

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Number 359 Copyright 2020 The Trinity Foundation Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 July-October 2020
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Something to Consider: A Response to Francis Chan and His Romish View of the Lord's Supper

By Timothy F. Kauffman

Every few years a prominent evangelical announces that he wants to go back to worshipping God the old-fashioned way, having discovered the ancient liturgy of the apostolic church. On January 5, 2020, as he was preparing to celebrate the Lord's Supper, pastor Francis Chan became the next to do so, confessing that until very recently, he had not known that the center of the ancient liturgy was the body and blood of Christ:

For 1500 years, it was never one guy and his pulpit being the center of the church. It was the body and blood of Christ. [And—this was the real surprise to him—*everyone* believed it was *literally* His body and blood.] I didn't know that for the first 1500 years of church history everyone saw it as the literal body and blood of Christ. And it wasn't 'til 500 years ago that someone popularized the thought that it's just a symbol, and nothing more.... That's something to consider.¹

Because there is so much countervailing evidence against his claim, it suggests to us not that Chan has discovered the ancient liturgy, but rather that he has

credulously embraced the pedestrian talking points of a typical Roman Catholic apologist.

A gullible Protestant will often fall headlong into such a trap with neither knowledge of the facts nor even a healthy, investigative curiosity to find out for himself. Because Francis apparently lacks both, we provide this helpful primer to equip him not only to resist the claim, but also to correct the one making it. We will review the scholars who, though reluctantly, acknowledge the widespread and enthusiastic embrace of symbolic language in the early church; the testimony—explicit and implicit—of the ancient writers themselves; the reasons the scholars are constrained to downplay the evidence; and finally, three of the most common fallacious arguments used in support of the literal view, based on Ignatius of Antioch (107 AD), Cyprian of Carthage (253 AD), and Irenæus of Lyons (190 AD). Together, these data lead to the unavoidable conclusion that for the first three hundred years of Christianity, the nonliteral, symbolic view of the Lord's Supper prevailed.

The Tacit Confession of the Scholars

The early church's conviction that the consecrated bread and wine were figures, similitudes, icons, representations, symbols, images, examples, types—or, in some cases, antitypes—of the body and blood of Christ, may reasonably be inferred from the animated attempts of the scholars to deny it. We are assured, on their scholarly authority, that

¹ Chan, Francis, "The Body of Christ and Communion," January 6, 2020, May 26, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUUbXzb2atM>.

such language from the early writers ought to be construed opposite its known meaning:

Adolph Harnack (1896): What we now-a-days understand by “symbol” is a thing which is not that which it represents; at that time “symbol” denoted a thing which, in some kind of way, really is what it signifies;²

Darwell Stone (1909): The question of the meaning of such words in connection with the Eucharist will recur again in a later period. It may be sufficient here to express the warning that to suppose that “symbol” in Clement of Alexandria or “figure” in Tertullian must mean the same as in modern speech would be to assent to a line of thought which is gravely misleading.³

Joseph Pohle (1917): For want of a more accurate terminology, they often refer to the sacramental species as “signs,” “types,” “symbols,” or “figures.”⁴

Burton Scott Easton (1934): None of this language, however, is “symbolic” in the modern sense; ... in the earlier Patristic period the deeper nature of this connection was left unexplored.⁵

J. N. D. Kelly (1977): Yet we should be cautious about interpreting such expressions in a modern fashion. According to ancient modes of thought a mysterious relationship existed between the thing symbolized and its symbol, figure or type; the symbol in some sense was the thing symbolized.⁶

These strident and dismissive cautions lead us to suspect that there is more to the early writers’ symbolic, figurative, metaphorical language than these scholars would prefer to admit. The casual reader may therefore be forgiven for casting a skeptical eye on their warnings.

It is evident by inspection that the ancient writers were not in “want of a more accurate terminology,” and knew very well the meaning of their words and used them advisedly. Clement of Alexandria (198 AD) wrote that gold is “the symbol (σύμβολον) of royalty”⁷ and the crown “is the symbol (σύμβολον) of untroubled tranquility” (*Pædagogus*, 2, 8).⁸ With his expansive vocabulary, Clement analyzed the allegorical, metaphorical, symbolic, tropish and enigmatic sayings of the Barbarians and Greeks, comparing them against the “first principles” and “truth” they represented: “...both Barbarians and Greeks, have veiled the first principles of things, and delivered the truth in enigmas (αἰνίγμασι), and symbols (συμβόλοις), and allegories (ἀλληγορίας), and metaphors (μεταφοραῖς), and such like tropes (τρόποις),”⁹ (*Stromata*, 5, 4).¹⁰ Tertullian of Carthage (208 AD) explicitly contrasted *the figure* and *image* with *the truth* it was intended to represent, stating with a clear illustration that *the figure* is not *the reality*:

And, indeed, if all are figure (*figuræ*), where will be that of which they are the figures (*figuræ*)? How can you hold up a mirror for your face, if the face nowhere exists? But, in truth, all are not figures (*imagines*), but there are also literal statements (*veritates*)” (*De resurrectione carnis*, 20).¹¹

² Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Volume 2, translated from the 3rd German edition, Neil Buchanan, translator, 1896, 144.

³ Darwell Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, Volume 1, 1909, 31.

⁴ Joseph Pohle, *Dogmatic Theology*, Volume 9, “The Sacraments: A Dogmatic Treatment,” Volume 2, “The Holy Eucharist” 2nd edition, 1917, 75.

⁵ *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, Burton Scott Easton, translator, 1934, 94.

⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th edition. 2000, 212. Emphasis in original

⁷ Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, (PG hereafter), 1856-1857, 85 volumes, Volume 8, Column 469.

⁸ Migne, PG, 8:484.

⁹ Migne, PG, 9:41.

¹⁰ Unless otherwise notes, English translations of the Early Church Fathers are cited from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325*, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 volumes, 1885–1887, and *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 28 volumes in 2 series, 1886–1889.

¹¹ Jacques Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (PL). 221 volumes, 1844-1855, Volume 2, Column 821.

In a second century manuscript the term “antitype” is used the same way it is in *Hebrews* 9:24 in which the earthly temple is but a copy (ἀντίτυπον), a “pattern” (*Hebrews* 9:23), a “shadow” (*Hebrews* 8:5) of the true temple in heaven. The copy (ἀντίτυπον) is contrasted with the authentic (αυθεντικον) and is notably inferior to it: “No one then who corrupts the copy (ἀντίτυπον), shall partake of the original (αυθεντικον)”¹² (2 *Clement* 14)[§] An ancient writer, Adamantius (c. 300 AD) implores his listener to take heed as he explains the difference between the image (εικόνοϛ), the figure (σχήματος) and truth (ἀληθείας).¹³ These early writers freely contrasted the symbol with the reality, the figure with the truth, the antitype with the authentic, and the nonliteral trope with the literal meaning behind it.

In the face of this ancient evidence, are we to understand, as the scholars suggest, that Clement believed gold *is really* the royalty, and the crown *really* the tranquility? Are we to take Tertullian to mean that the figure is *literally* the thing it figures, ignoring his emphatic plea contrary? Are we to understand “antitype” to refer to *the reality*, rather than the copy, the pattern, the shadow, knowing full well how the term was used in antiquity—indeed, even in the Scriptures? Are symbols, figures, likenesses, images, metaphors, allegories, tropes, enigmas, images, and antitypes such mysteries to the layman that he cannot understand antiquity without liberal, anglo-Catholic and Roman apologists to redact and revise it for him? The scholarly warnings about the use of figurative language are more indicative of their own desperation than any deficiency in the vocabularies of these ancient writers.

