

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



Volume 86:1

January 2022

Table of Contents

Hermann Sasse's View of the Office of the Ministry Up to World War II Matthew C. Harrison	3
Confessional Loyalty or "I Let That Subscription Lapse"? Scott R. Murray	25
Justification in the Theology of Robert D. Preus David P. Scaer	43
Repentance for the Corinthian Community: 1 Clement's Presentation of Christ in the Old Testament Daniel Broaddus	57
Research Notes	73
Private Celebrations of Holy Communion and Laity Conducting Services of Holy Communion Third Homily on the Holy Pascha by Basil of Seleucia	
Book Reviews	89

a) That is, that [cause] which, by the authority of another (superior), puts the sacrament in use.⁹

My colleague William Weinrich reminded us of Walther's teaching:

Historically, Lutheranism has answered the question of whether or not a layman should exercise the duties of the Office of the Public Ministry with a definite "No." The biblical basis for this answer included 1 Cor. 4:1 and Eph. 4:11. The basis in the Lutheran Confessions is AC XIV: "Nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call." When C. F. W. Walther observed that "in the case of the Lord's Supper no genuine case of emergency can arise" and so "almost all orthodox Lutheran theologians declare that no layman should administer holy communion," he was simply reflecting the common opinion of Lutheran exegetical and dogmatic tradition.¹⁰

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

The Third Homily on the Holy Pascha by Basil of Seleucia

Early Christian paschal homilies are a largely ignored source for theological reflection on the meaning of Easter. However, as a resource for homiletic imagery, linguistic vitality (at times virtuosity!), and rhetorical strategies, ancient paschal homilies provide a rich mine of materials.

In an earlier submission, I presented a translation of a homily attributed to Pseudo-Chrysostom.¹¹ The short homily translated below is another wonderful example of such a homily (that is, an Easter homily). The Greek text for this translation is the critical text provided by Michel Aubineau.¹² In the notes, I have

⁹ "Causa ministerialis" est minister ecclesiae ordinarius, qui elementa externa consecrat et communicantibus distribuit.

"a) Seu quae auctoritate alterius, velut superioris, sacramentum in usu constituit." Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, 3:494.

¹⁰ William C. Weinrich, "Should a Layman Discharge the Duties of the Holy Ministry?," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 68, nos. 3–4 (2004): 212–213; C. F. W. Walther, *The Congregation's Right to Choose Its Pastor*, ed. Wilbert Rosin, trans. Fred Kramer (Fort Wayne, Ind.: The Office of Development, Concordia Theological Seminary, 1987), 107.

¹¹ William C. Weinrich, "A Homily: On the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ—Attributed to Pseudo-Chrysostom," *CTQ* 85, no. 1 (2021): 83–88.

¹² Michel Aubineau, *Hésychius de Jérusalem, Basile de Séleucie, Jean de Béryte, Pseudo-Chrysostom, Léonce de Constantinople: Homélie Pascales (cinq homélie inédites)*, Sources Crétiennes 187 [hereafter SC] (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1972), 169–277 (Greek text, 206–214).

made ample use of the material given by Aubineau, while also making some observations and comments of my own.

Very little is known of the life of Basil of Seleucia. His birthdate is unknown, as is the course of his life before he became the bishop of Seleucia at some point before 448. He is best remembered for his somewhat vacillating behavior during the Christological debates of the fifth century. He attended the Synod of Constantinople in 448, summoned by Bishop Flavian of Constantinople, at which Eutyches was condemned as heretical for his christological opinions. Basil of Seleucia supported Flavian and voted against Eutyches. However, in the following year at the so-called “Robber Synod” of Ephesus (449), Basil, perhaps under pressure from Dioscorus of Alexandria, voted to remove the previous condemnation against Eutyches, and in addition to depose Flavian as Patriarch of Constantinople. Finally, at the Council of Chalcedon (451) Basil again voted to condemn the heresy of Eutyches, while escaping any disciplinary action against himself. After Chalcedon, Basil seems to have remained an advocate for the council. We last hear of Basil in 458 when he joined with other bishops of Isauria in a letter to Emperor Leo I, urging the emperor to support the decisions of Chalcedon and protesting the recent elevation of the “monophysite” Timothy Aelurus as Patriarch of Alexandria. The date of Basil’s death is also unknown, but Ernst Honigmann has argued for a date after 468.¹³

The city of Seleucia was founded around 300 BC by Seleucus I, king of Syria. It is located near the mouth of the river Calycadnus, in the southern part of Isauria, a rugged inland area of southern Asia Minor. Early on Seleucia had a Christian population, and the city became famous for the tomb of St. Thecla (first century), which became a favorite for Christian pilgrims.¹⁴ The see of Seleucia was attached to the patriarchy of Antioch. In 359, a council of some 160 bishops was assembled to discuss the doctrine of Christ and his relation to the Father. This council is usually termed “Semi-Arian,” because it rejected the *ὁμοούσιον* of Nicaea as well as the formula *ὁμοιούσιον* (“similar in essence”) since neither was used in the Scriptures. Rather, the council strongly condemned the “unlike” formula (*ἀνόμοιος*) of Aetius and Eunomius and accepted the creed of Acacius of Caesarea, which affirmed that the Son was “like in all things” (*ὁμοῖος κατὰ πάντα*) to the Father.

