

10-1-1934

## Externalism and Sacramentalism

P. E. Kretzmann

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, P. E. (1934) "Externalism and Sacramentalism," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 5 , Article 86.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol5/iss1/86>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

wirft du Gott finden, dann wirft du alle Fragen von der ewigen Gnadenwahl auflösen können, welche den fleischlichen Menschen töten. Wenn du empfindest, daß dir der Sohn gefalle; wenn du dich an ihm ergößest, daß er dir zugute ein kleines Kind geworden ist; wenn du anfängst, ihn liebzugewinnen: dann sei getroßt und halte gewiß dafür, daß du zu der Zahl der Gerechten gehörst und dich der Vater gezogen habe, nicht durch einen der Vernunft erkennbaren (metaphysico) Zug, durch Offenbarung und Gesichter. Denn den sonderlichen Offenbarungen, Entzündungen und Gesichtern, wie denn die Mönche ehemals dergleichen Offenbarungen und Erleuchtungen gehabt haben, soll man keinen Glauben beimessen. Der Teufel ist oftmals Urheber dieser Dinge. . . . Viele haben hier den Hals gebrochen und sind darüber in große Gefahr geraten. Ich aber gebe den Rat und die Erinnerung, daß du alles dieses verachtest und ansiehst, mit dem Kinde ein Kind und mit dem Sohne ein Sohn zu werden. Dieses Kind erfasse, das in der Krippe und im Schoße der Mutter liegt. An demselben ergöße dich. Wenn dir der Sohn gefällt, wenn du den hast, wenn du dem anhangst und fest an ihm bleibst, so kannst du des rechten Weges nicht fehlen, nicht eigenen Träumen folgen noch in irgendwelche Gefahr geraten. Mit diesem Sohn hast du den himmlischen Vater, du hast den Heiligen Geist, du hast die Engel und alle Kreaturen zu Freunden. Ja, es wird dir gewiß keine Kreatur auch nur das allergeringste Leid zufügen können." (St. L., VI, 185 f.)

## 8.

Zum Schluß wollen wir wiederholen, was wir schon oben angezeigt haben, nämlich daß dieser Artikel sein Entstehen einer tiefgefühlten Freude verdankt, der Freude darüber, daß sich in der genannten Rezension eine Gesinnung ausspricht, die uns veranlaßt, noch ein weiteres zu tun, damit die von uns allen begehrte völlige Einigkeit in der Lehre erzielt werden möge. Die Einigung der Lutherischen Kirche im rechten Geist und Sinn muß uns um so wichtiger sein, je mehr wir die hohe Aufgabe erkennen, die Gott der Lutherischen Kirche in den Vereinigten Staaten in dieser Zeit allgemeinen Unglaubens zugebracht hat. Und diese Aufgabe ist fürwahr bedeutend. J. L. Müller.

---

## Externalism and Sacramentalism.

---

When the worship of God in the Old Testament in the form of so-called public services was first instituted, it had a very simple form. We are told that in the time of Enos men began to call upon the name of the Lord, that is, to proclaim the name of the Lord Jehovah, Gen. 4, 26. This preaching or teaching was clearly a sacramental act, just as the bringing of sacrifices, as in the case of Abel, was a sacrificial act, very likely attended by prayer. In

the patriarchal period following the Flood we are again shown a very simple form of worship, the account being given in practically the same words as above. Abraham built an altar unto the Lord and then proclaimed the name of the Lord, Gen. 12, 8. Cp. Gen. 12, 7; 13, 4, 18; 21, 33. Isaac followed his father's example, Gen. 26, 25, and Jacob on two occasions erected an altar to the Lord, openly confessing his faith as he did so, Gen. 33, 20; 35, 7. The story of Melchizedek, Gen. 14, 18—20, conveys the same impression of a very simple, a primitive form of worship; for he was indeed a priest of the Most High, and he received tithes at the hand of Abram; but there is no indication of an elaborate ceremony as an essential part of public worship in patriarchal times. The picture remains unchanged in the case of Job, chap. 1, 1. 5. It is clear that the objective side of worship was the basis for the subjective expression of the believer's devotion in his sacrifices.

