

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



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## An Old Journal under a New Cover

This issue, sporting a new cover designed by Colleen Bartzsch, gives us reasons to celebrate. First, after being two years behind in our publication schedule, CTQ is now current. Our readers have been pleasantly surprised by the receipt of 15 issues since December 2006, a few of which were two issues printed under one cover in order to save postage. Some of you have even suggested that our journal should now be named *Concordia Theological Monthly*! Although David Scaer previously mentioned the key persons who helped in this catch-up process (see CTQ 70 [July/October 2006]: 367), I again express our sincere appreciation for the dedicated work of Annette Gard (CTQ Administrative Assistant), Jason Braaten (CTQ Graduate Assistant in 2006–2007), and Peter Gregory (CTQ Graduate Assistant in 2007–2008). The exemplary quality and quantity of these issues, produced under a demanding schedule, is due to these three individuals.

A second reason to celebrate is because this journal has been blessed for many years by the editorial leadership and writing of David P. Scaer. As we begin our seventy-second year of publication, it is worthy to note that it has been almost four decades since Scaer first became Editor of this journal (see *The Springfielder* 33, no. 3 [December 1969]: 1). Over 30 years ago, he introduced both a new *name* (*The Springfielder* became *Concordia Theological Quarterly*) and a new *cover* (see his editorial in CTQ 41 [January 1977]: 1–2). The respect that CTQ enjoys among its readers as one of the most important journals in Lutheran theology is due, in large part, to Scaer's work. He has been a consistent advocate for letting this journal be "the theological voice" of our seminary to the wider church, an untiring editor in cultivating the right mix of writings for publication, and a prolific author of countless incisive articles that have appeared in these pages over the past four decades. We are thankful that he continues to serve as Editor.

We hope you enjoy the small changes in this issue and those that will follow. Do not, however, expect an issue each month: we are back to four issues a year, one every three months! Most of all, we pray that you will continue to be blessed and nurtured by the theology—especially the faithful witness to Jesus Christ—presented in this journal.

Charles A. Gieschen  
Associate Editor

# The Mystical Sense of Scripture According to Johann Jacob Rambach

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

The scholastic Lutheran Pietist Johann Jacob Rambach (1693-1735), professor in Halle and Giessen, is perhaps best known among modern Lutherans for his hymn, "Baptized into Thy Name Most Holy."<sup>1</sup> Many of Rambach's writings were well-liked by the first few generations of Missouri Synod Lutherans<sup>2</sup> and nineteenth-century German-American evangelicals as well.<sup>3</sup> In the first half of the eighteenth century, however, Rambach was known not only for his work in hymnology, homiletics, catechesis, dogmatics,<sup>4</sup> and as a publisher,<sup>5</sup> but also for his work in

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<sup>1</sup> *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), #298; *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), #224; *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), #590. For biographies of Rambach, see Carl Bertheau, s.v. "Rambach: Johann Jakob R (I)," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875-1912), hereafter cited as ADB; Klaus-Gunther Wesseling, s.v. "Rambach, Johann Jacob," in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (Verlag Traugott Bautz), <http://www.bautz.de/bbkl> (accessed February 12, 1999), hereafter cited as BBKL; Carl Bertheau, s.v. "Rambach," in *Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905), hereafter cited as RE<sup>3</sup>; Carl Bertheau, s.v. "Rambach, 1. Johann Jacob," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 13 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908-1914; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1952), hereafter cited as *Schaff-Herzog*; and Richard A. Muller, "J. J. Rambach and the Dogmatics of Scholastic Pietism," *Consensus* (Winnipeg) 16, no. 2 (1990): 8-9. For the most complete bibliography of Rambach's works, see Ulrich Bister and Martin Zeim, eds., *Johann Jakob Rambach: Leben, Briefe, Schriften* (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1993). For literature, see BBKL s.v. "Rambach."

<sup>2</sup> *Lenten Prayers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912); *Wohlunterrichteter Katechet* (St. Louis: Volkening, 1866; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1880); Reinhold Pieper, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik nach der Erläuterung über die Praecepta Homiletica von J. J. Rambach* (Milwaukee: Germania, 1895; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1901).

<sup>3</sup> *Christus in Mose; oder Einhundert Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Weissagungen und Vorbilder auf Christum in den fünf Büchern Mosis* (Cleveland: Verlagshaus der Evangelischen Gemeinschaft, 1886).