¹³ Ernst Honigmann, *Patristic Studies*, Studi e testi 173 (Roma: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1953), 174–184.

¹⁴ According to the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (c. 190), Thecla came from Iconium and was dedicated to virginity. She was converted by Paul and died at Seleucia. Etheria visited the tomb during her famous pilgrimage (c. 384).

Although a relatively minor figure, Basil and his works have been greatly appreciated. Forty-one homilies of Basil are printed in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*¹⁵ (PG 85:28–473). Six sermons attributed to Pseudo-Athanasius are now thought to be from Basil (PG 28:1047–1061, 1073–1108).¹⁶ Also authentic to Basil are the *Life of St. Thecla* (PG 85:477–560) and the *Collection of Thirty-One Miracles of St. Thecla* (PG 85:561–617). The reputation of Basil as a homilist is attested by the fact that the famous Byzantine hymnographer, Romanos the Melodist, used some material from Basil in his *kontakia*.¹⁷

The present homily is preserved in five manuscripts, dating from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. Four of these witnesses attribute the homily to Basil. The fifth (*Codex Parisinus gr. 1554 A*, fourteenth century) attributes the homily to Chrysostom. It was common to attribute sermons to Chrysostom when the origins were unknown or less famous. The fact, then, that four of the five witnesses attribute the text to Basil is a good argument for his authorship.¹⁸ On the other hand, it is evident that Basil made use, sometimes word for word, of a paschal homily by Proclus of Constantinople (*Oratio 15, In S. Pascha*).¹⁹

This homily reveals a strong anti-Arian theology, emphasizing the full deity of the Word. Basil emphasizes the immutability of the Word and its subsistence without any beginning (emphasis on the imperfect “was”) especially in the second section. The first section praises the benefits and effects of baptism. The third section is addressed directly to those recently baptized. There Basil exhorts the newly baptized not to fall away from the heavenly gifts of Baptism into the evil realities and habits which had previously been their custom. Notable are the sixteen ways in which Baptism is a good gift from heaven. The heavenly gifts of Baptism are due to the fact that the one in whose name they are baptized is none other than the fully divine Word of whom the evangelist John speaks in John 1:1–3. In the Byzantine liturgy, the prologue of John was the usual lectionary reading for the eucharistic service on Easter morning. Thus, this homily was probably delivered “on the day of Pascha itself, during the morning service, before a public which contained within its ranks those ‘newly illumined’ in the previous night.”²⁰

¹⁵ *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857–1886) [hereafter PG].

¹⁶ See now also Richard W. Bishop, “Homilia in Pentecosten (CPG 6665): A Sermon of Basil of Seleucia,” *Sacris Erudiri* 52 (2013): 119–160.

¹⁷ For discussion of the works attributed to Basil and the use of some by Romanos, see Aubineau, SC 187:170–174.

¹⁸ For discussion of the textual tradition, see Aubineau, SC 187:175–181.

¹⁹ For evidence, see Aubineau, SC 187:181–186. This sermon by Proclus is printed in PG 65:800–805.

²⁰ Aubineau, SC 187:201–202, here 202.

With some variations in the manuscripts, the title of the homily is as follows:

Τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Βασιλείου ἐπισκόπου Σελευκείας
λόγος εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πάσχα

[Discourse of Basil, our father among the saints, Bishop of Seleucia.
On the Holy Pascha]

I. Inexpressible is Christ's love of humankind toward us in that he has enriched his church with many gifts. He who is great in will "and mighty in his works"²¹ has "redeemed our nature from the curse of the law,"²² he has freed it from the ancient "certificate of debt."²³ Upon the wood [of the cross] he has led in triumph him who set a snare [for Adam] through a tree.²⁴ He has made dull the sting of the fearful death. Those who have become aged by sin he has made new, not through fire but through water. He has shown the three-day tomb to be the gate of the resurrection. "Those who are estranged from the commonwealth of Israel"²⁵ he has shown to be "fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household."²⁶ "To those who

²¹ A quotation from Jeremiah 39:19 (LXX). The first part of Jeremiah 39:19 reads "the Lord of great counsel" (Κύριος μεγάλης βουλής). (All Scripture quotations are that of Brenton's English translation of the LXX.) Basil has slightly altered that reading: "He who is great in will" (ὁ μέγας τῆ βουλή). In doing so, Basil makes the language of Jeremiah into a divine attribute or characteristic of Christ. This corresponds to the pervasive claim of this homily: Jesus Christ is true God, equal to the Father in all things divine.

