from that [set forth in *Leiturgia*]. The preaching of the ancient church . . . was doctrinal preaching. It was an expression of the orthodox faith of the church at that time. Accordingly it is subject to the prejudiced charge which is leveled against all forms of orthodoxy, including the orthodoxy of our time, that the preaching was dry and irrelevant and of interest only to learned theologians. I wish that you could see some of the few extant fragments of paper on which stenographers recorded sermons. Perhaps you are aware that the extant sermons of the great Church Fathers, including those of Augustine, were not written by themselves but were recorded by stenographers. When one sees and deciphers the hastily written shorthand notes of the stenographers, one can get an impression of what preaching was like at that time. Sermons were not dull doctrinal addresses in our sense of the term. Congregations were attentive. Records reveal the tremendous, dramatic emotion which the sermons evoked, even the cries with which the auditors interrupted the preacher. The stenographic reports give us all sorts of information, even that Augustine had a bad cough on one occasion. This is alluded to in a passing remark, 'Pardon me, I could not help coughing, for I have been preaching a great deal the last few days.'

"If one reads the great sermons on the dogma of the ancient church which Gregory Nazianzen preached in Constantinople before he was elevated to the patriarchate—the entire dogma of the ancient church is contained in four sermons which have been published on the basis of stenographic reports—one must be astonished at the intellectual and spiritual power of the preacher, who was able to communicate the teaching of the church to his hearers in such a compact, vivid, and existential manner, for what he treated concerned life and death. This is what services were like in the ancient church. Our honored liturgiologists . . . will say that all of this is well known. But there is still danger that we misinterpret the ancient church when we see it only in the light of the Benedictine investigations and inquire only about the origin of the Kyrie and ask when the Hallelujah was first employed. . . .

"The impression has gone abroad, and our liturgiologists are at least partly to blame for this, that the preaching, teaching church is to be replaced in some sense by the liturgical church."

A Look Back—Erlangen 1945

The following reminiscences are from Wolf Dietrich Knappe, who studied at Erlangen immediately after World War II. A native of Rhineland who grew up in Munich, Knappe was drafted into the German Army in 1943. Both of his parents died in an air raid on Munich in July of 1944. He was taken prisoner by Americans on 3 May 1945, five days before the armistice. He was discharged from the army on 25 June 1945 and went on to study at Erlangen, Göttingen, and the Theologische Schule Bethel. After graduating in 1948, he received a World Council scholarship to do graduate work in the United States and attended the "Chicago Lutheran Seminary located at Maywood" for a year, receiving the STM. Back in Germany, he was ordained in the Lutheran Church of Bavaria in 1949 and served a parish in Munich-Allach (plus six refugee camps) for two years. He then accepted a call to St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Wine Hill (Steeleville, IL), where he served for four years. Afterwards he served as a pastor, teacher, and mission developer in other parts of the United States. He received the STD from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago in 1977. Logia *thanks him for providing this personal look at academic and student life at Erlangen.*

September. It was the first university in West Germany that opened up again after the War. Students flocked to it from all over the country, including the Soviet Zone. I was one of the lucky ones. Having been preenrolled while still serving in the army, I had no trouble being admitted. Finding food and lodging was another story.

Erlangen had been spared any major war damage. But like all cities in the West it was overrun with refugees. The housing authorities were very strict in allowing only a certain amount of square meters per person. If you had more, you had to relinquish a certain number of rooms to refugees or students. I was fortunate to be assigned a room with a retired pastor (a widower), formerly *Dekan* in Gräfenberg. There was no bathroom. The room only had a washstand, and the toilet had to be shared with other families in the building.

The Students. They were a motley crowd. Most of them were veterans wearing uniforms or parts of them. I had some civilian pants from my father (ill-fitting, too short). My army coat served as my jacket. It had different (civilian) buttons that my sister had sewed on. The rank insignia was removed.

There were many wounded among us. The most noticeable were the amputees. I remember one named Schreiber who had lost a leg at Poltawa in the Ukraine. He hobbled along on two crutches. Then there was Luckau. He had an artificial leg and used a cane. There were some who had lost one eye. Some had lost both.

All carried the inner wounds that the war had inflicted. So many lost their homes and loved ones. Too many lost both! I lost both my parents and my home in a bombing raid in Munich. I also lost an uncle and at least eleven cousins that

I can remember (probably more). By the grace of God my four siblings and I survived the war.