<sup>4</sup> Johann Jacob Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie oder Christliche Glaubens-Lehre*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt & Leipzig: Wolfgang Ludwig Spring, 1744).

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hermeneutics,<sup>6</sup> and especially the "mystical sense of Scripture" (*sensus mysticus scripturae*).<sup>7</sup> Rambach is a part of the Lutheran tradition and not an innovator concerning the mystical sense of Scripture. While cultivating the knowledge of the mystical sense, Rambach also had a high respect for the literal sense of Scripture. From his *De sensus mystici criteriis* ("On the Criteria of the Mystical Sense") it will be shown that Rambach's view of the mystical sense, even if not as objective as some would like, is by no means subjective, arbitrary allegorizing.

According to Rambach, the sense of Scripture is "that meaning which the Holy Spirit represented to the mind of the holy writers and which they, through pleasant words, have represented to the mind of the readers."<sup>8</sup> Rambach upholds the classic Reformation rule that the literal sense of the Scripture is one,<sup>9</sup> but he also believes that "under the literal sense there is a mystical sense hidden in many, but not in all, places of the Holy Scripture."<sup>10</sup> For example, in Numbers 21, the bronze serpent was lifted up on a pole so that whoever would look at the snake would be saved from death caused by snake bites. Rambach insists that this literally took place (*sensus literalis*). Underneath this factual occurrence, however, something else is prophesied or indicated, namely, that the Son of Man would be lifted up on the cross, as Christ himself explains this passage in John 3:14. This is the *sensus mysticus*.<sup>11</sup>

Scholarship concerning Rambach and Lutheran Pietist hermeneutics are not agreed, however, as to how this view of the mystical sense fits into the general flow of Lutheran hermeneutical tradition. Some have implied that Pietist hermeneutics, emphasizing a double sense of Scripture (literal and mystical), are a clean break from Lutheran orthodoxy's rule of *sensus literalis unus est* (the literal sense is one).<sup>12</sup> Others have noticed that Pietism

<sup>5</sup> Bister, *Johann Jakob Rambach*, 97-118, lists 22 works of Luther published by Rambach. Rambach was also the publisher of the first complete works of Johann Arndt, according to Tholuck, s.v. "Arndt, Johann," in RE<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Johann Jacob Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae variis observationibus copiosissimisque exemplis biblicis illustratae* (Jena: Joan. Wilh. Hartung, 1743).

<sup>7</sup> Johann Jacob Rambach, *Commentatio hermeneutica de sensus mystici criteriis* (Jena: Ex officina Hartungiana, 1728).

<sup>8</sup> Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 1:225. All translations are by the author of this article.

<sup>9</sup> Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 1:225; Rambach, *Institutiones hermeneuticae sacrae*, 64.

<sup>10</sup> Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 1:227.

<sup>11</sup> Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 1:227-228.

<sup>12</sup> Bengt Häggglund, *History of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 307, 327; Emanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, 5 vols.

did not intend to make a new hermeneutic other than what was received from Lutheran orthodoxy, and that a double sense of Scripture had already been taught by the orthodox Lutheran theologians.<sup>13</sup> A third interpretation sees broad continuity between orthodox and Pietist hermeneutics, but also a "change of accent" on the part of Pietism, emphasizing application.<sup>14</sup> In fact, roughly a century earlier the orthodox Lutheran theologian Salomon Glass (1593–1656)<sup>15</sup> had already taught a *sensus duplex* (double sense of Scripture) and had given rules for discovering types in his *Philologia Sacra* ("Sacred Philology," 1623–1636).<sup>16</sup> Glass was not the first to suggest using

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(Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1951), 2:173–174. Usually the presence of *sensus duplex* language prior to the Pietists is recognized, but a difference of opinion on this issue among the various orthodox theologians (e.g., Glass and Calov) is not recognized: Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970–1972), 1:329; Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, 2:173.