²² Galatians 3:13. In a note, Aubineau reminds us that the "curse" here mentioned is that which arises from the accusation of the law. He quotes Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De paenitentia sermo* 3, as illustration: "How did Christ redeem us? By giving gold or silver?—By no means! But by giving his own blood which is more valuable than gold or precious stones. He has in effect redeemed all of our sins. . . . What sins?—Those of the Law. Not that the Law is sin. Not at all! But because without the Law one would not commit sin. As the Law, having made a transgressor of me, has placed me under a curse, Christ Jesus has come to redeem me from the curse of the Law, having become for us a curse" (PG 60:707).

²³ See Colossians 2:14. The idea that Christ paid or cancelled a certificate of debt was a common theme in patristic literature. Here Basil seems to say that the certificate of debt from which our nature is freed was the Mosaic law. See the discussion with further evidence on the use of the theme in Aubineau, SC 187:217–218.

²⁴ The verb σκελίζω "to trip up, ensnare, overthrow" (also ὑποσκελίζω) was a favorite term for the devil's temptation. For example, Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* 3.10: "He [the devil] made Adam trip and he overwhelmed him" (ἐνίκησε τὸν Ἄδαμ καὶ ὑποσκέλισε [ACW 31:59; SC 50:155]). The theme that by a tree Christ overcame sin and death which had entered the world by a tree was common. With great economy, the idea is expressed by Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In Pascha sermo* 6.50–51: "having planted the tree in the place of the tree" (ξύλον ξύλω ἀντιρριζώσας [SC 27:176]).

²⁵ See Ephesians 2:12. Baptism is the new birth which allows Gentiles to share in the promises of God first given to Israel. Basil now repeats this idea through various descriptions of the Gentiles given in Ephesians 2:12, 13, 19.

²⁶ Ephesians 2:19.

were strangers to the covenants of the promise”²⁷ he has given the heavenly mysteries. “To those who have no hope”²⁸ he has freely given the down payment of salvation, the Spirit.²⁹ “Those who were without God in the world”³⁰ he has promoted to be temples of the Trinity. “Those who once were far away,”³¹ not in place but in the manner of their conduct, he made to be near, not in distance but by intention, not by location but by worship, through the cross of salvation, having embraced those who were rebellious.

It is truly so as the prophet [said], “Who has heard of such things and who has seen anything like this?”³² All the angels are amazed at the mystery! All the heavenly powers shudder before the wonder. The throne has not been left vacant, but the world has been saved.³³ He did not depart from the heavens, but he freed the earth. He did not leave bare the paternal breast,³⁴ but he has despoiled hades. He remained unchangeable,³⁵ yet he has clothed himself with those newly enlightened.³⁶

²⁷ Ephesians 2:12.

²⁸ Ephesians 2:12.

²⁹ An echo of 2 Corinthians 1:22 (τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος).

³⁰ Ephesians 2:12.

³¹ Ephesians 2:13.

³² Isaiah 66:8 (LXX). Basil reads according to Codex Sinaiticus (τίς ἤκουσε τοιοῦτα καὶ τίς ἐώρακεν οὕτως). Aubineau notes that this text of Isaiah was employed also by Severian of Gabala (+ c. 408) in a baptismal context (*In allud: In principio erat Verbum 2* [PG 63:546]).

³³ In four parallel statements, Basil expresses the conviction that he who became man and suffered and died remained that which he eternally was, namely, the fully divine Word. The claim was made especially against Arian denials that the Word was fully divine. The throne was a common image for the assertion that the Word shared in the divine rule with the Father. For example, Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 1.61: ἐπὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θρόνον τῷ πατρὶ κάθηται (PG 26:140).

³⁴ Greek: πατρικούς κόλπους. This is an image perhaps derived from John 1:18 (ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς). This image was commonly used to assert the deity of Christ along with his humanity. That the Word did not depart the paternal breast asserts not only that the Word incarnate remained fully divine, but also that he remained with the Father in the inseparable unity of the Trinity. That the one Son of the Father existed in and through his deity and in and through his humanity provided rich homiletic opportunity. For example, Proclus of Constantinople, *Oratio* 15, *In S. Pascha* 5–6: ἴδε μητρικῶ κόλπῳ τὸν μὴ χωρισθέντα τοῦ πατρῶου κόλπου . . . ὁ μὴ γυμνώσας τὸν πατρικὸν θρόνον (PG 65:804). See Aubineau for other examples (SC 187:223–224).

³⁵ Greek: ἀναλλοίωτος ἔμεινε. The adjective “unchangeable, immutable” (often with ἄτρεπτος, “immutable”) was common in discussions with the Arians. In its final anathema, the *Symbolum Nicaeanum* of 325 includes these terms: “Those who say that the Son of God is either mutable [τρεπτόν] or changeable [ἀλλοιωτόν] the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.” For the wide use of these terms, see G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford/New York: Clarendon, 1961).

³⁶ Greek: ἑαυτὸν τοὺς νεοφωτίστους ἐνέδυσε. Perhaps inspired by Galatians 3:27: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε). Basil takes the liberty to reverse the image. In Baptism, Christ has clothed himself with the raiment of the baptized!

