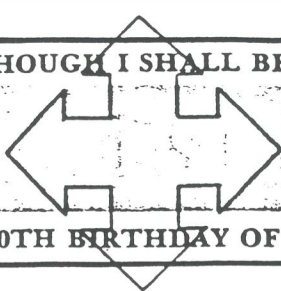


I RESPOND ALTHOUGH I SHALL BE CHANGED

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A CONFERENCE MARKING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY

THE GOSPELS AS THE LIPS OF JESUS

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"The Lips of Jesus"

Introduction

Rosenstock-Huessy visualized the Gospels serving the church as the lips of Jesus. In order for these fundamental documents of Christian faith to function as they should in the church, it was necessary for them to be properly disposed one to the other. Rosenstock-Huessy was well enough acquainted with the history of nineteenth century German academic history to know that something happened during the nineteenth century that had served to distort the twentieth century voice of Jesus. To be specific, Rosenstock-Huessy recognized that a certain "assured result" of nineteenth century German Protestant Gospel criticism, namely the primacy of the Gospel of Mark, had in fact never been established, and that this mistaken reversal of the traditional relationship between the Gospels had far reaching consequences. This placed Rosenstock-Huessy fundamentally at odds with the established world of theological scholarship, since it was inconceivable to his theological colleagues that most German New Testament scholars could be mistaken on such a fundamental point, i.e. on their assumption of Marcan primacy.

The theory of Marcan primacy has led to the "scientific" practice of applying the text of the Gospel of Matthew, the foundational Gospel of the Christian church, to the text of the presumed "primal" text of Mark. The consequent twist of Jesus' lips that followed from this paradigm shift profoundly diminished the Jewish character of his message and helped pave the way for German Christianity in the Third Reich. Moreover, interest in

the book of Isaiah (in which book Rosenstock-Huessy could see the whole of Christian faith prefigured), was discounted as a later obsession of the Apostles, rather than a beginning point for understanding Jesus' own reading of the Law and the Prophets.

But in 1964, with the publication of The Synoptic Problem, A Critical Analysis by William Farmer, Rosenstock-Huessy's insight concerning the misplaced confidence in Marcan primacy received support from an unexpected quarter--Dallas, Texas, where the year before John F. Kennedy had been assassinated. Rosenstock-Huessy contacted his former colleague at Dartmouth College, Klaus Penzel, who had recently moved to Southern Methodist University, where Farmer was teaching. This led to a meeting between Rosenstock-Huessy and Farmer in Heidelberg at the von Moltke residence in the spring of 1965, ^h~~w~~^kere arrangements were made for Rosenstock-Huessy to travel to Göttingen for a small-scale high-level conference with some German and American professors. Out of this small beginning has come a series of international Gospel conferences: Pittsburgh 1970, Münster 1976, San Antonio 1977, Cambridge 1979, Tübingen 1982, Ampleforth 1982 and 1983, Jerusalem 1984, Atlanta 1986, with further conferences scheduled for Cambridge in 1988, Dublin 1989, Dallas 1989, and Milan 1990, all indebted to and giving expression to the insight and spirit of Rosenstock-Huessy.

In 1977 Rosenstock-Huessy's recognition that Marcan primacy was never established in the nineteenth century received even more dramatic confirmation in a book published by the venerable house of Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht: Geschichte und Kritik der markus Hypothese by Hans-Herbert Stöldt (Eng. translation by Donald L. Niewyk, History and Criticism of the Marcan

Hypothesis, Mercer University Press and T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1980).

In 1987 the late Professor Bo Reicke of Basel University published his study of "Synoptic Theories Advanced During the Consolidation of Germany, 1830-1870," in which he traced the history of the idea of Marcan primacy from David F. Strauss to Heinrich J. Holtzmann, noting that the appointment of the young Holtzmann to the prestigious chair of New Testament at the reconstituted University of Strasbourg gave his scholarly career (and thus the Marcan hypothesis) an important boost ["From Strauss to Holtzmann and Meijboom: Synoptic Theories Advanced During the Consolidation of Germany, 1830-1870," Novum Testamentum XXIX, 1 (1987) p. 18]. Meanwhile, Hans-Herbert Stóldt in 1977 had analyzed Holtzmann's influential book of 1863, and had demonstrated its scientific weakness. Since this had been done independently as early as 1866 by the Dutch scholar, Hugo Meijboom, well before Holtzmann's appointment to the chair at Strasbourg, it remains a mystery how and why this appointment was made. This leads us to focus on the decade in which this happened, 1870-1880, the era of the Kulturkampf, to see whether it is possible to discover how what was still only a popular "scientific" hypothesis in 1870 was soon transformed into a virtual Protestant dogma.

Part I

By Kulturkampf is meant that conflict which dominated relations between Germany and Rome during the decade of the eighteen seventies. This conflict pitted the Iron Chancellor of the German Empire Prince Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck-Schoenhausen against Pius IX, the leader of the Roman Catholic church. The issue was an age old question of Church and State.

Constantine, the first Christian emperor, had simply announced to bishops of the Church that he had received a revelation from God that he was to exercise the office of bishop on all matters outside the Church, just as they were to exercise jurisdiction on all matters internal to the life of the Church.