The scholars’ desperation is on full display when Stone claims that Tertullian used *figura* to refer to the truth, the reality, the substance and essence of Christ’s spoken words, not just a *mere allegory*: “He says that our Lord made known to the Apostles

‘the form (*figura*) of his voice’.”¹⁴ The reference is to Tertullian’s *Scorpiace*, and we could scarcely ask for a more apt illustration of the poverty of Stone’s hypothesis. Tertullian had used *figuram vocis* to describe Christ’s *parables* (*Mark* 4:11; compare *Matthew* 13:11, *Luke* 8:10), His “figure of speech.” Tertullian commends his reader to the writings of the Apostles where Christ’s parabolic lessons, His “veiled” language, His “*figuram vocis*”¹⁵ is unveiled to us (*Scorpiace*, 12). Christ’s “figures of speech” require unveiling precisely *because they are not literal statements*, and Tertullian had used “figure of speech” in exactly the same way we do today.

Strain though they might, the much-exercised scholars have tacitly revealed something important about the early Church, and the attentive reader is invited to take note of it: the early church writers so frequently, so liberally, so *enthusiastically* embraced symbolic, figurative, metaphorical, allegorical, typical, and antitypical language to describe the Supper, that the scholars have been forced into tortuous explanations to deny what they plainly meant by it.

The Explicit Evidence from Antiquity

Having heard from the scholars how frequently the early writers employed distinctively *nonliteral* terminology for the consecrated elements, we turn now to the words of the writers themselves. We limit our evidence to the first three centuries of Christianity in order to show at once that for 1,500 years “everyone” did not believe the bread and wine were the literal body and blood of Christ and, that the symbolic language for the consecrated bread and wine was not a 16th century novelty.

Irenæus of Lyons (190 AD)

Irenæus refers to “the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ” as “these antitypes (ἀντίτυπον)”¹⁶ (*Fragment* 37).

Clement of Alexandria (202 AD)

“Elsewhere the Lord, in the Gospel according to John, brought this out by symbols (συμβόλων), when He said: ‘Eat my flesh, and drink my blood;’ describing distinctly by metaphor (*lit.* allegory,

¹² Of unknown authorship, once attributed to Clement of Rome.

[§] Remarkably, other translations intentionally suppress the distinction between that which is *antitypical* and that which is *authentic*: “no one, therefore, having corrupted the type, will receive afterwards the antitype.” (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to AD 325*, Volume 9, Allan Menzies, D.D., editor, 1896, 255.)

¹³ Adamantius, *Dialogue* 5, 6 (Migne *PG*, 9:1840).

¹⁴ Stone, 30-31.

¹⁵ Migne, *PL*, 2:146.

¹⁶ Migne, *PG*, 7:1253. N.B.: fragment 38 in Migne.

ἀλληγορῶν) the drinkable properties of faith....”¹⁷
(*Pædagogus*, 1, 6)

Tertullian of Carthage (208 AD)

“Then, having taken the bread and given it to His disciples, He made it His own body, by saying, ‘This is my body,’ that is, the figure (*figura*) of my body”¹⁸ (*Adversus Marcionem*, 4, 40).

Hippolytus of Rome (215 AD)

The Greek original of Hippolytus’ instructions on the thank offerings and the Supper is no longer extant, but the Verona Latin fragments helpfully preserve both the Latin translation and a Latin transliteration of the Greek. At the thank offering, prior to the blessing, the bread is called an example, “*exemplum*,” of the body of Christ, or in Greek “*antitypum*.” The wine is called an antitype, “*antitypum*,” of the blood of Christ, or in Greek, “*similitudinem*.”¹⁹ Yet, even after the consecration, the communicant is instructed to receive “the image (*antitypum*)²⁰ of the blood of Christ” (*Anaphora* 32).²¹

Origen of Alexandria (248 AD)

“...it is not the material of the bread but the word which is said over it which is of advantage to him who eats it not unworthily of the Lord. And these things indeed are said of the typical (*τυπικοῦ*) and symbolic (*συμβολικοῦ*) body”²² (*Commentary on Matthew*, 11, 14).

Adamantius (c. 300 AD)

“If, as these say, He was fleshless and bloodless, of what flesh or of what blood was it that He gave the images (*εἰκόνας*)²³ in the bread and the cup, when He commanded the disciples to make the memorial of Him by means of these?” (*Dialogue* 5, 6)²⁴

Eusebius of Caesarea (325 AD)

¹⁷ Migne, *PG*, 8:296.

¹⁸ Migne *PL*, 2:460.

¹⁹ *Didascalie Apostolorum Fragmenta Veronensia Latina*, D. Hauler, translator, 1900, 112.

²⁰ Hauler, 117.

²¹ Easton, 60.

²² Migne *PG*, 13:952.

²³ Migne *PG*, 11:1840.

²⁴ English translation by Stone, 62.

“Yea, and perfect services were conducted by the prelates, the sacred rites being solemnized, ... and the mysterious symbols (*σύμβολα*) of the Saviour’s passion were dispensed”²⁵ (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 10.3.3).

“...we have received a memorial of this offering which we celebrate on a table by means of symbols (*σύμβολων*) of His Body and saving Blood”²⁶ (*Demonstratio Evangelica*, 1.10).²⁷

“...the wine which was indeed the symbol (*σύμβολον*)²⁸ of His blood...He gave Himself the symbols (*σύμβολα*) of His divine dispensation to His disciples, when He bade them make the likeness (*εἰκόνα*) of His own Body.... bread to use as the symbol (*σύμβολω*) of His Body”²⁹ (*Demonstratio Evangelica*, 8.1).³⁰

Cyril of Jerusalem (350 AD)

“Wherefore with full assurance let us partake as of the Body and Blood of Christ: for in the figure (*τύπω*) of bread is given to you His body, and in the figure (*τύπω*) of wine His blood.”³¹ (*Catechetical Lecture* 22, 3)

“Trust not the judgment to your bodily palate no, but to faith unflinching; for they who taste are bidden to taste, not bread and wine, but the *anti-typical* (*ἀντίτυπου*) Body and Blood of Christ.”³² (*Catechetical Lecture* 23, 20)

Sarapion of Thmuis (353 AD)

“This bread is the likeness (*ομοίωμα*) of the holy Body, ... the cup, the likeness of the Blood, for the Lord Jesus Christ, taking a cup after supper, said to his own disciples, ‘Take, drink, this is the new

²⁵ Migne *PG*, 20:848.

²⁶ Migne *PG*, 22:89.

²⁷ Translations of Christian Literature, Series I Greek Texts “*Demonstratio Evangelica* of Eusebius of Caesarea” W. J. Ferrar, translator, 1920.

²⁸ Migne *PG*, 22:593.

²⁹ Migne *PG*, 22:596.

³⁰ Ferrar, 114-115.

³¹ Migne *PG*, 33:1100.

³² Migne *PG*, 33:1124.

covenant, which is my Blood,’ ...” (*Eucharistic Anaphora*).³³

Gregory of Nazianzen (361-381 AD)

In his preparation for the Supper, Gregory refers to the unconsecrated elements using the language of symbolism, calling them “the antitype (*ἀντίτυπον*) of the great mysteries”³⁴ (*Oration 2*, paragraph 95), but also uses figurative language even after the consecration: “Now we will partake of a Passover which is still typical (*τυπικῶς*); though it is plainer than the old one...”³⁵ (*Oration 45*, paragraph 23).

