THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN SCHLEIERMACHER'S ECCLESIOLOGY:
THE 1830 AUGSBURG CONFESSION SERMONS

by

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

In his 1830 sermons commemorating the 300th anniversary of the handing over of the Augsburg Confession, Friedrich Schleiermacher advocates an ecclesiology that is Catholic in spirit within the context of the predominant Protestant spirit that imbues his theological vision. The thesis charts a path beginning with ecclesiological elements from the original Augsburg Confession document of 1530 in order to show Schleiermacher’s affinity with one of the founding symbolic books of Reformation history. The argument then continues to delineate the consistency with which Schleiermacher pursues an essentially Catholic view of the Church, from the burgeoning ecclesiology of the Speeches to the mature theology of The Christian Faith. The thesis concludes with the suggestion that in his Augsburg Confession sermons of 1830, Schleiermacher constructs a converging “fugal” ecclesiology - Protestant at its core but Catholic in its sacramental, ministerial, eschatological and ecumenical attributes. Essentially, Schleiermacher’s theology of the Church is an ecumenical one seeking to constantly expand “the circle of Christian love".
"No one therefore can be surprised to find at this point the proposition that salvation or blessedness is in the Church alone, and that, since blessedness cannot enter from without, but can be found within the Church only by being brought into existence there, the Church alone saves."

Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*

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Introduction

On Sunday June 20, 1830, a few days before the tercentenary commemorating the Augsburg Confession, Friedrich Schleiermacher addressed his parishioners with the following cautionary sentiment: “Only if we approach this festival in the knowledge of our total freedom from the letter ... only then will we be able to reckon this celebration to our blessing”.1 A few months later, on November 7, 1830, he completed his series of ten sermons on the Augsburg Confession by exhorting his andächtigen Freunden to diligently maintain “not a unity written in codes but the ‘unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace’”.2 To free oneself from the letter in order to engage in “noble servitude”3 to the Spirit of Christ - this was the rallying cry of the pastor-theologian who became, for later generations of Christians, the founder of modern liberal Protestant theology.

Though a romanticist at heart for whom feeling took precedence over knowing,4 Schleiermacher’s theological vision sought to preserve antithetical elements in a dialogic pair, never forsaking one at the expense of the other. He remained faithful throughout his life to the “coincidence of...contraries”5 that appears to undergird the deep mysterious structure of a human existence ennobled and divinized by the saving grace of the Redeemer. He espoused the respectful maintenance of an “equipoise”6 between such antitheses as freedom and dependence, sin and grace, humanity and divinity, emotion and reason, the whole and the fragment, unity and diversity, the individual and the community, the visible and the invisible Church, and - the Catholic spirit and the Protestant spirit.

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1 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Reformed But Ever Reforming: Sermons in Relation to the Celebration of the Handing Over of the Augsburg Confession (1830)* trans. Iain Nicol (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), p.22 (Further citations from this work will be abbreviated to *Sermons* and the page number.)
2 *Sermons*, p.175
3 *Sermons*, p.33
4 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, eds. H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T&T Clark), p.5 (Further citations will be abbreviated to *CF* and the paragraph ($) and/or page number (p)).
5 James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Viking Press, 1939), 49
6 *CF*, p.15
In the introductory section to *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher formulates his classical distinction between the Protestant and Catholic positions in ecclesiastical terms:

... the former makes the individual’s relation to the Church dependent on his relation to Christ, while the latter contrariwise makes the individual’s relation to Christ dependent on his relation to Church.7

Note that on either side of this antithesis, Schleiermacher preserves a balance between the individual and the communal elements. He further warns that the “greatest care must be taken not to carry the antithesis too far, lest we should fall into un-Christian positions”.8 When faced with polar opposites, we are encouraged to carry on the dialogue in a spirit of tolerance that seeks not to “constrict the circle of Christian love”9 but rather to invite all of humankind to membership within the vital fellowship of Christ the Redeemer.10 All are ultimately destined to be elected into the Kingdom of the Father. Until such time, the Moravian pastor invites us to a theological banquet that is emotive, critical and dialogical, where religious feeling seeks understanding in a tolerant spirit of conversation with “the inhabited earth”.11 For Schleiermacher, Christian faith is a search for *harmony within the spirit of the whole* - a phrase that might summarize his position as a Christian theologian and his prayer as a Christian pastor.

Within this ecumenical/colloquial ethos, I will argue the following thesis:

In his 1830 sermons commemorating the 300th anniversary of the handing over of the Augsburg Confession, Friedrich Schleiermacher advocates an *ecclesiology* that is *Catholic* in

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7 *CF*, § 24
8 *CF*, § 24, p. 107
9 *Sermons*, p.136
10 *CF*, § 93, p. 384; § 113, p.525
11 The root meaning of ecumenical, from the Greek *oecumenikos*, “of the inhabited earth”.
spirit within the context of the predominant Protestant spirit that imbues his theological vision.

By the Protestant spirit, I refer to that trilithic core of principles that has framed reformation theology since Wittenberg, namely, *sola fide, sola scriptura* and the priesthood of all believers. Schleiermacher expounds this position throughout his sermons but particularly in *Sermon 2* of the Augsburg collection where, with reference to the New Testament, he writes:

Thus, we have an important and permanent safeguard in scripture insofar as we truly have concord in our faith in Christ, setting aside all human authority, and acknowledge that no witness is valid for the development of doctrine and for the ordering of life other than what is expressed in these writings.  

Later on he affirms “that all Christians should be priests” so that “the difference in our church between those who proclaim God’s word and those who hear it has also become smaller and smaller.”

As for the Catholic spirit, I allude to Schleiermacher’s antithetical views. On the one hand, he uses the term Catholic to denote what is “common to the whole Church”\(^\text{14}\), namely the universal, ecumenical, inclusivist connotations implied in the spirit of *catholicity*. On the other, he adopts the traditional Catholic position of salvific exclusivity, namely, “no salvation outside the Church” or in Schleiermacherian terms, no blessedness outside the fellowship of Christ. In the section on the doctrine of the Church from *The Christian Faith*, he explicitly adopts the position of St. Cyprian\(^\text{15}\):

*No one therefore can be surprised to find at this point the proposition that* salvation or blessedness *is in the Church alone,*

and that, since blessedness cannot enter from without, but can

\(^\text{12}^\text{Sermons, p.41}^\text{13}^\text{Sermons, p.45}^\text{14}^\text{CF, § 21, p.96}^\text{15}^\text{Extra ecclesiam nulla salus. (No salvation outside the Church) St Cyprian was bishop of Carthage, 248-258 C.E.}*
be found within the Church only by being brought into existence there, the Church alone saves. 16
(Emphasis added)

This antithetical theme of an inclusivist catholicity within a seemingly exclusivist ecclesiology continues in the Augsburg Confession sermons as “the goal toward which the effort of the Evangelical Church is directed”. 17 All are invited to join the Church (the inclusive theme) but unless you join, you remain outside the circle of redeeming blessedness (the exclusive theme).

Finally, by the term ecclesiology, I point to the structure and role of the Christian Church in the life of faith. For Schleiermacher, the individual life of faith springs from the communal life of faith grounded in the reconciling work of the Redeemer. Church as “the fellowship of believers” 18 arises from the redemptive work taking effect within individuals. Ultimately, the function of the Church is to make the life of Christian piety possible. In Schleiermacher’s vision, piety is an inherently ecclesial activity and Christian prayer is primarily communal.

The thesis will comprise four interrelated chapters. Firstly, I will examine ecclesiological elements from the original Augsburg Confession document of 1530 in order to show Schleiermacher’s affinity with one of the founding symbolic books of Reformation history. The second chapter will consider Speech 4 from Schleiermacher’s collection, On Religion,19 as the groundwork of his ecclesiology. The third and most substantive chapter will involve a critical analysis of Schleiermacher’s 1830 collection of sermons on the Augsburg Confession in order to reconstruct his ecclesiology and position its role within his broader theological program. As I analyze these sermons, I will attempt to integrate into the argument

16 CF, § 113, p.527
17 The title of Sermon 10.
18 CF, § 113, p.525
Schleiermacher’s related insights from his other works, particularly *The Christian Faith*. In addition, this chapter will include a section on the critical response to Schleiermacher’s theology from both Protestant and Catholic perspectives. The fourth and last chapter will engage the salient features of Schleiermacher’s mature theology of the Church. I intend to delineate the consistency with which he pursued his ecclesiology from his earliest writings to his latest sermons - essentially a Catholic view within a Protestant theological framework.
Chapter 1

"Ecclesiology" in the Augsburg Confession of 1530

In the spring of 1530, the German Emperor Charles V convened a Diet in the city of Augsburg ordering the Lutheran princes to present a statement of their faith. Intending to settle the religious controversy between Catholics and Protestants so they could maintain a united front against the Turks, the Emperor had hoped for a peaceful settlement among the divergent parties. With the approval of Luther, Philip Melanchthon prepared and wrote the document. The confessional statement was signed by the German princes and presented to the assembled Church and State representatives at Augsburg on June 25, 1530.

This presentation of the Augsburg Confession to the secular and sacred authorities of the day was considered a courageous act of faith on the part of the protesters "in view of the immense political and ecclesiastical power of the Roman Church at that time". In the foreword to his collection of sermons on the Augsburg Confession, Schleiermacher echoes this view when he claims that the jubilee of 1830 celebrated "more the act of handing over the confession than the work or the content of that document itself". A small Christian fellowship expressing its faith and confessing it openly for the purpose of extending the circle of Christian love - this for Schleiermacher is the essence of being the Church of the Redeemer.

Though we may extol the act of presenting the confession, the document itself was obviously not a blank manuscript, in spite of anecdotal reports that the Emperor slept through its delivery. It is a carefully crafted theological statement comprising twenty-two Articles of Faith in Part I and seven articles dealing with ecclesiastical abuses in Part II. Its tone is reconciliatory; its theology is catholic; its aim is unity - as a reader can surmise from Melanchthon's summation in Article XXII:

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21 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Foreword, Sermons, p.2 (Emphasis added).
This is about the sum of doctrine among us, in which can be seen that there is nothing which is discrepant with the Scriptures, or with the Church Catholic, or even with the Roman Church, so far as that Church is known from writers [the writings of the Fathers]. But the dissension is concerning certain abuses, which without any certain authority have crept into the churches...they should bear with us, since not even the Canons are so severe as to demand the same rites every where, nor were the rites of all churches at any time the same.22

The priority of Scriptures, the importance of a unified truly “catholic” Church, the notion of corrective development, the plea for tolerance of the diversified manifestations of the Christian Church - themes central to the proponents of the Augsburg Confession of 1530; themes equally important to Schleiermacher’s Augsburg Sermons written in 1830 to commemorate this founding act and document of the reformed church, ever reforming.

The next step to be taken is an examination of those Articles dealing with Church issues in order to discern the type of ecclesiology that animates this confessional symbol, an ecclesiology resonant with and yet distanced from Schleiermacher’s own theological outlook.

In the Preface itself, we encounter an ecumenical ecclesiology similar to that espoused by Schleiermacher in his sermons. We note a concern to embrace the true religion “as we are subjects and soldiers of the one Christ, so also in unity and concord, we may live in the one Christian church”.23 The aim of the Augsburg Confession is the removal of dissension so that all parties can return “to confess one Christ”.24 This striving for unity, for inviting all believers to the one Christ underlies

23 Augsburg Confession, p.4
24 Ibid. p.5
most of the document, as it drives most, if not all, of Schleiermacher's theological project.

Articles V, VII, VIII, XIV and XV explicitly address ecclesiastical topics: Ministry of the Church; Of the Church; What the Church Is; Of Ecclesiastical Orders; and Of Ecclesiastical Rites. In addition, Articles IX through XIII take on the sacraments as essential components of ecclesiology. Two related questions need to be posed at this point. Firstly, what aspects of these Articles' ecclesiology does Schleiermacher accept? Secondly, what features does he reject?

We can argue convincingly that the only feature Schleiermacher is uncomfortable with is the condemnatory tone towards those who believe differently. The "Damnant Anabaptistas" of Article V or the "Damnant Donatistas" of Article VIII are phrases that Schleiermacher considers incompatible with the religion of the Redeemer. As he indicates in Sermon 8 of his Augsburg collection, to condemn others is to ignore Jesus' exhortation not to judge or condemn others but to forgive them.25 Schleiermacher goes on to opine:

Jesus' warning against judging and condemning equally applies to what we take to be mistaken about the notions and opinions of others, as well as to what we must consider to be wrong in the conduct of a person's life.26

Much better and more effective, Schleiermacher would argue, is to invite dissenters into dialogue. Conversation is Christian; damnation has no place in our religion - so Schleiermacher would conclude.

As for what Schleiermacher would agree with, we can delineate five resonating features in the ecclesiastically relevant Articles. Firstly, there is the notion that the essence of Spirit-inspired ministry consists of the two-pronged activity of preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments. To quote from Article V: "Nam per verbum et

25 Luke 6:37
26 Sermons, p.140
Sacramenta, tanquam per instrumenta, donatur Spiritus Sanctus”. Preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments are signs of the continual and perpetual presence of Christ in the Church.

In *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher reflects this view where he proposes six essential doctrines related to the immutable aspect of the Church. Preaching the Word, administering Baptism and distributing the Lord’s Supper stand as the most important activities of Church ministry and membership. The Ministry of the Word of God as a “living witness to Christ” is “taken universally as the duty and calling of every member of the Church”. Preaching is “the most spiritual Ministry”; it is “the ordered presentation of the Word of God...from which all radiates out and to which all is in relation”. The Word and the Sacraments form and sustain ecclesial fellowship. In this respect, Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology lies within the same vein as that of the Augsburg Confession.

We note similarities as well with the second and third salient features of Augsburgian ecclesiology, namely, the Church as “congregatio Sanctorum”, the congregation of saints and the locus of Church as wherever “the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered.” For Schleiermacher also, the Church is essentially “the fellowship of believers” who continue “the work of redemption” initiated by Christ. This “work” is the evangelical and sacramental activity “in behalf of the Kingdom of God which embraces men together in the grasp of the love flowing from Him”, the Redeemer. Wherever there is a “coming

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27 *Augsburg Confession*, p.10 “For by the Word and Sacrament, as by instruments, the Holy Spirit is given”
28 *CF*, § 127, p. 586
29 *CF*, p. 588
30 *CF*, p. 616
31 *Augsburg Confession*, p.11
32 Ibid., p.11-12
33 *CF*, p.577
34 *CF*, p.576
together of regenerate individuals to form a system of mutual interaction and cooperation”, 35 there is the locus of Church.

Tolerating the diversity with which the Christian faith can be expressed in multifarious human traditions constitutes a fourth meeting point between Augsburg and Schleiermacher. The confession emphasizes that customs, rites or ceremonies “ab hominibus institutas” 36 (instituted by men) need not be all alike everywhere. Quoting from the letter to the Ephesians, the document reminds us that “there is one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all”. 37 Expressing this divine oneness through human diversity, however, is the natural outcome of a faith incarnated within history. Ultimately, we are unified as Christians by the Gospel and the Sacraments: “And unto the true unity of the Church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments”. 38

In his discussion of the putative differences between the Lutheran and Reformed theological positions with respect to confessions, Schleiermacher works out of this Augsburg spirit of unity within diversity when he concludes: “I did not at all find that I stood in a different relationship to this festival from that of my Lutheran brothers in the ministry on account of my belonging to the Reformed school”. 39 Schleiermacher always underscores the priority of perceiving through the complex historical-cultural tapestry of humanity a unifying thread, namely, the common spirit of humankind as responding to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth, a response leading to a vital fellowship with Christ the Redeemer.