2. The Word subsisted, and to fishermen he has provided wings for speaking about God.³⁷ For that reason John cried out,³⁸ “In Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.”³⁹ See the accuracy of the evangelist! He does not say, “In the beginning was the Word begotten.”⁴⁰ He does not proclaim the begetting but the subsistence. For since a begetting suggests a beginning of existence, the evangelist, wishing to establish that the Son was without beginning,⁴¹ is silent about the begetting and proclaims the subsistence.

“In Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” These three statements suffice as a wall of defense for the church.⁴² Who has

“Newly enlightened” was a common term for those who had just been baptized. For more examples, see Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. νεογώτιστος.

³⁷ Basil begins a reflection on John 1:1–3. In doing so, he shows the anti-Arian emphasis of this homily. The fishermen refer to the apostles, especially St. John. Aubineau interprets the mention of fishermen to refer to the fact that Christ chose untrained men rather than philosophers to be his apostles. He translates: “Il a donné des ailes pour la contemplation” (“He has given wings for contemplation” [SC 187:209, 226–228]). The mention of “wings” might lead to this interpretation, for John, signified by the eagle, was often thought to have been given sight into heavenly realities. Later in the homily, Basil emphasizes the ascent of John to the royal throne of God. However, perhaps “fishermen” possesses also a secondary sense. The Greek is τοὺς ἀλιέας πρὸς θεολογίαν. Θεολογία means “speaking about God” (see Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. θεολογία for references). The idea then seems to be this: John has received wings so that he might ascend to behold heavenly realities in order to speak about them. As a parallel, Aubineau adduces Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In allud: Si qua in Christo nova creatura* (PG 64:25). But that text refers to the “preaching” (κήρυγμα). Nevertheless, “wings” refers to an exalted vision.

³⁸ Greek: βοᾷ Ἰωάννης. Aubineau reports that he has found thirty-nine occasions in the homilies of Basil where the verb βοᾷν is used to introduce a biblical citation. Nineteen times the subject of the verb is Christ; eleven times the subject is the apostles, especially Paul and John; three times the verb is used of Moses or Isaiah. The verb ἀναβοᾷν also occurs, but less frequently (seven times) and for a wider circle of speakers. See Aubineau, SC 187:228.

³⁹ According to Aubineau, this commentary on John 1:1–3 is taken, almost word for word, from *Homily 15* of Proclus of Constantinople (*In S. Pascha* [PG 65:800–801]). His note gives an interesting summary of the reading from John 1:1–17 in paschal liturgies (SC 187:228–229).

⁴⁰ Aubineau notes that in his homily (see previous note) Proclus, perhaps in view of the *Symbolum Nicaeanum*, interprets “begetting” (γέννησις) and “subsistence” (ὑπαρξίς) as complementary terms. The former refers to the eternal generation of the Son, the latter refers to the eternal subsistence of the Son in the deity of the Godhead. Basil, on the other hand, speaks of these two terms as opposites. “Begetting” refers to a beginning in time; “subsistence” to the Son’s eternal subsistence in the Godhead.

⁴¹ Greek: βουλόμενος οὖν ὁ εὐαγγελιστῆς παραστήσαι τοῦ Υἱοῦ τὸ ἀναρχον. Τὸ ἀναρχον is an adjectival substance with the genitive “of the Son.” That is difficult to put into readable English. The adjective ἀναρχος is at times translated “eternal.” However, in this context Basil is not concerned about an attribute, but about the contrast “without a beginning”—“with a beginning.”

⁴² I have translated the Greek εἰς τεῖχος as a “wall of defense.” Α τεῖχος was specifically a wall around a town or city, and so a defense against hostile intruders. The word could then simply mean a “fortification, castle, fort.” Here the theological statements in John 1:1 form a “wall of defense” against the Arian heretics. For further evidence on the use of this image, see Aubineau, SC 187:233–234.

taught you these things, O John?⁴³ The sea? But the sea teaches no doctrine! The fish? But fish do not contemplate God! Zebedee? But he was uneducated! The fatherland? But your village was insignificant! Your fellow citizens? But they were rustic folk! The Jews? But they were unbelieving! The law? But it has only shadow!⁴⁴ Moses? But he was “weak in speech and slow in tongue!”⁴⁵ Abraham? But he was “earth and ashes!”⁴⁶ David? But he was “a worm and not a man!”⁴⁷ The prophets? But the veil of the law still lay over them!⁴⁸

How, then, do you say, “In Beginning was the Word”? Who has raised you up to such a height?⁴⁹ Who has graciously granted to you such wings? You have forgotten your nature! You have left the earth behind! You have gone beyond the air! You have surpassed the ether! You have flown beyond the heavens! You have leapt over the angels! You have gone beyond the seraphim! You have surpassed the cherubim! You have stood near the royal throne! You have bent over and peered

⁴³ The homilist addresses the evangelist as though in personal conversation. In patristic homily, this was an oft-occurring and effective rhetorical strategy. It has the effect of bringing the author of the written text *into* the orality of the sermon. The following series of rhetorical questions are taken, with some variation, from Proclus of Constantinople (*Oratio* 15, *In S. Pascha* [PG 65:800–805]), one of the clearest examples of Basil’s use of Proclus.