<sup>13</sup> August Friedrich Christian Vilmar, *Dogmatik: Akademische Vorlesungen* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1937), 1:117; The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, "Appendix R3-01A: Prophecy and Typology," in *1998 Convention Workbook* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1998); Ludwig Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche* (Jena: Mauke, 1869), 369; Brevard S. Childs, "The Sensus Literalis of Scripture: An Ancient and Modern Problem," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 87. E.g., Johann Wilhelm Baier, *Compendium theologiae positivae*, ed. C. F. W. Walther, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Ex officina synodi Missouriensis lutheranae, 1879), 1:177–178. Even up until the late 1920s the *sensus mysticus* had not been excluded from LCMS instruction on hermeneutics, as can be seen from *Theologische Hermeneutik: Leitfaden für Vorlesungen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), 14, § 22, Anm. 5. Here, the rule *sensus literalis unus est* does not exclude the *sensus mysticus*.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Stroh, "Hermeneutik im Pietismus," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 74 (1977): 46–47. Cf. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 48. In addition, it should be mentioned that the development of Lutheran hermeneutics was not isolated from other developments in Europe, especially among Reformed exegetes. Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 366, sees a wide spectrum of hermeneutical approaches in post-Reformation Reformed theology. On the mystical side was Cocceius, and on the rational/literal side were the Arminians. Cf. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 2:451–453, 469–473.

<sup>15</sup> Glass was successor of J. Gerhard as professor of theology at Jena (1638–1640) and was thereafter called to Gotha as superintendent. As a Hebrew and Rabbinic scholar, he completed the "Ernestine" or "Weimar Bible" begun by Gerhard, preparing the poetic books of the Old Testament. See F. W. Bautz, s.v. "Glassius, Salomo," in *BBKL* (accessed December 3, 2003), and Gustav Moritz Redslob, s.v. "Glaß: Salomon," in *ADB*.

<sup>16</sup> Salomon Glass, *Philologia sacra*, 5th ed. (Frankfurt & Leipzig: Jo. Theodor Fleischer, 1686), 288–350. Glass's canons for explaining types were abridged by Benjamin Keach and included in his *Tropologia* [modern edition: *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible* (London, 1855; Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1972), 233–237], removing Glass's disparaging remarks about Calvin and his reference to orthodox

types in this way. Already before him Johann Arndt (1555–1621)<sup>17</sup> and Valerius Herberger (1562–1627)<sup>18</sup> had exemplified this kind of exegesis.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Johann Gerhard's sermons were rich with christological typology.<sup>20</sup>

This is not to say, however, that the "double sense of Scripture" was unopposed in Lutheran Orthodoxy. Ludwig Diestel comments, "Among the Reformed, and since Calov<sup>21</sup> and Pfeiffer<sup>22</sup> also among the Lutherans, the unity of the sense is again stressed theoretically."<sup>23</sup> Instead of the *sensus duplex*, Abraham Calov preferred to speak of an "application of the literal sense to another spiritual thing," which was, nevertheless, made according to the will of the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup> J. G. Walch thought the debate on whether it should be called the "mystical sense" or an "application of the literal sense" was probably more about words than content as the debate was carried on within the Lutheran Church.<sup>25</sup>

Lutheran theologians. For an assessment of Glass's hermeneutics, see Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 377.

<sup>17</sup> See the articles s.v. "Arndt, Johann" by H. Hölscher in *Schaff-Herzog* and *RE*<sup>3</sup>, and Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz in *BBKL* (accessed August 27, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, s.v. "Herberger, Valerius," in *BBKL* (accessed January 29, 2002); Ferdinand Cohrs, s.v. "Herberger, Valerius," in *Schaff-Herzog*.

<sup>19</sup> Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 377. For example, Herberger's commentary on Exodus in his *Magnalia Dei, de Jesu, Scripturae nucleo & medulla: Der grossen Thaten Gottes*, 12 vols. [?] (Leipzig: Schürer, 1616–1619; reprint, Hamburg: Jacob Rebenlein, 1661), 6:46–49 (page citations are to the reprint edition), has every meditation beginning with the name "JESUS" and an explanation of what ways Jesus is in each particular text. See also Johann Arndt, *Sechs Bücher vom Wahren Christenthum* (Braunschweig: Andreas Duncker, 1606–1609; reprint, Philadelphia: J. Kohler, 1856), 42 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

<sup>20</sup> E.g., Johann Gerhard, *Postilla: An Explanation of the Sunday and Most Important Festival Gospels of the Whole Year*, trans. Elmer M. Hohle, vol. 1 (Malone, TX: The Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy, 2003), 221, where David's five smooth stones are the five wounds of Christ.