We all had a very keen sense of being survivors. We were convinced that God had let us survive for a purpose. We studied like crazy. We wanted to accumulate as much knowledge as possible and as soon as possible. For some like Walter Christlein this was a bitter necessity. He was in his thirties, married, and had three children. He had been a captain in the artillery. However, since he had attended the *Real-Gymnasium* that stressed the sciences and modern languages, not the *humanistisches Gymnasium* that emphasized classical studies, he had to learn Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in just the first semester! He was not the only one!

The Faculty. We loved them all dearly. We were very proud of them and proud to be their students. We would fiercely defend them against any attacks. My last two semesters I spent at the *Theologische Schule* in Bethel. This of course was Union [*Uniert*], almost Reformed territory. It didn't matter so much to me, since I had studied dogmatic and liturgical theology at Erlangen. However, one day I went with a group from there to visit the school in Elberfeld-Barmen. This was the center of Calvinism. We heard sharp attacks against our beloved Althaus, especially concerning natural revelation. Althaus defended it while Barth denied it. We few Lutherans naturally took Althaus's side but they gave us a hard time.

In the following, I want to give just a few anecdotal glimpses of some of the members of the faculty:

Paul Althaus: I remember one piece of advice that he gave us concerning the biblical languages. He said: "Do not lose them. Keep practicing them. In the New Testament, read at least one chapter in Greek every day. In the Old Testament, even if you read only two or three verses a day, you will not forget your Hebrew." Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he added: "Of course, this is a rule which you always can return to!"

He was deeply moved when we showed our support during the difficult weeks when he was suspended from teaching during the process of denazification. We were convinced that Althaus had not been a Nazi. Yes, like many other Germans, he had welcomed the new government in the early thirties in some of his writings and sermons. But when he saw where things were going (as early as 1934) he never mentioned the Nazi regime or its leader again. He was accused of not speaking out against the government. This would have cost him his job for sure, if not also his liberty and his life. He chose silence and kept on teaching. That this took also an enormous amount of courage, only those who were there will understand.

We went to sing in front of his house during this time. He came out and one of the students handed him some document expressing our support. He read aloud the first sentence: ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται (2 Tim 2:9). He was visibly moved.

Werner Elert: We admired him because of his razor-sharp language, diction, memory, and reasoning. He had no use for female theologians. There were at least a dozen women in his class even though at that time they could not be ordained. The best they could hope for was to serve as some sort of chaplain in a women's prison. Nevertheless, they would sit at his feet in the first row, glancing up at him admiringly, while he totally ignored them, starting his lecture with a loud "Meine Herren!"

He had virtually memorized his own dogmatics (*Der christliche Glaube*) — probably his other books as well. In his lectures on dogmatics he would recite whole chapters from that book without looking at it. He resented it if students had it (it was out of print at that time) so not many had it. I had obtained the only copy from the library and followed his lecture in the book. He noticed it and gave me a dirty look.

Hermann Sasse: A fiery fighter for Lutheran orthodoxy. One only had to say the name Calvin to set him off. This was illustrated in a play the students put on at that time: "The Erlangen Faculty in Heaven." It showed Sasse meeting Calvin in heaven. He balls up his fists and he is ready to do combat. However, to his own amazement his fists open and he raises his hands in blessing his former enemy. Here on earth Sasse was not as charitable with Calvin as Althaus, who told us: "There are many areas where we must disagree with Calvin, especially when it comes to the sacraments. But his commentaries on the Old Testament are still very useful and worth reading."

Friedrich Baumgärtel. He was my most beloved teacher mainly because he seemed to take a very personal interest in each of his students. In his first lecture (on Isaiah) he said to us veterans: "Gentlemen, I know how hard it is to return to studying after a long absence. Four years in the military is equivalent to being totally stupefied. I should know. I was in it for ten years!" He had served four years in World War I and six in World War II in which he achieved the rank of captain. His last teaching job was in Göttingen. His family was still there in the fall of 1945 since he was unable to find housing for them. He was grotesquely dressed in army boots and a Prince Albert coat. They were the only clothes he had. He would come into the classroom with a letter in his hand. "See this? It is from my wife in Göttingen, written three weeks ago. The Romans had a relay postal service that would send mail from Rome to Trier in five days. That's progress!"

One day word leaked out that his son had unexpectedly returned from Russia. When he came into the classroom we greeted him with a thunderous *oratio pedestris.* Stamping with the feet was a sign of greeting as well as approval. If you didn't like what the professor said, you scratched your feet on the floor. He was quite moved. His son had been missing and so he thought he would never see him again.

