

"If one says (what, in general, is not to be disputed) that the writings of the NT are a work of the church, and if one still wishes to maintain that the church nevertheless has always lived with and from 'sola scriptura,' one usually goes on to say that, before there was any NT, the church had the OT. From this one infers that the church has never been without scripture. I will not now go into the fact that there is a historical error here, insofar, namely, as it can be shown quite certainly, in my opinion, that the OT became 'scripture' for the Christian church only relatively late. But if we leave this aside, one can establish simply that the church distinguished itself from Judaism in that it did not interpret the OT but rather used it on the basis of its faith in Christ. This, however, is something utterly different! The OT was the authority for Jews; but this it became for Christians (not from the beginning but later) insofar as it could be used from the standpoint of Christian faith. The church, in any case, established a critical standard prior to its exegesis of the OT. And this critical standard--namely, faith in Christ--was the binding authority. Therefore, it is false to say (quite aside from the historical error of saying it was so from the beginning) that the church has never been without (binding) scripture. It was without scripture."