⁴⁴ Basil writes *σκιάν εἶχε*, perhaps with Hebrews 10:1 in mind (*σκιάν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν*). However, the idea that the law was a shadow of the new things to come in Christ was so common that an allusion to a biblical passage would have been unnecessary.

⁴⁵ Exodus 4:10.

⁴⁶ Genesis 18:27.

⁴⁷ Psalm 21:6 (LXX).

⁴⁸ Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:13–16.

⁴⁹ Basil now describes the ascension of the evangelist to the vision of God. To speak of this ascension, Basil employs a series of verbs, each prefixed by a preposition indicating a going beyond (*παρατρέχει, παρέρχεσθαι, υπερβαίνειν, υπερίπτασθαι, υπερπεδᾶν*). Basil lists the stages through which and beyond which the evangelist rises to the throne of God: earth, air, ether, heavens, angels, seraphim, cherubim. Aubineau refers to similar descriptions of John’s ascent in Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De S. Iohanne* (PG 59:611); Paulinus of Nola, *Epistle* 21.4 (CSEL 29:151–152; PL 61:251). Citations marked PL are from *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1844–1864).

into the royal breast!⁵⁰ You have been furnished with wings by faith!⁵¹ As though by a trumpet [you have proclaimed] an incomprehensible faith. As though by a thunderclap [you have proclaimed] an unknowable generation.⁵² You have proclaimed a subsistence without a beginning. You have said, “In Beginning was the Word.” A Beginning which does not admit of a beginning.⁵³ “In Beginning was the Word.” For, before every beginning the Word was. The Word was.⁵⁴ It did not come [into existence]. For, without passion [the Word] was begotten,⁵⁵ inconceivable,

⁵⁰ Greek: εἰς τοὺς βασιλικούς ἐνέκυψας κόλπους. The verb κύπτειν “to bend over” in order to peer inside (also ἐνκύπτειν, παρακύπτειν) occurs often in texts describing contemplation. See Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. ἐγκύπτειν, παρακύπτειν. Παρακύπτειν occurs in John 20:5: The beloved disciple ran ahead of Peter, and coming to the tomb, he bent over and peered (παρακύψας) into it. The “royal breast” is that of the Father. From that standpoint, the evangelist could contemplate the eternal generation of the Son. A common patristic claim was that John was allowed (or enabled) to peer into the mysteries of the Godhead because it was he who leaned upon the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper. For a good example of this, see Pseudo-Chrysostom, *In laudem S. Iohannis*, hom. 2 (PG 61:722): “He reclined on the lordly breast of the Savior, and having been enlightened in his mind into the depths of wisdom and knowledge, he cried out, ‘In Beginning’ . . .” For other evidence of this, see Aubineau, SC 187:243–244.

⁵¹ Greek: ἐπτεροποιήθη τῇ πίστει. The very rare verb πτεροποιέω “make winged” is not listed in Liddell-Scott: Henry George Liddell, and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. P. G. W. Glare and A. A. Thompson, rev. and augm. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0725/95032369-b.html>. Lampe’s *Patristic Lexicon* gives but two examples: Athanasius, *fr. 1 in Cant.* (PG 27:1349) and Proclus of Constantinople, *Oratio* 15.3 (PG 65:801). The Proclus citation is, in fact, the same as in our homily. Basil of Seleucia seems to have borrowed the phrase from Proclus.

⁵² Greek: γέννησιν ἀκατάληπτον. Perhaps referring to Isaiah 53:8 (LXX): τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται. The fathers frequently interpreted this verse as a reference to the temporal generation of the incarnation. But it could also be applied to the eternal generation. For evidence, see Aubineau, SC 187:245–246. Aubineau refers to G.-M. de Durand, “Sa generation, qui la racontera (Is. 53,8b): L’*exégèse des Pères*,” *Revue de Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 53 (1953): 638–657.

⁵³ Greek: ἀρχῆ ἀρχὴν οὐκ ἐπιδεχομένη. The adjective ἀναρχος “without beginning” was frequently employed to assert the deity of the Word. This precise phraseology probably was borrowed from Proclus of Constantinople, *Homily* 15 (PG 65:805), who expresses the two natures of Christ by distinguishing between having no beginning and receiving a beginning (ὁ λόγος . . . ὁ ἀναρχος καὶ ἀρχὴν μὴ δεχόμενος καὶ ἀρχὴν τοῦ εἶναι λαβών). For further discussion, see Aubineau, SC 187:247–248.