Strathmann. He was also a very Lutheran orthodox teacher. His personal enemy was Rudolph Bultmann. To mention Bultmann's name to him was like showing a red cloth to a bull. He would foam away: "Dieser Herr Bultmann in

Marburg . . . !" He was also suspended for a long time in the course of the denazification process, but I believe he was reinstated.

Walther von Loewenich. He was a very lively teacher of church history. I remember one Luther quotation from him: "If God has put the fish in the water, why should I not eat it?" For a while he came to class wearing a homburg. On the way to class he had to pass through several groups of students. They would dutifully lift their hats in greeting. He felt obligated to do the same. After a while he grew tired of it. So one day he appeared with a *Baskenmütze* (a basque cap). He did not feel obligated to take it off. It became his trademark.

I could mention others from whom I learned during my years at Erlangen, such as Hauck, Kempff, Preuss, Grether, Goppelt, Trillhaas (the latter two were my teachers in Göttingen). But I offer these few glimpses and I hope they suffice. It was a time of great hope, a wonderful time, in spite of many outward hardships. I am deeply grateful to God that I could be there.

Seminary Curriculum

As Indicated by the Book of Concord

Dr. Norman Nagel wrote this piece on 27 August 1991. It will be published in the forthcoming Collected Works of Norman Nagel *(Volume 1), edited by Dr. Naomichi Masaki.*

Where to begin? With the Lord of course! Where is he? Where he has promised to be, where he speaks and gives out his gifts, that is, where the means of grace are going on. That they be going on, giving out his gifts, he instituted the *ministerium/Predigtamt* (AC IV–V). The *ministerium/Predigtamt* is not going on without ministers/preachers going on as instruments of the means of grace.

Where the means of grace are going on, there is the church and the ministry. What goes into making a minister is a question therefore that has its answer in the means of grace. We will hardly get anything right if we begin elsewhere. To begin with the means of grace is to begin with the Lord—with what he has instituted. What is according to our Lord's mandate and institution is dominically sure. Any other grounds are dubious. He deals with us in the way of the *externum verbum* (AC V, 4). Those whom he puts into the service of the *externum verbum* are then best equipped with the *externum verbum*. The Book of Concord puts it this way:

> We have directed our church and schools first of all to the Holy Scriptures and the Creeds, and then to the aforementioned Augsburg Confession. We desire particularly that the young men who are being trained for [the] service in the church and for the holy ministry [*ad sacrum ecclesiarum et scholarum ministerium educatur*] be faithfully and diligently instructed therein, so that the pure teaching and confession of the faith may be preserved and perpetuated among our posterity through the help and assistance of the Holy Spirit until the glorious advent of our only Redeemer and Savior Jesus Christ. (Tappert, 12; *Triglotta*, 20–21; *BSLK* 13.21).

We have heard our confession that the Holy Spirit has promised to do his work where the means of grace are going on, and here in this passage where the Book of Concord speaks of seminary curriculum it puts the matter *coram Deo*, and with a view to the return of our only Redeemer and Savior Jesus Christ. Forgetfulness of this would be to our peril, to our unshakable confidence in this our confession, officium and *Amt* (Tappert, 9 and 12).

So for our seminary curriculum we have, as it says in the following paragraph, the certainty "of our Christian confession and faith on the basis of the divine prophetic and apostolic Scriptures." That gives us departments of Old Testament, New Testament, and doctrine. And we shan't be able to do without historical theology if we would fulfill our commitment to a Christian exposition thoroughly grounded in God's word which has clarity "in the presence of so many intrusive errors, aggravated scandals, dissensions, and long-standing schisms," "so that pure doctrine can be recognized and distinguished from adulterated doctrine." How else could we confess "that we are not minded to manufacture anything new" (Tappert, 13 and 5)?

So far nothing of practical theology, although that may not be the case if we speak (with Walther and our tradition) of pastoral theology. Homiletics, and more, is certainly included when we read of the commitment "to do everything that is useful and profitable to the increase and expansion of God's praise and glory [*liturgias*], to the propagation of that word of his that alone brings salvation [evangelism]."

The foregoing we are then already committed to, and the appropriate question is then whether we are indeed fulfilling this commitment. Anyone who has been engaged in our theological interviews will certainly hesitate to answer Yes. If the answer were Yes, and if there were some unoccupied space in our curriculum, the question would then be what needs most urgently also to be included. A useful starting point might be what used to be included but which for one reason or another was taken away. For example: logic which the Book of Concord calls "solid reasoning" (Tappert, 6), and composition, which the Book of Concord extols when it says that "the truth divinely delivered be clearly and lucidly presented" (*Triglotta*, 11). In the good/bad old days such things were regarded as preliminary to the seminary. Has our curriculum adjusted to the fact that many men now come to the seminary without benefit of a humane education? There are those things which if we are not accomplishing them,

we forfeit the name of seminary, as understood in the way of the means of grace and the doctrine of the ministry and of the church. First questions derive from these. Secondary questions are ancillary to the first ones.