Lastly, the efficacy of Sacraments as ordained and commanded by Christ “though they be delivered by evil men” 40 emerges as a theme common to both the

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35 CF, p.532
36 Augsburg Confession, p. 12
37 Ephesians 4:5-6
38 Augsburg Confession, p. 12
39 Schleiermacher, Foreword, Sermons, p. 4 (Emphasis added).
40 Augsburg Confession, p. 12
confession's and Schleiermacher's sacramental theology. Implicit in this position is the priority of faith-righteousness over works-righteousness. God through Christ alone brings goodness - no matter what the odds. Christ's definitive victory over the dark forces of evil is such that even "the ministry of evil men" is neither "inutile (useless)" nor "inefficax (ineffective)". Sacramental power works through and in spite of evil to effect its goal of inviting all of humankind to fellowship with the Redeemer. A common ground appears to surface at this point between the classical Protestant principle of sola fide and the traditional Catholic notion of ex opere operato - in that both principles undergird the absolute efficacy of the Sacraments as channels of Christ's redemptive presence in the world.

To sum up then, the Augsburg Confession of 1530 as a foundational symbolic document of Protestantism embodies an ecclesiology echoed in Schleiermacher's own theology of the Church as evangelical, sacramental and ecumenical. In short, both are really committed to the good of the ecclesia catholica, the universal, Catholic Church.

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41 Augsburg Confession, p. 13
42 "A term used by theologians to express the essentially objective mode of operation of the Sacraments and its independence from the subjective attitudes of either the minister or the recipient." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977)
Chapter 2

The Speeches: Schleiermacher’s “Burgeoning” Ecclesiology

In his attempt to reach out to the “cultured despisers” of religion, Schleiermacher published in 1799 a series of five speeches on the subject of religion. His purpose was to reach out to friends and acquaintances in order to demonstrate that one can be both culturally sophisticated and religiously affected without having one in conflict with the other. In fact, Schleiermacher goes one step further and argues throughout the collection that a human being cannot help but be “religious”, that is, cannot help but be touched in some way by an intuition and feeling for the infinite. We each of us experience in either implicit or explicit ways a taste for the infinite, a yearning for a different reality from the one we are engaged in within our quotidian context.

The Speeches then as they have come to be known are essentially an experiment in translating the “religious experience” of humanity into a generic vocabulary that would be meaningful and relevant for Schleiermacher’s contemporaries. In Speech 2, for example, he speaks of being “religious” not as a cognitive activity of assent to beliefs but rather as an affective experience of tasting divinity in and through humanity’s communal living. We don’t look to the clouds for a God “out there”; rather we enter within the inner sanctum of our consciousness to discover the “God within”, the divine presence within the interior castle of our soul - to borrow from St. Teresa.

Within this matrix of relevant theological translation, Speech 4 appears as the groundwork for Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology. The fourth speech contains in a nascent form Schleiermacher’s theology of the Church, a theological position that comes to fruition and maturity in his later work, The Christian Faith. In this chapter, we will consider two aspects of Schleiermacher’s

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43 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers
burgeoning ecclesiology: the *hermeneutical* viewpoint (or the view “from without”) and the *contextual* view (or the view “from within”).

**A) The Hermeneutical Viewpoint**

An examination of the structure of the *Speeches* may well lead one to ask the following question: Does the order of the *Speeches* contain a clue as to the theological intent of Schleiermacher? One could indeed argue affirmatively that Schleiermacher intends a “movement” in religious understanding from the isolated individual to the interacting community, from introspection to societal vision, from the self to the world. This intentional undertow in the collection can be represented as a series of concentric circles - moving away from the self as “monad” to the self as “manifestation” of humanity. Ultimately, the “religious” self is ineluctably a “communal” self. For Schleiermacher, there is no religion without community.

Within the innermost circle lies the self of *Speech 1* trying to find a religious sense within segregated consciousness. In *Speech 2*, the self encounters the Other within others. *Speeches 3, 4 and 5* move progressively outwards from personal formation of the religious sense to social and universal development. The encounter between self and religion is mediated through the self’s relationships in community. By the end of the *Speeches*, Schleiermacher has led us away from the dangers of a solipsistic pietism to a community-driven and community-defined notion of life lived within a “religious” ethos.

At this point, we can also ask a second hermeneutical question, particularly in reference to *Speech 4*: Does the “title” of the fourth speech give us a clue to Schleiermacher’s theological project? Once again, we answer in the affirmative for Schleiermacher intends to lead us from the social element in religion to the ecclesial factor in Christianity. The argument is positioned as follows: Religion as essentially a *social* phenomenon develops into Christianity
as essentially an ecclesial phenomenon - where all members are expected to be priests for one another. To be Christian for Schleiermacher is to be Church.

The Contextual Perspective

Having briefly examined the Speeches “from without”, we can now focus on the text of Speech 4 itself in order to discern “from within” the underlying ecclesiology that imbues this section on the social nature of religion. We shall consider twelve key themes upon which Schleiermacher’s contextual perspective is built.

We begin with a summative statement at the outset, a declaration that sets the tone for the entire speech: “Once there is religion, it must necessarily also be social”.44 This is Schleiermacher’s resounding theme, namely, that there is an inherent, innate “social” nature to religion. To put it in terms of the contemporary Catholic spiritual theologian, Henri Nouwen: communion with the divine inevitably leads to the community of those who have experienced the divine and wish to share that experience with each other. To encounter God is to encounter the human fellowship of those who are so touched by a sense of the infinite that the “touch” brings them together to worship in community. In tasting the infinite, humanity becomes in a sense divinised or deified. In encountering God, we become like God. We experience what the Eastern Christian tradition calls theosis or participation in divine life. Recovery of this concept is a dominant theme in current Catholic spiritual/ethical theology as evident in Mark O’Keefe’s Becoming Good, Becoming Holy.45 Today’s spiritual theologians may very well find a resonant conversation partner in Schleiermacher with his notions of religious fellowship.

44 Speeches, p. 73 (All page references in this thesis refer to the Crouter translation & edition, 1988)
45 Mark O’Keefe, Becoming Good, Becoming Holy (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1995)
A second theme in *Speech 4* centres around the image of the “city of God.” The social, communal expression of religion functions as a preview and foretaste of the “heavenly bond” among humans who experience mutuality, cordiality and “most perfect equality.” The “practiced sense of community” brings the hearts of all religious persons on to a “common stage.” This “common stage” will metamorphose in *The Christian Faith* into the worshiping stage of believers embraced by the Redeemer, that is, the Church.

A third element focuses on one of the pillars of Reformation theology, namely, the “priesthood of all believers”. Religion as a social phenomenon engenders for Schleiermacher a society of “priestly people”. An authentic religious community is a sacerdotal democracy where members function both as priests and laity, “where each alternately leads and is led; each follows in the other the same power that he also feels in himself and with which he rules others.” Indeed for Schleiermacher, the Church aims to become “a perfect republic”, a concept reflecting Schleiermacher’s Platonic interests as well as alluding to the “royal priesthood, holy nation” status to which God’s people are called.

Truly religious associations are called to an egalitarian mode of living that overcomes “discord and dissension” by concentrating on the notion of a unified spirit underlying superficial differences. As Schleiermacher puts it in *Speech 4*: “I see nothing except that all is one and that all distinctions that really

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46 *Speeches*, p. 75  
47 Ibid. p. 75  
48 Ibid.  
49 Ibid.  
50 Ibid.  
51 Ibid. p. 76  
52 Ibid.  
53 Ibid.  
54 *1 Peter* 2:9  
55 *Speeches*, p. 76
exist in religion flow smoothly into one another through the social association".56 A universal priesthood engenders a communal spirit that becomes a force of unification in the world.

In his 1830 Augsburg Confession homiletic collection, Schleiermacher continues this egalitarian theme in Sermon 6 under the topic of confession. In that sermon, he espouses the blessings and benefits of an equal mode of confession where members confess their sins to each other57 such that the confessional trust among brethren enhances “the unifying power of Christian faith”.58 In a sense, confession becomes an ecumenical witness to a unified Church.

Unity underlying diversity is a fourth important theme in Speech 4. The fragments of life are all “inseparably bound up with the whole”.59 In so far as human persons are inextricably in contact with others, “one bond encloses them all”60 so that we are all “flowing, integrating part(s) of the whole..”.61 Later, in his mature theology, Schleiermacher will identify the whole with the redeeming Body of Christ i.e. the Church - to which all of humanity is called. In essence, the individual believer has no life apart from the whole community, that is, apart from the Church.

The call for religious tolerance constitutes another theme in Speech 4 and becomes the leitmotif for most of Schleiermacher’s work. If one had to select the key principle that motivated Schleiermacher throughout his life as both a theologian and pastor, it would be that of tolerance for all creatures great and small. In Speech 4, he warns against wresting from a person whatever “portion

56 Ibid.
57 Taking his cue from James 5:16
58 Sermons, p.104
59 Speeches, p.77
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
of religion" that person has chosen for it is society's role to enhance the religious sense in whatever form it chooses to appear. In Sermon 8 on the Augsburg Confession, he specifically pleads against condemning those who believe differently for to condemn others is to "wantonly constrict the circle of Christian love" and in essence implies a condemnation of ourselves. We are called rather to a "loving forbearance" towards all of humanity, taking our cue from the redemptive love of Jesus of Nazareth.

Distinguishing between the "true" church and the "common" church is a sixth preoccupation in Speech 4. For Schleiermacher, the "true" church exists wherever there is a true mutual communication based on a shared affective experience of the infinite. This "true" church is the "church triumphant", not the church "that still struggles against all the hindrances of religious culture" but the church "that has already overcome everything that was opposed to it and has established itself." By contrast, the "common church" is often a hierarchic rather than a democratic assembly and lacks mutuality. Church goers remain passive recipients of doctrines, rules and "dead concepts" and fail to experience the "living intuitions and feelings from which they were originally derived". We sense at this stage in Speech 4 the beginnings of an ecclesiology based on an inclusivist sense of the work of the Spirit: The Church is for all and all are destined to become Church through the sustaining and indwelling work of the Spirit. In a sense, for Schleiermacher, we do not so much belong to a church as much as we become the Church in our religiously affected fellowship.

62 Ibid. p. 77
63 *Sermons*, p. 136
64 Ibid.
65 *CF*, § 11, p.52
66 *Speeches*, p. 78
67 Ibid., p.81
The seventh theme appears as a reprise of the whole in the fragments. The proliferation of “churches” doesn’t bother Schleiermacher since he views the multifarious forms of Christian communities as simply “detached fragment(s) of the true and universal church, which is just maturing quietly and slowly toward its union in spirit with this great whole”.68 This undercurrent of “catholicity” in Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology points towards a “Catholic” view of the Church rather than the traditional Protestant one. There is only one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. However, it resides neither in Rome nor in Berlin but in the redeemed hearts of those united around the one Redeemer who maintains his presence and power in the very process of affective religious fellowship. For Schleiermacher there would appear to be many roads to Emmaus; it is the common goal which unites us - the coming of the Kingdom of God in full consummation.69 Until this point of final completion, we are a Church “on the way”, a Church whose goal is unity and peace.

In Sermon 10 of the Augsburg collection, Schleiermacher pursues this theme of the unifying goal of the Church. The Church in this last sermon is presented as God’s work of continuous sanctification enacted in human form and fashion and guided by the Spirit.70 This collaborative work calls us to become not passive spectators “expecting something from beyond”, but rather to engage the world as active participants, as co-redeemers of our own humanity. This would appear to be a Jamesian influenced works-ethic “Catholic” theology of the Church rather than the traditional Pauline inspired faith-ethic of “Protestant” theology. To be fair to Schleiermacher’s overall theological vision however, it would be more accurate to say that

68 Ibid., p.83
69 Cf. § 157, p. 696
70 Sermons, p. 156
Schleiermacher holds the Jamesian and Pauline ecclesiology in a dialogical pair.

In many ways, Schleiermacher is both Catholic and Protestant at the same time. He is comfortable living with ambiguity, with the juxtaposition of opposites. He is not so concerned, as Hegel was, to synthesize antithetical realities. We live in both a sinful and a graceful world - where light is the left hand of darkness, where divinity appears when and where we least expect it. We are called to be in constant dialogue with all aspects of a world already redeemed and yet to be redeemed in full glory.

The eighth theme is a variation on the true church/false church dichotomy. In essence, Schleiermacher points out the way in which the spirit of the true church can become institutionalized into a “false” church where the initial affective/prophetic energy wanes into perfunctory routine rituals. Here he anticipates the sociology of religion work developed by the twentieth century author, Max Weber. In his book, *The Sociology of Religion*, Weber identified what he termed “the routinization of the charisma” whereby institutionalization can lead to the de-spiritualization of the church.

As a pastor involved in the socio-political structures of his day, Schleiermacher was well aware of the dangers when a true church of the spirit becomes “politicized” into a false bureaucratic entity. The trappings of earthly riches can easily replace true religious feeling, as he writes in a somewhat rhetorical, poetic fashion:

Indeed, if only no prince had ever been allowed in the temple before he had laid down in front of the portal the most beautiful ornaments, the rich cornucopia of all his favours and tokens of honour! But they have taken it with them; they have presumed that they could decorate the simple nobility of the heavenly edifice with the tatters of their earthly riches.

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splendor, and instead of a sanctified heart they have left behind worldly gifts as offerings to the highest being.72

Indeed with institutionalization, “the virtuosos of holiness” who embodied the true spirit of religion are replaced by “virtuosos of political bureaucracy” who instantiate the false spirit of a false church. Schleiermacher pleads against political intrusion into religion. The result of such foreign importation is the defilement of true religious fellowship. In this appeal, Schleiermacher appears as a modern day prophet calling his flock back to their original covenant with the Redeemer. Ultimately, the true church as a community of freely chosen mutually caring relationships needs nothing “except a language in order to understand each other and... a space to be together, things for which they need no prince and his favour”.73

A quadruple litany of pleas comprises the ninth concern in Speech 4. Firstly, a plea for religious tolerance as there are thousands of individual intuitions and “different ways in which these intuitions might be put together in order to illumine each other”.74 As he so eloquently and forcefully describes it:

Master and disciple must be allowed to seek out and choose one another in perfect freedom, otherwise one is lost for the other; one must be permitted to seek what is beneficial to all individuals, and no persons must be compelled to give more than they have and understand.75

If religion isn’t freely chosen for Schleiermacher, then it isn’t true religion. Secondly, a restated plea for a democratic priesthood of all believers such that the distinction between priests and laity can be “softened” to the point where laity can be at the same time priests. This egalitarian notion of the Church as the

72 Speeches, p. 85
73 Ibid., p.88
74 Ibid., p.89
75 Ibid.
people of God anticipates, a century before its time, the democratic concept of the Catholic Church resurrected with Vatican II in the 1960's.

A third plea calls for an *ecumenical spirit* that will overcome “the malicious spirit of sectarianism and proselytizing, which always leads further away from the essence of religion”.76 Truly religious people do not feel that they belong to hermetically sealed “distinct” circles. They may identify with a particular manifestation of the religious experience but they do not exclude themselves nor do they exclude others from the common taste for the infinite resident within each member of humanity. The taste for the infinite in the *Speeches* which becomes the feeling of absolute dependence as the “essence” of religion in *The Christian Faith* moves on to become the personal relationship with the Redeemer as the “essence” of Christianity.