Macarius the Egyptian (390 AD)

The consecrated bread and wine are “the symbol (*ἀντίτυπον*) of His flesh and blood, ... those who partake of the visible bread eat spiritually the flesh of the Lord...”³⁶ (*Homily 27*, 17).³⁷

There are many other early writers who testify of the symbolic nature of the consecrated elements, but these are among the earliest and suffice to disprove any claim of a universal belief in the literal body and blood of Christ in the Supper since the Apostles. These same writers argued against the unbelief of the Jews on the one hand, and the idolatry of the pagans on the other, all while deconstructing the complex worldviews of the Gnostics and Philosophers. It is inconceivable to lay at their feet the charge of an insufficient vocabulary, or that they had left “unexplored” the mysterious connection between the symbol and what is symbolized. They knew very well what these words meant and knew exactly why they were using them. The bread and wine were symbolic of Jesus’ incarnation, remembrances of His sufferings for our sins, typical, figurative, sensory objects intended to stimulate our senses and bring to mind the reality of His incarnation. If these men had truly understood that the bread and wine were *literally, really, truly* changed into the body and blood of Christ, their

sophisticated vocabularies were more than equal to the task of explaining and defending that belief to us in their own languages. Yet they used *figure, antitype, example, similitude* in Latin, and *antitype, symbol, allegory, icon, likeness* and *type* in Greek. None of them would have denied that the bread and wine were *spiritually* the body and blood of Christ to us by faith. In fact, they insisted upon it. What is lacking in the ancient church is a confession from any of them that it was *literally, truly* His body and blood.

The Implicit Evidence from Antiquity

In addition to the explicit testimony of the early writers, we have implicit evidence, as well. They expressed themselves through teachings and practices that were wholly inconsistent with a deep, abiding conviction of the real, literal presence of Christ in the bread and wine.

Kneeling to receive the Supper was forbidden

A posture of kneeling would seem appropriate in the literal presence of Christ, as suggested by *Revelation* 1:17 and 5:8. The modern Roman Catholic liturgy incorporates a kneeling posture for the consecration of the bread and wine, and a genuflection—bending of the knee—to adore the “real presence” of Christ during the Lord’s Supper. Such a posture is used to reverence the consecrated bread in the tabernacle, as well. Yet that practice was forbidden in the early church. Irenæus wrote that Christians “do not bend the knee” on Pentecost “because it is of equal significance with the Lord’s day” (*Fragment 7*). Tertullian considered “kneeling in worship on the Lord’s day to be *unlawful*,” and similarly for every day from Easter to Pentecost (*De Corona*, 3). The Council of Nicæa established uniformity of worship by *prohibiting* kneeling on the Lord’s Day (Canon 20). The 20th canon of Nicæa was affirmed explicitly or incorporated by reference at every ecumenical council thereafter until kneeling was finally incorporated into the liturgy in the 11th century.³⁸ If the “real presence of

³³ *Bishop Sarapion’s Prayerbook: An Egyptian Pontifical Dated Probably about AD 350 – 356*, J. Wordsworth, D.D., editor, 1899, 62-63.

³⁴ Migne, *PG*, 35:497.

³⁵ Migne, *PG*, 36:656.

³⁶ Migne, *PG*, 34:705.

³⁷ *Fifty Spiritual Homilies of St. Macarius the Egyptian*, A. J. Mason, translator, 1921, 209.

³⁸ The *Catholic Catechism* explains that “the Elevation” of the Eucharist for adoration during the Mass, and “kneeling during Consecration” are “of comparatively recent introduction” (“Elevation,” *The Catholica Encyclopedia*, Volume 5, Robert Appleton Company, 1909, 380, and “Genuflection,” in Volume 6, 424).

Christ” was the universal conviction of the Church for 1,500 years, it seems that kneeling to receive communion ought to have been *required* rather than *forbidden* on the one day all Christians gathered together to consecrate the bread and wine. And yet, for a thousand years, kneeling on that day was prohibited.

Christ Was Not in the Cup the Night Before He Died

Cyprian of Carthage’s figurative language is evident in his 62nd letter (253 AD). He writes that Christ is made one with His people “when the water is mingled* in the cup with wine,” a mingling that occurred before the consecration (*Epistle 62*, 13). Obviously, Christ is not “really” in the cup before the consecration. Cyprian is speaking figuratively. He then insists that Jesus’ “disciples ought also to observe and to do the same things which the Master both taught and did,” having in their cup for the Supper exactly what Jesus had in His (*Epistle 62*, 10), so that what is consecrated is what Jesus Himself consecrated the night before He died. Jesus used wine. So ought we. Cyprian removes all doubt when he writes that Christ could not have had His own blood in the cup the night before He died, “because just as the drinking of wine cannot be attained to unless the bunch of grapes be first trodden and pressed, *so neither could we drink the blood of Christ unless Christ had first been trampled upon and pressed*” (*Epistle 62*, 7, emphasis added). To Cyprian, even after the wine is consecrated, Christ still is not “really” in the cup. If we must celebrate in the same way Christ did, and Christ’s blood was not in the cup when the Supper was instituted, then Cyprian clearly did not believe in the “real presence” of Christ in the Supper.

The Invocation Does Not “Literally” Change the Thing

In Cyril of Jerusalem’s explanations (350 AD) of the supper and of baptism, the change that occurs at the invocation was a trope (*τρόπον*), a figure of speech, a metaphorical turn of phrase not intended to be taken literally. The Scriptures use the term this way: Jesus says of Jerusalem that He would have

“gathered thy children together, as (*τρόπον*) a hen doth gather her brood” (*Luke 13:34*), and Paul writes that lovers of self will “resist the truth” in the last days, just “as (*τρόπον*) Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses” (2 *Timothy 3:8*). The elements of the supper were indeed “simple bread and wine” beforehand, Cyril taught, but “after the invocation the Bread becomes the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ.” The same was true of meats sacrificed to idols: “so in like manner (*τρόπον*) such meats belonging to the pomp of Satan, though in their own nature simple, become profane by the invocation of the evil spirit”³⁹ (*Catechetical Lecture 23*, 7). There had been no change in the meats at the invocation of an evil spirit, except a change in their use, from simple to profane. The bread and wine of the Supper were changed “in like manner” at the invocation, from simple use to holy. There was no real change in the bread or the meat itself.

The same was true of the oil and water applied to the convert at baptism. The oil “was a symbol (*σύμβολον*)” of his participation with Christ, and the water of baptism was “hinting at a symbol (*συμβόλου*)”⁴⁰ of his burial with Christ, for baptism itself was the antitype (*ἀντίτυπον*) of the sufferings of Christ.⁴¹ Cyril insisted, on Paul’s authority, that baptism was not *really* Christ’s death, but only a likeness (*ὁμοίωματι*) of it (*Catechetical Lecture 20*, 2-7). Just like the bread after the invocation “is mere bread no longer,” so the oil used in baptism, “after invocation” is no longer “simple” or “common,” and “is symbolically (*συμβολικῶς*) applied to your forehead”⁴² (*Catechetical Lecture 21*, 3).

Cyril repeatedly emphasized that the “change” of the meat, the bread, the oil, and the water was not real, or literal, but only symbolic. A trope. A figure of speech not to be taken literally. And thus, water, oil, wine, and bread, though repurposed for holy uses, were still “antitypical” even after the invocation. If the bread of the Supper was changed in the same way as the meats offered to idols, or in the same way as the water and oil used in baptism,

³⁹ Migne, *PG*, 33:1072.

⁴⁰ Migne, *PG*, 33:1080.

⁴¹ Migne, *PG*, 33:1081.

⁴² Migne, *PG*, 33:1092.

* See our article *Recovering Irenæus*, *The Trinity Review*, January-March 2019 for an explanation of the ancient practice of mixing *merum* with water to make wine.

then the bread of the Supper was not really changed at all, except in the way it was used.