Who would deny that we need to do better? How to do better is an exercise in pipe-dreaming unless there are the space, time, and resources for doing better.

Unless we increase the competence of those whom we certify as candidates, they will slip further behind in diagnosing and dealing with the ever-increasing complexities which shape the people whom they may be called and ordained to serve.

Those who confess the church with AC VII (*perpetuo mansura*) can never imagine that they are the first ones on the scene tackling things *de novo*, nor with humanism's notion of some golden age, nor the notion that something new (disavowed in the Book of Concord) would commend itself merely by being new (cf. C. S. Lewis's *De descriptione tecuporum* and the top beer being advertised as made according to old, original recipe from the old country). So we begin with what is already there: *dona data*. Since the curriculum of a seminary is the product of the means of grace, and the gifts given by the means of grace are no dead things, but given into and among us are enlivening and energizing (the Holy Spirit's verbs): [we have the] source, corrective, and freedom to tinker a bit. His gospel way won't let us get bogged down in [what] we have done and got it all [right]. Not ours but his! Not the way we figure it but as he gives it all and more. *Coram deo, coram externum verbo*, from whom and by way of which the *ministerium verbi divini*, and running with that gift "according to the Lord's mandate and institution" the readying of men for the holy ministry as indicated in the Book of Concord.

Should Absolution Be Unconditional?

This is a revised and edited post from Jack Kilcrease's blog, Theologia Crucis *(*http://jackkilcrease.blogspot.com/*), dated 14 May 2011.*

This question touches on the big blowup last summer (2010) over objective justification. It also touches on debates people are having in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and (believe it or not) some of the breakoff microsynods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The question regards whether or not absolution in the divine service should be given unconditionally. The opponents of this practice argue that because absolution is not valid unless it is received with faith and repentance, conditional absolution should be the practice in the divine service. In other words, a sentence or two should be added to the absolution that states that you really, really have to be repentant and have faith to receive the absolution just given. This is, I guess, presumably to inform people that they really shouldn't believe that they just received absolution unless they really felt bad about their sins and really had faith. Presumably telling them this will somehow produce these attitudes and feelings in them. This is a little bit odd, insofar as historic Lutheranism has always taught that we receive absolution by believing it. So how could someone falsely believe the word of absolution? Perhaps I am just reading the intention here incorrectly, but that seems to be the implication. Allow me to make two points about this, one historical and the other theological.

First, this question of public and unconditional absolution actually goes back to the early Lutheran Reformation and so we do have Luther's opinion on the subject. He writes:

> Even he who does not believe that he is free and his sins forgiven shall also learn, in due time, how assuredly his sins were forgiven, even though he did not believe it. . . . He who does not accept what the keys give receives, of course, nothing. But that is not the key's fault. Many do not believe the gospel, but this does not mean that the gospel is not true or effective. A king gives you a castle. If you do not accept it, then it is not the king's fault, nor is he guilty of a lie. But you have deceived yourself and the fault is yours. The king certainly gave it. (AE 40: 366–67)

The occasion of this opinion was a controversy that broke out in the church of Nuremberg where Andreas Osiander of later "mystical-indwelling-is-justification" fame was pastor. Osiander insisted that unconditional public absolution should not be given. Instead, he favored private absolution almost exclusively. Why? Because Osiander claimed that he could not be certain if he was wrongly absolving people. If people lacked the right mental attitude of repentance, then they would not actually be receiving forgiveness and therefore when he absolved them, he would be saying something false. Most early Lutheran liturgies actually agreed in some sense with Osiander on this point. Likewise, later in Lutheran history, the Pietists actually took the same attitude and so many early (and some later) liturgies of North American Lutheranism only allow for a conditional public absolution.

As we know, Osiander later rejected the doctrine of purely forensic justification. As new research has demonstrated, the reason for this was his doctrine of Christ. Whereas he assumed with Luther that only God could oppose his own wrath with an infinite and eternal righteousness, he nonetheless rejected the communication of the divine attributes to the human nature. What was the effect? On the one hand, Christ had rendered satisfaction according to his human nature alone. This forgave sins, but was insufficient to satisfy God's infinite righteousness. Humans had to be mystically indwelt with infinite divine righteousness in order to stand as righteous before God. By contrast, Luther (and later Flacius) taught that Christ fulfilled the law as a divine person through his human nature, making his righteousness and satisfaction

of the law divinely effective through his human nature. In other words, the "forensic" fulfillment of the law through Christ's obedience to the Father and death on the cross was also "effective" insofar as it was infused with divine power so that his "blood cleanses from all sin."