Therefore it has always been tempting for the head of any government in Christendom to presuppose as a legal precedent this Constantinian right of a Christian ruler to exercise sovereignty over Christian subjects.

Kaiser Wilhelm was no exception and Bismarck was his appointed minister. Pius IX, on the other hand, was the inheritor of an ecclesiastical tradition according to which, as the head of the Roman Catholic church, he was responsible for every faithful Roman Catholic, including those who were German citizens.

At issue was whether Roman Catholics in Germany in a showdown were to obey the Pope or the Iron Chancellor. From the Pope's point of view it was a matter of whether these Catholics were going to obey man or God, he being God's appointed representative by way of Christ who had been sent by God. Christ in turn sent Peter whose infallible successor he (Pius IX) was. From Bismarck's point of view it was more a matter of whether these German citizens were to be subject to the laws promulgated by the elected representatives of the German nation, he controlling the legislative process by means of his influence over a Protestant majority within the dominant Prussian parliament.

* The conflict broke out in public life when Dr. Wollmann, a Roman Catholic instructor of Religion in the gymnasium at Braunsberg in East

Prussia, having refused to signify his assent to the Vatican decrees of 1870 on the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope, was excommunicated by Bishop Kremenz of Ermeland and deprived of his right of giving instruction in the doctrines of the Catholic faith.¹ It helps to know that although Dr. Wollman was giving instruction on the doctrine of the Catholic faith to Roman Catholics, he in fact, in accordance with a long-standing arrangement, had been appointed to his teaching position by the Prussian government, and his salary was paid by the State. Ordinarily this arrangement worked well, since such appointments were made in consultation with local church authorities. The State in turn assumed an understanding with authorities in Rome that no local bishop would dismiss a government appointee without due cause.

And here we come to the crux of the matter. What was there in this situation that resulted in a breakdown in a system that had worked so well for so long in maintaining an excellent relationship between a Prussian state committed to religious toleration, and its Roman Catholic minority?

The crux of the problem was the way the decrees that had been issued at the Vatican Council in the preceding year were to be interpreted and implemented not only in Germany where Bismarck could to a considerable degree control the situation through Protestant dominated Prussia, but in France and Austria, whose governments were ever vulnerable to pressure from ultramontane forces within their Catholic majorities.

It was among the conservative ultramontane elements in French and Austrian society with their reaction against the revolutionary developments arising out of the enlightenment now embodied in the liberal forces behind

Bismarck, that the Jesuits found support and encouragement for their plans to persuade the Pope to call the Vatican Council and issue the decrees on papal infallibility. The aim was to strengthen the papacy as the only viable hope for rallying a conservative European defense against the rising and ruinous tide of rationalism and social unrest. Pius IX sincerely believed that he was infallible. He thus played out his role in good conscience and with verve.

Meanwhile, in response to Dr. Wollmann's excommunication, the Prussian minister von Mühler sent a rescript to Bishop Kremenetz, demanding that Catholic students in the school should continue to receive religious instructions from Wollmann. The Bishop protested. Mühler issued an ordinance stating that "in the eyes of the state, the excommunicated teacher remained a member of the Catholic Church."² The Prussian bishops collectively sent an 'immediate' remonstrance to the Emperor against "the interference of the State in the Church's internal sphere of faith and right."³ The German sovereign communicated to Pius IX that "the Prussian government had acted in strict accordance with the existing law" as hitherto approved by the Pope.⁴ A high ranking government official issued a declaration that "the state was under no obligation to treat the adherents of the unchanged Catholic Church as seceders from it." This paved the way for eventual state recognition of property rights and legal status for that portion of the Catholic clergy which refused to assent to the Vatican decrees and organized itself accordingly (i.e. Old Catholics).

In August, the Provinzial-Correspondenz, the organ through which the government was in the habit of elucidating its views for the benefit of the public,

explained that no bishop could be allowed to force teachers subject to state control to give their assent to a dogma imperilling the relations between the State and the Church of Rome.⁵

If we ask: "How could the decrees of the Vatican Council imperil the relations between Germany and the Church of Rome?" the answer is clear. Germany was a nation in which Protestant principles were dominant. These decrees were anti-Protestant to the core! The whole Protestant Reformation had been carried out in opposition to any such dogmas.

The decrees had been promulgated by the Pope in St. Peter's on July 18, 1870. One month later, on August 15, the Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung in Augsburg delivered this judgment:

The monstrosity has taken place. The paramount party in the Church (i.e. the Roman Catholic Church) has committed the crime of declaring to be a heresy the oldest principle of the Catholic faith that revealed truth is made known only by the continuous consent of all Churches, and, on the other hand, has declared as a dogma by the mouth of the unhappy Pius IX the crazy opinion of mere human origin that the Pope by himself is infallible. It has ventured to threaten with excommunication from the Church all those who may decline to agree to this overbearing outrage. It was not a formally valid resolution of the Council which delivered this verdict. It was merely a fag-end of the Vatican gathering which, [on account of the scornful contempt dealt out by the court and that faction to the independent members, on account of its departure from all rules of ecumenical Councils in order to thwart free deliberation, [and] on account of official calumination of the minority,] had long forfeited the reputation of an ecumenical Council, or in truth had never won it. This fag-end of a sickly corporate body has attempted to turn the Church upside down by the overthrow of its constitution, and Pius IX has lent himself to confirm this criminal undertaking.⁶

From as early as 1830 onwards the unification of Germany had required a modus vivendi between Protestants and Catholics. In response to this

ideological need of German society for change and accomodation, German liberalism had carefully worked its will within responsive circles in both communions.