<sup>21</sup> Abraham Calov (Kalau) (1612–1686) was professor of theology in Wittenberg. See Wilhelm Gaß, s.v. "Calov," in *ADB*, and Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, s.v. "Calov (eigentlich: Kalau), Abraham," in *BBKL* (accessed May 23, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> August Pfeiffer (1640–1698) was an orientalist and superintendent of Lübeck. See Adolf Schimmelpfennig, s.v. "Pfeiffer, August," in *ADB*.

<sup>23</sup> Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 365. Diestel refers to Abraham Calov's *System. theol.*, 1:663, and August Pfeiffer's *Thes. hermen.*, 168.

<sup>24</sup> Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 377.

<sup>25</sup> Johann Georg Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 4 vols. (Jena: Sumtu viduae Croeckerianae, 1757–1765), 4:227–228. For Walch, talk of an "accommodation" can be misunderstood, but if understood in agreement with the *sensus mysticus*, the names are of little import.

The early eighteenth-century Lutheran Pietists did not invent the mystical sense of Scripture. Walch gives fifteen pages of annotated bibliography on works dealing with the mystical sense of Scripture<sup>26</sup> which go back as far as 1604.<sup>27</sup> Rambach himself was quite aware of his predecessors in hermeneutics, not only of Lutherans, but also of Roman Catholic and Reformed theologians. He was familiar with the works of Glass, Franz,<sup>28</sup> Dannhauer,<sup>29</sup> and Flacius,<sup>30</sup> but in his *De sensus mystici criteriis* he most often quotes the Dutch Cocceians Campegius Vitringa<sup>31</sup> and Herman Witsius.<sup>32</sup> It is obvious that Rambach admires the Reformed federal theologian Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669).<sup>33</sup> In support of this admiration he quotes Abraham Calov, who said of Cocceius, "And many

<sup>26</sup> Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 4:225–239.

<sup>27</sup> Lucas Bacmeister, *Explicatio typorum* (Rostock, 1604), cited in Walch, *Bibliotheca*, 4:229.

<sup>28</sup> Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628) was professor of theology in Wittenberg. See the articles s.v. "Franz, Wolfgang" by Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz in *BBKL* (accessed September 6, 2001), and G. M. Redslob in *ADB*.

<sup>29</sup> Johann Konrad Dannhauer (1603–1666) was professor of theology in Strasbourg and teacher of Spener. See F. Bosse, s.v. "Dannhauer, Johann Conrad" in *Schaff-Herzog*, and Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, s.v. "Dannhauer, Johann Konrad," in *BBKL* (accessed March 25, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Stroh, "Hermeneutik im Pietismus," 46. Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520–1575) was the leader of the "Gnesio-Lutherans." For a recent monograph, see Oliver Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002). Flacius's *Clavis scripturae sacrae, seu de sermone sacrarum literarum*, 2 vols. (Basel: Ioannes Oporinus & Eusebius Episcopus, 1567; Frankfurt and Leipzig: Hieronymus Christianus Paulus, 1710), discouraged allegory and the mystical sense in theory but made use of it in practice and has thus been described as inconsistent. See Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 253; Bernd Jörg Diebner, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Zur Hermeneutik der Melanchthon-Schule," in *Melanchthon in seinen Schülern*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, vol. 73 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997), 180–181. To Diebner's research I might add that Flacius included in his *Clavis* (1:1345–1372) a reprint of the highly allegorical *In librum formularum spiritalis intelligentiae* by Eucherius of Lyons.

<sup>31</sup> Campegius Vitringa (1659–1722), not to be confused with his son of the same name (1693–1723), was professor at Franeken. See the articles s.v. "Vitringa, Campegius" by E. Kautzsch in *Schaff-Herzog* and *RE*<sup>3</sup>, and W. J. Fournier in *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, ed. D. Nauta et al. (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1983), hereafter *Biografisch Lexicon*.

<sup>32</sup> Witsius (1636–1708) was professor at Franeken and Utrecht. See the articles s.v. "Witsius, Hermannus," by S. D. van Veen in *Schaff-Herzog* and *RE*<sup>3</sup>, and J. van Sluis in *Biografisch Lexicon*, vol. 4.