This situation was changed, to some extent, at the time of Moses. The children of Israel, up to the time of the Exodus a family or a band rather than a nation, became a unified body as a result of the Exodus, and in particular due to the revelation of God on Mount Sinai and the giving and codifying of the Old Testament *corpus iuris*, Ex. 19 and 20. There can be no doubt, on the basis of the entire story, that the significant and essential feature of Israel's relation to God is contained in the Lord's opening words: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation," Ex. 19, 6. Yet a new element was introduced by the Lord Himself when He instituted a separate priestly division or station, or hierarchy, the members of the tribe of Levi, Num. 3, 5 ff., especially vv. 12. 13. 44 ff. The sons of Aaron were to be in charge of the priestly office, while the other descendants of Levi were to have the other services of the Tabernacle and, later, of the Temple in their charge. All the regulations pertaining to the Levites indicate that the sons of Levi were a separate order, in charge of the public functions of worship by the Lord's direct appointment, on the basis of the Jewish Ceremonial Law.

This part of the Old Testament Law, the ordinances governing public worship, regulated also every other private and public act connected with the relation of men to Jehovah. The priests (and the Levites) were in charge of all the sacrifices of the people, the burnt offerings, the meat- or cereal-offerings, the peace-offerings, the sin- and trespass-offerings of every kind. They regulated and governed the festivals of the children of Israel and later of the Jews. All the manifold ordinances, which concerned even the most infinitesimal details of worship, were in their hands. It was inevitable that many functions of their office became merely mechanical, consisting in the observance of the outward form of worship, often without a proper regard for its inner significance and purpose.

David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, took a great interest in regulating the form of public worship and in enhancing the beauty of the services of the Tabernacle. He arranged for a proper division of the Levites, 1 Chron. 23, and of the priests, 1 Chron. 24. He organized a Temple orchestra as well as a chorus, a total number of 288 men being in these organizations, 1 Chron. 25. He planned the divisions of the porters and provided for Levites in charge of the treasures of the Tabernacle, 1 Chron. 26. All this resulted in an elaborate and beautiful form of public service, one which could well express the most profound emotions of a worshipping people and give a proper outlet to their feelings of devotion. If we add to this that the priestly vestments of the Old Testament were directly prescribed by God, Ex. 39, just as were the furniture and the appointments of the entire Sanctuary, we obtain a clear picture of a liturgy whose elaborateness was not exceeded to any great degree by some of the most complicated rites offered in heathen temples. Yet all this, under proper direction and with a proper regard for the real objectives of worship, could well have served the purpose which the Lord had in mind for His children at that time. For they were children, in bondage under the elements of the world, Gal. 4, 3.

If one now keeps in mind the proclivity of the children of Israel toward idolatry, especially in the Northern Kingdom, one can well understand that all the conditions tending toward *externalism* and *formalism* were here present. David could yet sing of his desire for the beauty of the Lord, Ps. 27, 4, of his eagerness to go to the house of the Lord with a multitude that kept holy-day, Ps. 42, 4. The outward beauty of the services did not interfere with his devotion, which was very real and true. And like him hundreds and thousands of members of the Old Testament Church used the Tabernacle and later the Temple worship in the proper way, for their edification and for the growth in knowledge of the truth which they then possessed and of the types that foreshadowed the Messiah. We never forget that there is a difference of degree, but never of kind, between the Old Testament and the New Testament Church. The believers before the time of Christ died in the same faith in the Triune God which brings salvation to men now; only they looked forward to the coming Messiah, while we rest our hope in Him who has come, in Jesus of Nazareth.