This has a direct implication for church practice. Just as God does not do his justifying work apart from Christ's human nature and therefore his human activity (active and passive righteousness), so too he doesn't do his work of justifying the sinner apart from the concrete preached, forensic word, "I absolve you." The indwelling of God and the creation of faith therefore happened through the forensic word. Forensic justification was effective also.

For Osiander, by contrast, God was not active through the preached word and therefore the spiritual union that really justified the sinner was available for the sinner due to his internal attitude prior to or perhaps alongside the forensic word. Just as Christ's two natures were divided, the forensic and effective nature of the gospel was as well. This too was also true in the case of Pietism, which talked about whipping one's self up into a repentant frenzy so that one might receive the Spirit apart from the word and in fact be ready to receive the word rightly.

Hence, in keeping with his claim that God is deep within the word and the sacrament, just like he is deep in the flesh of Christ (*genus maiestaticum*), Luther took a very different stance towards the practice than did Osiander. When asked by Osiander's congregants what they thought, Luther and Melanchthon both insisted that unconditional and public absolution should be given. Why? Because the word of God is effective, it does what it says! God of course hardens some and works repentance and faith in some, but it is his prerogative. By placing conditions on absolution, one simply shifts the emphasis from the objectivity of God's work to the subjectivity of the sinner's mental attitude. The question that the believer would begin to ask would be: "Have I really had faith and repented?" and not "What has God done *pro me*?"

Second, this leads into the general theological point. If, as Luther tells us, humans are passive before God's activity in word and sacrament, we must preach and absolve under the presupposition of bondage. If we do not preach under the assumption of bondage, then we will begin to think about humans as free subjects and begin to worry about what free subjects will do with the word. Secondly, we will begin to view God's word as mere information and think that humans can in some way undermine or enhance its effect by adding something to it. Hence, the fear that people would not "really repent" without a conditional absolution is groundless. God's work is always effective. The word of absolution is a word of both law and gospel. It reveals sin, insofar as absolution presupposes sin. It also gives a unilateral promise and creates faith. If people do not believe either the word of law or gospel, then the word will simply harden them and it will be effective in that manner. This is God's own prerogative to do. The preacher cannot control the word or preempt hardening by placing conditions on the word. He can of course distort the word by reversing who is the subject of the verb. Instead of "Christ absolves you" (Christ is the subject of the verb!), he states "If you repent and believe, then Christ absolves you" (the believer as the subject!). Hence the word of the gospel is rendered as a word of pure law.

In addition, please note the relationship of this topic to the debate regarding the issue of objective justification. Luther states that all theology is just an intellectual clarification of what we are doing when we preach. This does not mean that theological doctrines are not propositionally true. Nevertheless, as propositionally true, they are inherently uninteresting as abstractions. They are only interesting insofar as they are also regulatory of church practice, that is, the proclamation of the word of God. Hence, the position of those who reject objective justification is ironic and strange for several reasons.

First, those who reject objective justification talk constantly of the effectiveness of the word of God. But their main worry about objective justification assumes the ineffectiveness of the word. In other words, they claim that because people in American Lutheranism believe in God's universally valid and unconditional forgiveness, then they behave badly and think that they do not have to be afraid of divine judgment, repent, and obey the law. Apparently the goal of the preacher should be to scare people by placing conditions on absolution so they will behave better? Again, this all presupposes a need for a better mental attitude on the part of hearers of the word to make the word effective. In other words, they talk a good game regarding the effectiveness of the word, but in practice they do not really believe in it.

In addition, they constantly accuse their opponents of being secret Pietists. But ironically, their doctrinal proposals (that there is only subjective justification) presuppose a church practice of Pietism. In other words, in terms of regulation of church practice, the doctrine of objective justification stands as the basis of the minister's public, unconditional absolution of sinners. Since God has already eternally said such a thing in the cross and empty tomb, then the minister's practice of giving public unconditional absolution makes sense. His giving of absolution is not somehow an echo of God's absolution but is the means and channel through which God renders such a judgment present and effective in time. Without the former, the latter makes no sense and is rendered meaningless.