<sup>33</sup> On Cocceius, see Brian J. Lee, "Biblical Exegesis, Federal Theology, and Johannes Cocceius: Developments in the Interpretation of Hebrews 7:10–10:18" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2003); and the articles s.v. "Coccejus, Johannes" by W. J. van Asselt in *Biografisch Lexicon*; Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz in *BBKL*; and C. F. Karl Müller in *RE*<sup>3</sup>.

oracles of the Old Testament he does not, with his Calvin, tear away from Christians; also in many things he seeks Christ with pious zeal, even if he does not find Him."<sup>34</sup> In summary, the debate on whether it is proper to speak of a double sense of Scripture, and to what extent one should make use of the mystical sense, is older than Rambach and his Pietist colleagues.

### I. *De Sensus Mystici Criteriis*

Rambach's hermeneutical work has been described as "more well-balanced" than that of his teacher, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727).<sup>35</sup> J. G. Walch calls the *De sensus mystici criteriis* "a little work written elegantly, accurately, clearly, and distinctly."<sup>36</sup> At issue, however, is whether Rambach has given an *objective* presentation of the mystical sense of Scripture, for this is precisely what is denied by some who have studied the work. In the words of Ludwig Diestel, Rambach allows "absolutely every analogy of Scripture, of content, of faith."<sup>37</sup> If this is true, how are we to understand the places in the book where Rambach makes cautionary statements and restrictions? For example, the stated purpose of the book is to attain greater objectivity in dealing with the mystical sense. "Many without judgment," Rambach writes, "depending on certain principles, are led hither and thither, being led by vague conjectures and being destitute of a guide for the way."<sup>38</sup> These people, noticing any similarity whatsoever between things in the Old Testament and the New Testament, claim immediately "that one has been ordained by divine counsel to be a figure of the other." This leads others to mock the *sensus mysticus* or to expose it to calumny.<sup>39</sup> A closer study of *De sensus mystici criteriis* will be necessary in order to evaluate whether Rambach has achieved his objectives, or whether Diestel is right in seeing therein arbitrary allegorizing.

The table of contents of *De sensus mystici criteriis* summarizes its contents:

<sup>34</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Stroh, "Hermeneutik im Pietismus," 41; see also Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, 2:178. On Francke, see the articles s.v. "Francke, August Hermann" by T. Förster in *Schaff-Herzog* and RE<sup>3</sup>, and Udo Sträter in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998-n.d.), hereafter cited as RGG<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 4:227.

<sup>37</sup> Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 379; similar, but with more appreciation for Rambach's work is Carl Gottlob Hofmann, *Institutiones theologiae exegeticae* (Wittenberg: Io. Ioach. Ahlfeldium, 1754; reprint, St. Louis: Ex officina synodi Missouriensis lutheranae, 1876), 49, 51, 53, 60 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>38</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 3.



Besides the literal sense of Scripture, the *mystical* sense is also given (ch. 1), which, however, is not to be sought everywhere (ch. 2), but *avoiding extremes* on both sides (ch. 3), throughout both the *Old* as well as the *New Testament* (ch. 4), the mystical sense should be investigated in certain 'classic passages,' — of which *twelve* more important ones are reviewed (ch. 5), — and should be recognized by certain *indications* which reveal themselves (ch. 6). For which, nevertheless, we do not, in fact, need an extraordinary inspiration of the Holy Spirit if we want to explore the real sense [*sensum realem*]<sup>40</sup> in other passages besides those explained mystically in the New Testament (ch. 7, 8). But rather, from the example of holy men certain CRITERIA are to be formed, of which many are INTERNAL (ch. 10, 11) which reside 1) in *things* [*in rebus*], and their innate character, where four criteria are indicated, (ch. 12), 2) in *words* [*in verbis*], and their emphasis, where *two* signs are established (ch. 13). Others are EXTERNAL (ch. 14) where the Holy Spirit reveals elsewhere that something of the mystical sense is present in a certain passage 1) *explicitly*, and with distinct words (ch. 15), 2) *implicitly*, where *five* modes are reviewed by which one can come to the knowledge of the mystical sense (ch. 16). Criteria are added, by which it can be demonstrated that we have achieved the *genuine mystical sense* of a certain passage (ch. 17). Nevertheless this whole matter will be confined by *nine precautions* (ch. 18), and the discussion is finished with a *prayer*.<sup>41</sup>