The final plea is an invitation to form a *religion of action* rather than a religion of empty words, a religion where one’s entire life becomes a “priestly work of art”. Schleiermacher writes: “If their whole life and every movement of their inner and outer form are thus a priestly work of art, then perhaps, by this mute speech, the sense of what dwells in them will open up in many”.77 Indeed this is none other than the priestly prayer of Jesus in John’s gospel: The world will come to know you by the love you have for one another.78

The importance of *the family* as the first and last source of true religious spirit brings us to the tenth theme. “If sounds of love accompany all movements”, Schleiermacher writes, “the family has the music of the spheres in its domain”.79 Pious domesticity becomes preparatory ground for mature religious feeling. Indeed, if pushed to the wall, Schleiermacher would concede

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76 Ibid., p.91
77 Ibid., p.92
78 *John* 14:35
79 *Speeches*, p.92
that the priesthood of the family is ultimately the “true” church. All other forms are immaterial: “This priesthood was the first in the holy and childlike primeval world and it will be the last when no other is any longer necessary”.80

In Sermon 7 of the Augsburg collection, Schleiermacher identifies the family as the Boden, the foundation of a virtuous society. Though churches may be scattered, the spirit reigns supreme wherever two or three are gathered in the name of the Redeemer81 who brings eternal life to all humanity through community, however small and insignificant that community may seem to the outside world.

The penultimate theme in Speech 4 centres on the notion of what later came to be known in twentieth century theology as pan-en-theism.82 This is the recognition of the Pauline position that the coming of Jesus as the Christ reconciles all creation back to God83 so that in effect, as Schleiermacher writes at the end of Speech 4: “Everything human is holy, for everything is divine”.84 To recognize infinite divinity within daily humanity because the Word became flesh and dwelled among us - this is Schleiermacher’s reminder. We cannot denigrate creation for the Redeemer completes the creation begun by the Father and brings humanity to God-consciousness, to participation in divine life.

Appropriately, Schleiermacher brings Speech 4 to a close with the reprise that there is nothing nobler in human life than community where “each is simultaneously conscious of the other”.85 We are called to become and to continue to be a “band of brothers [and sisters]” that together form a choir of friends singing the praises of the God that lives within human fellowship, the

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80 Ibid., p.93
81 Matthew 18:20
82 e.g. Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume III
83 Col 1:19-20
84 Speeches, p. 94
85 Ibid., p.94
God that can be touched here and now. In this way and only in this way are we "on the way to true immortality and eternity".86
Chapter 3
Schleiermacher’s 1830 Augsburg Confession Sermons: The “Mature” Ecclesiology

1) The Context: Theology Serves the Pulpit

On the fourth of April in 1830, King Friedrich Wilhelm III issued a royal directive for a festival to commemorate the presentation of the Augsburg Confession. Considering this symbolic document as the “principal foundation of the Evangelical church”,87 the government intended to promote a spirit of unity among church members and hopefully consolidate the ecumenical work of the Lutheran-Reformed union begun in 1817. This unification process had unfortunately come to an impasse with the radical entrenchment of the confessionalists on one side and the rationalists on the other. The former appeared committed to stringent doctrinal uniformity and rectitude in a blind, unchanging sola fide seemingly without thought; the latter remained coldly isolated in a “calculated policy of sola ratio in all matters theological”,88 seemingly without faith.

Into this dichotomous arena, Schleiermacher emerges as a mediator, attempting to inject a dialogical spirit into the controversy. He calls for a balance between faith and reason; he advocates unity within diversity; he intends primarily to heal the divisions within his own church in Berlin. As Iain Nicol has aptly argued in his introduction, Schleiermacher’s 1830 response to the Augsburg Confession was not so much an academic one bent on resolving the Halle dispute between the confessionalists and the rationalists, but more a pastoral one intent on healing the disorder in his own congregation. With this goal in mind, Schleiermacher puts theology at the service of the pulpit and delivers a series of ten sermons in the summer and fall of 1830 on the subject of the Augsburg Confession.

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87 Quoted in Iain Nicol, Introduction, Sermons, p. xi
88 Ibid., p. ix
As we listen to this collection of sermons, we can discern three key intercalated presuppositions in Schleiermacher’s presentation. The first presupposition states that Christian doctrine as a human, historical formulation of Spirit is subject to a continuous process of development. There is therefore no fixed body of doctrinal knowledge; doctrine is forever evolving.

The second presupposition claims that the Church as “an organic community of faith and life is, essentially, a living and dynamic historical process”. Consequently, the ecclesia is not a fixed, unchanging institution; like its own doctrine, the Church also evolves over time under diverse manifestations.

A third presupposition posits a threefold dialectic of spirits underlying the historical development of the Christian Church. Firstly, there is the “original” Christian spirit of the Gospel preached by the early church. Secondly, there is the Catholic spirit as manifested in Roman Catholic traditional documents. Lastly, the Protestant spirit surfaces as embodied in the confessional writings of the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

In this dialectic, all historical manifestations of the spirit of Christianity, Catholic or Protestant, are to be “measured and judged” against Scripture. In the foreword to his collection of Augsburg sermons, for example, Schleiermacher indicates his allegiance to the Confessio Sigismundi of 1614, “as long as it is in agreement with holy scripture”. Scripture alone is the norma non normanda, the unnormed norm - a tenet of faith and argument held by most (if not all) Protestant and Catholic thinkers throughout the history of theology. For Aquinas in medieval times, for Luther in the Reformation era, for Schleiermacher in the Romantic period and for Barth or Rahner in our own century, Scripture is the theological centre and

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89 Ibid., p.xvii
90 Ibid., p. xx
91 Schleiermacher, Foreword, p. 4, note 6
within Scripture, Jesus as the Word and the Christ is the "ascriptive subject"\(^2\) of the Christian faith experience explicitly or implicitly. We would do well to remember this common evangelical ground when faced with classical Catholic-Protestant theological debates. For Schleiermacher, diverse ecclesiologies are welcome multifarious epiphanies of the unifying spirit of Jesus-of-Nazareth-as-Redeemer.

From the presuppositions stated above, a number of implications suggest themselves.

Firstly, one of theology's task is the continuous reformulation of tradition, assisting the process of doctrinal development rather than arresting it.\(^3\) What was "theirs back then" cannot "be ours now" in the same sense. We need to maintain continuity with the past while redescribing it for the present, neither kidnapping a text from the past nor leaving it buried there. To the extent that Christian doctrine is subject to development and that the Spirit must be freed continually from the letter, then the process of reformulation is never-ending, can never be brought to closure, can never lay down its head until the eschaton and the final coming of the Kingdom of Christ. Consequently, doctrinal documents like the Augsburg Confession are symbols "surcharged with meaning", to borrow from Ricoeur, and confessional interpretations can never be exhausted or conclusive. In fact, on-going debates are a sign of doctrinal health for Schleiermacher. Diversity of the letter within a unified spirit of Christianity is to be encouraged.

A second implication is the emergence in Schleiermacher's ecclesiology of an ecumenical approach *avant le temps*. Doctrinal differences are to be resolved not with anathemas but in *Streit und Liebe*, in controversy and love. Evangelical freedom arising from the spirit of Protestantism can sustain "a plurality and diversity of


\(^{93}\) Nicol, Introduction, p. xvii
doctrine and practice". 94 Within the same Christian fold devoted to the Spirit of Christ, there is a place for the "plurality of voices" to put it in twentieth century terms. Schleiermacher exudes an inspiring confidence that the freedom inherent in the Gospel will bring humanity together, trusting that Christ is present wherever two or three are gathered in His name whatever the words of the prayer or hymn may be. As Nicol concludes: "Schleiermacher may well have prophesied the advent of the Ecumenical Movement of the twentieth century". 95

The third implication arising from Schleiermacher's presuppositions is that by its very developmental nature, the Church is indeed reformata semper reformanda, a reformed church, ever reforming. This "ever reforming" spirit applies to its confessions, its liturgies, its theologies. The church lives in a dynamic state of permanent dialogue. It is a church in perpetual motion, subject to no human document or institution, save to Christ and His Spirit. For Schleiermacher, the Christian faith calls us to be "pilgrims on the way to an Emmaus church", 96 to a church forever on the horizon. We can take heart about being immersed within a wayfaring ecclesiology for Christ has promised to be with us to the very end of the age. 97

2) The Hermeneutics: The Architecture of the Sermons

Prior to a detailed investigation of the actual contents of the Augsburg Confession sermons, we will examine the underlying architecture upon which this collection is based. This query involves looking at three hermeneutical areas: the scriptural, the ordinal and the structural.

From a scriptural viewpoint, Schleiermacher's choice of introductory New Testament texts for each sermon is significant for the development of his argument.

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94 Ibid., p. xxiii
95 Ibid., p.xxiv
96 Ibid., xxv
97 Matt.28:20
We note the following selections, the combination of which reflects the *dialectic of spirits* that generates and sustains Schleiermacher’s ecclesiological discourse.

Six of the sermons are based on Pauline letters - *I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians* and *Philippians. Hebrews* is also included as the source for *Sermon 5* on the “once-for-all” sacrifice of Christ. These passages clearly represent the *Protestant* spirit. Constituting seventy percent of his choices, there is no denying that Schleiermacher wears his true colours as a theologian working within a traditional Protestant framework.

As for the remaining epistolary selections, however, both are taken from the “Catholic” epistles - *I Peter* and *James*. The choice of these New Testament texts reflects an authentic concern for the *Catholic* spirit - the Petrine drive for a unified Church as well as the Jamesian call for a “good works” component to faith. Interestingly, in *Sermon 10*, Schleiermacher underscores the importance of being active participants rather than passive spectators as believers involved in ecclesial life. Instead of “expecting something from beyond”, he writes, “we ourselves need to get involved” for “the divine completion of this work is always at the same time a human one”. Christ alone redeems, but as members of his vital fellowship we are called and ordained to extend the redemptive circle to humankind in our daily lives. In this particular instance and in fact throughout his ecclesiology, Schleiermacher continues to hold faith-righteousness (the *Protestant* spirit) and works-righteousness (the *Catholic* spirit) in a dialogical pair.

The only Gospel text selected for this collection of sermons is that of *Luke* 6:37. Considering Schleiermacher’s predilection for *John’s* Gospel in most of his writings, it is most notable that on this occasion, he selects *Luke*. Why? Because *Luke’s* is the irenic gospel of tolerance, forgiveness and universality, themes central to

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98 *Sermons*, p. 157
his Augsburg sermons. Further, Luke's gospel and its sequel, Acts, constitute the sacred books that establish the Church as the continuation of Christ's redeeming work for humankind. Luke/Acts is the Catholic/Ecclesial text suited to Schleiermacher’s Catholic-leaning ecclesiology and so he makes use of Luke to underpin these sermons dealing with the meaning of being Church.

As a theologian fully cognizant of hermeneutical infrastructures, Schleiermacher’s placement of the Augsburg sermons in the particular order in which they occur is consequential. As with the Speeches, Schleiermacher’s ordinal choice with the Augsburg Sermons clearly reflects an ecclesiastically-driven trajectory towards a truly spiritual Church. The concern for avoiding inauthentic servitude to the Letter of Sermon 1 leads to the championing of true ecclesiastical unity in Sermon 10, a unity not written in codes but in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Beginning with the Pauline exhortation to be servants of Christ and the Spirit, not slaves to men and letters (Sermon 1), Schleiermacher next calls upon the Petrine challenge to defend the “hope that is in you”, but with gentleness and reverence. (Sermon 2). The handing over of the Augsburg Confession in 1530 is a classic example for Schleiermacher of defending the Christian faith and expanding its hope to all within an atmosphere of tolerance and forbearance.

Sermons 3 and 4 delineate the implications of the Christian faith. We are first justified by faith in Christ and through this faith-righteousness, Christ comes to live in us. We then share his God-consciousness and participate in His divine life. Rather than being reduced to doctrines, faith becomes a living, communal reality. This “sharing and participation” however does not occur in a ghostly vacuum. It becomes incarnated in the sacramental action of the Eucharist (Sermon 5) and Confession (Sermon 6). Confessing our sins to one another and sharing the Lord’s Supper are

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99 Only Luke contains such unique passages as the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11-32), the thief who enters paradise with Jesus (Lk 23:43) and the words: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do”. (Lk 23:34), surely the epitome of the Spirit of forgiveness - to forbear one’s own executioners.
signs of the presence of the Spirit in our communally-expressive faith. Although as Christians we are all called to be spiritual priests for one another, there is still the necessity for public ministry (Sermon 7), for a clerical priesthood to oversee the faith-community - protecting, encouraging and enhancing the fellowship with the Redeemer.

Within this sacramental/ecclesial community, there is no room for condemnation of those who believe differently (Sermon 8) nor for a wrathful, vengeful God (Sermon 9) to frighten humans into a fear-ridden belief. Rather the Church as the Redeemer-centred community lives with tolerant kindness and prays to a loving, forgiving God. (Sermon 10)

Finally, the ultimate goal of the Christian life is not perfect adherence to human rules and rituals (the Letter) but rather a love-abounding ecclesial unity (the Spirit) that instantiates in human form the divine completion of the sanctification of the world. This sanctification is enacted through the service of human beings.

To sum up then, Schleiermacher’s hermeneutical ordering of the ten Augsburg Sermons erects a matrix upon which his thematic arguments will lie. The very order of these sermons reveals Schleiermacher’s theological, pastoral intent - to coax and coach his parishioners away from a self-preoccupied, letter-enslaving, exclusivist pietism towards an ecclesially-centred, Spirit-driven, inclusivist faith.

The final hermeneutical aspect to be considered in this section is that of the consistent structure with which Schleiermacher builds each sermon. He begins with a scriptural text, spells out its theological implications and suggests its ethical applications for the Christian life of communal piety.

Consider, as an example, Sermon 6 on the exhortation to confess our sins. Based on the James 5:16 text, Schleiermacher’s introduction immediately situates confession within the context of the Eucharistic sacrament. Confession is not
concerned with “an enumeration of particular trespasses”. Rather the confession of sins “belongs to our partaking of the supper of our Redeemer as a fresh reassurance of the divine forgiveness”. The theological implication of the Jamesian text is that confession is really a “subject of prayer” and is meant for healing and reconciliation, not for punishment and atonement. The blessings of confession in an egalitarian mode reflect the priesthood of all believers. Ultimately, confession becomes an ecumenical witness, a witness to the “unifying power of Christian faith”. The ethical application of James’ exhortation for Schleiermacher is to act in such a way that brotherly and sisterly trust is to undergird all our relationships with each other as a reflection of our trusting relationship with Christ.

This three-fold movement of scriptural text, theological implication and ethical application acts as the homiletic paradigm for all of Schleiermacher’s sermons in this collection. As a model, this structural component of each sermon reveals a theology concerned about and devoted to the pastoral needs of the ecclesia, a theology guiding parishioners towards a belief-and-behaviour mode reflective of their common faith in the Redeemer.