Lillian Parker Wallace in her work entitled The Papacy and European Diplomacy, 1869-1878⁷ writes that in the period before July 18, 1870:

The leading German churchmen had been building up a powerful Catholic party which (1) aimed at harmony with the world of science, (2) resented Jesuit influence over the Pope, and (3) strongly opposed further centralization of power in Papal hands.⁸

Wallace goes on to note that "the ambitions of this group were clearly grasped and set forth by" the papal nuncio in Munich, Meglia, who wrote to Cardinal Caterini on February 22, 1868 as follows:

Almost all . . . pride themselves on forming what they call the great party of German savants. Their aspirations consist in general of encouraging and pursuing to their furtherest limits scientific progress, and that with liberty, complete independence, maintaining dogma intact but sacrificing certain doctrines which are associated with it and have not been defined by the Church; their aspirations also consist of laying aside old-fashioned methods of scholasticism, these antiquities of the Middle Ages, as they call them, which are incompatible with modern progress; most important, their aspirations consist of rendering the scientific research of Catholicism as similar as possible to the scientific research of Protestantism, in order to demonstrate the superiority of Catholic theology over Protestant theology; finally, their aspirations include giving to biblical, philological and historical studies a very large place, leaving only a very small place for true and positive theology. This party is dominated by pride. It resents the rein of authority which according to its views hinders progress. It takes little account of the decisions of the Roman congregations; it esteems highly the university system of 'learned' Germany and prefers it to the seminaries of foreign lands; it regards with an eye of pity, if not scorn, the degree of scientific culture possessed by other countries, and considers theological

science in the seminaries of Italy, France, and other nations as in a state of infancy; thus it is explained, also, why this party never seems favorable to the founding of scientific institutions depending on the authority of the bishops, and prefers subordination to the civil government, in order to preserve a greater liberality in institution.⁹

It is very important to note that this liberal Catholic party aspired to render the scientific research of Catholicism as similar as possible to the scientific research of Protestantism. This clearly included biblical and historical studies, as these studies were carried out within the German universities by way of contrast to the way in which theological science was pursued in foreign seminaries like those of Italy and France. The fact that Germany's state controlled universities were financially dependent upon the civil government and subject to its influence appeared to these liberal Catholics to pose no threat. In fact it appeared to them to offer scholars greater liberty.

If we take this ecclesiastical document and subject it to sociological analysis we find that it affords striking confirmation of the view that these liberal Catholics, whatever their intentions, were profoundly implicated in facilitating the subsequent assimilation of the German Catholic intelligentsia within a predominantly Protestant German Empire.

To be sure, in order for this assimilation to take place there needed to be an ideologically compatible liberal Protestant majority equally willing to abide by the modus vivendi which would emerge out of this kind of cultural and intellectual accomodation.

Before we explain the sociological function of German liberalism in greater detail, let this one point be noted with great care: It is the

German university system and more precisely German science or Deutsche Wissenschaft that is to provide the decisive final court of appeal in the ideological struggle for the salvation of the German nation.

Part II

It should be self evident to any student of literature that the ideological needs of society inevitably affect the way literature of that society is interpreted.

However, in the established world of Biblical Scholarship this is not always the case. To be quite specific, there is today an identifiable reluctance to recognize the way in which the ideological needs of nineteenth century German society have influenced the way in which the Bible in both our theological schools and our universities was and continues to be interpreted. The reasons for this reluctance require careful exploration.

We may begin by asking: "What were some of the ideological needs of nineteenth century German society that have affected literary interpretation of the Bible?" There was, for example, the need to be up-to-date in relation to science. In order for Biblical Faith to be credible it was necessary for it to be defended on scientific grounds. In the nineteenth century, one science that provided some ruling models was that of biology. Since life appeared to develop from its simpler forms into ever more complicated forms, it became credible to think of literary forms as developing from the simple to the complex. Thus, for the Old Testament, relatively early J and E were united in various combinations with more developed D and P to make up the even more complex texts of the books of the Pentateuch.

For the New Testament, the more simple Mark and "Q" were combined to make up the more developed Gospels, Matthew, Luke.

Parables of Jesus like that of the leaven in the loaf and that of the Mustard seed were cited as evidence that Jesus was ahead of his time in that he thought in scientific terms, i.e., in the terms of growth. In fact these parables became known as the "parables of growth."