The Elements Were Handled with Care Because of Whom They Symbolized

Hippolytus of Rome (215 AD) warned the communicant not to drop the consecrated bread, “for the body of Christ...must not be despised,” and of the cup, “let none of it be spilled...as if thou didst despise it” (*Anaphora*, 32).⁴³ Yet, as he himself said, the consecrated bread and wine were *antitypical* of the body and blood of Christ.

Origen of Alexandria (248 AD) instructed catechumens to handle the consecrated elements reverently: “when you receive the body of the Lord...you protect it with all caution and veneration lest any part fall from it, lest anything of the consecrated gift be lost” (Origen, *13th Homily on Exodus*). Yet, as noted above, Origen believed the consecrated bread and wine were *typical* and *symbolic* of the body of Christ.

Cyril of Jerusalem (350 AD) instructed inexperienced communicants to handle the consecrated elements carefully, fingers together, hollowed palm, the left hand forming a throne for the right to receive, as it were, “a king” or precious “grains of gold,” taking the cup, not reaching out with arms extended, but worshipfully and respectfully (*Catechetical Lecture 23*, 21-22). He spoke as to children, to novices, to first-time communicants, about spilling the bread and wine, obviously concerned that they “[give] heed lest you lose any portion thereof” when handling the bread and wine on the day of their first communion. Yet, as noted above, Cyril thought the consecrated bread and wine were *figuratively* and *antitypically* the body and blood of Christ.

In these examples—from Hippolytus, Origen, and Cyril—the careful handling of the elements is understood in the context of their explicit words about the symbolic, typical, exemplary, and antitypical nature of the bread and wine. We may reasonably conclude that their concern was for Whom they *signified*, not for what they *were*. Such a conclusion is warranted in view of Cyril’s instruction to touch the bread to one’s eyelids before eating, and to moisten one’s eyes, ears, nose

and forehead before drinking: “hallow your eyes by the touch of the Holy Body” (*Catechetical Lecture 23*, 21), and “while the moisture is still upon your lips, touch it with your hands, and hallow your eyes and brow and the other organs of sense” (*Catechetical Lecture 23*, 22). Smearing the body and blood of Christ on your face as you eat and drink it is hardly indicative of a sincere belief in the “real presence.” Engaging one’s senses during communion, however, is evidence of a belief in the *symbolic* nature of the bread and wine—*sensible* reminders of the incarnation for which all of one’s faculties are brought to bear on the meaning of the symbol itself. This is confirmed for us by Tertullian, who also believed the consecrated elements to be *figurative*. Yet he displayed the same care for *unconsecrated* elements: “We feel pained should any wine or bread, even though our own, should be cast upon the ground” (Tertullian, *De Corona*, 3). If Tertullian feared to spill *unconsecrated* bread and wine merely because of Whom they *could signify*, we may reasonably understand Hippolytus, Origen, and Cyril to insist on the careful, reverent handling of consecrated elements because of Whom they *did signify*.

The Failure of the Scholars

In light of the abundance of explicit and implicit evidence from the early Church, one may justifiably wonder why the scholars were inclined to kick so strenuously against the goad. It not only hampered their own investigation into the early liturgy, but also obscured the terrain for those who would follow after them. Their self-inflicted wound was caused by a propensity for interpreting the early writers through a medieval lens. If the later paradigm of a literal or physical “presence” of Christ is definitive, then the early record becomes extremely challenging because its authors held no such belief, exasperating the medieval divines with a superabundance of symbolic, figurative language. As such, their works must be *reinterpreted*, *controverted*, or even *redacted* to force them to conform with the later novelties. The alternative is to view the early writers through the lens of their own time and writings, leading the objective historian to the obvious conclusion that the Roman Catholic doctrine of the “real presence” is itself the novelty, devoid of apostolic authority. The former

⁴³ Easton, 60.

requires an intentional misinterpretation of the early church, normalizing the medieval liturgy, and leading to the obviously misguided claim of Francis Chan and the apologists who persuaded him. The latter requires a wholesale re-evaluation of the medieval liturgy, and frankly calls into question the validity of some Protestant liturgies that were derived from it.

Of those two paths, the former is well-traveled and easy to find, and by and large the ecclesiastical scholars have preferred it. John of Damascus (726 AD) from his medieval perspective, could not accept that early writers had called the bread and wine *antitypes* even after the consecration, and gratuitously overturned the explicit testimony of the ancients: “if some persons called the bread and the wine antitypes of the body and blood of the Lord...they said so not after the consecration but before the consecration...” (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4:13). His claim is obviously false. W. Wigan Harvey (1857 AD) could not accept Justin Martyr’s 2nd century testimony that the *mere recitation of Christ’s words*—“*This is My body*”—effected the consecration (*First Apology*, 65), so he interpreted him instead through the lens of late-4th century Basil (364 AD) who “stated expressly” that the consecration had to be “something more than the simple words of Scripture.” On that basis Harvey overturned Irenæus’ own Greek description of the tithe offering and opted instead for an inferior Latin rendering more consistent with the consecration.⁴⁴ For the same reason Jacques Paul Migne (1857 AD) rejected Irenæus’ own account of the 2nd liturgy, substituting a “preferred” medieval wording more consistent with the later novelty.⁴⁵ Phillip Schaff (1894 AD) believed “the full explanation” of Irenæus’ Eucharist could only be found in the meanderings of late-4th century Gregory of Nyssa (382 AD), and reinterpreted Irenæus accordingly.⁴⁶ These examples illustrate a habitual, systematic redaction of the early liturgy to make it conform to the superstitious medieval liturgy that eventually replaced it. A principled

approach would have prohibited such tampering, but the scholars were faced with an unpalatable choice between two unattractive options, and so took the path of least resistance.

Correcting Fallacious Arguments

The unbeaten path is less obvious to the naked eye, but much more satisfying to the intellect, and at the same time exposes the lie that the literal, actual, “real presence” of Christ in the Supper was held universally until the Reformation. The truth is, for the first three centuries, the nonliteral, symbolic understanding of the Supper prevailed. To that end, we now revisit three of the most common misinterpretations of the early writers, demonstrating how the scholars have corrupted the evidence through anachronism, misconstrual, and redaction.

The Anachronistic “Evidence” from Ignatius of Antioch (107 AD)

Of all the evidence supporting an ancient belief in the literal presence of Christ in the Supper, the most popular is Ignatius’ *Letter to the Smyrnæans*. The heretics “abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins” (*Smyrnæans*, 7). Ignatius appears to provide early 2nd century support for the central tenet of the Roman religion, and her apologists could scarcely ask for a more generous gift from antiquity. Ignatius’ words, however, can only support the “literal” presence of Christ if they are interpreted through a medieval lens by which “the Eucharist” is taken to refer to the elements *after the consecration*. But in Ignatius’ day, the Eucharist referred to the thank offering, the tithes and prayers offered *prior to the consecration*, a tithe that included bread from which a portion was taken for the celebration of the Supper. That subtle difference in the usage of “Eucharist” is determinative, as a little history will show.

Through the prophet Malachi, the Lord condemned the unacceptable burnt offerings of the Jews, foretelling a day when “in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering...among the heathen” (*Malachi* 1:10-11). The apostles left instructions that sacrifices must and would continue under the New Covenant, but

⁴⁴ Harvey, W. Wigan, *Sancti Irenæi Episcopi Lugdunensis, Libros Quinque Contra Haereses*, Volume 2, 1857, 205n, 206n. Wigan refers to Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 66.

⁴⁵ Migne, *PG*, 7:1028n.