Rambach's first order of business is to assert that there is a mystical sense of Scripture aside from the literal sense. The literal sense can be either proper or metaphorical, but the mystical sense is different than this: "Besides the literal sense of the sacred Scriptures which is indicated to the readers through the signification itself of the words, whether proper or metaphorical, the mystical sense is also given through the thing [*per rem*] expressed by the words, intended by the Holy Spirit."<sup>42</sup> It is interesting that Rambach does not see the mystical sense as an alternative to the literal, grammatical meaning of the words. Instead, it is an *addition* to the literal sense. The literal sense is one, be it proper (e.g., "Jesus was born in Bethlehem") or figurative (e.g., "Herod is a fox"), and sometimes, in addition, there is also a mystical meaning.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> That is, the sense indicated not by the words but by the thing (*res*) expressed by the words. See Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 5-6.

<sup>42</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 6; see Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 1:226.

<sup>43</sup> Flacius included metaphors and figures in the literal sense: Diebner, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 174. So did Glass: Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 376. Glass, likewise, held to only *one* literal sense (*sensus literalis unus est*) while also seeing the *sensus mysticus* in many passages.

Next, Rambach claims that all the "more pure" doctors of the church have held this position, though they have had different ways of expressing it. They have all taught that God expressed himself in two ways in Scripture. Words are always signs of things (*signa rerum*), and sometimes those things are signs of other analogous things (*signa aliarum rerum analogarum*).<sup>44</sup> But there has been disagreement. According to Rambach, the disagreement is whether "that mystical signification which relies on secret analogies of things [*rerum*] can be called the *sensus mysticus*."<sup>45</sup> This is the same argument that Walch notes. On his side, Rambach counts Salomon Glass, and on the other side he names August Pfeiffer. Others have attempted a *via media*, speaking of a composite sense of Scripture which includes a double truth intended by the Holy Spirit. With a quote from Johannes Franciscus Buddeus (1667-1729), we are left to think that it was all a war of words.<sup>46</sup>

It is a testimony to Rambach's objectivity that he states that the *sensus mysticus* must not be sought indiscriminately in all passages of Scripture. It is present in some passages but not in others. In addition, he warns against confusing the mystical sense with the "use and application of a passage," for there is no passage in Scripture which does not have some "spiritual use." Uses and applications are not the mystical sense, but they are rather inferences derived from the literal sense, even if they deal with the most interior and secret things of God and of the Christian religion.<sup>47</sup>

In his exegesis, Rambach's goal is to avoid both excess and defect when it comes to the *sensus mysticus*.<sup>48</sup> People who err in excess hunt out arcane mystical senses almost everywhere, indulging allegories too often,

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<sup>44</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 6 (ch. 1). Cf. Augustine's usage of "word," "sign," and "thing," in "On Christian Doctrine" 1.2.2 and 2.1.2-2.2.3, in Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 2:523, 535-536; also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981), I-I, 1.10.

<sup>45</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 7 (ch. 1).

<sup>46</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 7 (ch. 1).

<sup>47</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 8 (ch. 2). See Rambach, *Dogmatische Theologie*, 1:226-227, on the spiritual, edifying nature of the literal sense. Glass, likewise, did not see the *sensus mysticus* as being in all passages of Scripture, and also distinguished "innate" allegories from *allegoriae illatae*, "allegories brought in by the reader." Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 375-376.

<sup>48</sup> Rambach had also used the "excess and defect" tool in his discussion of the use of technical terminology in dogmatics. Muller, "Scholastic Pietism," 18. Cf. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 71-72 (ch. 18).

and usually in a contorted form.<sup>49</sup> As examples of those who err in excess, Rambach names "the most ancient teachers of the Jews," especially Alexandrian Jews such as Philo, but also the Midrashim and Rabboth of the ancient Hebrews. Rambach lauds how some of the ancient Jewish exegetes looked for the Messiah, "the heart of Scripture" (*Scripturae nucleum*), even though they often looked in the wrong place. Other examples of excess include many church fathers (especially Origen), papistic interpreters (especially the scholastic doctors), the more impure mystics (especially those from the school of Paracelsus and Jakob Böhme),<sup>50</sup> many followers of Johannes Cocceius,<sup>51</sup> and several "from that order of recent philosophers, like Thomas Burnetius." Other examples are also given.<sup>52</sup> In another part of *De sensus mystici criteriis*, Rambach says of Cocceius that he is "often more free than what is right in multiplying types."<sup>53</sup> This is a sentiment shared by J. G. Walch.<sup>54</sup> Diestel notes that the Lutheran disagreement with Cocceius was in practice, not in hermeneutics.<sup>55</sup> That is to say, the Lutherans were more controlled in their use of typology, though they were working from the same principles as Cocceius.