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100 Sermons, p. 93
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid. p.104
3) The Text, At Last! : Themes and Variations

Having considered the contextual and hermeneutical framework for the Augsburg sermons, we can now examine the text itself in order to tease the fabric of ecclesial themes and variations contained herein, a tapestry comprising an essentially Catholic ecclesiological foreground within a Protestant theological background.104

Sermon 1 : Admonition Concerning Self-Induced Servitude

For Schleiermacher, the “whole kernel of this confession”105 comprises the Redeemer as the only-begotten Son of the Father and the Spirit “whose outpouring on his people he first requested of the Father”.106 In other words, it is the expression of a Redeemer-centred communitarian faith, a faith that generates, sustains and celebrates a communal life reflective of the divine life of the Trinity.107 The communal life of the ecclesia acts as a window to the communal life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What are the features of this ecclesial life? It is characterised not by a self-induced slavery to institution or confessional document but by a “noble, spiritual servitude in Christ”.108 It is animated by an egalitarian spirit of friendship where none call each other master, for the only master is Christ. It calls all of us to share in the work of Christ who transfers us from the “kingdom of darkness” to the “kingdom of light”.109 Christ has already accomplished the work of salvation and in faith we gracefully receive the fruits of His labour - Protestant spirit territory. But, as noble servants of the Redeemer, “we too are part of this struggle and it behooves us too to share in paying the price to be paid for others”.110 There are “further battles” to be

104 A summary chart of the ten sermons and their relevant themes is provided for the reader in Appendix 1.
105 Sermons, p.23
106 Ibid.
107 For Schleiermacher, the “Trinity” is usually taken in the modalistic sense of Sabellius. See p.750 of the CF.
108 Ibid. p.33
109 Ibid. p.30
110 Ibid. p.31
fought and more suffering required “to complete Christ’s afflictions”¹¹¹ - Catholic spirit terrain. Schleiermacher appears to walk a tightrope: as a Protestant, he can never let go of faith-righteousness; yet, the implicit necessity of works-righteousness haunts him like a spectre. His Protestant side assures him of the Redeemer’s victory; his Catholic side calls him to the everlasting struggle until we do achieve the “uninterrupted enjoyment of all blessings of the kingdom of God”.¹¹²

Unfortunately, while we toil on this side of paradise, we are faced with not only a divided world but a divided church. This divisive ecclesial condition should not lead us to grievous despair but rather should evoke a “loving forbearance” and an “aching compassion”¹¹³ for truly we know not what we do. We continue to live in the shadow of Calvary, with the cries of the Redeemer redounding in our ears. Yet, we take heart that we will be with him in paradise. In the interim, we act to “ensure that the bond of the unity of the Spirit will not be dissolved by these divergent tendencies”.¹¹⁴ We live as free servants of Christ dedicated to the Word, never forcing others to become “slaves of any human word or prescription, for our freedom lies in this: that all is ours, but we are Christ’s”.¹¹⁵ The Word of God before the word of humanity - anytime, anywhere.

By the end of this first sermon, Schleiermacher has clearly delineated some essential features of his ecclesiology. He calls his flock to a spiritual, egalitarian, compassionate church where much work of service still needs to be done. He calls his fellow pastors to become leading examples to the flock, servants to the community and “stewards of the mysteries of God”.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Ibid.
¹¹² Ibid.
¹¹³ Ibid. p.32
¹¹⁴ Ibid. p.33
¹¹⁵ Ibid.
¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.27
Sermon 2: On the Handing Over of the Confession
as Giving an Account for the Ground of Hope

Though it begins with a Catholic epistle\textsuperscript{117} exhorting us to defend our faith, the second sermon is for the most part a classical expression of the three pillars of the Protestant spirit: justification by faith alone; scripture as the sole norm for Christian doctrine and practice; and the priesthood of all believers.

Lest we suspect that he has defected to the Catholic camp, Schleiermacher unequivocally reminds us that neither external works nor any meritorious activities of our own can “bring peace with God”\textsuperscript{118} Rather, righteousness comes from God through the one He has sent so that in communion with the Son we might have eternal life. This communion involves a “living faith in the Redeemer”\textsuperscript{119} who alone brings salvation and peace. All other things are to be rejected, even confessional documents, for “the letter of the text” should never prevent “the advance and increase of knowledge”\textsuperscript{120} of the life of the Spirit.

On this latter issue, Schleiermacher departs from many of his confessionalist-oriented Protestant contemporaries for whom confessional symbols like the Augsburg document were written in stone with the same degree of normativity as the original tablets of Exodus or the Beatitudes of the Gospels.\textsuperscript{121} On the contrary, for Schleiermacher, the understanding of our faith evolves over time so that the articulation of this faith in written documents also develops over time. In short, the meaning of a text, even a scriptural text, depends on the historical context. It meant something then in its own time; it means something different now to us in our own

\textsuperscript{117} 1 Peter 3:15
\textsuperscript{118} Sermons, p.38
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid. p.39
\textsuperscript{121} It is interesting to note that contemporary support for Schleiermacher’s notion of doctrinal development came from the Catholic theologian, Johann Sebastian Drey (1777-1853), the founder of the Catholic faculty at the University of Tübingen. Drey’s relationship with Schleiermacher’s theology is addressed in a subsequent section of this thesis.
situation. Doctrine, as the expression of faith in a given context, ineluctably changes and develops over time. The task of the pastoral theologian is to discern, preserve and enliven the spirit of faith though its letter may change over time. The husk may fall by the wayside; the kernel must be protected and sown until the final coming. Each generation will address faith in its own clothing so that it speaks relevantly to its own times. The danger, however, might be that we lose sight of the core of our faith.

For Schleiermacher, the continual presence of the Spirit within the vital fellowship of the Redeemer will always save us from any impending loss of sight of our faith. The preaching of the Word ensures us of this presence. This preaching activity is not limited to formal addresses from the pulpit. It is often instantiated in public actions such as the very act of handing over the Augsburg Confession in 1530.

Schleiermacher cites three praiseworthy aspects surrounding this deed of living faith. Firstly, it was an exemplary action of faithfulness, the faith of the Evangelical church in action in the real world of its own times. The protesters in 1530 did not cower in underground caves or escape to monastic enclaves to profess their faith. Rather they courageously stood in a public forum addressing the political-ecclesial powers of the day to confess their religious beliefs and practices.122

Secondly, it was an attempt to maintain unity within a diversified expression of faith. The aim “was not at all to establish a new and separate community but was simply to preserve their liberty of conscience”123 within a unified church. Schleiermacher argues that had the Church of Rome been willing to allow divergent regional tendencies within on overriding unity, the Reformation would perhaps not have spawned a schismatic but rather a renewed church.124

122 *Sermons*, p.39
123 Ibid. p.40
124 Interestingly, the retrieval of the notion of diversified expressions of faith with Vatican II in the 1960’s resonates with Schleiermacher’s insight. Schleiermacher would probably have been a welcome guest at the Vatican II sessions.
Thirdly, the deed of 1530 affirmed the principle of *sola scriptura.* The Word of God, Christ embodied in scripture, is the sole unnormed norm against which to judge the development of doctrine and the ordering of the Christian moral life. For Schleiermacher, no witness is valid except for "what is expressed in these writings".125

In addition to his exposition in this sermon of the *faith-alone* and *scripture-alone* principles of Protestant theology, Schleiermacher also reiterates the democratic notion of the universality of Christian priesthood. He affirms:

..that all Christians should be priests and that servants of God’s Word were called not to be masters of people’s consciences but rightly to divide the Word of God so that everyone might freely make use of it. Likewise, ever since then the difference in our church between those who proclaim God’s Word and those who hear it has also become smaller and smaller.126

Does this mean that Schleiermacher eschews a clerical ministry? Not at all, to judge from his observation at the outset of this sermon where he writes: “Great care must be taken in selecting teachers for the new congregations and in ensuring their proper oversight”.127 Schleiermacher reveals his Calvinist roots in espousing a community-driven notion of church. We don’t express faith by ourselves; we express it in communal worship. We don’t read scriptures by ourselves exclusively without communal oversight. We give an account of our faith “not merely each person for oneself but also as one community”128.

Once again, in spite of the predominant Protestant theological landscape in this sermon, we can reasonably discern lurking in the text ecclesial elements of a more “Catholic” nature: not only faith-alone but works-with-others; not only scripture-

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125 *Sermons*, p.41
126 Ibid. p.45
127 Ibid. p.37 (emphasis added)
128 Ibid. p.44
alone but worship within community; not only universal priesthood, but episcopal oversight as well.

_Sermon 3: The Relationship of Evangelical Faith to the Law_

Within the context of determining which elements of a confession are universal and eternal and which are transient, historically-conditioned features, the third Augsburg sermon is essentially a reprise of the theme of the priority of faith over works of the law. Basing his homily on the classic Galatians text “that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ”,¹²⁹ Schleiermacher cautions his parishioners against the tendency for Law and the works-righteousness mentality to seep back into the church community through idolatry to doctrines or confessional documents. A clear distinction has to be drawn, Schleiermacher warns, between living faith and doctrinal letter.¹³⁰ As a Christian community, we must avoid the reductionist tendency to distill a truly living faith into perfunctory adherence to moribund doctrines. The “faith that matters” is not concerned with “legalistic purity of doctrine” but with Lebensgemeinschaft, with the “living communion offered to us by Christ”.¹³¹ Faith is truly alive and active in us not so much through doctrinal beliefs as through loving action.

For Schleiermacher, there is one unambiguous choice to make as a believer: Do you have faith in Christ or do you put your faith in external works? Is Christ alone sufficient for you or do you rely on other things as “still necessary and salutary”?¹³² An immediate objection to this dichotomous position arises as follows: If faith is loving action within a living community, does it not by definition involve external works as expressions of that faith? Otherwise, we end up with an

¹²⁹ _Galatians_ 2:16-18
¹³⁰ _Sermons_, p.59
¹³¹ Ibid.
¹³² Ibid. p.56
internalised, individualistic piety which Schleiermacher consistently shuns in favour of expressive communal action. Schleiermacher would probably answer, along with Luther, that though works don't count, they do, nevertheless, matter in the life of faith. Works don't justify us in themselves; only Christ does. But faith in Christ only comes alive through loving action within the fellowship He inaugurated and continues to sustain.

A further clarification is that in this context of a sermon dealing with the Augsburg Confession, Schleiermacher appears to be concerned not with works of loving communal action but rather with that "legalistic, hypocritical sanctity" associated with the excessively ritualistic devotional practices of the Roman church at the time of the Reformation. The commercial procurement of indulgences as a ticket to heaven or similar activities reflecting a ledger-book religiosity - this is the type of "works" Schleiermacher is warning us against. His point as a self-critical Reformer is that such tendencies can surreptitiously creep back into religious practice under different guises - such as uncritical adherence, in his own Evangelical church, to the letter of a doctrine or to a confessional document. Blind belief in the Augsburg Confession as a document is not an adequate measure to appraise Christian commitment. Nor are attending pious assemblies or abstaining from enjoyable activities necessarily signs of "good Christians". Living, active faith in the vital fellowship of the Redeemer - this is the only measure for "Christ gave no commandment other than that we should love one another with the same love that he has loved us".

133 Ibid.
134 Schleiermacher lists: "pilgrimages, fastings and penances, alms for the poor". Sermons, p. 49
135 Ibid. p. 57
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid. p. 62 from Jn 13:34
Therefore, Schleiermacher concludes, let us not be led to "the slavery to human regulations" but rather build the church upon "the foundation of faith" so that we can rejoice in the Spirit.

Schleiermacher’s ecclesial vision provides a significant structural background to the discussion of faith and law in this tertiary sermon. Faith and law are not treated as isolated theological concepts in a complex cognitive-driven system of thought. Rather, these keystone notions of Christianity are contextualised within an ecclesiological matrix that searches for and succeeds in finding the meaning of being a faithful church that truly and faithfully reflects and celebrates the vital fellowship of the Redeemer. The Church that Schleiermacher preaches is not a church based on pious attendance and doctrinal adherence. It is rather a Church based on the living faith of a loving community committed to expanding the circle of participatory divine life to humankind. This sermon preaches the church not as institutional assembly bowing to flickering images on a cave wall in obsequious consent to robed figures; rather it preaches the Church as the faithful People of God. It is also the definition of “Church” found in the new Catechism of the Catholic Church: "‘The Church’ is the People that God gathers in the world”; it is “the whole universal community of believers”. Schleiermacher could well have written these sections of the Catholic catechism.

Sermon 4: On Righteousness Based on Faith

Schleiermacher’s fourth sermon continues to explore the implications of the Pauline sense of justification by faith whereby “it is no longer I who live, but Christ

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138 Ibid. p.63
139 Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph # 752. English translation, Ottawa: Publication Services of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994. This catechism is remarkably the first new catechism since the Council of Trent (1545-63).
140 Significantly, it is only in this sermon that the “Augsburg Confession” (p.65) is explicitly named. This is congruent with Schleiermacher’s argument, namely, that we are not concerned with the document per se but with the faith that it attempts to express.

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who lives in me”. There is a dynamic quality to this process of *gerecht machen*, of “becoming righteous”, an attribute driven by an eschatologically-oriented ecclesiology.

To begin with, faith in itself involves a dyadic movement. Firstly, God through Christ evokes it; that is, the first step of faith is itself a “graced” step. Secondly, as a person addressed by God in Christ, I respond and succumb to his influential grace. Divine initiative precedes human action since, before I can respond, I have to be addressed. As Schleiermacher writes: “Faith is simply that surrender to his influence, and there would be no faith if he did not evoke it”. The Protestant doctrine of divine prevenient no doubt undergirds the opening paragraphs of this homily.

Schleiermacher however is much too aware of the ambiguity of life to be content with this potentially passive view of faith. The surrender of faith is not a falling into a complacent quietism. On the contrary, it is a call to an “ever renewing process” of receiving the Redeemer. There is a realised righteousness and a yet-to-come righteousness implicit in Schleiermacher’s argument for the kingdom that Christ has inaugurated is also both realised and yet-to-come. Such a dynamic eschatological view is implied in Schleiermacher’s notion of the whole and the fragment. He posits that “the divine eye sees the future in the present and the part in the whole”. In other words, God sees in the Church now, as an embodiment of his Son, “the new life that has come upon the human race” as a glimpse of the final consummation of His Kingdom. In the interim, we are called to surrender to Christ.

141 *Galatians* 2:20
142 *Sermons*, p.68-69
143 Ibid. p.69
144 Ibid. p.72
145 Ibid.
To surrender to the Redeemer is to become “co-workers” who serve and promote “the kingdom of God according to our capacity.” As Schleiermacher puts it, “our taking hold of him and our taking him into ourselves must also be renewed over and over again.” The renewal process commands us to ensure that “the interconnection with Christ” is never severed. Otherwise, “love will shrivel up and the kingdom of the Spirit will fall into ruin.”

How do we maintain this interconnection with Christ in a post-apostolic age? We can only do so through that extension of Christ in time and space, that is, through the Church. As faithful co-workers in the Church, we can ensure that the kingdom of the Spirit does not fall into ruin but rather continues to bear the torch of the Redeemer’s righteousness to the world. Further, Christ cannot continue to truly live in us unless we “refer everything to the universal salvation of all.” We are not really justified, we are not really his Church, unless we open up the doors of our communal banquet to the inhabited earth.

For Schleiermacher then, faith-righteousness is inherently, intimately and inexorably bound up with a Church-at-work-and-on-its-way to a finalised righteousness, a Church both assured of the Redeemer’s victory and called to ensure its triumph as well - a Church Militant and a Church Triumphant at the same time; essentially a Catholic Church.

Sermon 5: On the Sacrifice of Christ That Makes Perfect

Working from the Hebrews text that “Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins”, Schleiermacher’s fifth sermon unfolds the implications of the

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146 Ibid. p.77
147 Ibid. p.74
148 Ibid. p.72
149 Ibid. p.75
150 Ibid. p.76
151 Hebrews 10:12
Redeemer's once for all salvific act for humankind. Christ's sacrifice is not so much a reminder of sin but a removal of sin, more a process of reconciliation rather than expiation. It is the perfect fulfillment of the will of God throughout his life that makes the Redeemer who he is, not just the sacrifice of his body on the Cross, the latter, at best, a symbol of a life of self-giving.

The sacrifice that makes perfect then is the accomplishment of the will of God at all times and in all places. Consequently, for Schleiermacher, there is neither need for nor worth in the repetitive sacrificial rites of the Roman Catholic Mass, for it is not the ritualistic adoration and consumption of the host that saves us but the reception of the life of Christ spiritually in ourselves. In some ways, this misrepresents traditional Catholic sacramental theology where the proper inner disposition to receive the Lord is a concurrent condition to the outward reception of the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ. The point Schleiermacher appears to be making however is to attend primarily to the spiritual rather than to the ritual component of worship, as in the previous sermons he underscored the importance of living faith over doctrinal letter.