Lastly, their critique of the doctrine of objective justification is hollow also insofar as it fails to recognize what I pointed out regarding the dual effectiveness of the word of absolution. A universal and absolute pronouncement of forgiveness is condemnation against those who reject it. As Luther remarks in the John commentaries, there is only one sin in the whole world. That sin happens when a person rejects the universal and unconditional word of divine absolution present in Christ. This is true especially when that word is pronounced in the divine service. The word of absolution condemns as it absolves insofar as it reveals sin. It also condemns those who reject it. This is why in Revelation, that which begins the eschatological judgment is the book with the seven seals. A book with seven seals is a book of a last will and testament in the first century. This is

what Jesus, Paul, and Hebrews say the gospel is. So, what is really happening is that the word of the testament is going out and redeeming the church, while judging those who reject it. It is a word that is at the same time law and promise. It both redeems and condemns. It kills and makes alive. After all, God's grace never comes without judgment.

Hermann Bezzel: The Bishop Who Dared to be Lutheran!

Hermann Bezzel (1861–1917) was an influential Bavarian Lutheran churchman shaped by the confessional awakening associated with Erlangen. Unfortunately he is as yet little known in the English-speaking world. He served as the rector of the deaconess institution at Neuendettelsau from 1891 to 1909, when he became bishop of the Bavarian Church. Bezzel is cited positively by Hermann Sasse and J. Michael Reu as an outstanding voice for confessional Lutheranism over and against calls for theological diversity in the Lutheran Church. Reu relates the following from a "pastoral letter" that Bezzel wrote soon after becoming bishop. The source is "Hermann Bezzel: Aspects of His Life for Our Time," in Anthology of the Theological Writings of J. Michael Reu, ed. Paul I. Johnston (*Lewiston: Mellen Press, 1997*), *182–83.* [*For more information about Bezzel, see "The Pastoral Character of Hermann Bezzel" on Blogia* (http://logia.org/blogia/?p=223).]

"Highly revered fathers and brothers, may I, at this grave moment, direct a message to you, whose true significance, God willing, will not remain entirely unhallowed," he describes the situation of the church: "At the present time, however, fidelity to the faith which made our fathers strong, cheerful in victory, and courageous in death, reverence for the Holy Scriptures, whose truth is understood as belonging not to the past but to all times; and the determination to overcome, in worthy battle, hesitations and doubts—these are no longer the bond which unites us together as pastors. . . . I deeply deplore the fact that the church desires to become a school of philosophy and its servants want to become critics. For they still may be stewards dealing with and in mysteries, which stewardship does not render one unfree or impious, but which rather establishes, in unsullied attachment, a masterful freedom and a blessed breadth." He concluded with a warning and a request: "The time has not yet come for us to see clearly what the Lord is commanding us to do in these critical and decisive times; hopeful patience and prayerful watchfulness seem to be our duty and our task. But I firmly promise you this, from a conscientious obligation to my ordination vows and my many years of experience, that there can be no talk of an equal right for diverse opinions. . . . Often I am weighed down with a sense of inadequacy; often I am at a loss to know what to do; my troubles are many, my delights few. But I will gladly place at the disposal of my brothers my time, my energy, and my experience; I am here to answer your questions, and, whenever possible, to provide instructions. But the serious business of action, when the hour strikes, is not something I intend to avoid."

This "pastoral letter" attracted sharp, and open, criticism. It was the cause for Oberbürgermeister from Bayreuth Dr. Casselmann's sharp attack on Bezzel at the synod meeting in Ansbach which met shortly thereafter. But Bezzel responded: "I hope no one expects me to retract a single iota of my general letter. I stand behind the whole tenor of that profession with all my power. With willingness, with joy, with generosity, I am ready to meet anyone, even the simplest, lowliest vicar; I am prepared to learn from him; but I shall not remain silent, when I see our church being turned into a lecture hall, where diverse theological opinions come and go—while the congregation stands there and suffers. You can take my word for it: if the president [bishop] is not up to the situation, then there will be some of you who will be capable of cutting through the bonds which can restrict him and to which he must feel an obligation. I promise you furthermore that if God continues to grant me understanding and good will, then no one will have to spell it out for me, if it should get to the point where my departure would be of benefit to the church; if I come to that conclusion, I won't try to evade it. But when it comes to the truth that I have come to know, which I love, and which I am sworn to defend, I will defend that truth until my death."