According to Rambach, those who err in defect concerning the *sensus mysticus* include, first of all, the Socinians.<sup>56</sup> The Socinians would recognize only the sacrifice of atonement as prefiguring Christ.<sup>57</sup> In addition,

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<sup>49</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 8-9 (ch. 3). Stroh, "Hermeneutik im Pietismus," 44, notes that this was a common concern for Pietist exegetes. On the one hand, they opposed sterility of Bible reading, and, on the other hand, the falsification of the biblical statements.

<sup>50</sup> See Martin Brecht, ed., *Geschichte des Pietismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

<sup>51</sup> Note that Cocceius himself is not included in this list.

<sup>52</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 9-10 (ch. 3).

<sup>53</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 36 (ch. 12).

<sup>54</sup> Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 4:228. After reviewing the hermeneutics of Rambach and the early eighteenth-century Lutheran theologians, Diestel is amazed that they could still accuse the papists, associates of Cocceius, and the fanatics of "sinning in excess" in their typology. This is an accusation which Diestel labels "somewhat inconsistent." Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 379.

<sup>55</sup> Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 383-384.

<sup>56</sup> Fausto Sozini was a sixteenth-century anti-trinitarian with a large following in Poland. See Erich Wencker, s.v. "Sozini, Fausto," in *BBKL* (accessed March 6, 2003), and O. Zöckler, s.v. "Socinus, Faustus," in *Schaff-Herzog*.

<sup>57</sup> On the Socinians, see also *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 25-26. Rambach's opposition to the Socinians is further illustrated by his doctoral dissertation, which he wrote three years later: *Dissertatio inauguralis, qua pellis ovina Socinianorum detecta ac detracta sistitur* (Halle, 1731). The Cocceian influence on Rambach has been generally recognized. It

Rambach names Arminians, such as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), Simon Episcopius (1583–1643), Philippus van Limborch (1633–1712), and Jean le Clerc (1657–1736), and a few others from England and France.<sup>58</sup>

When one thinks of the *sensus mysticus*, the relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament immediately comes to mind. Rambach, however, thinks that the *sensus mysticus* is also to be found in the New Testament, though this is more rare than in the Old Testament. Rambach gives as examples: 1. Jesus' parables; 2. the miracles of the Son of God; 3. the more notable events of our Savior; 4. the singular circumstances of certain singular cases, e.g., the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Paul's conversion, and Peter's call to preach the gospel to the nations; 5. the seven epistles in Revelation. At this point, Rambach is simply giving examples. He has not yet begun to explain the criteria by which one can reasonably assume the mystical sense is present in a particular passage. Usually, however, the New Testament uncovers the *sensus mysticus* in the Old Testament. Hidden under the three days of Jonah in the belly of a fish is a *res mystica* (mystical thing or meaning). The same can be said of the raising of a bronze serpent, the manna, the paschal lamb, the rock in the desert, the marriage of Abraham, and the histories of Joshua and Melchizedek.<sup>59</sup>

Before beginning his explication of the criteria for the mystical sense, Rambach first sets forth "classic passages" in which the *sensus mysticus* is said to be present and then discusses the question of whether an explicit New Testament indication is necessary for one to find the mystical sense in a passage of Scripture. According to Rambach, the *sensus mysticus* lies hidden (*latet*) in several categories of passages:

1. Rituals of the Mosaic law.<sup>60</sup>
2. The histories of the most greatly notable persons of the Old Testament.<sup>61</sup>

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seems, however, that the anti-Socinian element also plays a role in explaining Rambach's exegetical approach.

<sup>58</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 10 (ch. 3). Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 4:228, likewise speaks out against most of these people.

<sup>59</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 11 (ch. 4). Matthew 12:40; John 3:14; 6:32; 19:36; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Galatians 4:24; and Hebrews 4:8–9; 7:1–28 are the passages used.