⁴⁶ *NPNF-02*, volume 7. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, editors, Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894, xxxix.

these new sacrifices would take the forms of “praise...the fruit of our lips giving thanks” (*Hebrews* 13:15), doing good works and sharing with others (*Hebrews* 13:16), “spiritual sacrifices” (*1 Peter* 2:5), providing for those in need (*Philippians* 4:18), and “your bodies a living sacrifice” (*Romans* 12:1). Such sacrifices are “holy” and “acceptable” (*Romans* 12:1, *1 Peter* 2:5) and well-pleasing to the Lord (*Philippians* 4:18, *Hebrews* 13:16). A new temple of living stones had been constructed so that these new sacrifices would continue (*1 Peter* 2:5).

The early church understood these apostolic instructions as a fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy, and included thank offerings—the Eucharist, *εὐχαριστία*—in the liturgy. The Sunday gathering was the venue for those offerings, as tithes of the harvest were collected and distributed to “orphans and widows and...all who are in need” (Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 67). According to Irenæus “the very oblations” of the Church consisted of the tithes of the Lord’s people, and Christians “set aside all their possessions for the Lord’s purposes,” just as the widow had in the *Gospels* (*Mark* 12:42, *Luke* 21:2) (*Against Heresies*, 4, 18.2), “offering the first-fruits” to care for the needy (*Against Heresies*, 4, 18.4), hungry, thirsty, naked, and poor (*Against Heresies*, 4, 17.6). The sacrifice of *Malachi* 1:11 was fulfilled in thanksgiving, “a joyful noise,” “praise and prayer” (Athanasius, *Festal Letter*, 11) when we “take up our sacrifices, observing distribution to the poor” (*Festal Letter*, 45). What these early writers were describing is an offering of the first fruits with thanks. “The Eucharist and prayer.” *The tithe*.

On the day of their baptism, catechumens were at last eligible to contribute, and were thus instructed to bring their own Eucharist with them for the oblation (Hippolytus, *Anaphora*, 20)⁴⁷—bread, wine, oil, cheese, or olives (Hippolytus, *Anaphora*, 4, 5, 6)⁴⁸ or oxen, sheep, “a batch of dough,” and “a jar of wine or of oil” (*Didache*, 13). The purpose of “the Eucharist of the oblation” was to “share it with strangers” for which reason the Eucharist was to be brought “to the bishop for the entertainment of all

strangers” (*Didascalia*, 9).⁴⁹ The gift we offer to God is “our prayer and our Eucharist” (*Didascalia*, 11).⁵⁰ Origen wrote that “we have a symbol of gratitude to God in the bread which we call the Eucharist” (*Against Celsus*, 8, 57). The Eucharist of the early church was in fact *the tithe* offered with prayers, *before the consecration*.

Early in the sub-apostolic church, the consecration was a simple recitation of Christ’s words—“this is my body, which is broken” (*1 Corinthians* 11:24) and “this is my blood...which is shed” (*Matthew* 26:28)—as attested by Justin (*First Apology*, 66), Irenæus (*Against Heresies*, 4, 17.5, 5, 2.3), Clement (*Paedagogus*, 2.2), and Tertullian (*Against Marcion*, 4, 40). It was common for bread from the Eucharist to be distributed into the hands of the recipient before the consecration was even spoken, as attested by all four Gospel accounts, and by Justin Martyr (*First Apology*, 65), Tertullian (*Against Marcion*, 4, 40), Origen (*Against Celsus*, 8, 33) and Cornelius, Bishop of Rome (Eusebius, *Church History*, 6, 43.18-19). Because the bread was still “the Eucharist” when it was distributed, having not yet been consecrated, the Supper was often called by the same name.

Ignatius’ liturgy may therefore be summed up as follows: a Eucharistic offering of *prayers and a tithe* for the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Some of the bread taken from the still unconsecrated Eucharist is distributed to those present. Participants take the unconsecrated Eucharist in hand, and together pronounced the ancient consecration over it—“This is my body, broken.” The heretics who abstained from this were the Gnostics who cared neither for the physical needs of the poor, nor for the incarnation, and so refused to participate in the prayers and the Eucharistic tithe offering, unwilling as they were to take the bread in their hands and affirm the words of consecration spoken over it.

With that in mind, we now revisit Ignatius, including this time the preceding sentence that contextualizes his statement:

They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the

⁴⁷ Easton, 45.

⁴⁸ Easton, 35-37.

⁴⁹ *The Didascalia Apostolorum in English*, Margaret Dunlop Gibson, M.R.A.S., LL.D. translator, 1903, 53.

⁵⁰ *Didascalia*, 63.

thirsty. *They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins. (Smyrnæans, 6-7).*

The Roman apologist relies exclusively upon the italicized sentence, assuming incorrectly that “the Eucharist” from which the heretics abstain refers to the *consecrated* elements of the Supper. Thus, Ignatius’ words are taken to mean that the heretics did not acknowledge the “truth” of transubstantiation. Many a gullible Protestant has surrendered at this point, fearing to be counted among the heretics, and converted to Rome.

We owe it to Ignatius, however, to understand him in his native context, in the simplicity of his own sub-apostolic liturgy, in which “the Eucharist and prayer” from which the heretics abstained refers to the tithe for the widow, the orphan, and the oppressed, offered along with grateful prayers for created goods from the harvest. The offering occurred *prior to the consecration*, and—please note—the confession that the bread is Christ’s flesh which suffered, *is actually Ignatius’ reference to the consecration spoken after the Eucharist was distributed*: “This is My body, broken...”. Thus, Ignatius’ words are properly understood to mean that the heretics did not participate in the tithe offerings and prayer, because they had no regard for the poor, and refused to recite the consecration, because they had no regard for Christ’s body.

In sum, if we read Ignatius through the lens of a medieval liturgy, in which “the Eucharist” refers to the Supper, then he appears to affirm Rome’s precious doctrine of transubstantiation, and the heretics are they who refuse to affirm the “real presence.” But if we read him in his own context, in which his first reference to “the Eucharist and prayer” refers to the *tithe* offered with prayers of thanksgiving (*εὐχαριστίας*), and his second reference to “the Eucharist” refers to unconsecrated bread taken from the tithe and distributed for the Supper, then the heretics are they who refuse to provide for the poor and refuse as well to join in the corporate recitation of Jesus’ consecratory words.

This is consistent with the early liturgy⁵¹ and is essentially the same liturgy evangelical Protestants celebrate today: after the offertory, bread and wine are distributed, and taking them in our hands, we affirm corporately that Jesus had a real body that suffered, real blood that was shed.

The Misconstrued “Evidence” from Cyprian of Carthage (253 AD)

In his explanation of the ancient liturgy, Cyprian insisted, “the Lord’s passion is the sacrifice which we offer” (*Epistle 62, 17*). From a medieval perspective, Cyprian appears to advocate for a liturgical offering of the literal body and blood of Christ, but as noted above, in the same epistle, he also insisted that Christ’s disciples could not drink the blood of Christ until after the cross. That being the case, in Cyprian’s mind Jesus could not have had His own blood in the cup the night before he died. How then could Cyprian literally offer “the Lord’s passion” sacrificially while maintaining that Christ’s blood was not really in the cup?

The answer is found in Cyprian’s tendency to combine the concept of “offer” and “commemorate,” as seen in his letters.* In Cyprian’s mind, “to offer” the passion of a martyr or the good work of a brother was “to celebrate” or “to commemorate,” and memorialize the martyr’s death or the brother’s labors with a sacrificial offering. We “offer sacrifices for them” to “celebrate the[ir] passions...in the annual commemoration” (*Epistle 33, 3*). On the anniversaries of their deaths “we...celebrate their commemoration among the memorials of the martyrs...and there are celebrated here by us *oblations and sacrifices for their commemorations...*” (*Epistle 36, 2*). The martyr

⁵¹ Compare Irenæus in which *the bread becomes the Eucharist* when it is tithed (*Against Heresies IV.18.5*), and then *the Eucharist becomes the body and blood of Christ* when it is consecrated (*Against Heresies V.2.3*). See also Tertullian who chastises those who skipped the *sacrificial offerings of the Eucharist*, and only showed up for *the Supper* (*On Prayer, 19*).