Holy Baptism's Diminishment

The faithful confession of what Holy Baptism gives is provided in the Small Catechism: It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this as the words and promises of God declare. Then the Mark 16:16 promise from the Lord comes ringing in! The bestowal of such a bounty from the Lord is for all sinners. Jesus died for all! He wants all to be baptized (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38–39) in order to receive what he won for all on Good Friday. "Be baptized every one of you," Peter declares. "This promise [of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit] is for you and for your children and for all . . . " (Acts 2:38–39)! Quite simple. Quite clear. Unless, of course, you studied at Erlangen! Here is a snippet from an essay delivered by Dr. David P. Scaer based on his dissertation on infant baptism. As you read it be reminded of Dr. Luther's saying, "Let the sacrament remain whole!" (WA 30, I: 55.19)

In their theology of infant baptism the Erlangen theologians combined the older Lutheran theology with philosophical Romanticism, while retaining the perspectives of Rationalism and Schleiermacher that faith required developed reason or consciousness.

Their anthropology divided the human being into "the spiritual and physical nature" (*die geistige und leibliche Natur*), on which baptism worked and to which it was addressed, and the mental self (*die geistige Persönlichkeit*), to which the oral or preached word was addressed. Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Höfling, known for his *Übertragungslehre*, found no conclusive New Testament evidence for infant baptism. Like Rationalists he dismissed arguments drawn from the blessings of the children, the promise to the children (Acts 2:39), and its replacing circumcision (Col 2:11–12). He did however find a basis for it in Matthew 28:19–20, where disciples are made by baptizing and teaching.

This corresponded with his division of a human being into the real self (*die geistige und leibliche Natur)* and the mind (*die geistige Persönlichkeit*). Baptism was intended for the spiritual, physical, essential self and the preached or oral word for the mind. This bifurcation allowed for baptismal regeneration in a person's fundamental part, but faith was possible only with intellectual maturity. His proposal appeared to be Lutheran in that baptism worked regeneration but still allowed for the Rationalists' and Schleiermacher's view that faith was a conscious or mental act.

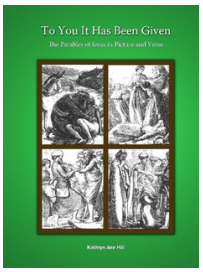
The Danish theologian and bishop Hans Lassen Martensen followed suit in holding that a human being consisted of mental and natural parts. Baptism worked on the natural part to establish an organic relationship between Christ and the Christian from which faith is developed by preaching. Even without faith the baptized child is a *christoforus*. Martensen agreed with the Rationalists in that infant baptism could not be proven from passages like the blessing of the children. He made use of Matthew 28:19–20 to allow for a time gap between the administering of baptism and the subsequent teaching that alone produces faith. He held that children are born with one impulse to the world and another to the kingdom of God that is unable to resist the working of grace in baptism. From this impulse, preaching later awakens faith. Martensen correlates the baptized child's lack of mental awareness of his place in God's kingdom with Christ being unaware of his deity. Until the child develops consciousness, he/she is devoid of faith, and to avoid the impression that the child believes, questions in the rite addressed to the child should best be omitted. If they are retained, they should be asked of the sponsors. A declarative form of the creed is preferable.

As the other Erlangen theologians, Thomasius holds that a developed consciousness is required to hear the word and believe. However, he goes further in his description of the material, physical, and real self as a mysterious realm lying beneath consciousness. This physical self is able to receive the grace of baptism through which the Spirit of Christ penetrates into the depths of the child. Personal appropriation happens only by faith with the spoken word, a view supported by Romans 10:17, that faith comes through hearing the word of God. Like Höfling and Martensen, he uses the traditional passages to support infant baptism. If the baptized child fails to come to faith later, he is at the same time regenerate and unregenerate.

Franz Delitzsch, who was associated with the founders of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, held that by their baptism Protestants, Catholics, Socinians, and Unitarians are members of the body of Christ. In all the baptized the Holy Spirit remains active, unless they commit the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. Baptismal grace compensates for the lack of faith.

Rudolph Rocholl identifies Fichte, the philosopher of Romanticism, as the source of the Erlangen anthropology. The unconscious nature is a person's holiest part, which is often destroyed by the development of the powers of reflection. Lacking developed reason, the child's unconscious self is more receptive to the Holy Spirit. Rocholl called the *Naturmysterium* "faith," a term the other theologians used for the conscious belief.

The Good Employer
Matthew 20:1–15



Kathryn Ann Hill's second book of poems, To You It Has Been Given: The Parables of Jesus in Picture and Verse, *is available at* lulu.com. *These stanzas may be sung to the hymn tune* Eirene.

The Lord is good, so my eye must be evil
When I see other men's prosperity
And envy what the Lord in love has given
And think those blessings should have come to me.