⁵⁴ Rhetorically, Basil is giving emphasis to the durative imperfect “was” (ἦν). In the presentation of the sermon, Basil would have given the verb emphasis by tone of voice and perhaps by lingering on the verb. As Aubineau notes, this entire section reflects the debate with the Arians. Consider the anathemas at the conclusion of the *Symbolum Nicaeanum*: “Those who say that there was a time when *he was not* [ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν] and that he was begotten *he was not* [πρὶν γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν] and that he was brought forth out of nothing [ἐκ οὐκ ὄντων ἐγένετο] the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.”

⁵⁵ Greek: ἀπαθῶς γὰρ ἐγεννήθη. “He was begotten without passion” distinguishes the eternal generation of the Son from the Father from all animal or human generations. The Father did not *become* a father by begetting a son, nor did the Son *become* a son by being begotten. There is no “before” nor “after” in their relationship. In animal and human generation, a father was the son of

simple, non-composite, beyond all understanding, inaccessible to idle inquiry, eternal, indivisible, immutable, uncreate, being everything whatsoever the one who begot [him] is.⁵⁶

“In Beginning was the Word.” He [i.e., John] has shown that the person has no beginning.⁵⁷ “And the Word was with God.” He has shown that the essence is indivisible. “And the Word was God.” He has shown the identity of the nature. “He was in Beginning with God.” He has shown that he is coeternal with the Father. “All things were created through him.” He has shown that he acted freely when he created.⁵⁸ “All things were created.” They were created long ago, but now they have been renewed.

his father, and the son of a father will himself become a father of a son. Such a sequence of “before” and “after” which includes separation and divisibility is excluded in the relation Father-Son in the Trinity. See the discussion in Aubineau, SC 187:250–252. See especially Athanasius, *De decretis* 11 (PG 25:441–444).

⁵⁶ Basil lists ten attributes of the Word which are implied in his generation from the Father “without passion.” Greek: ἀπερινόητος, ἀπλοῦς, ἀσύνθετος, ἀνέφικτος, ἀπολυπραγμόνητος, αἰδῖος, ἀμέριστος, ἀναλλοίωτος, ἄκτιστος, πάντα ὧν ὅσα ἐστὶν ὁ γεννήσας. For discussion of these terms, see Aubineau, SC 187:252–256; Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*.

⁵⁷ Until now, Basil has commented only upon the first clause of John 1:1. John has demonstrated that the person of the Word is without beginning (ἔδειξε τῆς ὑποστάσεως τὸ ἀναρχον). Now Basil, with great brevity, gives commentary on the remaining clauses of John 1:1–3, indicating how each reinforces the full deity of the Word. That the Word created all things was commonly used as an argument for the eternal preexistence of the Word. With a striking suddenness, Basil transitions at the end of the paragraph to the new creation of Baptism, the real homiletic topic of the sermon (καὶ νῦν ἀνεκαινίσθη).

⁵⁸ That all things were created through the Word was an argument for the Word himself being “uncreated.” Here Basil of Seleucia asserts the *freedom* by which the Father created through the Word. The Arians claimed that God freely willed to create his Word/Son. Were the Son generated by nature, then the Son was generated by a natural necessity. The fathers of Nicaea, in opposition to the Arians, asserted that the eternal generation of the Word was itself characterized by the freedom of love. At the same time, as here, they asserted that the creation of the universe was an act of freedom. Aubineau adduces Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos* 3:63–64: “But the Son is not a work of will [βελήματος δημιουργημα], nor has he come after [the will], as is the creation, but he is by nature [φύσει] the proper offspring of God’s essence. For being the proper Word of the Father, he does not allow us to think of a will as before himself, since he is himself the Father’s living counsel and power and the framer of the things which seemed good to the Father. . . . Therefore, if the works subsist ‘by will and favor,’ and the whole creation is made ‘at God’s good pleasure,’ . . . he is external to the things which have come to be by will [βουλήσει], but rather is himself the living counsel of the Father by which all these things have come to be” (PG 26:456–457; *NPNF*² 4:428–429). I have not followed completely the selection of quotation as Aubineau gives it. The whole passage is worthy of reading and reflection. Quotations marked *NPNF*² are from *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952–1957).

3. Behold, therefore, O newly enlightened,⁵⁹ of what great mysteries you have been thought worthy! You have come to know their power by experience.⁶⁰ You have been redeemed. Do not again allow yourself to be taken prisoner. You have renounced.⁶¹ Do not be again deceived and associate again with [the devil].⁶² You have openly given your signature. Take care concerning the interest.⁶³ You have

⁵⁹ Basil addresses the newly baptized directly and refers to them as “newly enlightened” (ὡ νεοφώτιστε). The language expresses two ideas: (1) the minds of the newly baptized are illumined to know, perceive, and acknowledge the truth of divine revelation in the Gospel of Christ; (2) but perhaps more specifically, the newly baptized are themselves the new creation. As at the first creation God said, “Let there be light,” so now through Baptism the newly baptized have themselves become the light of the new creation, enlightened by the Light which is Christ himself. It should be noted that the transitional conjunction “therefore” is in strengthened form (τοιγαροῦν).