* No doubt influenced by an ancient Latin rendering of Tobit 12:12, in which “I brought the remembrance of your prayer” (*ἐγὼ προσήγαγον τὸ μνημόσυνον τῆς προσευχῆς*) in Greek is rendered “I offered the remembrance of your prayer” (*ego obtuli memoriam orationis*) in Latin. See *Treatise 4, 33* (Migne, *PL*, 4:540) and *Treatise 7, 10* (Migne, *PL*, 4:588-589).

“which affords an example to the brotherhood both of courage and of faith, *ought to be offered up* when the brethren are present” (*Epistle 57*, 4). Out of gratitude for the generosity of their brethren, and “in return for their good work,” the needy were encouraged to “present them in your sacrifices and prayers,” and “to remember [them] in your supplications and prayers” (*Epistle 59*, 4). Contrarily, the brother who died in disobedience would not be so memorialized: “no offering should be made for him, nor any sacrifice be celebrated for his repose” (*Epistle 65*, 2).

All of these illustrate Cyprian’s propensity for conflating “offer” and “commemorate,” implying that he was “offering” in the sacrifices that which he was really only “commemorating” in them, be it the good works of the brethren, the passions of the martyrs on their anniversaries, or the crucifixion itself. The immediate context of his wording makes the very point: “we make mention of His passion in all sacrifices,” and “we offer the cup in commemoration of the Lord and of His passion” (*Epistle 62*, 17). Cyprian’s admonition in *Epistle 62*—“the Lord’s passion is the sacrifice which we offer”—is therefore understood in the same sense that the passion of the martyr is “offered up” in the sacrifices, or the labors of the saints are “presented” in the offerings. Cyprian had not offered “the Lord’s passion” at all. He had merely commemorated it, both in the Eucharist offerings before the consecration, and in the Supper that immediately followed it, just as Evangelicals do today.

The Redacted “Evidence” from Irenæus of Lyons (190 AD)

In a commonly accepted translation of Irenæus’ voluminous work, *Against Heresies*, he appears to affirm an ancient liturgical offering of “flesh and spirit” to the Father in the Eucharist because the bread takes on a heavenly reality at the consecration, ostensibly becoming the real body and blood of Christ:

For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation (*επικλυσιν*, *epiclusin*) of God, is no

longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity. (*Against Heresies*, 4, 18.5)

By these words Irenæus appears to describe a Eucharist offering in which the bread and wine consist of “two realities” at the invocation, attesting to “the union of the flesh and spirit,” and an offering of the literal body and blood of Christ to the Father. If Irenæus had actually written that, we suppose the Roman apologist might very well have proved the ancient origins of his medieval liturgy. But the words do not belong to Irenæus. What the translators have presented to us is a carefully crafted redaction, intended to create the impression that the medieval liturgy is much older than it really is. Again, a little history will serve us well.

The context of Irenæus’ statement on “the fellowship and union of the flesh and spirit” was not *the Supper*, but the *tithe*, an offering of created food to the Father. The heretics believed spiritual things and created things could not interact, and so denied both that Jesus had taken on a body and that His Father had created the world. But something had changed since Ignatius’ day, and the Gnostics were no longer abstaining “from the Eucharist and from prayer.” They were now imitating the Christian liturgy, offering created food in their tithes to the Father, something Irenæus found to be inconsistent and appalling (4, 18.4). His refutation focused entirely on Jesus’ interaction with created food. Jesus had thanked His Father for created food, proving that His Father had created it (3, 11.5). Christ’s hunger for created food proved “that He was a real and substantial man” before the crucifixion (5, 21.2), and His promise to eat created food again proved that He remained incarnate thereafter, “for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit” (5, 33.1). The Gnostics were therefore doubly inconsistent to offer created food in their tithes to the Father Who (they claimed) had not created it, in imitation of Jesus Who (they claimed) did not need it and would not have thanked Him for it. Christians, on the other hand, knew very well that they were offering to God the things He Himself had created, anticipating the

day when they would eat and drink again with His Son, thereby “announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and spirit” with their tithes (4, 18.5). It was not *the consecrated food of the Supper*, but rather the *unconsecrated food of the Eucharist*, that affirmed both truths and refuted the heretics. The student who reads Irenæus through a medieval lens will miss that subtlety and conclude, invalidly, that Irenæus affirmed the union of flesh and spirit, and therefore the real presence of Christ, by offering *consecrated food* to the Father.

The context of Irenæus’ statement on the “two realities” was also the *tithe offering*, not the *Supper*. He had spent the preceding chapter proving that the prophecy of an offering of “a pure sacrifice” by the Gentiles (*Malachi* 1:11) had been fulfilled in the tithe offerings of the Church (4, 17.5), and arrived at the obvious conclusion: “We are bound, therefore, to offer to God the first-fruits of His creation” (4, 18.1). The heart of Irenæus’ argument was the teaching of the prophet who said the Lord summons the tithe to Himself (*Malachi* 3:10). Because the first-fruits of the earth were set aside “for the Lord’s purposes” (4, 18.2), offered to Him on a heavenly altar (4, 18.6), they took on a heavenly reality the moment they were *summoned by Him*, becoming the tithe offering, which is to say, *becoming the Eucharist*. In truth, what Irenæus wrote was not that the bread took on a heavenly reality *when it received the invocation*, but rather that it took on a heavenly reality *when it received the summons*, that is, *when it became a tithe*: “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives *the summons* (*ἐκκλησιον, ecclusin*)⁵² of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly....”[§]

Until the 18th century, Irenæus’ original work had been lost to history, and *Against Heresies* was only available in a poor Latin transcription in which the bread was alleged to change when it received the

“*invocationem Dei*,”⁵³ that is, “the invocation of God.” In 1743, Irenæus’ Greek entered circulation and corrected that Latin transcription error. It would be a gross understatement to say the correction was unwelcome. Translators and scholars were confronted with the fact that Irenæus had not written “*ἐπικλυσιν του Θεού*” (invocation of God) *in reference to the Supper* as they had expected, but rather had written “*ἐκκλησιον του Θεού*” (summons of God) *in reference to the tithe*. A “real” change in the nature of the bread at the moment it becomes a *tithe offering* upended the medieval liturgy in which the bread is alleged to undergo a “real” change *at the consecration*. Scholars assured themselves that the difference was negligible and “*ἐπικλυσιν* (epiclusin)” must surely be what Irenæus had meant.⁵⁴

To bring Irenæus’ Greek back into conformity with the errant Latin, and thus back into conformity with the medieval liturgy, translators discretely substituted “*ἐπικλυσιν* (epiclusin),” or “invocation,” where Irenæus had written “*ἐκκλησιον* (ecclesin)” or “summons.”⁵⁵ That illicit redaction is now widely accepted as authoritative by the translators, profoundly changing the meaning of Irenæus’ simple words, “we offer to Him *His own*.” If Irenæus is read in his native context, the words mean precisely what we would expect: “we offer to Him His own [*created food*]” in the tithe, *prior to the consecration*. The earthly bread takes on a heavenly reality because it is set aside to feed the poor. However, if we accept the illicit redaction, Irenæus is made to say “we offer to Him His own [*Son*]” in the Supper, *after the consecration*, and the earthly bread takes on a heavenly reality because it becomes Christ’s body, backloading into Irenæus’ 2nd century tithe offering a medieval sacrifice of the “real presence” of the body and blood of Christ.