This "scientific" approach to the Bible resulted in the attempt to distinguish the earlier from the later levels of the tradition. This made possible chronological rearrangements of the fragmented parts of the Bible which could then be reworked into "scientific" histories of Israel on the one hand and "scientific" histories of the early Church on the other. In this way the grand, richly diverse, yet unified story of the Bible, from creation in the book of Genesis to the new heaven and the new earth and the speedy triumph of Christ's Kingdom in the Book of Revelation, was fragmented. This is not only true for the Bible as a whole, but also for individual books. We can test how this has affected the interpretation of a particular piece of literature by considering the Gospel of Matthew. There is a story in this Gospel which, following the canonical model of the Servant in Isaiah 53, begins with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea and runs continuously to his death in Jerusalem and his resurrection appearances in Jerusalem and Galilee. It all hangs together in the form of a beautiful and powerful narrative. But by the end of the nineteenth century this Gospel had been hopelessly dissected into an incomprehensible set of separate sources. Some parts came from a source called "Q;" other parts came from Mark or a source called "Ur Markus;" still other parts came

from other putative sources. As a consequence the canonical character of this book is radically modified.

Every commentary or book about Matthew written out of a commitment to this nineteenth century model (which by now has assumed an anti-canonical function) borders on being unintelligible. Try as they will, the very best scholars are unable to recreate any meaningful story or discover any convincing authorial purpose out of a study of these separate parts, when arranged according to what on this model is believed to be earlier and what is believed to be later. This is no less true for redaction critics than it is for the older Form and Source critics. The Gospel which was and remains foundational for the Christian Church has become, at the hands of all who rely on this German critical tradition, largely incomprehensible. As a consequence, Matthew, for the modern church, and for most European oriented theologians, has lost a great deal of its religious authority and much of its literary and aesthetic value.

For our purposes, however, it is the political side of the ideological question that is of paramount importance. Here we all have a great deal to learn.

For example, Bismarck managed to exclude Roman Catholic Austria from the ever expanding Prussian State. This means, as we know, that the Second German Reich in reality became a Protestant dominated Empire with a Protestant Kaiser. However, while nineteenth century Germany was predominantly Protestant we must never forget that it contained a very significant Catholic minority. At the same time, while it was predominantly Christian it contained a relatively small but influential Jewish minority.

Among the powerful ideological needs of nineteenth century Germany was not only that of a modus vivendi between the Protestant majority and a Catholic minority, but also between a Christian majority and a Jewish minority. Protestants, Catholics and Jews, following the Enlightenment, were, by 1869-70, all recognized as citizens of the Second Reich. These culturally diverse German citizens had to accommodate their inherited differences and work together if the German Empire was to thrive and to attain its ascending role in world politics.

Nineteenth century Biblical criticism served German society well in enabling it to meet these pressing ideological needs. The State supported universities facilitated the inevitable process of intellectual accommodation, and/or assimilation. From a post-Holocaust vantage point it is shocking how far Judaism was willing to go in facilitating the possibilities for a German Jew to become a "better" German. Not only were the dietary laws given up, some synagogues were willing to move their main worship service to Sunday. Enlightenment Biblical criticism which became state supported Biblical scholarship smoothed the way for this accommodation.

On the majority side, sacrifices made by Christians were less radical. However, all passages in Scripture which had fed Christian anti-semitism throughout the middle-ages needed to be discountable. This meant not only that the terrible words in Matthew "let his blood be upon our heads," needed to be relativized; so also did the stinging condemnations of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. This was best achieved by denying the foundational role of Matthew in the constitution of the Church, and by giving this foundational role over to earlier hypothetical sources which

were sanitized and purified as much as possible from anti-Jewish polemic. The two chief results of this process were Proto-Mark and the logia source later called "Q."

The breaking up of the text of Matthew into many parts with the earliest and most reliable coming from Mark and "Q," and the later and less certain (which tended to include material that was troublesome) coming from the church or from the time and hand of the Evangelist, made it possible for liberal theologians to pick and choose with a clear conscience as they composed "historical" reconstructions of Jesus serviceable for the time, i.e., serviceable for liberal Germans--Jews and Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike. Ideally Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi of the liberal school of Hillel. But he could also be a Jewish prophet. Both liberal Jews and liberal Christians could experience relief and joy over this deconstructive yet socially and nationally unifying achievement made possible by German Wissenschaft.

However, it was just this gentle liberal historical Jewish teacher or eschatological prophet--whichever the case might be--that proved inadequate as a basis for theology for disillusioned post-World War I liberal Christians in Germany when they tried to make sense out of the devastating defeat of their imperial forces. The defeated German people needed a theology with a strong doctrine of sin. In Germany, this led to Pauline dominated Dialectical theology with its rejection of the "historical" Jesus, and, in this country, eventually to Pauline dominated Neo-orthodoxy.

State-initiated pressure on German Catholics to accommodate and/or assimilate to the Protestant majority (and this is what the Kulturkampf was

all about) was at first successfully resisted by the Vatican. But eventually, through the state supported universities of Germany, aided by British and American universities which followed the lead of German scholarship, German Wissenschaft triumphed over Church Tradition, over "revelation," over "the "oracular." Sociologically speaking, within Germany, the critical tradition that developed in and was fostered by these State Universities was one that went a long way toward serving the ideological need for Catholics, Protestants and Jews to accommodate their differences, in the interests of a unified and purposeful Germany.