⁶⁰ Greek: ἔγνωσ τὴν δύναμιν τῆ πείρα. Basil employs similar language in *Vita sanctae Theclae* 1 (PG 85:553): “Thanks to you, O Paul, I have come to know [ἔγνω] the grace and the power [δύναμιν] of this divine bath that is baptism, both by the instruction and by the experience [πείρα].” Cited by Aubineau, SC 187:260. We learn that passages from Paul’s letters were used in pre-baptismal catechesis, and these spoke of the gifts and benefits of Baptism. However, what Paul had instructed about was also experienced through the event of Baptism itself. Power (δύναμις) is not a thought. It is a force which moves and so is experienced.

⁶¹ Greek: ἀπετάξω. In the middle, ἀποτάσσεισθαι means “to say good-bye” to a person, “to depart from” a person. Or, more negatively, “to get rid of” a person (ἀποτάσσεισθαι τῷ βίῳ = “to commit suicide”). The middle also has the sense of “to renounce” or “to give up.” Here the reference is to the “renunciation” of the devil and of all his pomp and wiles. The renunciation of the devil was an essential aspect of Baptism, signifying the abjuring of a former allegiance and lordship and the habits of life corresponding to them. See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catecheses* I.4–9 (SC 126:88–99); John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* II.17 (SC 50:143; ACW 31:49–50). For further references, see Aubineau, SC 187:260–261; Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. ἀποτάσσω, II.A. In the middle form, the verb also became a technical term for the renunciation of the world when entering the monastic life (Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. ἀποτάσσω, II.D). See also J.-H. Waszink, “Pompa diaboli,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 1 (1947): 13–41.

⁶² Greek: μὴ πάλιν δελεασθεὶς συντάξῃ. The verb συντάσσω is the opposite of ἀποτάσσω. In the passive and middle, the verb was used of military formations (“to draw up in a live” for battle). It is possible that Basil is thinking of such ideas (do not again become a soldier in the army of the devil). The verb for “to deceive” is δελεάζω. Its basic sense is “to catch by a bait” (noun: δέλεαρ = bait [also δόλος]). Aubineau adduces two other instances in which Basil uses the image of deception (SC 187:261–262). One is of a stratagem of the devil to deceive so as to effect the fall of a Christian (*In sanctam Thomam* 6 [PG 28:1089]). The other is of Christ deceiving Hades: “Christ himself descends into Hades, deceiving Hades by the flesh which he was wearing, destroying the royal palace by the power of his divinity” (*In S. Pascha* 4 [PG 28:1080]).

⁶³ Greek: ἐξέθου τὸ χειρόγραφον· μερίμνα περὶ τοῦ τόκου. Baptism arranges one on the side of Christ as one’s new Lord. The one newly baptized, therefore, assumes a new set of habits and obligations which are, so to speak, contracted with Christ. Basil articulates this new reality as a contract signed. The new master, Christ, gives a loan to the newly baptized and expects the principal to be kept safe, and indeed interest to be paid. The term ὁ τόκος (from the verb τίκτω = “to bear, give birth”) means “childbirth,” or concretely that brought forth, “a child.” However, metaphorically it was used in an economic sense of that brought forth from the lending of money, that is, interest. The following mention of the “talent” and the “work” expected makes clear that the interest expected through the baptismal contract is the disciplines and habits of that life

been entrusted with the talent. Take heed of the work. By experience you have been given into marriage. Do not commit adultery through blasphemy.⁶⁴ You have been led into freedom. Do not behave arrogantly toward your liberator as though he were a slave. You have put on the bright garment. Flash like lightening by your conscience. You have put away your outward form.⁶⁵ “Do not grieve the Spirit.” For, preaching from above the mystery of Baptism and the unmeasurable grace of him who was crucified, the prophet cries out, “He is the one who desires mercy!”⁶⁶ Who, O prophet? Christ, who for mercy’s sake became man! He who, although by his birth he did not open the virginal gates, will himself “return and have pity upon us.”⁶⁷ Having “returned,” he has delivered you from error. “He has had pity” upon you. For, upon the cross he has triumphed over the common sin and “has drowned our iniquities,”⁶⁸ since the mystical waters of Baptism have expunged “our sins in the

renewed and engendered through Baptism. See the discussion and evidence given by Aubineau, SC 187:262–264. As illustration, Aubineau adduces a fifth- or sixth-century baptismal catechesis (perhaps from Constantinople) which gives a full analogy: “Take note, you have come to the end of your catechumenate and to the time of your deliverance. Today you will give over to Christ the letter [γραμμάτιον] of your faith. The paper [χάρτης] is your conscience. The ink [μέλαν] is your speech, and the reed/pen [κάλαμος] is your disposition [σχῆμα]. See, therefore, how you are going to give your signature [χειρογράφητε] on your confession. . . . Note that you have renounced the devil and that you have aligned yourselves with Christ. The contract is effected. The master holds it in heaven. Strive to observe its stipulations [συνθήκας], for on the day of judgment this contract will be presented to you. Do not lose the principal [τὸ κεφάλαιον]. On the contrary, add some interest [τοὺς τόκους] to it” (SC 50:85, 87). Aubineau notes that these images are analogies and do not suggest that there was, in reality, a subscription by hand to a confession of faith.