But while conditions were still favorable to the promotion of a sound and edifying worship in the days of David, and possibly for a century or two afterwards, the situation was no longer so favorable in the eighth century B. C. Shortly after the beginning of that century, about 787 B. C., the prophet Amos proclaimed his message. And what does this message reveal? That externalism,

formalism, had taken hold of the people at large. This is nowhere more strongly in evidence than in chap. 5, 21—23: "I hate, I despise, your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." And what was the trouble that caused this outburst of scathing denunciation? It is given in chap. 8, 11, 12: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread or thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; and they shall wander from sea to sea and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord and shall not find it." The entire Book of the Prophet Amos shows us that there was indeed an outward observance of religious customs, with great pomp and circumstance, with much offering of sacrifices. But the heart had been taken out of the people's worship by the disregard of the Word of God. Men evidently thought that a mere outward observance of legal ordinances, of the prescriptions of the Ceremonial Law, was sufficient for worship. But the Lord cared nothing about all outward forms, whether these were fastings or sacrifices or singing, if there was no true spiritual life based upon the Word of the Lord.

The same conditions appear from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, as we learn in particular from chap. 1, 11—15. There the Lord, as in Amos, speaks with repugnance, with loathing, of the burnt offerings of rams, of the blood of bullocks, of lambs, and of he-goats, of the festivals of the new moon and of the Sabbaths, of the presenting of prayers by a mere repetition of words. It is significant that the Lord, even while the outward form of the Old Testament worship was at the very height of its beauty and glory, speaks with abhorrence of its external forms which were not the outgrowth of a true inner life and that He, in the well-known statement in chap. 6, speaks of the self-obduration of His people, which was soon to be followed by the Lord's judgment of obduration upon them. An emphasis upon external forms, that is, if the inner life of the spirit is not constantly nourished and strengthened by the sound truth of the Word of God, is bound to lead to similar conditions of indifference, of apathy, of aversion, and of obduration. And we remember in this connection that the Old Testament government was theocratic, with a hierarchical polity, a fact which becomes all the more significant when we consider the contrast presented in the Apostolic Church.

It is true, of course, that Jesus, as a member of the Jewish Church, observed the regulations also of the Ceremonial Law. This

is evident from the story of His circumcision, His presentation in the Temple, His regular attendance at the synagog and at the festivals, His acquaintance with all the customs which had been added to the Jewish rites as given by God. At the same time, however, Jesus was unequivocally opposed to all ritualism and formalism, as His many rebukes of the scribes and Pharisees show. He unhesitatingly and emphatically denounced the prayers which were offered as mere lip service, Matt. 7, 21. The whole Sermon on the Mount shows that the external forms of service were to Jesus mere vehicles to bear the real offerings of faith. He tells the Samaritan woman that neither in Jerusalem nor on Mount Gerizim would the Father be worshiped, since those who would worship Him in the proper way would do so in spirit and in truth, without dependence upon external forms, without the need of types and symbols. And the words of the Savior were echoed by His apostles in their writings, by James, by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and especially by the Apostle Paul. He rebukes the Galatians for observing days, and months, and times, and years, chap. 4, 10. He calls things of this type weak and beggarly elements. In writing to the Colossians, he likewise urges them to set aside the rudiments of this world, not to be subject to ordinances, not to let any man judge them in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days, which are the shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ, chap. 2, 16, 17.

In accordance with this attitude, these principles, we find the worship of the Christians in the first century containing indeed both the sacramental and the sacrificial elements, but with strongest evidence of democracy and simplicity in form. There was no elaborate ritual, and even Storf (in Thalhofer's edition of the Church Fathers) does not dare to assert that the Liturgy of St. James is in its entirety the work of the first bishop of Jerusalem, although its nucleus may well be ascribed to him. This nucleus contained the following parts: 1) Psalm; 2) Teaching; 3) Prophecy; 4) in some places, Tongues and their Interpretation; 5) Lord's Supper, including also the agape. We may well assume that the first century had some fairly long prayers, in addition to the lections and the preaching, and certainly some fine hymns, as the excerpts in various books of the New Testament indicate. But there were no special clerical vestments, as even Kaufmann (*Christliche Archaeologie*, 553) frankly states: "*Die Kultkleider unterscheiden sich im Urchristentum nicht wesentlich von den Profankleidern und wurden uns in dieser Form uebermittelt.*" And again (p. 565): *Sie [die liturgischen Gewaender] waren, wie schon bemerkt, urspruenglich nichts weiter als die guten Strassenkleider des gebildeten Mannes.*" It was only later that certain secular garments were modified and adapted