The societies of every country which faced essentially these same ideological needs readily embraced this liberal Protestant German criticism. These included those of England, Scotland, Holland, Scandinavia, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The most talented and aspiring young Biblical scholars from these countries flocked to the German universities.

But societies in which these particular ideological needs did not exist turned a deaf ear to this critical tradition. These included those of Ireland, Austria, Greece, France, Italy, Ethiopia, Spain, Portugal and all Latin American countries. The presence of students from these societies in the lecture halls of the theological faculties, whether Protestant or Catholic, of the universities of Berlin, Göttingen, Marburg, Tübingen, Münster and Strassburg, was negligible.

Part III

With this survey of the general sociological aspects of our topic in view, let us return to the struggles between Bismarck and Pius IX. Each of these titans lived out of and represented his own world of discourse. That

of Pius IX was Catholic. That of Bismarck was Protestant. At issue between these two worlds is the figure of the Apostle Peter, and how the Pope is to be understood in relationship to Peter.

*f. Treaty of
Stephano*

We must bear in mind that the protagonists from these two different worlds of discourse are playing out their respective roles within a larger world of discourse within which both sides have committed themselves to a serious measure of religious toleration. There literally must not be bloodshed over this issue. Arrests, trials, banishments or imprisonments--not torture or capital punishment--these are the forms of persecution to be suffered. It is against this modern background of religious tolerance that measures taken by Bismarck to break down Catholic resistance appear so shocking. "In 1876 every Prussian Bishop was in prison or had left the country."¹⁰ It is estimated that at one time, at the height of the controversy, as many as 989 parishes were without priests.

One source numbered imprisonments at 225.¹¹

In February of 1875 the newspaper Frankfurter Zeitung published a list of fines, arrests, and other acts of enforcement, enumerating the arrests of 241 priests, 136 editors, 210 Center Catholic party members (in addition to those included in the first two categories) and 55 other persons; 20 confiscations of newspapers; 74 house searches; 103 expulsions and internments; and 55 dissolutions of meetings and organizations.¹²

But how and when were these repressive measures first initiated? As early as May of 1871, Bismarck had told the Prussian legislators that

. . . the Prussian Cabinet is determined to take measures which shall henceforth render it impossible for Prussians who are priests of the Roman Catholic Church to assert with impunity that they will be guided by canon rather than by Prussian law [Bishop Kremenz of Ermeland had so expressed himself] . . . We shall maintain the legislative

power of the state against all comers.¹³

On June 19 Bismarck told a government official that "he proposed to move vigorously against the clericals . . ." Wallace conjectures that this decision which contemporaries said came so quickly it seemed like an inspiration, and could be fixed almost to the day and hour, was possibly "the result of a report from Rome that the papacy was assuming an anti-German attitude."¹⁴

Three days later, on June 22, 1871, an article appeared in the Neue Preussische Zeitung which declared that the Jesuits, who had exhausted every resource to prevent the unification of Germany, were responsible for the formation of the Center Party [i.e. the Catholic Party]. Although the Papal See, it went on, had at first greeted the establishment of the German Empire with approbation, their action had belied their words. The government of Germany would never consent "to strengthen a party whose sole aim was to resurrect the powers of the papacy . . ." This article, in Wallace's view, was the clarion call to arms in the Kulturkampf.¹⁵

On June 24 the periodical Germania carried an article in which science and religion were juxtaposed as hopelessly at odds and concluded that an "ultra montane, that is a Catholic, cannot love his German fatherland; he is a stranger in his own house."¹⁶ Clearly such a person's influence in society, in the press, and in politics was to be curtailed. The conflict escalated during the ensuing months.

On May 14, 1872 the question of what to do about the Jesuits was brought up in the German Reichstag. A bill was introduced calling for their expulsion from Germany. Speeches were heated and the supporters of the bill

proved in the end to be unstoppable. One evening in the theater, following a day of debate, songs were performed about the Jesuits, the Pope, and Infallibility.¹⁷ The decrees of 1870 were certainly at issue in the minds of those who wanted to expell the Jesuits.

On June 24, after word reached Pius IX about the results of the debates in the German Reichstag, he had the opportunity to address the German reading club in Rome. While he could agree that God wants citizens to obey and respect magistrates, God also wants them to speak the truth and fight error.

* We find ourselves under [a] persecution [that has been] prepared for a long time, but [is] now making itself felt. It is the minister of a powerful government who after great success on the battlefield [victories over Austria and France] has placed himself at the head of this persecution. I have let him know (it is not a secret, the whole world may know) that triumph without moderation cannot last, that a triumph which combats truth and the Church is the greatest madness. Who knows if soon a little stone may be detached from the height to break the foot of the colossus? . . . If God wills that other persecutions follow, the Church is not afraid. On the contrary! In the persecution it will be purified, strengthened, and surrounded with new beauty."¹⁸

The Pope's remarks evoked a predictable reaction. Bismarck was understandably displeased. Everyone seemed to realize that the reference to "the stone and the colossus" was to the German Empire and particularly to Bismarck himself. The Jesuits were banned on July 4, and the Kulturkampf was now well underway.¹⁹