Does the sacrifice that makes perfect continue to be enacted? Yes, Schleiermacher answers, for as the will of God was accomplished through Christ's body while He dwelt among us, so too now the divine will continues to be fulfilled through the Church as the body of Christ extending through time. Taking his cue from the Corinthian text and resonating with the tradition of Catholic ecclesial theology, Schleiermacher expounds on the Church as the mystical Body of Christ:

...we are all united in one body, and this body is also his because in it we likewise do the will of God together in that we support one another as its members in the various offices apportioned by the one Lord.

152 Sermons, p.84-85
153 1 Cor. 12
154 Sermons, p.82

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Consequently, though Christ's sacrifice was once for all, we continue, as his Church, to embody in our daily lives the sacrifice over time. As the author of Hebrews exhorts us, we cannot neglect to meet each other. We need to encourage each other and "stir up one another to love and good works". The greater the work of community, "the better the work of sanctification flourishes". The measure of sanctification, the measure of becoming good and becoming holy in the image of the Spirit, is the vitality of the fellowship of the Redeemer, the life of the Church.

Instantiating Christ's sacrifice over time by enacting the will of God involves a recognition that "we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit". In the context of the fifth sermon, Schleiermacher attempts to guide his flock to the practice of living within a common ecclesial spirit. He does this by encouraging them not to end communion with those who believe differently but rather to "diligently seek the truth together with them". We neither give up our position nor do we enforce ours on others. Rather we engage in a Spirit-filled dialogue that tolerates dissent as an integral part of ecclesial life.

Schleiermacher's fifth homily is really an invitation to follow the ecumenical voice of the Redeemer calling us to become one as the Son and the Father are one. It is the tolerant voice of the renewed Catholicism of Vatican II, a century before its time.

Sermon 6: Exhortation to Confess Our Sins

With the sixth sermon, Schleiermacher plunges into Catholic sacramental waters. The very mention of confessing sins in many conservative Protestant circles is apt to trigger a conditioned response that Papists have infiltrated the church.

155 Sermons, p.84, where Schleiermacher quotes Hebrews 10:24
156 Ibid. p.84
157 I Cor. 12:13
158 Sermons, p.91
Stereotypically, Protestant Christians claim to have God’s direct e-mail address - no need to go through a priest or the Pope to obtain forgiveness; that’s for Catholic Christians. For the Protestant Schleiermacher, then, to exhort his flock to confess their sins, based on a text which Luther considered an epistle of straw, is to surf dangerous waves. Of course, controversy is never a problem for Schleiermacher who thrives on dialectic and dialogue in the search for truth.

Interwoven then within a Protestant tapestry, Schleiermacher embroiders a Catholic sacramental theology of confession.

The theological context of confession is set firmly within the Protestant principle of sacerdotal democracy. As a universal priesthood, Christians are invited neither to confess to the select few nor to elders but “to one another”. The making and receiving of confession then is a “calling that we then share in common.”

The scriptural context, however, is the Catholic letter of James with its emphasis on good works and the efficacy of such Catholic sacraments as confession and the anointing of the sick. In this epistle, confession is related to healing, prayer and the power of the righteous to effect change. It is imbued with a works-righteousness ethos not normally conducive to Protestant thinking. Schleiermacher overcomes this barrier by emphasizing the social nature of confession as an essential healing ingredient of church life.

Indeed true Christian confession is communal by nature and is an integral, necessary part of the Eucharistic meal. It is not so much an isolated, penitential “enumeration of particular trespasses” but more a reassurance of divine forgiveness as we come together to share in the Lord’s Supper. Although sin includes the transgression of specific laws, it is much more a reality of severing the relationship of

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159 James 5:16
160 Ibid. p.98
161 Ibid.
162 Sermons, p.93
trust with God and our neighbour. Confession of sins then is a public act of overcoming the breach of trust and re-establishing a loving relationship with the fellow members of our Eucharistic community. As Schleiermacher expounds:

...those who share the Lord's Supper together at the same time also renew their certainty of the forgiveness of sin beforehand and so meet together there as those who rejoice in this divine grace with fresh remembrance, but we link this assurance only to a common confession of sin such that no Christian can shun it at any time.\(^{163}\)

Confession then is indeed a requirement of Christian life but within a public, ecclesial context. When confronted with our sinful nature, we place ourselves in the living presence of the Redeemer who then restrains our heart so that rather than condemnation, there is consolation. However, since the Redeemer is no longer with us in the flesh but with us as the ecclesial community of his faithful followers, we are to confess our sins to one another and pray for each other so that we may be healed. There is no need to stand alone in our sinful struggle. As we are all members of the Body of Christ, our brothers and sisters are there to succour and support.\(^{164}\)

Now this ecclesial nature of confession does not imply that private confession should be avoided altogether. On the contrary, Schleiermacher invites his fellow Christians to the “blessings that come from the special confession of sins to a trusted soul”.\(^{165}\) Working through the “sincere sympathy of an intimate spirit”\(^{166}\) divine grace brings consolation to our lives of struggle. It is part of the work of ministers “entrusted with the care of souls” to “provide aid and comfort to everyone in everything that one is likely to encounter in the course of one’s spiritual journey”.\(^{167}\)

\(^{163}\) Ibid. p.101
\(^{164}\) Ibid. p.97
\(^{165}\) Ibid. p.98
\(^{166}\) Ibid.
\(^{167}\) Ibid. p.99
Confessors need not be priests but we all need confessors as an integral part of our Christian life to encourage us in the healing of brokenness.

For Schleiermacher then, both public and private confession are necessary components of the Christian’s life within an ecclesial context. Once again as a pastoral theologian concerned with healing ecclesiological divisions, Schleiermacher places on the table a conflated Protestant/Catholic view of sacramental confession as essentially ecumenical witness. For the Moravian pastor, there is no stronger symbol of “the unifying power of Christian faith” to transcend all barriers than “the trust of confession”.

_Sermon 7: On the Public Ministry of the Word of God_

By invoking the _tradition_ of the early Church to support the notion that a system of ordered ecclesial leadership has always been necessary to guide the faithful, Schleiermacher establishes himself distinctively within a Catholic ecclesiology. Indeed the seventh sermon in this collection represents Schleiermacher’s most “Catholic” sermon, at least in its endorsing the virtues of an officially ordered ministry.

Once again, lest we think that he has abandoned his Protestant roots, Schleiermacher does remind us of the continuous responsibility of all the faithful to pastoring. Nevertheless, some members are singled out for specific leadership roles as ordained ministers within a hierarchic framework. The church community calls for “an ordered ministry of the divine Word”. Anyone not called to the office of pastoring and teaching “in a fitting and orderly way may not and should not interpret the Word of God in public or dispense the holy pledges of his promise”. Further, Schleiermacher argues that “this highly important, even indispensable task of public Christian discourse and everything else that pertains to it must be entrusted only to

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168 Ibid. p.105
169 Ibid. p.108
170 Ibid.
some and ordered in a specific way".171 This advocacy of a hierarchical clergy as infrastructural support to a priesthood of all believers establishes a synergistic ecclesiology resonant with Schleiermacher’s Calvinist tradition and proleptic to Vatican II Catholicism. The Church is indeed both the People of God and the hierarchical institution called to the task of sustaining, enhancing and celebrating the faithful fellowship of the Redeemer as the Body of Christ. As Schleiermacher prays at the end of his homily:

"So, may this blessed company of the body of Christ continue to be transformed also through the faithful ministry of its pastors and teachers! Strengthened by the encouragement and love of the congregation, may they also continue to advance the cause of the Church ever more!172

Pastors and the faithful are both called to work together to build up the body of Christ in the world, each according to their own gifts.173

In the second half of his sermon, Schleiermacher underscores at least three differences between the ministry of the Reformed Church and that of the Roman Catholic Church: the mode of ministry; the modality of oversight and the marital status of the clergy. The differences in the first two issues have become somewhat blurred in post-Vatican II Catholicism; the third issue continues to be an obvious and distinctive difference.

For Schleiermacher working within the nineteenth century church, the Reformed ministry was primarily egalitarian in mode while the Roman ministry was significantly authoritarian in its ecclesial affairs. Inspired by the first letter of Peter, Schleiermacher reminds us that elders are really fellow-elders called not to a domineering position over people but to an exemplary one.174 Further they are not

171 Ibid. p.113
172 Ibid. p.125
173 Ephesians 4:11-12
174 Sermons, p.116
subject to an obsequious obedience but to a critical loyalty where faithful dissent is welcome. Consequently, they are to extend a respectful tolerance to others’ judgments as well as advise and assist without interfering in the domestic lives of the members of the congregation.\textsuperscript{175}

A second difference for Schleiermacher centres around the modality of oversight in the Reformed Church, essentially an \textit{episcopal} one where elders are elected from within the congregation, thereby practicing Jesus’ exhortation to remain equal to each other as friends for no one should be master of another. By contrast, the Roman Church relied on the \textit{papal} model of appointing bishops to serve selected communities. Although bishops in the contemporary Roman church are still appointed rather than elected, the Pope as the Bishop of Rome is ecclesiologically one among equals with episcopal collegiality having priority over any pyramidal authority - in theological theory, if not always in ecclesial practice.

The third, and in many ways the most significant difference, between Roman priests and Reformed ministers is the way in which the latter “have been released from the prohibition that excluded them from marital happiness and from the fullness of domestic life”.\textsuperscript{176}

For Schleiermacher, there are two key advantages to the marital/familial status for pastors. Firstly, there is a greater understanding and empathy for the flock, most of whom are married with families. A celibate clergy is inherently limited in advising families for their counsel is not based on their own experience.\textsuperscript{177} Though they may know what it’s like to be a member of a family, they have no experience of begetting and heading a family.

Secondly, a minister’s family can stand as a model for the family of others. Indeed for Schleiermacher, family is the \textit{Boden}, the foundational ground for society

\textsuperscript{175} Ibid. p.118
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid. p.120
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid. p.121
and community. As we indicated in the chapter on *Speech 4*, family is the *ecclesiola*, the "little church" on which the larger church community is built. Anything that enhances family life ultimately builds up church life. For Schleiermacher, a married ministry is an important part of this process.

In concluding our analysis of this sermon, we can reasonably affirm that in spite of the cosmetic differences between Schleiermacher's and the Roman church's notions of ministry, there is a common ecclesiological ground: the Church as either the vital fellowship of the Redeemer (Schleiermacher) or the People of God (Vatican II) needs a public, ordered ministry of leadership to organize, assist, advise, admonish and exhort the congregation to become what it is destined and called to become - the Body of Christ.

*Sermon 8: On the Condemnation in Our Confession of Those Who Believe Differently*

Organizationally, theologians trace the gestation of the modern ecumenical movement to the beginning of this century.178 Theologically however, as well as practically,179 this movement begins arguably with Schleiermacher’s work in the early nineteenth century. One of his clearest statements on this subject comprises the theme of the eighth sermon in the Augsburg collection. Let us not, Schleiermacher advises, condemn those brothers and sisters who believe differently. Rather than chasing away dissenting members of the redemptive fellowship with condemnatory anathemas, let us engage in loving and forbearing dialogue with our fellow travellers.

We are all on the way to Emmaus. Why not help each other instead of ostracizing

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178 "The modern ecumenical movement may be dated from the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, though this owed much to earlier developments. It led to the establishment of the International Missionary Council; its impetus was behind the creation in 1925 of the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work and of the first World Conference on Faith and Order which met in Lausanne in 1927. These two bodies were fused in the *World Council of Churches*. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 167

179 Schleiermacher's efforts in contributing to the Lutheran-Reformed union of 1817 provides a good example.
ourselves into hermetically-sealed cliques? The Redeemer calls us to universal brotherhood and sisterhood. How can we ignore his prayer to become one as He and the Father are one? The eighth is indeed Schleiermacher's most emotionally inspired plea to remain open to the Christian flock everywhere so that its unity can be assured.180

Significantly, this plea is a key theme in the ecclesiological section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In the paragraphs devoted to the unity of the Church, we find the following affirmation:

...one cannot charge with the sin of separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers...

Furthermore, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church...All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him, and are in themselves calls to "Catholic unity".181

Likewise, in the eighth sermon, Schleiermacher writes:

How then should we want to condemn fellow-servants of whom we might hope that their Lord will find them ever watchful? Should we not gladly remain united with them in the community of teaching and inquiry, of love and prayer?

Therefore, together to seek truth in love, to move toward salvation in undisturbed peace, richly to divide the Word of the Lord among us that it may be ever more clearly revealed to everyone, this is the excellent work of community in which we are united with one another through the gracious calling of our God and Savior.182

This ecumenical "desire to recover the unity of all Christians"183 as a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit constitutes the common foundation stone to the

180 Sermons, p. 136-137
181 Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 818
182 Sermons, p. 139-140
183 Catechism, # 820
ecclesiologies of both Schleiermacher and Catholicism. Indeed both search, pray and work for a truly “Catholic” Church.

In this eighth sermon, as well as in the ninth, Schleiermacher contends with what he terms the “shortcomings and offenses”184 of the Augsburg Confession, thereby practicing the critical theology he always professed. Although it is an important foundational ecclesial document, the Augsburg Confession remains a human document with “imperfections and deficiencies”185 that need to be addressed and corrected. Neither the condemnation of others (Sermon 8) nor the invocation of the wrath of God (Sermon 9) have any place in Christianity for Schleiermacher. The unfortunate lingering presence of condemnatory sentiments included by the authors in the Augsburg Confession is “something that we can only forgive them as a human weakness”.186

As Ignatius of Loyola advised his followers centuries before, so Schleiermacher counsels his flock not to condemn but to persuade. He exhorts them to seek insight into the truth of Christian faith in stillness and humility, with “steadfastness in Christian piety”187 as the measure of faith. Christian piety calls for tolerance towards those who believe differently for to exclude others from our community is to surrender our capacity to influence them. Our work of love as a unifying force then “no longer resides within our circle”.188 In condemning others, we condemn ourselves for we then abandon the work of the Spirit to which we are called as the living fellowship of the Redeemer - namely, to embower the inhabited earth and encircle the globe with an ecumenical love.

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184 Sermons, p.127
185 Ibid.
186 Sermons, p.131
187 Ibid. p.138
188 Ibid. p.135
189 Ibid. p.134
Sermon 9: That We Have Nothing to Teach Regarding the Wrath of God

If Christianity is “the ministry that proclaims reconciliation”, Schleiermacher argues in the first pages of the ninth sermon, then we have no need to invoke the wrath of God as a doctrine of faith. The latter is a pagan concept having no basis in Christian scripture or doctrine. In fact the more we attempt to call on the wrath of God, the more we deviate from “the true spirit of Christianity”, a religion of loving enemies, not seeking vengeance. For Schleiermacher, there has been too much use of the notion of an angry God scaring children and adults into being faithful. The Redeemer does not frighten us into belief; rather he invites us to the living faith of a loving community.

The Redeemer himself never spoke of the wrath of God, except in parabolic references where the lessons are meant to be metaphorical rather than categorical. As his followers then, what need have we to dwell on the wrath of God? It will only detract us from our ministry of reconciliation.

As for the classic motif of the zeal and wrath of God that runs through the Old Covenant, Schleiermacher declaims that the coming of Christ as a new creation means that the old has passed away. Old concepts and images of the anger of God have passed away and are no longer needed. The wrath of God with its threat of punishment belongs to the same category as the law of the flesh prescribed in stone, or tablets or in the letter. By contrast, the New Covenant wrought by the Redeemer is written in the hearts and minds. “The love of Christ is all we need” to deliver us from evil and guide us towards righteousness and reconciliation. The Redeemer was sent not to condemn the world but to save it, even to the point of forgiving those who denied him. What need of divine wrath if enemies are forgiven?