Pluck out my evil eye, O God of mercy,
And give me eyes of faith so I will see
The loving heart that governs Your rewarding
And gives Your gifts with perfect equity.

Then will I be more apt to help than envy,
More prone to serve than plot to take away;
Then will I look with confidence unbounded
Toward Jesus and His great Rewarding Day.

LUTHER ACADEMY

Caring for Indigenous Pastors

WEST AFRICA AND FRANCOPHONE

National and *Regional* conferences have been held in Togo and Ghana. In July of 2013 Rev. Dr. Ron Mudge of Concordia University Wisconsin, a former LCMS missionary to Togo, will conduct a Luther Academy *National* Conference for 200 ordained pastors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). These pastors shepherd 100,000 souls in a rapidly growing, war-torn and impoverished church. Rev. Gui Kasongo Kabeo of Milwaukee, Wisconsin will accompany Dr. Mudge. Luther Academy Director Rev. Dan McMiller has worked with Pastor Kabeo for many years to bring the pure Gospel to the DRC.

Annual cost—$14,000 *(Airfare, visas, in-country food, housing and transportation for 200 pastors for four days)*

EAST AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Conferences have been held in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi and Sudan. Rev. Dr. Detlev Schulz of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is assembling a team of highly qualified presenters to address core theological needs in this region. In December of 2012, Dr. Schulz taught 45 pastors for four days in Matongo, Kenya. The pastors represented church bodies of over 300,000 members. Dr. Schulz is working closely with Rev. McMiller to return in December of 2013.

Annual cost—$15,000 *(Airfare, visas, in-country food, housing and transportation for 50 pastors for five days)*

SOUTH AMERICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

In July of 2013 Rev. McMiller will host and translate for Rev. Dr. Harald Tomesch of Concordia University—Wisconsin at the third regional conference in Buenos Aires. Seventy-five pastors from Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay will receive advanced education for one week, providing opportunity for strong confessional ties between church bodies in the "Southern Cone" of South America. Additionally Luther Academy has built a team of organizers and presenters from the Buenos Aires Concordia Lutheran Seminary for low cost *National* Luther Academy conferences in Bolivia, Panama, Venezuela, Guatemala and beyond (see below).

Annual cost—$15,000 *(Airfare, visas, in-country food, housing and transportation for 75 pastors for five days)*

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CENTRAL AMERICA
REGIONAL CONFERENCE

A third Regional Luther Academy Conference will be held in Antigua, Guatemala, where Rev. McMiller will host and translate for Rev. Dr. David Scaer of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne. Theological Educators and ordained leaders from small and young national churches in Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela, Columbia, and the Dominican Republic will participate. A continuity of confessional doctrine and practice is essential as the devil and the world attack the foundation laid by missionaries no longer present in this region.

Annual cost—$14,000 *(Airfare, visas, in-country food, housing and transportation for 25 pastors for five days)*

LATIN AMERICA
NATIONAL LUTHER ACADEMY CONFERENCES

Working very closely with LCMS Regional Director Rev. Ted Krey and Rev. Carlos Schumann of the Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Chile, at least six *National* Luther Academy conferences are being planned for 2013. From the fruit of relationships from the South American *Regional* conference (see above) and in partnership with Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Buenos Aires (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana de Argentina), pastors in very isolated and small church bodies will be able to gather with their leaders for solid Confessional theological education following a carefully designed curriculum. Many of these pastors have had minimal training prior to ordination. World Missions is subsidizing these conferences.

Annual cost—$5,000
(Administration of Rev. Carlos Schumann of Chile, and partial cost of South American presenters travel cost and honorarium.)

INDIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Working with the Bible Faith Lutheran Church and Seminary in Guntur, India, Luther Academy Conferences are held for 400 pastors from different Lutheran backgrounds and even non-Lutheran church bodies. Conference topics include Justification, the Doctrine of the Holy Ministry, and the Augsburg Confession. Lutherans within India are not only a minority among Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim opposition but also a minority among Christians and an increasingly liberal Lutheran environment. A second week of conferences for 40–70 Bible Faith Lutheran Pastors will be held if finances allow.

Annual cost—$8,500
(Airfare, visas, in-country food, housing and transportation for two presenters, and room and board for nearly 400 pastors for four days)

LUTHER ACADEMY

Worldwide Theological Education

of Ordained Indigenous Pastors in Partner & Emerging Partner Churches

Pastors in Kenya East Africa

Central America

Kenya East Africa

India

Central America Conference Guatemala

Argentina

Luther Academy is immensely grateful for your prayers and support.