The 'first May laws,' as they came to be known, were introduced into the Prussian legislature on January 9, 1873. They have been well summarized in the Cambridge Historical Series: Germany 1815-1890 as follows:

Clerical offices could only be confirmed on cadidates of

German birth, who, after passing the school-leaving examination, had studied theology for three years in a German university, and had received a sound scientific training tested by the State. Certain exceptions notwithstanding, this rule was manifestly aimed at theological seminaries on whose behalf an outcry at once arose. Still more contentious . . . was the subjection of the appointment of candidates duly trained to the veto of the State . . . Appointments made without the approval of the State were null and void; and the making of such appointments or the leaving open of clerical offices beyond the period of a year, was to be punishable by fines. Heavy fines were also to be imposed on priests illegally appointed [even if they should only] exercise spiritual functions--a provision which had the effect of depriving a parish served by such a priest of the ordinary comforts of religion.²⁰

i.e.
not Roman
Universities

These and other laws providing for the dismissal of clergymen, including bishops, whose continuance in office was proved "incompatible with the needs of public order," were passed by the lower legislative body by 245 to 110. After long debate and finally a speech by Bismarck alleging [that it was] "the conviction of the King and the Government that the foundation of the State is in danger," this legislation passed in the upper house on May 1st by 87 to 53. All these laws were promulgated on May 15. The Catholic bishops in response at once prepared for resistance, informing the government on May 26th that "they were unable to cooperate in carrying out these enactments."²¹

Six months later on November 21, 1873 Pius IX issued the encyclical Etsi multa luctuosa, in which he lamented certain things, including the May Laws which were causing Prussian Catholics so much suffering. He nonetheless advised courage and reminded everyone that the Church would be triumphant in the end. "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my words will not pass away." The Pope said that the words Jesus referred to were: "Thou

art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Those who oppose the Church, history teaches us, have been defeated in the end, while the church itself "gleams brighter than the sun." 22

These papal lamentations had no significant effect on developments in Germany. The bishops on the contrary were made to take an oath to keep the State's laws conscientiously, unconditionally and without reservations. Catholic legislators both in the Prussian and Imperial parliaments opposed these measures at every step and spat out their defiance at the Iron Chancellor and his government. On occasion they reduced their tormentors to silence.

You have power [replied their chief spokesperson in one instance] to torment us, to wound our hearts. You do not have the power to take our faith away from us. When you shall have closed all our churches we shall assemble in the forests, we shall imitate the Catholics of France during the Terror.²³

At the height of the conflict, with all Catholic bishops in Prussia either in prison or in exile, with hundreds of priests incarcerated, and several hundred parishes priestless, the Pope on February 5, 1875, issued another encyclical in which he cried out against the May Laws and again lamented their damage to the Church. Because the Church no longer had control of the education of priests, since they must be educated at state controlled universities where there was no way to assure that, for example, the Peter passage would be taught as foundational, the Pope could hold that this anti-Catholic legislation overturned the constitution of the Church and cut the ground from beneath the authority of the bishops. Catholic bishops who were shut up in prison he held as martyrs.

For it is not to the powers of this earth that the Lord has

submitted the bishops of His Church, but to Peter to whom he has entrusted his sheep and his lambs. That is why no temporal power, however high, has the right to despoil of their episcopal dignity those who have been named by the Holy Spirit to administer the church . . . It is necessary to obey God rather than man. ²⁴

It follows that Bismarck is not contending with a mere human being like himself but with the Prince of the Apostles who is by faith perceived by Roman Catholics to be authoritatively present in the person and office of the Pope. It was this unending resistance of the Catholic bishops, urged on and supported by the ultramontane forces of other Catholic countries, that tormented Bismarck beyond endurance. ²⁵

This encyclical of the Pope evoked a response in the Provinzial-Correspondenz:

The fact of this open outspoken message leaves no doubt that the relations of the Papal See to secular government have been fundamentally altered through the newest development [i.e. since the Vatican Council].

The Pope's message, the article maintained, was a revolutionary confrontation of the State's authority which by virtue of its unmistakable purpose indicates the course the government must follow in combatting it; the Catholic Church must learn who is sovereign in Prussia. ²⁶

There can be no question as far as Bismarck is concerned about the decisive role in all this, both of the Vatican Council decree on papal infallibility and of its basic ideological corollaries, Petrine primacy and papal supremacy. On April 15, 1875 while the Kulturkampf was still at its height, Bismarck leveled a bitter attack against Pius IX. The [Roman Catholic] Church, he said, is now nothing else but the Pope. Before the Vatican Council, German bishops exercised the right to at least think for

themselves independently from what the Pope held. However, since the Vatican Council, they no longer, complained Bismarck, exercised this independence of the Pope. Focusing on Papal claims for Petrine primacy, Bismarck disdainfully juxtaposed Peter to the Pope saying that Pius IX was not really Peter's successor since the Apostle had not been infallible; Peter had sinned, wept bitterly, and repented; Bismarck closed his attack with bitter irony: "From the Pope, I think, we need not expect that."²⁷ Bismarck certainly understood the decisive role of Peter in the political context and thus could not have been unmindful of the long term effect of a growing adherence to Marcan primacy in the state controlled universities.