190 Ibid. p.141
191 Ibid. p.142
192 Schleiermacher cites Matt. 22:11-14 as an example where a king gets angry and throws out an unprepared guest.
193 Sermons, p.144
194 Ibid. p.145
In this sermon, Schleiermacher appears to be retrieving the notion of *apokatastasis*\(^{195}\) or universal restoration prevalent in the theology of such early Church Fathers as Origen\(^ {196}\) and reconsidered in our own century by prominent Catholic theologians. Hans Urs von Balthasar, for example, in his seminal work, *Dare We Hope “That All Men Are Saved”?*\(^ {197}\) redescribes *apokatastasis* in the context of a theology of hope that seeks to balance divine justice with divine mercy. Although divine justice requires that the damned be left in torment under the wrath of God, the Creator seems to have pre-empted his own plan by offering his Son for all. As Balthasar writes, “Christ damned for all, so that all damned arrive at salvation”.\(^ {198}\) Although we cannot assume nor presume restoration for all, we are still called to live and pray in hope for the universal redemption of all humankind in Christ.

So too in Schleiermacher where the “divine displeasure at sin”\(^ {199}\) implied in the retributory *wrath of God* becomes the “divine compassion that sent Christ to save sinners”\(^ {200}\) in the reconciliatory *love of God*. Indeed, according to Schleiermacher, “the true power of Christianity will shine ever brighter”\(^ {201}\) the more we dispel the wrath of God and the more we espouse the notion that the only knowledge that makes for salvation is the knowledge that “God is love”.\(^ {202}\)

Once again we encounter in these Schleiermacher sermons a universal, inclusivist, redemptive portrait of what constitutes a credible and veritable “Catholic” Church.

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\(^{195}\) *Apokatastasis* is the Greek word for the doctrine that ultimately all free moral creatures - angels, men and devils - will be saved. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p.27

\(^{196}\) For Origen, God’s all powerful love will ultimately persuade all rational creatures to accept the offer of salvation.

\(^{197}\) Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope “That All Men Are Saved”?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988)

\(^{198}\) Ibid. p.154

\(^{199}\) *Sermons*, p.151

\(^{200}\) Ibid. p.151-152

\(^{201}\) Ibid. p.154

\(^{202}\) *1 John* 4:8
Sermon 10: On the Goal Toward Which the Effort of the Evangelical Church is Directed

 Appropriately, the last sermon in the Augsburg series deals with the eschatological goal of the Church. Essentially, it is the work of a Triune God embodied and enacted “in human form and fashion”, bringing creation to its “completion at the day of Jesus Christ”. God the Father creates the world; God the Son takes on human form as the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us to inaugurate salvation and the Kingdom of God. God the Holy Spirit completes the work of creation and salvation acting through the Church where in the service of human beings, the work of the Lord is brought to its consummation. Everything is God’s work but it is “brought about through those he has prepared to serve him”. The final sanctification of creation is the eschatological goal of the Church.

What is involved in sanctifying or fulfilling the work of God? Essentially, it entails becoming a blameless, sinless, grace-filled community that reflects the divine life enjoyed by the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Of course, on this side of paradise, we are never completely blameless for no matter how far we forge ahead, we are still pilgrims on the way to the final consummation. However our goal remains one of becoming good, becoming holy, to use contemporary Catholic moral theological terms or in Schleiermacher’s words: “to be Christ’s and present Christ so that everything alien is set aside and to give full and free course to the Spirit alone so that all offense is removed”. Only then will God be able to carry out “the creation of the new human being in one and all” wherein the Father, Son and Spirit will dwell.

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203 Notably, Schleiermacher also ends The Christian Faith with a section on the Trinity where he advocates the Sabellian view (p.750). Though he is critical of the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, nevertheless Schleiermacher’s God remains a trinitarian God.
204 Sermons, p.156
205 Phil. 1:6-11
206 Sermons, p.157
207 Ibid. p.159
208 Ibid.
209 Ibid.

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Schleiermacher ends his collection of the Augsburg sermons with a consideration of the contribution of the Reformed church to the Christian religion. Basically, Reformed theology for Schleiermacher recovers the Pauline justification by faith alone as well as the centrality of Christ as the only one necessary for our salvation. This faith however is a living, experiential, expressive faith immersed and instantiated in communal love, not a theoretical, cognitive belief obsessed with “precision of expression”.\textsuperscript{210} It is a faith of the Spirit, not of the letter. It seeks not to separate and divide but to become one body and one spirit; to sustain and bear witness not to a superficial unity “written in codes” but to “the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace”.\textsuperscript{211} It is the faith of an ecumenically-driven Church determined to preach and celebrate its catholicity. It is arguably the faith of a Catholic ecclesiology.

\textsuperscript{210} Ibid. p.171
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid. p. 175; Eph.4:2
4) The Critics: Sparring with Schleiermacher

The response to Schleiermacher’s theology down to our present day is typical of the human reaction to innovative, ground-breaking thought. The Moravian pastor has indeed had his supporters and detractors. Praised as the saviour of modern Christian theology by some, he has also been denounced by others as having sold Christianity’s birthright to the “cultured despisers” of modernity.

We shall now consider a range of critical responses to Schleiermacher’s theology: first, a nineteenth century Catholic view represented by Johann Sebastian Drey of the Tübingen school; secondly, twentieth century Protestant reactions exemplified by Karl Barth, Brian Gerrish, Hans Frei and others; lastly, a twentieth century Catholic conversation with Schleiermacherian ecclesiology as articulated by Charlotte Joy Martin, representative of the current Catholic theological interest in Schleiermacher studies.

Johann Sebastian Drey (1777-1853): Vatican II Catholicism Before Its Time?

Although we have no evidence that Schleiermacher was familiar with Drey’s writings, scholars have long recognized that Drey had both read and been influenced by Schleiermacher’s major works.²¹² The Catholic Tübingen response to Protestant Berlin theology was for the most part quite favourable to judge from Drey’s own publications. Although a staunch institutional Catholic loyal to Rome, Drey advocated a developmental theology resonant with Schleiermacher’s and anticipating a century before its time the theological rediscoveries of Vatican II Catholicism. Drey’s pioneering notion of doctrinal development based on a dynamic rather than static theology of history was apparently buried by the magisterium of the nineteenth

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century Catholic Church only to resurface in our own times in the work of contemporary Catholic theologians,213 who then set the stage for the Vatican II Catholic renewal.

Drey and Schleiermacher stand on common theological and ecumenical ground in their mutual espousal of a theology of history as developmental, sacramental and ecclesial. Our understanding of revelation evolves and develops within an evolutionary historical process. Within this process, the Church has a mediating role to play as the agency that continues Christ’s work of transforming history into the Kingdom of God. In the tradition of Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin, both Drey and Schleiermacher advocate a sacramental vision of history where, as Bradford Hinze writes, “the Spirit-filled Church becomes the primary sacrament of Christ in history, the body of Christ, the earthly extension of the risen Lord”.214 In this view, the time from Christ to the eschaton is “the time of the Church”.215 In post-apostolic times, as Schleiermacher underlines in *The Christian Faith*, Christ can be met only in and through the Church.

This sacramental and ecclesially-grounded theology is the key motif that bonds Drey and Schleiermacher together within an ecumenical spirit of inquiry. For both, ecclesiology is Christocentric and yet, pneumatologically-driven. The Church is inherently inclusive of all humanity because of the presence of the Holy Spirit as the common spirit of the community. Both retrieve a scriptural theology of the Spirit as a holy and common force which “qualifies and limits the hierarchical nature of the Church”.216 It is a theology of the Spirit which supports a democratic model of leadership “more receptive and responsive to the community of the faithful”217 than the authoritarian one often practiced by the institutional Church. Although for Drey

213 Karl Rahner, Hans Küng, Bernard Lonergan to name a few.
214 Hinze, p.7
215 Ibid.
216 Ibid., p.277
217 Ibid., p.279
not all are equal in the Church according to function, there is "a common spiritual priesthood in which all participate".\textsuperscript{218} Likewise for Schleiermacher, although there is a universal priesthood, there is also a public ordered ministry guiding the faithful.

Apart from similar ecclesiologies, Drey and Schleiermacher also share a common approach to theology as essentially pastoral, mediational and communal.

\textit{Pastorally}, both interpret Christ's Great Commission\textsuperscript{219} to baptize all nations as offering to their contemporaries the Christian faith as a credible choice for the critical mind, where faithfulness to ecclesial traditions includes creative reformulations of those traditions for our times.

Both insist on theology's \textit{mediating} function. To the extent that Christian faith is incarnational, then theology as the articulation of that faith also has to be incarnational or mediational. In responding to contemporary historical/cultural situations, theology is not just a matter of retelling but "entails critical assessment and creative construction".\textsuperscript{220}

Lastly, theology is \textit{communal} in providing that kind of organic leadership that will achieve three interrelated goals: one, "foster the life of the believing community through discourse and dialogue"\textsuperscript{221}; two, "affirm and clarify the identity of the Christian Church"\textsuperscript{222} as the vital fellowship of the Redeemer; three, expand the circle of this community beyond the visible church to all of humankind.

To conclude then, we can reasonably state that Schleiermacher in his own day wasn't alone in his reformed notions of ecclesiology. Unknown to him, he had a theological soulmate in the Catholic faculty at Tübingen, the beginnings perhaps of an ecumenical dialogue that took a century or more to come to its fruition in the Catholic Church at Vatican II.

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., p.281
\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Matt.} 28:16-20
\textsuperscript{220} Hinkle, p.293
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid. p.297
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid.
Barth and After-Barth: Where To Place Schleiermacher?

As the shadow of Beethoven hovered over Brahms most of his musical life, likewise the spirit of Schleiermacher haunted Karl Barth most of his theological life. Barth appeared to live in a dialectically ambivalent relationship with his predecessor. We cannot ignore his infamous declaration that the Reformed tradition running back to Calvin and Paul “does not include Schleiermacher”. Nevertheless, in spite of this blatant anathematizing of a fellow churchman, Barth maintained a distant admiration for the Berlin pastor. In the foreword to his *Dogmatics In Outline*, Barth shares a somewhat touching anecdote in the context of the post-war ruins of the Kurfürsten Schloss in Bonn:

About eight o’clock the rebuilding in the quadrangle began to advertise itself in the rattle of an engine for breaking up the ruins. (I may say that with my inquisitive ways, among the rubbish I came upon an undamaged bust of Schleiermacher, which was rescued and somewhat restored to honour again.)

In spite of the severe criticism of what he felt was Schleiermacher’s “anthropologizing of theology”, Barth continued to admire his antagonist’s sermonic output. He considered Schleiermacher’s sermons as the key to understanding his theology. Indeed Schleiermacher saw himself primarily as a preacher and only secondarily as an academic theologian, as he states in his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*:

I rather consider the position of the preacher as the most noble, capable of being worthily filled only by a truly religious, virtuous and serious nature; never of my own will would I exchange it for another.

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225 Emphasis added.

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Theology is meant to serve the pastoral needs of the Church, contributing to the Church’s understanding of its distinctive nature and mission in the world. On this notion of the ecclesial purpose of theology, Barth and Schleiermacher appear to be in agreement.

Lest, as we extol their implicit camaraderie, we inadvertently gloss over the significant differences between these two giants of Christian theology, we shall now consider Barth’s fundamental objections to Schleiermacher’s theological enterprise as articulated in the Göttingen Lectures of 1923/24.

Firstly, Barth objects to Schleiermacher’s integrationist tendency, his predilection for making theology a “part of the cosmic interconnection of spirit and nature”. For Barth, theology deals with the Word as radically different from the world and supreme over it. Its tendency is primarily discontinuous as a way to ensure that the Word of God maintains its priority over the word of humanity.

A second related objection centres on Schleiermacher’s notion of the continuity of human and divine history so that revelation is construed as a natural organic outgrowth of creation. By contrast, revelation for Barth is a radical intervention of the divine into human history. Once again Barth’s penchant for discontinuity surfaces as the key presupposition for his theologizing.

As a counter-objection to these first two points, we wonder whether Barth’s insistence on discontinuity could perhaps engender a docetist view of Christianity that leaves God in his heaven in spite of the mediation of the Word. While Schleiermacher sees the Redeemer as annulling the distance between the natural and the supernatural, Barth insists on maintaining the distance. Whereas Schleiermacher builds a bridge across the great divide, Barth erects a drawbridge and carves a moat around the supernatural. Transcendent life remains radically other and ultimately unattainable in spite of the Incarnation. For Schleiermacher, on the contrary, the

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227 Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen 1923/24*, p.171

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Redeemer brings God-consciousness to humanity so that we can now participate in divine life. Radical otherness is overthrown as Father, Son and Spirit come to dwell within the heart of the believer.

Barth’s third objection questions Schleiermacher’s *ethics-based* theology with its emphasis on feeling, piety and fellowship. Barth prefers an *ontology-based* theology underlining truth, the dyadic relationship to God and assent to revelation as priorities. What Barth could possibly be concerned with here is the Jamesian theology of works implied in Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology. The Church as the vital fellowship of the Redeemer is called to continue his ethical work in building up the Kingdom of God. Is Schleiermacher sounding perhaps too “Catholic” for Barth?

In his critical review of Barth’s Göttingen Lectures, Richard Niebuhr draws an insightful conclusion to the radical difference between these two theologians. While Schleiermacher seeks absolute community, Barth leans towards absolute truth. Schleiermacher is concerned with the actualizing of well-being on earth as the call of the Church and a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. Barth is consumed with the establishment of theological certitude, “a quest for the supremacy of biblically warranted truth over life”. Such obsessive quests inevitably fail for human talk and divine talk are ineluctably interwoven. Barth himself reminds us in his commentary on Romans that we can’t speak about God without speaking about ourselves. To theologize is to anthropologize. To speak about God is to speak about humanity. Christ as the redemptive Word made flesh makes this conversation continuously possible in the context of the fellowship of a Church which seeks not a radical transformation of the world but a regenerative reconciliation of the world with the Word. The Redeemer came not to condemn the world as radically different from its Creator but to save it as an integral part of its original life. The Church as the

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229 Ibid. p.135

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continual embodied presence of the Redeemer is called to the same agenda - bringing the world back to fellowship with its Creator.

As committed Christian pastors and theologians, both Barth and Schleiermacher would no doubt agree to this calling. It seems to us however that Schleiermacher would probably be a more tolerant fellow traveller on the way to Emmaus than Barth. Schleiermacher calls us to celebrate the world as gift of God; Barth appears to be obsessed with judging it. He would do well to listen to Schleiermacher’s peroration from the eighth sermon in the Augsburg collection:

When we consider from this viewpoint the human, often so arbitrary
and poorly grounded divisions in matters of salvation, how true will we
not then find the saying of the Redeemer that whoever condemns others
also condemns oneself?  

Therefore, let us not ourselves condemn Barth for what Richard Niebuhr called “the Barthian captivity of the history of modern Christian thought”. Let’s not “demonize Barth” as we attempt to resurrect Schleiermacher from the ashes of the neo-orthodox critique.

In the last few decades, a number of prominent Protestant theologians have attempted to re-instate Schleiermacher within the pantheon of the Evangelical church tradition. Probably no one has been more successful or enthusiastic about this work of retrieval than Brian A. Gerrish of the University of Chicago Divinity School. In a number of seminal essays and books, Gerrish has restored Schleiermacher’s rightful place in modern theology by re-establishing his links with Calvin. In this process, it is primarily the resonant ecclesiological components in Calvin that surface in Schleiermacher’s work, features redolent with a “Catholic” view of the Church.

