

*Sola Scriptura, Solus Christus, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide*

For the Reformers, scripture and Christ are correlative as primary authority and explicit primal ontic source of authority respectively. Thus, even though the only authority scripture has is the authority it derives from Christ, the only Christ who is the explicit primal ontic authorizing source is the Christ attested by scripture.

At the same time, Christ and grace and faith are the interdependent moments that determine the Christian *proprium*, in the sense of the distinctively Christian answer to the existential question of the ultimate meaning of human existence. Christ is the *historical* moment, grace and faith together, the *existential* moment—grace being its *metaphysical* aspect, faith its *moral* aspect. Moreover, if grace and faith are essential to the decisive significance of Christ, Christ is essential to grace and faith's decisively becoming event. In other words, the existential-historical Jesus is not just the external combination of two independent realities; he is a new, distinctively different reality, each of whose two essential moments, existential and historical, is qualified by the other.

Of course, for us today, application of the early church's criterion of canonicity—namely, apostolicity—requires relocating the primary authority from scripture or the New Testament as such to the earliest stratum of Christian witness. But given this necessary relocation, one can make all the corresponding changes in the Reformers' paradigm, still following its essential formal pattern. Thus, if the primary authority should prove to be the earliest stratum of the synoptic tradition, or the so-called Jesus-kerygma, the only explicit primal ontic authorizing source is the Jesus it attests. Similarly, the meaning of God for us in its metaphysical aspect is the prevenient love of God that is decisively represented in this Jesus, just as, in its moral aspect, it is the faith and returning love for God and for all things in God that this Jesus decisively authorizes.