And now we come to the point of our essay:

Marcan primacy became a German dogma. It is literally taught to children without question. How did this happen? In 1870, the Marcan Hypothesis was only a popular wissenschaftliche Hypothese. But certainly by 1914, probably by 1890, and possibly as early as 1880 this popular Protestant hypothesis was converted into a dogma. Why? I suggest that belief in Marcan Primacy and the existence of "Q" became dogmatic counterparts to the dogmas of Petrine Primacy and Papal supremacy. These ^(i.e. Marcan Primacy and the existence of "Q") dogmas cut the theological (i.e. scriptural) ground out from underneath the Vatican Council decrees. In sociological terms the wissenschaftliche achievements of Marcan primacy and the existence of "Q," correlate positively in results if not in intentions to the political passage of the May Laws. In both cases the results achieved were anti-ultramontane in effect, and both achievements were reached through State institutions under State control. In both cases, parameters were set within which the Catholic

minority was to find a viable place in the body politic of the Second Reich.

[Not until they accepted Marcan primacy would Catholic exegetes be accepted by their Protestant colleagues.] The immediate reaction of the Catholic hierarchy was one of resistance to political aggression from the dominant Protestant majority. Bismarck, however, found a way around this resistance by going over the heads of the German Catholics and negotiating a favorable end to the Kulturkampf with the new Pope who wanted to normalize relationships between Germany and the Vatican. This eventually freed German Catholic liberals--who, in the first instance, in the face of state persecution, had joined forces with conservative Catholics--to resume their program of cultural assimilation through university sponsored German Wissenschaft. This in turn eventually paved the way for German Catholic university-based scholars to recommend Marcan primacy and the existence of "Q" even in the face of the Vatican sponsored Biblical Commission's Responsum of 1912, which at that time was still negative to this theory.

During the Kulturkampf the German universities were more unified in support of Bismarck's goals than was the Prussian legislature. There had been open opposition in the legislature to the May Laws. No such concerted opposition to Protestant shiboleths developed in the universities. All German professors, both Protestants and Catholics, were appointed by the state. For a brief period, after 1875, any German scholar who would question the Marcan Hypothesis in its essential form, i.e. entailing Marcan primacy, would, in however small a measure, endanger "the foundation of the State." They would endanger the foundation of the State by denying the German majority a decisive defensive weapon against Vatican inspired

aggression manifest in the traditional use the Jesuits and the Pope were making of the Peter passage in Matthew, noticeably absent from Mark: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church," Protestants be damned! This being translated into ideological terms meant: dreams of German unity on Bismarck's (Protestant) terms be damned.

This crisis situation lasted only a few short years. When Pius IX died, his successor wanted to make peace, and upon learning this, Bismark, as previously noted, went over the heads of German Catholic leaders and worked out a concordat with the Vatican directly, ending the kulturkampf on terms in some respects favorable to the Third Reich. Persecution of Catholics in Germany abated, but by this time as far as gospel criticism was concerned, the die was cast. Matthean primacy had become identified with tradition. It could no longer be advocated as a scientific solution without raising the suspicion of being "unwissenschaftlich." Marcan primacy thus won by default. Certainly a critical mass of scholarly opinion eventually formed in favor of Marcan primacy. But all careful histories show that this happened in the absence of convincing historical and literary evidence. Therefore, the conclusion that non-scientific factors were at work is unavoidable. What some of these non-scientific factors were are discussed in the histories by Meijboom, Farmer, and Stoldt. To these may now be added the factor of the ideological needs of the Second Reich. While the crisis of the conflict between Bismark and the Vatican eventually abated, anti-ultramontane feelings in Germany persisted, and remained strong throughout the life of the Second Reich.

It may be argued that no German scholar of the Second Reich, Catholic

or Protestant, would have allowed himself to be influenced by the fear of being regarded as unwissenschaftlich.²⁸ But is such an argument sociologically tenable? And in any case would these German scholars also be free from all national sentiment? Would Catholic professors be immune from the societal pressure emanating from a majority prejudice that a Catholic "cannot love his Fatherland"? It is within this historical and sociological context that we are most likely to find the answer to our question: "How did Mark displace Matthew as the foundational Gospel for Christian faith and thus offer itself as the chief theological model for liberal Protestant, and eventually liberal Catholic theology?" Our hypothesis is: that this until now otherwise unexplained transformation happened in part in response to the ideological need of the German State for a theological defense against a life threatening move on the part of the Pope and his Jesuit army in bulldozing through the Vatican Council, over the opposition of liberals from northern Europe (especially Germany) and the United States, the decrees on Papal supremacy and Papal infallibility--decrees which were intended to help rally a Catholic ultramontane coalition of France and Austria against Protestant Prussia and which proceed from and depend upon the Peter passage found only in Matthew. Liberal Catholic losers at Vatican Council I, after the Kulturkampf was over, eventually regrouped, and in Vatican Council II they became the winners. Meanwhile, however, they had appropriated an important lesson. By Vatican Council II, they had come to recognize who was sovereign in Germany. It was Mark, not Matthew.²⁹ With Vatican Council II behind them, contemporary Roman Catholics in Germany interpret their more favorable treatment at the hands of their Protestant colleagues as evidence

that they can now be accepted as "Good Germans." It is not clear whether they realize that this acceptance has been bought at a price, i.e. the acceptance of Marcan primacy. They dare not question it and they do not.