for special clerical use, namely, at the time when the hierarchy had well established itself. The first-century Church had no incense, no exceptionally splendid Eucharistic vessels (the Chalice of Antioch is placed by Kaufmann at the end of the second century), in fact, no ritualism or formalism in any degree. Both Catholic and Protestant archeologists and liturgiologists agree that the elaboration of the early Christian ritual, its externalization and formalization, was a matter of later development.

How did this phenomenon come about? It was due to various causes. First and foremost among these causes was the growing distinction between clergy and laity, the strong hierarchical tendency which became manifest at the beginning of the second century, as the letters of Ignatius and others show. This undemocratic distinction, which was not at all in agreement with the principles of pastoral deportment as stated in the various books of the New Testament, soon showed itself in the adoption of garments distinctive of the clerical order or station, so that we find the vestries of the larger churches in particular soon boasting a most elaborate wardrobe of tunics, and albs, and dalmatics, and penulas (chasubles), and palls, and stoles, and maniples, and gremials, and subuculas, and amices, and rochets, and cassocks, and almuces, and what not. In the second place, the changed attitude toward the Eucharist, which soon became the Mass, must be noted, as we shall presently see. In the third place, the influence of the *disciplina arcani* is unmistakable. The practise of withholding from sight the Eucharistic vessels by means of the *tetravela*, or curtains, hiding the altar during the *missa catechumenorum*, that of withholding from the catechumens the exact text of even the Lord's Prayer and the Creed until just before the *redditio symboli*, the first profession of faith made by the candidates for membership, and the strange secrecy maintained by the leaders of the Church even after the Apologists had written their books in defense of the Christian religion reacted in a very strange way in causing the Christians to invest certain rites with an air of mystery and to shape their form of worship and their art accordingly.

This tendency became particularly noticeable after the rise of the great liturgies, chiefly the Clementine Liturgy, or that of Antioch; the Liturgy of St. James or of Palestine and Syria, often known as the Great Oriental, which included also those of Constantinople, of Cappadocia, and other cities and provinces; the Liturgy of St. Mark, or of Alexandria; the Ephesine-Gallican Liturgy; and the Roman, or Petrine, Liturgy. Practically every one of these liturgies, probably not in its original form, but certainly in the configuration of its later development, shows an unusual emphasis upon external rites and allegorical representation, not only

in the matter of vesting of the clergy, but also in the diversified chanting as practised by the lower clergy in the Ambrosian and the Gregorian chants as well as in antiphonal chanting between the officiating bishop or priest and the choir. It is very significant that this gradual externalization went forward at about the same pace as the growing impurity of doctrine. In fact, as a noted scholar pointed out, *externalization and deterioration have always run parallel in the Church.*

And this introduces the last point of the present discussion, namely, that of *sacramentalism*. It is interesting to note indeed that the Passover, the Old Testament "Sacrament" which is most closely related to the New Testament Eucharist, never showed an unusual amount of externalization and ritualization. This is very probably due to the fact that it was celebrated as a festival of families, with the head of each family serving as the priest for the occasion. Hence the possibility of concentrating a special authority in the hands of the priests was more remote. That there was, as a matter of fact, a certain amount of externalization appears from the fact that not a few customs or rites were introduced in connection with the celebration of the Passover which had not been commanded by God. Yet it does not appear that a disproportionate emphasis was placed on the "sacrament" as such.