⁶⁴ Baptism was frequently described as a spiritual marriage in which Christ as groom takes to himself the church/each Christian as his bride. The image occurs already in Paul (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25–26). See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Baptismal Catecheses* 3.1–2 (PG 33:425); John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* I.1 (SC 50:108). Ammonius of Alexandria: “The groom is Christ; the bride is the church; the marriage is the place of baptism” (J. Reuss, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Texte und Untersuchungen, 89; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 221. Any sundering of the baptismal union is the adultery of blasphemy.

⁶⁵ Greek: ἀπέθου τὸ σχῆμα. Basil has just mentioned the clothing with bright garments. This refers to the putting on of white garments on those coming up from the baptismal font. However, the white garment was itself a figure of the renewed body and soul of the baptized. When now Basil speaks of putting away “your outward form,” he is referring to the habits of sin which characterize the unbeliever.

⁶⁶ Greek: θελήτης ἐλέους ἐστίν. Aubineau translates: “Il veut la miséricorde” (“He desires mercy”). However, Aubineau gives the sense of the subject noun to the verb. Θελήτης is a masculine noun serving as the subject of the sentence. As such, it identifies the desire with the person himself: He is the desiring person, or, he is the person whose personal characteristic it is to desire mercy. The Greek of Basil is an exact rendering of Micah 7:18. For this noun form, Liddell-Scott refers only to the Micah text. But see Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. θελήτης.

⁶⁷ The quote comes from Micah 7:19. Basil will now elaborate on the two verbs, “shall return” and “shall have pity.”

⁶⁸ Basil continues to quote Micah, here again Micah 7:19. Basil mentions “common sin” (τὴν κοινὴν ἁμαρτίαν), a reference to the sin of Adam which finds its like in every human being.

depth of the sea.”⁶⁹ He considers the baptismal font and proclaims grace. For Baptism is the principal of all good gifts—the purification of the world, the renewal of nature, redemption in concise form, a simple medicine, a moisture which as fire consumes sins, a sponge which purifies the conscience, a clothing which does not become old with time, a womb which conceives without passion,⁷⁰ a tomb which gives new birth to those who are buried, an abyss which drowns sins,⁷¹ an element which is the tomb of the devil, the seal of him who took the rampart, the certain advocate before the judge, a fountain which quenches Gehenna, the gift which secures the Supper of the Lord,⁷² a mystery both ancient and new which was foreshadowed in the writing of Moses.⁷³

To Christ himself, our God, be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

William C. Weinrich
Translator

Aubineau comments: “An allusion to original sin” (“péché original” [SC 187:268]). This may be a misleading translation. It is doubtful that Basil of Seleucia is thinking in Augustinian terms, of sin inherited from Adam and organically connected to it. Basil’s way of speaking is not common. Aubineau notes the phrase “the common sin” is not mentioned in Lampe’s *Patristic Lexicon*. Aubineau adduces a text from Theodoret of Cyrus, *De incarnatione Domini* 12: “The defeat of our first father [προπάτορος] has become the common defeat [ἕττα κοινή]” (PG 75:1436).

⁶⁹ The quotation of Micah 7:19 continues.

⁷⁰ The baptismal font was frequently called the womb of the church, and likened to the virginal womb of Mary. For example, Leo I, *Sermon* 24.3: “For every person who is born anew, the water of baptism is as a virginal womb. It is the same Spirit who filled the Virgin who now fills the baptismal font” (PL 54:206).

⁷¹ An allusion to the drowning of the army of Pharaoh, who was regarded as a type of the devil.

⁷² Greek: δειπνου δεσπότικου πρόξενος χάρις. A reference to Baptism as that which allows one to partake of the Eucharist. It was common for the newly baptized to be led straightway to the Supper. For example, John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Homilies* 2.7: “For straightway [εὐθέως] after they come up from the waters, they are led to the awesome table heavy laden with countless favors, where they taste of the Master’s body and blood, and become a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Since they have put on Christ Himself, wherever they go they are like angels on earth, rivalling the brilliance of the rays of the sun” (SC 50:149; ACW 31:53). Also Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Lectures* 4.7: “When a person says to God, ‘You have prepared a table before me’ (LXX Ps 22:5), what does he intend to signify if not the mystical and spiritual table” (SC 126:141). For other evidence, see Aubineau, SC 187:274–275.

⁷³ Greek: ἐπὶ Μωυσέως σκιαγραφηθέν. A reference to the typology of the exodus. Early Christian authors frequently referred to Old Testament prefigurements of Christ and the church as written “in shadow” and the fulfillment as being “in truth/reality” (ἐν ἀληθείᾳ).