230 Sermons, p. 139
231 Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion (New York: Charles Scribner’s, 1964) p. 11
233 The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage and Continuing the Reformation: Essays on Modern Religious Thought are two excellent examples.
In the introduction to his collection of essays, *The Old Protestantism and the New*, Gerrish highlights a number of key Calvinist notions that can be construed as “Catholic” in spirit, notions that reappear centuries later in Schleiermacher’s work.

Firstly, there is the principle that scriptural interpretation is ecclesially-based. There is a “characteristically ‘catholic’ insistence that the Bible is the church’s book.”²³⁴ Christian believers are not called to read scriptures in isolation but in community. Reading the Word, as well as preaching it, is an ecclesial activity.

Secondly, sacraments are also ecclesially-centred. They are efficacious communal activities not merely didactic signs. The Eucharist, for example, is a gift to be cherished in an ecclesial context not an insular devotional exercise or sequestered good work.²³⁵

Lastly, for both Calvin and Schleiermacher, the concept of piety is “the hermeneutic rule”²³⁶ with which all things Christian are decided. Piety as Christian faith lived in a Christ-centred fellowship becomes the norm of a truly practicing catholic church - for Calvin, for Schleiermacher and for the contemporary Catholic Church.

As we examine these diverse Christian theologies, we begin to discern a greater continuity between the Protestant and Catholic positions. In Gerrish’s view of Schleiermacher for example, the Reformation was not so much a radical break from the Catholicism but more an overdue corrective to the errors and abuses of the Roman church. Gerrish reminds us that in Schleiermacher’s lectures on Reformation history, it is not the Protestant voices of Luther or Zwingli that earn his highest praise but the Catholic voice of Erasmus advocating a tolerant approach to the diversity of doctrine. For Schleiermacher, both Catholicism and Protestantism are “distinctive

²³⁵ Ibid. p.5
²³⁶ Ibid. p.7
expressions of the Christian idea, *jointly necessary* to the historical manifestation of Christianity".\(^{237}\) It would seem in hindsight that what Erasmus and Schleiermacher were attempting to achieve in their own times to maintain a unified catholic church, Vatican II leadership attempted in our own century to renew and revive the Roman Church so that it would truly reflect the spirit of catholicity to which it is called by its redemptive founder. Vatican II documents on the Church reveal a recovered spiritual/democratic ecclesiology resonating in many ways with the spirit of the Augsburg Confession and other Reformed symbolic books, namely, giving the Church back to the people and the Spirit that guides it to the end of time.

We shall conclude this section on the Protestant reaction to Schleiermacher's perspective with reference to Hans Frei’s typology of Christian theology.\(^{238}\) Frei suggests that most Christian theologies can be placed within a spectrum or cycle of five types. The key criterion for deciding a theology’s type is the relative importance given to the “communal religious self-description”\(^{239}\) vis-à-vis the ambient cultural description. In Barthian terms, it is a matter of deciding the extent to which the Word of God takes precedence over the word of humanity.

In *Types I* and *II*, the ambient philosophical culture takes a prior hold over the Christian theological ethos.\(^{240}\) Theology concerns itself with *construction* or *conversation*\(^{241}\) while biblical exegesis reduces Jesus to a type or symbol. *Type III* posits an equilibrium between the dominant culture and the Christian community; theology is primarily *expression* of religious feeling. In *Type IV*, the Christian


\(^{239}\) Ibid. p.2-3

\(^{240}\) Gordon Kaufman’s *An Essay on Theological Method* is Frei’s example of Type I, while David Tracy’s *Blessed Rage for Order* exemplifies Type II.

\(^{241}\) The italicised labels for the diverse types within Frei’s scheme are suggested by Professor George Schner, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology. To the best of my knowledge, Frei himself does not use any labels other than the numeric ones.
community’s self-description is absolute, relativising all other cultural criteria. Theology is response to the Word of God with a Christologically-centred biblical exegesis that elevates Jesus to his role as “the ascriptive subject”\textsuperscript{242} of the scriptures.\textsuperscript{243} Lastly, in Type V, the Christian community and the surrounding culture appear to be hermetically-sealed. Theology is reduced to repetition within the liturgical practice of the religious group.\textsuperscript{244} Exegesis is reduced to “hermeneutical silence”\textsuperscript{245} as the faithful repeat rather than interpret biblical statements.

Within this typological scheme, Frei places Schleiermacher in Type III theology. For Frei, Schleiermacher is perceived as hovering between the two worlds of human experience and divine intervention, “risking contradiction”\textsuperscript{246} in attempting to integrate theological description with philosophical method. For some this may be construed as a safe strategy of theological fence-sitting. For Schleiermacher however, equalizing the Word and the world is possibly a sign of theological maturity as the acceptance of ambiguity, that is, opposites need not be diametrically positioned but rather can be dialogically embraced, like human and divine nature in Christ or like error and truth within religious description. In the introductory section to The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher espouses this juxtapositional thinking:

\begin{quote}
The whole delineation which we are here introducing is based rather on the maxim that error never exists in and for itself, but always along with some truth, and that we have never fully understood it until we have discovered its connexion with truth, and the true thing to which it is attached.\textsuperscript{247}
\end{quote}

In this same passage, Schleiermacher goes on to say that even Polytheism as a perversion of God-consciousness is nevertheless “an obscure presentiment of the true

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{242} Frei, p.5
\textsuperscript{243} For Frei, Karl Barth is the prime exemplar of this type.
\textsuperscript{244} Frei cites the work of the contemporary philosopher of religion, D.Z. Phillips, as representative of Type V.
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid. p.6
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{247} CF p.33
\end{footnotes}
God". 248 Indeed for Schleiermacher as for Paul or Aquinas, the Word is not necessarily in opposition to the world for the Word incarnated in the Redeemer has come to bring the world back into the bosom of the Father.

Lest we surmise wrongly that Schleiermacher puts the world before the Word, we need to return to the foundation stone of Schleiermacher’s entire theological universe, the Christo-soteriological principle of paragraph 11 in The Christian Faith:

Christianity is a monotheistic faith, belonging to the teleological type of religion, and is essentially distinguished from other such faiths by the fact that in it everything is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth. 249

Christ the Redeemer is the absolute against which all human experience is to be evaluated; He is the centre who relativises all human effort. Possibly, this presuppositional kernel rises and sets prematurely in Schleiermacher’s output, like the Arctic sun at the dawn of winter. Unfortunately, critics can easily lose sight of Schleiermacher’s Christocentric theology while engaging his philosophical anthropology.

In Sermon 4 of the Augsburg collection, Schleiermacher reminds his congregation that Christocentric time is the only time worthy of consideration. As the Church, our communal self-description is defined by it:

The time of the One who is to come is the final time. If you turn away from him with the notion that you can bring about yet another time, a more beautiful time of greater autonomy and thus also of greater rejoicing in the achievements of the human spirit, you are mistaken, for there is no such thing as any new time to come. Everything is fulfilled in him; everything is to develop from him. 250

The time of the Redeemer is the final time and plays second fiddle to no one. We rejoice in the achievements of the Spirit, not the human spirit. The Word fulfills

248 Ibid. p.34
249 Ibid. p.52 Emphasis added.
250 Sermons, p. 76
everything, not the world. Contrary to Frei’s typological judgment, Schleiermacher ultimately stands under *Type IV* theology responding to the call of the Redeemer reverberating through ecclesial fellowship as the primal value for divinising human life.

*Charlotte Joy Martin: Schleiermacher and a Reconstructed Catholic Ecclesiology*

Charlotte Joy Martin is one of a number of contemporary Catholic theologians who have found an amicable and inspirational conversation partner in Schleiermacher. The common ground for this dialogue is the doctrine of the Church. Martin writes that “it is in the area of ecclesiology that Schleiermacher is most amenable to Catholic sensibilities, while at the same time ecclesiology is the area where most voices of dissent within Catholicism would be looking for amendment”.251

Within the task of developing a reconstructed Catholic ecclesiology that attends to diversified voices, Martin finds a resonant foundational principle in Schleiermacher’s egalitarian notion of the Church “as a relationship of people seeing each other as equals by virtue of God’s willingness to forgive their sins”.252 The Church as the Christ-centred fellowship of the forgiving and the forgiven becomes the platform upon which any subsequent ecclesial polity or policy will be based.

Martin suggests at least three parallels between Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology and the theological picture of the Church delineated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, an affinity strongly supporting the thesis that Schleiermacher’s Protestant faith lives within a Catholic ecclesial framework.

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252 Ibid. p.26

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To begin with, for both Schleiermacher and the Catechism, the Church is a missionary community called “to incorporate all within the riches of Christ’s communion with God”. In the Catechism, the Church is by its very nature “the ‘convocation’ of all men (sic) for salvation”. In Schleiermacher, “all belonging to the human race are eventually taken up into living fellowship with Christ”.

Secondly, although we are a gathering of sinners “still on the way to holiness”, the Church, according to the Catechism, is a sanctifying presence in the world transforming it into the “holy People of God”. Likewise for Schleiermacher, it is within the Church that we become holy, “akin to His perfection and blessedness”. Sanctification is a process of “striving for holiness” with the assurance that “sin can win no new ground” as we engage in the “ever self-renewed willing of the Kingdom of God”.

A third common feature tying Schleiermacher with the Catechism is that both espouse a Eucharistic view of the Church. The Catechism clearly teaches that the Church is “made real” as a liturgical, Eucharistic assembly. The Church manifests its character most fully when it celebrates the fellowship of the Lord’s Supper. For Schleiermacher as well, the Lord’s Supper is the “climax of public worship”, confirming outwardly our inward fellowship with Christ. It is a reminder that the individual’s union with Christ “is unthinkable apart from his union with believers”, a union best exemplified in the Eucharistic celebration.

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253 Ibid.
254 Catechism, # 767
255 CF, § 119, p.549
256 Catechism, # 827
257 Ibid. para. 823
258 CF, § 110, p.505
259 Ibid. p.506
260 Ibid. p.508
261 Ibid. p.509
262 Catechism, # 752
263 C.F., p.640
264 Ibid. p.651
It is primarily within this Eucharistic view of the Church that Martin offers a reconstructed ecclesiology for the Catholic Church, an ecclesiology suggested in Schleiermacher’s work. It is an ecclesiology that fosters interhuman relationships based on our equality as forgiven sinners. In *Sermon 6* of the Augsburg collection, Schleiermacher affirmed the importance of realizing that the Lord’s Supper includes the sacrament of forgiveness of sins - all sins, not just venial sins as suggested in the *Catechism*.265 So too in Martin’s reconstructed ecclesiology, the Eucharist is itself the sacrament of forgiveness. In returning to table fellowship with Christ, we are forgiven and re-enter his vital fellowship. We become equals because of the catholicity of divine forgiveness. This vision of equality extends not only to fellow believers but to all of humankind, levelling not only the pulpit and the pew, but the Church and the world.

A Church construed as the vital fellowship of the universally forgiving and forgiven carries a regenerative and transformative power. As Martin points out, such an ecclesiology relativizes “any of the nondivine things which we might be inclined to see as absolute determiners of a person’s worth”266 - wealth, beauty, intelligence, ecclesial position or moral superiority. It relativizes any human artifacts that seek to rend the vital fellowship asunder - civic laws, confessional symbols, ecclesiastical dogmas. It diffuses any weapons that seek to undermine the Redeemer’s farewell prayer to his friends that they may become one with the One who loves us all.

The Church as the forgiven fellowship of humankind is meaningful divine life here and now. The sweet hereafter is already upon us and in our midst, often in places we least expect. Indeed, according to the *Catechism* itself, the presence of grace lies beyond the “visible confines of the Catholic Church”.267 A truly “Catholic” ecclesiology then includes both a visible and an invisible church. In effect, it is a

265 *Catechism*, # 1395
266 Martin, p.44
267 *Catechism*, # 819
vision of the Church preached and practiced by Schleiermacher whose spirit animates many of the pages of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 
Chapter 4
Schleiermacher’s “Fugal” Ecclesiology:
An Integration of the Protestant and Catholic Visions

“I saw that of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly said to be either, it was only because I was radically both.” Dr. Jekyll’s analysis of his dual personality in Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic story could well be applied to Schleiermacher’s approach to theological discourse - radically both: both faithful and critical, both sacred and secular, both Protestant and Catholic - at the same time, in a kind of cognitive-emotive “fugal” state. As a Bach fugue interweaves many voices to produce a euphonious musical score, so does Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology integrate many influences to produce a mellifluous unified and unifying theology of what it means to be the Church in the world, yet not of the world, to be a Church called to carry creation to its consummation as the Kingdom of God.

In this concluding chapter, we shall review the salient attributes of Schleiermacher’s “fugal” ecclesiology as the outcome of a fusion of the Protestant and Catholic viewpoints. These attributes will then be placed within a quincuncial structure that undergirds and integrates the diverse features into an ecclesiologically unified field.

Firstly, as described in our thesis statement, Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology is essentially “Catholic” in spirit yet arising out of the Protestant spirit that lies at the kernel of his theological vision. The Catholic metaphor declares that we get to Christ through the Church, while the Protestant view is that we get to Christ through Christ. Schleiermacher would appear to espouse the former position, namely, the Church comes first. The Church is the salvific channel through which we encounter the Redeemer and come to share in the same God-consciousness that Jesus’ contemporaries were blessed with. In fact there is an equation implied in Speech 4
which finds its “Catholic” expression in *The Christian Faith. Speech 4* declares: “Outside human fellowship, there is no religion”. In *The Christian Faith*, this equation becomes: “Outside the Church, there is no salvation”. Schleiermacher makes this explicitly clear in paragraph 113 of *The Christian Faith*: “...salvation or blessedness is in the Church alone... the Church alone saves”. This view, as stated previously in our introduction, is a redescription of the classic Catholic Church soteriological position epitomized in St. Cyprian’s famous adage: *Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus*. In adopting this ecclesio-centred soteriology, Schleiermacher reveals that he is essentially, at least in his ecclesiology, a Catholic theologian.

The next logical question to ask however is: What is the Church for Schleiermacher? Is it the spiritual community bonded to the Redeemer consisting of members who may or may not be aware of their destined election? Yes, for *the Church is Spirit* on the way to the final consummation in the Kingdom of God. But is it also a clerico-bureaucratic institution immersed in the world? Yes, Schleiermacher answers, for *the Church is also Matter* set in human history to instantiate the presence of Christ the Redeemer in overt institutional activities. For Schleiermacher, as for Catholic theology, these activities of Redeemer-presence are primarily sacramental, namely, the believer encounters the Redeemer and enters the vital fellowship embraced by him in and through Baptism and the Eucharist.

A second salient characteristic of Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology is that it is *eucharistic*. The Church is best manifested and bears witness to the Redeemer at its best within the context of the Lord’s Supper. Here within communal celebration, the “vital fellowship with Christ” shares a meal together as a living surcharged symbol of sharing God-consciousness, that is, participating in divine life. Interestingly, for Schleiermacher, forgiveness of sins arises out of this vital fellowship

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268 *CF*, p. 527 (Emphasis added)
269 *CF*, p. 434

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with Christ, not out of his suffering. Schleiermacher considers the language of atonement and divine wrath out of place in a love-centred Christian vision. Indeed the suffering of Calvary is peripheral to the fellowship of the Last Supper.

This type of fellowship-centred theology anticipates the work of the contemporary radical Catholic theologian, John Dominic Crossan. In his infamous book, *The Historical Jesus*, Crossan underscores what he considers distinctively radical about Jesus of Nazareth, namely, his "open commensality". Crossan uses this term to indicate the way in which Jesus invites everyone to table fellowship with him - male or female, rich or poor, saint or sinner. All are accepted; none are rejected. If, for Schleiermacher, Jesus was the ultimate "virtuoso of holiness", for Crossan, Jesus was the ultimate "virtuoso of table fellowship". For both Schleiermacher, as nineteenth century German Protestant theologian and Crossan, as twentieth century American Catholic theologian, the life-sustaining open fellowship of believers in Jesus is the core of the Christian faith as eucharistically-centred.