But the situation was decidedly different in the New Testament Church. No sooner had the last apostle closed his eyes in death than not only hierarchical tendencies began to manifest themselves, but the "mystery of iniquity" referred to by St. Paul in 2 Thess. 2 gave evidence of its power in other ways, especially in the gradual corruption of apostolic doctrine. And of this there is no more convincing example than that of the doctrine of the Mass. The deterioration of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper into that of the Mass took the following course. The concept of a sacrifice was stressed more strongly as time went on; the doctrine of the real or sacramental presence was gradually changed into that of transubstantiation; the decline of preaching had as its correlate the elevation of the Sacrament into a position emphasizing the authority and the power of the clergy as priests who could daily renew the sacrifice of Christ's body in an unbloody offering. (Cp. CONCORDIA THEOL. MONTHLY, I, 167—183.) It was because of the special authority claimed by the priests that the Eucharistic vestments were regarded with such veneration, so that the chasuble finally became the distinguishing garment for the celebration of the Mass, since it was inseparably connected with the hierarchical station and authority. This sacramentalism became so prominent a feature of the Roman liturgy that the preaching and teaching of the Word finally became a very secondary issue. In most churches of the pre-Reformation age the service of the Word had been practically elim-



## 764 Von dem Beruf der Lehrerinnen an christlichen Gemeindefschulen.

inated, and Mass alone was celebrated. To a large extent this sacramentalism, the insistence upon according to the Sacrament a higher position in the service of the Church than the preaching of the Word, is still found, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church and in other quarters where its influence has been retained or is again being exerted. To one who knows the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church the answer to both externalism and to sacramentalism is found in the emphasis placed by the Lord on the preaching of the Word as *the distinctive feature* of New Testament worship and in the fact that the Sacrament derives its power and value solely and alone from the Word, not only in the formula of institution in itself, but in the teaching that gives to the communicants the realization of its blessings. It is only where these truths are properly understood that the Sacrament is rightly celebrated. P. E. KRETZMANN.

---

### Von dem Beruf der Lehrerinnen an christlichen Gemeindefschulen.

---

Die Lehrerinnen bilden heutzutage hierzulande einen wichtigen Faktor im öffentlichen Unterrichtswesen. In den Staatsschulen fungiert zumeist weibliches Personal. Aber auch in christlichen Gemeindefschulen sehen wir, wenn auch in beschränktem Maß, Lehrerinnen an der Arbeit. Das ist nichts Neues in der Kirche. In den alten lutherischen Kirchenordnungen findet sich auch eine Rubrik über den Dienst der „Schulmeisterinnen“, denen insonderheit der Unterricht der „Jungfrauen“ anvertraut war. Vgl. den betreffenden Artikel im Novemberheft 1896 des „Schulblatt“, S. 328. Da hat man denn, auch neuerdings wieder, die Frage aufgeworfen: Wie? Ist das recht? Stimmt das mit Gottes Wort? Und wie hat man den Beruf der Lehrerinnen in Kirchsulen anzusehen? Diese Frage soll hier in Kürze mit Gottes Wort beleuchtet werden.

Der Kirche Christi sind mancherlei Gaben vertraut. Zu diesen Gaben gehören auch die Ämter oder Dienste, *diakoniat*. Und es gibt verschiedene Dienste, Röm. 12, 6; 1 Kor. 12, 5. Der Apostel nennt Röm. 12 und 1 Kor. 12 beispielsweise eine Reihe solcher Gaben und Dienste. Es ist nicht die Meinung, daß er sie alle aufzählen will. Er macht insonderheit diejenigen *χαρισματα* namhaft, die eine Prätogastie der apostolischen Kirche bildeten, Wundergaben und Wunderkräfte, mit denen die *ecclesia primitiva* geschmückt war. Zu andern Zeiten sind dann andere Dienste in der Kirche aufgetreten, welche die erste Christenheit nicht kannte. Alle Gaben und Dienste sind der Kirche geschenkt, und die Kirche, die Gemeinde, ist Herrin über dieselben. „Alles ist euer“, selbst Paulus, Apollo, Kephas, 1 Kor. 3, 21—23. Die Ge-