⁵³ *Divi Irenæi Græci Scriptoris*, Nicolai Gallasi, editor, 1700, 264.

⁵⁴ *Sancti Patris Irenæi Scripta Anecdota, Græca & Latine*, Grabe, Johannes Ernesti, editor (Hagæ Comitum et Francofurti ad Moenum, 1743, preface 13.

⁵⁵ See James Beaven, M.A., *An Account of the Life and Writings of S. Irenæus*, 1841, 184; Migne (1857), *PG*, 7: 1028n, where he substitutes “*ἐπικλυσιν*” as the “preferred” reading; Harvey, W. Wigan (1857), 205n-206, “*ἐπικλυσιν* is evidently the reading followed by the [Latin] translator, and is that which the sense requires.”

⁵² Migne, *PG*, 7:1028.

[§] See *A Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and West*, Volume 42, *Five Books of S. Irenæus Bishop of Lyons Against Heresies*, Rev. John Keble, M.A., translator, James Parker & Col., 1872, 361.

The effect of such an abusive treatment of Irenæus is profoundly damaging to history and to the apostolic liturgy of the early Church. Harnack's rejection of the figurative language of the ancient writers, for example, is founded upon that illicit redaction, from which he argues that the figurative, symbolic language of antiquity cannot possibly mean what it appears to say:

Accordingly, the distinction of a symbolic and realistic conception of the Supper is altogether to be rejected; ... The anti-Gnostic Fathers acknowledged that the consecrated food consisted of two things, an earthly (the elements) and a heavenly (the real body of Christ). They thus saw in the sacrament a guarantee of the union between spirit and flesh, which the gnostics denied.⁵⁶

It is evident that Harnack's objection to the nonliteral interpretation of the early liturgy is based entirely on a redacted version of Irenæus' Greek. Yet the unredacted original shows that Irenæus had the "real" change occurring *prior to the consecration* and knew absolutely nothing of the "real" presence of Christ in the Supper. It is sad to say, but the shameful centuries-long academic revision of Irenæus is illustrative of the ivory tower echo chamber in which the early liturgy is analyzed, digested, and transformed before it is regurgitated for our consumption. We have noted that Schaff relied on Nyssa (4th century) to reinterpret Irenæus (2nd century); Harvey used Basil (4th century) to overturn Justin (2nd century) and therewith to embrace the intentional translation error in Irenæus; Stone justified his own rejection of the ancient, symbolic, figurative language based on Harnack's conclusion;⁵⁷ and Kelly acknowledged that he, too, is "deeply indebted" to him.⁵⁸ And yet Harnack's conclusion rests entirely upon a lie.

Once the fog of academia has been cleared away, Irenæus acknowledges what is essentially a Protestant evangelical liturgy: the Eucharist (thanksgiving) tithe is offered "in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love," and "so also our bodies, when they

receive the Eucharist" as a meal with that same disposition, "are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity" (4, 18.4). The tithe of our first fruits is offered in faith, hope, and love, and then when the bread is consecrated, it is received with that same faith, hope, and love, with an eye toward the promised resurrection. There is no transubstantiation involved in the Supper Jesus instituted, neither in the Scriptures nor in Irenæus' rendition of it. And certainly, no liturgical sacrifice of the "real presence" of Christ to the Father.

Something to Consider

Given the centuries-long systematic attempt by scholars and translators to subordinate the ancient, Biblical, apostolic liturgy to the superstitious, medieval liturgy of Rome, Francis Chan can be forgiven for not knowing better. The deception for which he has fallen is as subtle as it is expansive. The myth of a universal belief in the "real" literal presence of Christ in the Supper—from the Apostolic era through the Reformation—has achieved legitimacy and notoriety solely on account of its frequent repetition by each successive generation of scholars. Its validity is maintained in an echo chamber located in the penthouse of an ivory tower that has long since lost touch with the original writings upon which it was allegedly based, and is substantiated with corrupted evidence tainted by the scholars themselves. They used that tainted evidence to corroborate their own conclusions and interpret the rest of the data that they have not yet tainted, convincing themselves and others that the ancient liturgy was really the same as the medieval monstrosity that prevailed in the dark ages. They revised, redacted and rewrote the ancient liturgy to make it comply with their preconceptions and conform it to an illicit, unbiblical medieval liturgy of Rome's imagination. By this means, for well over a thousand years, they have read both an offering and a meal of Christ's "real," "literal" body and blood back into the writings of the early Christians who insisted emphatically, to the contrary, that they were neither offering Christ's body and blood, nor "literally" eating it. The real evidence, long since discarded by its custodians, cries out to us from the base of the ivory tower, asking for another hearing, and that the case be remanded to a more reputable court. For three

⁵⁶ Harnack, 145.

⁵⁷ Stone, 30.

⁵⁸ Kelly, vi.

hundred years the early writers insisted, repeatedly, that they received in the Supper the body and blood of Christ by faith, digesting with their minds what the symbols suggested to their senses. For a millennium, the obvious idolatry of kneeling before the “real presence” in the elements had not even entered their minds. The bread and wine they consecrated and consumed with their believing brethren as they proclaimed “the Lord’s death till he come” (*I Corinthians* 11:26), were but symbols, figures, types, metaphors, enigmas, similitudes, antitypes, allegories, icons, images or likenesses of the real body and blood of Christ, received in the heart by faith, not with the mouth. And that, dear Francis, is “something to consider.”

Brief Book Reviews by Thomas W. Juodaitis
Cruising Through Collapse: a Family’s Story of Survival by Roy Timpe, 2020, 232 pages, self-published, available through Amazon.

This novel by Roy Timpe who has over thirty years of experience sailing and cruising boats in the Chesapeake Bay, the Intercoastal Waterways, and the Bahamas draws on the author’s experience as he sets the novel in a post-collapse (both economic and societal) world. The main characters in the novel are the Newman family – Harold, a pharmaceutical process engineer, his wife Gwen, and their son Allan and daughter Wendy.

As the novel opens, Harold is checking his fish traps in tidal flats in one of the cays in the Bahamas, when he sees another man destroying his traps. “Harold’s family depended upon the conch and fish gathered off this tidal flat and others like it for their survival. He called to the man, ‘Hey! Stop that! Stop! Stop now!’” The man shouts back in a foreign language and begins to approach Harold, and as he comes closer pulls out a knife. In this ordeal, Harold kills the man. Was it self-defense?

As the novel progresses, the reader learns that there have been electro-magnetic pulses, which have taken out the power grid and led to economic collapse, which then led to societal collapse, leaving people to fend for themselves. Harold and his family had been sailing on their 44-foot boat the *E. Willers* before the event, having prepared for collapse. Before leaving the Bahamas, they pick up a passenger, Montez, who had been left to harvest

Cascarilla bark. Montez happens to have a radio that has survived the EMP, and they stumble upon a broadcast of a sermon from the French Huguenot Church out of Charleston, South Carolina by Pastor Dabs.

It turns out that the people in Charleston were starting to rebuild some sort of society based upon Scriptural principles, encouraged and led by Pastor Dabs, whose name is D’Aubigne, and he is related to the church historian of the Reformation. Further, he not only broadcasts his sermons to whomever can receive the signals, but he also teaches about Biblical principles of government and economy. The Newmans and their friend Montez decide to set sail for Charleston.

What is interesting about this novel is that the author discusses many Biblical issues throughout, which may be a way to get others to think – others that won’t read theology or philosophy. Mr. Timpe discusses such ideas as the Gospel (imputed righteousness in justification), the doctrine of the lesser magistrates, and Biblical epistemology, just to name a few. Furthermore, it works out in fiction – post-apocalyptic fiction at that – what a family may go through trying to live by Scriptural principles. And as the author wrote to me, “I hope that people who would not read an essay or *Trinity Review* newsletter may read a fiction story and get exposed to these ideas.”