Schleiermacherian ecclesiology is also *ecumenical and inclusive* in nature. This tendency arises from the invitation to religious tolerance championed in *Speech 4*. The religious feeling exists in all of us and we are all called to seek understanding of this feeling in a tolerant spirit of conversation with the inhabited earth. Although there is no salvation outside the Church for Schleiermacher, this doesn't necessarily exclude anyone for all are potentially elected to enter and become Church. In paragraph 118, he clearly writes:

"..everyone still outside this fellowship will some time or another be laid hold of by the divine operations of grace and brought within it". Each human person is

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270 Schleiermacher develops this theme in the *CF*, §101, pp.434-437; we also encountered it in *Sermon 9* of the Augsburg collection: "That We Have Nothing to Teach Regarding the Wrath of God".
272 Ibid., 261-264
273 *CFp*.p.540
regenerated in his own time. All individuals will pass “into the full enjoyment of redemption” for it is “the inevitable condition of all activity in time” that results from “the Word made flesh”.274 If divinity enters humanity, then all are ultimately saved through the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth.

Schleiermacher develops an inclusive doctrine of election in the latter part of The Christian Faith. Election doesn’t mean that some are saved while others are damned. Rather some members of the human race are already elected while others are yet-to-be elected. Schleiermacher at this point appears to borrow from eschatological notions of the Kingdom of God as both realized and still-to-come. His position here harkens back, as we saw in Sermon 9, to the soteriology of Origen with its emphasis on apokatástasis, the reconciliation of all creation in Christ. The task of the Church is not to use the election doctrine to exclude any member of the race. Rather its goal is to awaken within each individual the “longing for the Kingdom of God”,275 the yearning to be included within the vital fellowship of the Redeemer.

Consideration of the relationship of the Kingdom of God to the Church brings us to yet another feature of Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology, namely, that it is eschatologically-driven. For Schleiermacher, there is a “realized” component to eschatology. The Redeemer has already inaugurated the Kingdom of God so that the Church membership has a foretaste of the final Kingdom. As he writes in The Christian Faith: “The Kingdom of God is actually present in the fellowship of believers”.276 However it is a developmental eschatology whereby the building of the Kingdom of God involves the progressive emergence of the whole out of the fragments - “less and less of fragmentary details and more and more to be a whole”.277 The Church organization has received a guarantee by the Redeemer that

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274 Ibid.
275 Ibid., p.542
276 Ibid., p.528 (Emphasis added)
277 Ibid.
it will overpower "the unorganized masses to which it is opposed".278 This is Schleiermacher's Johannine faith in the light that shines in the darkness and overcomes the world.279

A fifth aspect of Schleiermacher's ecclesiology is that it is *confessional* in nature. In other words, you have to be a player on the field, a participant within the organization, to be able to make valid statements about the Church. You cannot really "understand" the believer's life unless you become a believer yourself and "feel" the presence of the Redeemer within ecclesial fellowship. Schleiermacher writes: ".. affirmations concerning the Christian Church can be rightly made only by those who know its inner life through personal participation in it".280 Only in the context of "being Church" can we really be Christians and have any valid Christian theology.

A last feature to be considered regarding Schleiermacher's ecclesiology is that it is a *New Testament/Johannine/Spirit-centred* theology of the Church. It is *New Testament-based* in that the Church for Schleiermacher has little or nothing to learn from the Old Testament. A neo-Marcionite tendency is unmistakably present in Schleiermacher's theology. In his postscript to the doctrine on Scriptures,281 Schleiermacher states categorically: "..the Old Testament Scriptures do not on that account share the normative dignity or the inspiration of the New".282 The New Testament Scriptures alone are the authentic and sufficient norm for Christian doctrine. Christianity doesn't complete Judaism; rather as the religion of the Redeemer, Christianity represents a radical departure from any other religion.

Schleiermacher has often been criticized for this lack of recognizing the continuity between the Old and the New Testaments. Unfortunately, this criticism has often turned into scathing accusations of anti-Semitism against Schleiermacher.

278 Ibid.
279 John 1:5
280 Cf. p.529
281 Ibid., § 132
282 Ibid., p.608
This is a rather unfair and erroneous judgment of a theologian who went out of his way to include all members of the human race in his vision of a Redeemer-centred religion.

Two things can be said about Schleiermacher’s New Testament bias. Firstly, he did not know the Hebrew language as he so proficiently knew Greek. From his own hermeneutical principle that we can’t get to really understand an author unless we read and encounter him or her in his or her own language, we can perhaps suggest that Schleiermacher never really encountered the Yahweh of the Hebrews, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the God of Love in the Song of Songs.

Secondly, what Schleiermacher opposes in the Old Testament is the God of Wrath. We’ve seen how he makes this particularly clear in *Sermon 9* of the Augsburg collection where he writes that we have nothing to teach about the wrath of God, a pagan legacy based on primitive judicial systems. Rather Christianity is a religion of reconciliation, not vengeance; love, not wrath. To invoke the wrath of God as a technique to scare people into a forced faithfulness is an “offensive imperfection” in any Christian confession. The Redeemer embraces and saves; he does not judge and destroy. He creates a New Testament, a new way to God-consciousness. He doesn’t arise out of the Old Testament. The Hebrew scriptures are husks that have fallen away. The Christian scriptures alone hold sway. And within these scriptures, John’s gospel alone epitomizes the essence of Christianity.

It is quite a significant presupposition in Schleiermacher’s body of work that Johannine theology has centre stage. Even in his *Life of Jesus*, Schleiermacher dismisses the Synoptics as less historical than John’s version. The history of biblical scholarship has of course proven him wrong. The “high” Christology in John’s story is no doubt history re-created and elevated into theological vision. But, one can also argue that the Synoptics are theologically-biased re-creations as well. It’s just that the theology differs. While the latter focuses on Jesus’ humanity, the former concentrates
on his divinity, on his power to bring us eternal life - in Schleiermacher’s terminology, God-consciousness; in current Catholic moral theology, *theosis* or divinization. Schleiermacher obviously acknowledges that the Redeemer was a man born into human history, Jesus of Nazareth. Once this is established however, he drops the humanity and builds his entire theological opus on the Redeemer as the Way, the Truth and the Life, as the one who brings humanity into divinized fellowship.

In spite of this predominance of the Redeemer in Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology, he does not forget the pneumatological basis that has made possible the sustaining of the Christian fellowship across history. This fellowship is Spirit-centred taking its guide from John 4:24: “God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”. Schleiermacher develops this theme in paragraph 121 of *The Christian Faith* where the “common co-operative activity” of the Church is perceived as “the common Spirit of the new corporate life founded by Christ”. This common spirit instantiated in the Christian’s universal love for all citizens of the Kingdom of God is “the same One Holy Spirit”.

Our last remaining task in this thesis is to suggest how a quincuncial structure integrates the Protestant and Catholic features of Schleiermacher’s “fugal” ecclesiology. Unarguably, at the centre of this geometric arrangement lies Schleiermacher’s kernel of Protestant principles - *sola fide, sola scriptura* and the priesthood of all believers. *Sermons 2, 3, 4* and *7* of the Augsburg collection clearly substantiate this trilithic core. As we move out to each of the four corners however, the Protestant core undergoes, arguably, a metamorphosis into more of a Catholic manifestation of the same Christian spirit. The ecclesiology becomes significantly

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283 *John* 14:6
284 *C.F.*, p.560
285 Ibid. p.565
286 A graphic visualisation of this suggested structure is provided in Appendix 3.
more sacramental, ministerial, eschatological and ecumenical as Sermons 5 through to 10 can attest. It is more sacramental in that a greater emphasis is placed on the role of the Lord’s Supper as an efficacious sign of the living presence of the Redeemer. It is more ministerial in its advocacy of a publicly ordered institution as an essential condition of Church life. It is more eschatological in that it calls us to the works-righteousness-related task of becoming “co-workers” in building up the Kingdom of God. Finally, it is more ecumenical in that its notion of catholicity extends not only to Christian believers of diverse denominations but to all humans everywhere. In short, the Protestant spirit takes on a Catholic mantle in a sacramentally-centred and community-driven ecclesiology.

In this “fugal” ecclesiology, both the Protestant spirit and the Catholic spirit are inextricably linked across the landscape of the life of piety, of the Christian life of vital fellowship with the Redeemer. To eliminate one is to silence the other. In Schleiermacher’s theological vision, light is the left hand of darkness, the sacred lies within the profane, Jesus is found in the eyes of the stranger and - the Protestant and the Catholic shall lie down together like the calf and the lion waiting for the little child who shall lead them.  

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287 Isaiah 11:6
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| 1      | *I Cor.* 7:23<br>
"You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men". | Admonition Concerning Self-Induced Servitude | 1) Christian vocation to "the noble, spiritual servitude in Christ", not to any human servitude, institution or confessional document.  
2) The price we have to pay for a disunited, divided Church: "loving forbearance and aching compassion", perseverance, patience and freedom from any imposed human regulation or document, for we belong to Christ and Christ's word alone is the only norm of faith.  
3) The ecumenical call: "All of us are his servants and are brethren among ourselves"; "the unity of the Spirit and of faith". |
| 2      | *I Peter* 3:15<br>
"Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you". | On the Handing Over of the Confession as Giving an Account for the Ground of Hope | 1) The "trilithic core of the Protestant spirit": sola fide; sola scriptura; the priesthood of all believers.  
2) Schleiermacher’s ecumenical spirit: a unified church informed by scripture, freedom and tolerance.  
3) Contrast between the Protestant and Roman Catholic spirit.  
4) The "text or document" vs. the "deed or act".  
5) The event *then* in 1530 and the event *now* in 1830. |
| 3      | *Galatians* 2:16-18<br>
"...that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." | The Relationship of Evangelical Faith to the Law | 1) The priority of faith over works of the law.  
2) Tendency for Law and "works-righteousness" mentality to seep back into our church through idolatry to "doctrine".  
3) Distinction between "living faith" and "doctrinal letter", with caution against reducing faith to doctrine.  
4) The true and valid universal and eternal elements in a confession vs. the transient historically-conditioned changeable elements. |
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| 4 | *Galatians 2:19-20* "...I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." | On Righteousness Based on Faith | 1) Christ lives in us and in faith we forever renew the process of receiving the Lord.  
2) The whole lies in the fragment - God sees the future in the present and so do we in faith as Christ reveals this eschatological hope to us.  
3) We need rely on nothing else but that Christ lives in us; the sufficiency of Christ's love within us.  
4) Righteousness as a dynamic process of constant renewal; complacency is to be avoided. |
| 5 | *Hebrews 10:12,14* "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God." | On the Sacrifice of Christ that Makes Perfect | 1) The once for all nature of Christ's sacrifice as obedience to God and source of our salvation; the eternal and universal efficacy of this sacrifice for all humans and for all time.  
2) The futility and repudiation of Christ's sacrifice represented in the repetitive sacrificial rites of the Roman Catholic Mass.  
3) The call for tolerance and the ecumenical spirit. |
| 6 | *James 5:16* "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." | Exhortation to Confess Our Sins | 1) The blessings/ benefits of confession in an egalitarian mode as part of the priesthood of all believers.  
2) The distinction between private and common confession and relation of confession to the Lord's Supper.  
3) Why it is unnecessary to enumerate "lists of sins" as in the traditional Roman Catholic practice.  
4) Ecumenism as the ultimate effect of confession; the ultimate value of confessional trust among brethren = "the unifying power of Christian faith". Confession as "ecumenical witness".  
5) Confession as reassurance of divine forgiveness rather than a legalistic "enumeration of particular trespasses". Sin is severance of relationship with God. |
### Schleiermacher's Augsburg Confession Sermons of 1830

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| 7      | *Ephesians 4:11-12*  
> "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."  | On the Public Ministry of the Word of God | 1) The benefits of an ordained ministry for its congregation:  
   i) reminder of the "unbroken continuum of responsibility from all the faithful" to pastoring i.e. the "Protestant" spirit.  
   ii) Yet, some members are singled out for specific leadership as ordained ministers within a hierarchic framework i.e. the "Catholic" spirit.  
2) How the spirit of the Reformed ministry differs from the Roman Catholic ministry:  
   i) egalitarian  
   ii) range of modalities of oversight  
   iii) a married clergy & its benefits: "family life as foundation (Boden) for state and the place of virtue (138).  
3) Pastoral vocation as parity and sanctification. |
| 8      | *Luke 6:37*  
> "Judge not and you will not be judged; condemn not and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven."  | On the Condemnation in Our Confession of Those Who Believe Differently | 1) The plea for tolerance and loving forbearance towards those who believe differently; (compare with paragraph # 818 in the Catholic Catechism)  
2) To condemn others is to "wantonly constrict the circle of Christian love" and the work of the Spirit; in effect, it is to condemn ourselves.  
3) No human letter exhausts the truth; we can never presume to be privileged holders of truth; therefore, we cannot condemn others.  
4) Priority of liturgical practice over doctrinal belief: The world will come to know who you are by the love you have for each other, not by the common beliefs you happen to have in common.  
5) The confession as a human document contains "offensive imperfections": i) the condemnation of others ii) the wrath of God (in Sermon 9). |
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| 9      | *II Cor. 5:17,18*  
"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." | That We have Nothing to Teach Regarding the Wrath of God | 1) Christianity is a religion of reconciliation, not vengeance; love, not wrath  
2) The power of the love of Christ replaces the wrath of God as our guiding symbol and spirit.  
3) Schleiermacher neo-Marcionite tendency in repudiating the wrathful images of God from both Old Testament and New Testament.  
4) Further implications of "the canon within the canon".  
5) To use the wrath of God as a technique to scare people into being faithful is an "offensive imperfection" in the confession, a vestige of pre-Christian paganism. |
| 10     | *Phil. 1:6-11*  
"And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" | On the Goal Toward Which The Effort of the Evangelical Church is Directed | 1) Schleiermacher's ecclesiology based on the consciousness of a Triune God in Sabellian mode.  
2) The Goal of the Church: To complete the work of sanctification begun by God in the person of the Redeemer and continuing now through the presence of the Spirit in the community of the faithful.  
3) The divine completion of sanctification is enacted in human form and fashion, through the service of human beings.  
4) The Church is God's work of continuous sanctification enacted through human action guided by the Spirit.  
5) We are not here to be passive spectators "expecting something from beyond"; we are called to be active participants; "we ourselves need to get involved".  
6) True unity lies not in written codes but in the Spirit and bond of peace. |
Hans Frei's Typology of Christian Theology

Legend:
A.C. = Ambient Culture.
C.C.S.D. = Christian Community Self-Description.
> = takes priority over
/= not connected with

Type 4: Theology as Response:
Christological Exegesis
C.C.S.D. > A.C
(Karl Barth)

Type 3: Theology as Expression:
Psychic Exegesis
C.C.S.D. = A.C
(Schleiermacher)

Type 2: Theology as Conversation:
Symbolic Exegesis
A.C. > C.C.S.D.
(David Tracy)

Type 5: Theology as Repetition:
Hermetic Exegesis
C.C.S.D. ≥ A.C
(D.Z. Phillips)

Jesus as the Ascriptive Unsubstitutable Subject

Christological Bias

Pneumatological Bias

Jesus as Type or Symbol

Appendix 2

R.O/M/1997
Schleiermacher's "Fugal" Ecclesiology

Sacramental: Lord's Supper as Living Presence of the Redeemer


Ministerial: Publicly Ordered Institution as Essential Condition of Church

Ecumenical: Catholicity: A Church for All & All for the Church

Trilithic Core: Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura, Universal Priesthood