The sovereignty of Mark in the Second Reich was quickly passed to all societies outside the Second Reich which enjoyed a symbiotic relationship to the Second Reich through the agency of German Wissenschaft, whose currency through state supported research was ever on the rise.

It may be questioned whether scholars at the venerable British universities at Oxford and Cambridge would uncritically take over Marcan primacy from their German Protestant colleagues. But that they did has been documented.³⁰ And that they did so is less surprising when it is recognized that the ideological needs of English society, with its anti-Roman Catholic majority and its Roman Catholic minority, were not so very different from those of Bismarck's Germany.

Conclusion

The controlling idea that Mark is our earliest and most reliable Gospel has exercised a profound, even if indirect, effect on liberal minds of this century, and thus on all literature which reflects the importance of rational thought about Christian faith that is affected in any way by a modern understanding of Christian origins.

To Rosenstock-Huessy goes the credit of being the first student of German society to recognize that there was something profoundly amiss with the idea of Marcan primacy. He saw that the lips of Jesus would speak a confusing message to the church so long as this Gospel model normed Christian life and faith.

NOTES

¹ Sir Adolphus William Ward, Cambridge Historical Series, Germany 1815-1890, Vol III 1871-1890, Cambridge: At the University Press, 1918, p. 56-7.

² Op. cit. p. 57.

³ loc. cit.

⁴ loc. cit.

⁵ loc. cit.

⁶ Karl Von Hase, Handbook to the Controversy with Rome, translated from the 7th Ed. of the Handbuch der protestantischen Polemik gegen die römisch-katholische Kirche, edited with notes by A. W. Streane, London, 1906, Vol I pp. 311-312. [Bracketing and italicizing mine. W.R.F.]

⁷ Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1948

⁸ Wallace, The Papacy, p. 154. [Enumeration mine. W.R.F.]

⁹ George Goyau, L'Allemagne Religieuse, le Catholiciase 1800-1870. Paris, 1872, Vol. IV, p. 299 f. as translated and commented upon by Wallace, The Papacy, op. cit., pp. 154-5. [All italicizing mine. W.R.F.] There was at this time no Papal representative to Germany. "The Nuncio was to the kingdom of Bavaria, a post that Eugenio Pacelli held during the First World War, and he subsequently became the first Nuncio to Germany after it became a Republic," so Winthrop Brainerd in a letter to me dated 4 May 1987.

¹⁰ Werner Conze, "The German Empire," in The New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. XI, 1870-1898, ed. F. H. Hinsley, Cambridge at the University Press, 1962, p. 288.

¹¹ Ellen Lovell Evans, The German Center Party 1870-1933, A Study in Political Catholicism, Southern Illinois University Press, 1981, p. 76.

¹² Loc. Cit.

¹³ Wallace, The Papacy, p. 193.

¹⁴ Wallace, The Papacy, loc. cit.

¹⁵ Op. Cit. p. 194.

- 16 Wallace, The Papacy, pp. 194-5.
- 17 Wallace, The Papacy, pp. 199-200.
- 18 Ludwig Hahn, Geschichte des Kulturkampf in Preussen. Berlin, 1881, p. 102 f. English translation by Lillian Parker Wallace, The Papacy, p. 201.
- 19 Wallace, The Papacy, p. 201.
- 20 Ward, Germany . . . p. 63-64. A distinction should be borne in mind between the Imperial Parliament, the Reichstag, and the Prussian legislature, the Prussian Landtag. The "May Laws" were Prussian, not Imperial. However, because of her enormous size, Prussia dominated the German Empire, exercising a virtual veto in the Reichstag.
- 21 Ward, Germany . . . pp. 65-66.
- 22 Wallace, the Papacy . . . p. 215.
- 23 Wallace, The Papacy . . . p. 216.
- 24 Wallace, The Papacy . . . p. 241.
- 25 Wallace, The Papacy . . . p. 241.
- 26 Wallace, The Papacy . . . p. 241-242.
- 27 Wallace, The Papacy . . . p. 247.
- 28 Two excellent books on the German universities are: C. E. McClelland, State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700-1914. Cambridge University Press, 1980, and F. K. Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933, Cambridge, Mass, 1969. For further documentation of the anti-Catholic ethos of the Prussian controlled universities in the imperial period see Konrad H. Jarasch, Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany, Princeton University Press, 1982, and John E. Craig, Scholarship and Nation Building: The University of Strasbourg and Alsatian Society 1870-1939, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- 29 It should be noted that in contrast to Vatican Council I, none of the decrees issuing from Vatican Council II proceeds from the Peter passage in Matthew.
- 30 William R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem, A Critical Analysis, Macmillan, N.Y. 1964, pp. 48-198.

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