The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates: A Proper Resistance to Tyranny and a Repudiation of Unlimited Obedience to Civil Government by Matthew J. Trewella, 2013, 115 pages, available at DefyTyrants.com.

This is a good primer on the doctrine of the lesser magistrate and how it can be applied. Though written in 2013, it is certainly apropos for today. The chapters are brief but to the point with plenty of references. Chapters include: “Introduction,” “The Doctrine Defined,” “Rooted in Interposition,” “All Authority is Delegated,” “The Duty of Lesser Magistrates,” “The Objective Standard for Law,” “The Rule of Law and the Lesser Magistrates,” “Magdeburg and the Lesser Magistrates,” “John Knox, Holy Scripture, and the Lesser Magistrates,” “When Lesser Magistrates Go Rogue,” “The Response of the Tyrannical Higher Magistrate,” “The Role of the People,” and “The Lesser

Magistrate Doctrine in Our Day.” There are five Appendices: “An Examination of Romans 13 (Three Convincing Proofs that Romans 13 Does NOT Teach Unlimited Obedience to the Civil Government),” “The Laws of a Nation Should Mirror the Law and Justice of God,” “The Police Officer as Lesser Magistrate,” “The Interposition of the Military: Sodomy, a Rogue Congress, and the Rule of Law,” and “A Biblical Response to Those who say We Should Disarm; to Those who Teach Pacifism; to Those who Think the Scriptures have Nothing to say about Arms.” Also included are a Summary of the Doctrine, a Bibliography, and a Further Reading section. Trewella does an excellent job of defining terms and using primary sources.

Here is an excellent excerpt from “The Rule of Law and the Lesser Magistrate”:

The duty to resist unjust law is the product of Christian thought. Our loyalty is to Christ first – not man, not the State. So when the civil government makes unjust or immoral laws or policies, we obey Christ, not the State. Christianity acts as a check to tyranny. The whole of society should be thankful for the preservation of liberty that Christianity engenders. Christians are the best of citizens. We obey the State and are productive in commerce. We disobey the State only when they make unjust or immoral law. We have a salvific affect upon society as a whole. ...

When the lesser magistrates are accused of insubordination or anarchy because they interpose against bad law, the counterfeit man-made “rule of law” will be heralded by the Statists. They will sing and herald the mantra – “we must obey the rule of law!” But if the rule of law itself is unjust and immoral, then what virtue is there in supporting it? To do so is to stand the true rule of law on its head.

Men should not respect “the rule of law” just because “it’s the rule of law,” rather we respect it because as Blackstone said – it does not “*contradict*” the law of God. This is why Western Civilization respected the rule of law for nearly 1500 years, precisely because it was based upon the law of God. (28-29, emphasis original)

From “Magdeburg and the Lesser Magistrates” quoting the *Magdeburg Confession (1550)*, translated by Matthew Colvin, Createspace Publishing, 2012, 57:

The Magistrate is an ordinance of God for the honor to good works, and a terror to evil works (Romans 13). Therefore when he begins to be a terror to good works and honor to evil, there is no longer in him, because he does thus, the ordinance of God, but the ordinance of the devil. And he who resists such works, does not resist the ordinance of God, but the ordinance of the devil.

And in Trewella’s commentary he writes, “In their arguments, the pastors declare the idea of unlimited obedience to the State as ‘*an invention of the devil*’ (68)” (34, emphasis original).

In Trewella’s concluding chapter, “The Lesser Magistrate Doctrine in Our Day,” he writes, “The American Church and the American people need to repent for having spurned the law of God. If we do not, we will one day see what a taskmaster the Statists or Islamists are, and rue the day we threw off His rule. If the lesser magistrates do not stand against the tyranny and injustice of this Federal beast, America is doomed” (69). Very sobering words for very sobering times.

The Hedonism and Homosexuality of John Piper and Sam Allberry, Enoch Burke, 2020, 165 pages, Burke Publishing. Chapters include: “Introduction,” “Before We Begin: Do Words Matter?” Then two chapters devoted to John Piper – “John Piper: Preaching Mysticism, Not Christ” and “Preaching Christ, Not Mysticism.” Next are two chapters on Sam Allberry – “Sam Allberry: Turning Grace Into Lasciviousness” and “Rescuing Grace From Lasciviousness.” Finally, a section of application and a conclusion – “Holiness Not Hedonism,” “Taking a Look at Ourselves,” and “Conclusion: Seven Things to Do to Save Yourself.” There are Endnotes and an Index.

The author, a language and history teacher at the middle school level (second-level) for over 10 years lives in Castlebar, Ireland, has a Bachelor of Theological Studies (TNARS), a BA in History and Politics, and a Masters in Education (NUI Galway). Burke’s book is endorsed by ES William, author of *The New Calvinists*, an elder at Metropolitan Tabernacle (“Spurgeon’s Church”) in London.

What I appreciate about Mr. Burke’s book is that he not only points out the errors of Piper and Allberry, but he also positively gives the Scriptural truth – as you may see from the titles of the chapters

listed above. I also especially appreciated his first chapter, “Before We Begin: Do Words Matter?” demonstrating that, Yes, they do, and he shows the reader from the Scriptures. Those of us familiar with the work of The Trinity Foundation will appreciate this emphasis upon the importance of words (ideas), and Gordon Clark’s emphasis on definition – “define or discard!” An excerpt from the last section of that chapter:

Words Matter

Words do matter. To depart from the language of the Scripture is to depart from the historic doctrine of the Reformers and the authority of Scripture. One’s use of words reveals one’s respect, or lack thereof, for the only infallible source of truth: every word of God (Mt. 4:4). Piper’s introduction of a new term into the church, and a mystical and sensual one at that, signifies the rejection of the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture. No longer does the Christian have enough in the Bible to teach him how God would have him live: instead he needs a copy of *Desiring God*. In the company of men such as C. S. Lewis, Scripture becomes merely a means to an end, with the end being a mystical pursuit of emotion which bears no resemblance to the Christianity of the Bible (Gal. 1:6-7).

The prophet Isaiah, speaking during a time of consternation and upheaval in the land of Israel, faced the same fantasy-peddlers that we do today: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?” (Isaiah 8:19a). Isaiah rejected the mysticism proffered to him because he has something better: the sure words of the living God. To him, indulgence in witchcraft and wizardry was an absurdity to be shunned, as well as a portent of deep darkness: “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20). Words are important. That one’s words accord with God’s words is the only real indication of light in the soul. If one’s words do not accord with God’s words, Scripture itself testifies that only perpetual darkness awaits the soul (Isa. 8:22b). (28-29)

I did not know much about Sam Allberry, a same-sex attracted Anglican, promoted heavily by Piper and others in the Gospel Coalition, so this was eye-opening for me. In Burke’s chapter on Allberry, “Turning Grace Into Lasciviousness,” he writes,

Rather, this attitude which Allberry displays toward this sin [sodomy / homosexuality] in his book [*Is God Anti-Gay?*] is somewhat trivial. This is seen, for example, in his chapter on “Homosexuality and the Christian”: “All of us experience fallen sexual desires,...it is not un-Christian to experience same-sex attraction any more than it is un-Christian to get sick” (34). At best, this is a gravely misleading statement on the part of Allberry, considering the judgment meted out on sodomy in the Scripture. Homosexuality, in all its forms, is to be shunned by the believer and Scripture is clear that evil desires constitute wickedness (Pr. 21:10). At worst, Allberry’s comment is a repudiation of the Christian doctrine of sin. (79)