<sup>60</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 12 (ch. 5). Romans 10:4; Hebrews 8:5; 9:9; 10:1; and Colossians 2:16–17 are cited as proof.

<sup>61</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 12–13 (ch. 5). In the "kingdom of light" Rambach lists Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, Elijah, Jonah, Eliakim, Daniel,

3. The chief oracles (*fatīs*) of ancient Israel, by which God most wisely selected Israel from the number of other nations, in order to thereby delineate the events of the New Testament church.<sup>62</sup>
4. The chief liberations of Israel from the hand of their enemies.<sup>63</sup>
5. The more eminent judgments which God executed under the old *oeconomia*, both against degenerate and noncompliant Israel, as well as against enemy peoples.<sup>64</sup>
6. The more excellent and remarkable benefits which God bestowed on the church of the Old Testament, by which the more sublime benefits, proper to the new *oeconomia*, were prefigured.<sup>65</sup>
7. The promises of good lands, "by which various categories of the felicities of the covenant of God are promised."<sup>66</sup>
8. Many oracles of the prophets, especially concerning Judah, Jerusalem, Babel, Egypt, Edom, etc.<sup>67</sup>
9. Many canticles and Psalms.<sup>68</sup>
10. The chief events of the life of Christ.<sup>69</sup>

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"etc." In the kingdom of darkness, Cain, Ishmael, Esau, Balaam, Jezebel, Antiochus Epiphanes [1 Maccabees 1:10], "etc." are listed.

<sup>62</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 13–14 (ch. 5). Rambach refers to Psalm 78:2; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 (Textus Receptus); Isaiah 4:5; 9:4; 35:6; 43:2; 44:10; Jeremiah 31:2; Revelation 11:3–4; and 18:4; as well as to the Lutheran Confessions, Ap III, 274.

<sup>63</sup> The prophets spoke of the future salvation of the New Testament church, either from the power of the devil or from the yoke of antichrist, under the guise of Israel's salvation from the Egyptians, Midianites, Assyrians, Babylonians, "etc." Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 14–15 (ch. 5). For proof, Rambach cites Luke 1:70–71, 74. At this point, Rambach quotes Vitringa, who says that "all the liberations of the church" which happened under the old economy (*oeconomia*) were typological of the redemption which the Son of God would one day bring. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 14 (ch. 5).

<sup>64</sup> The penalties suffered by Israel in the desert are our types, τύποι ἡμῶν, according to 1 Cor 10:6, 11. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 15 (ch. 5).

<sup>65</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 16–17 (ch. 5). A quote from Joh. Jac. Pfeizer gives examples: "productio lucis ex tenebris, institutio sabbati, conservatio familiae Noachi per aquam diluvii . . . Istum tamen indicem novis nominibus augeri posse, non dubitamus."

<sup>66</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 17 (ch. 5). Examples are from Genesis 9:26–27; 27:27–29; 49:3–27; Deuteronomy 33; 30:1–7; Isaiah 1:25, 27; 52:1–4; Jeremiah 3:14–18; 30:1–24; 31:1–30.; and Zechariah 2:2–5.

<sup>67</sup> Rambach claims that sometimes the prophets preached some things *mixed*. In these cases, there is a double subject [*duplex subiectum*], of which one is an emblem of the other. Here the prophets were speaking about both subjects gramatically and mystically. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 18 (ch. 5).

<sup>68</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 18 (ch. 5). E.g., Psalms 2, 8, 22, 45, 110, etc.

<sup>69</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 19 (ch. 5). E.g., the nativity, circumcision, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, anointing, passion, resurrection, and ascension.

11. Parables.<sup>70</sup>

12. The miracles of our Savior.<sup>71</sup>

For Rambach, the statement that events in Christ's life have a mystical meaning in no way detracts from the importance of the literal meaning. In fact, all of these retain the *sensus literalis*. Without the literal sense, everything falls apart. "If the truth of this history is denied, all of these things transform into mere images and nude pretenses of the thing being shown to us."<sup>72</sup> Another sign of objectivity is Rambach's awareness that there have been abuses in explaining the *sensus mysticus* of the parables. He does not, however, believe that the abuse overthrows the principle.<sup>73</sup>

For Rambach, the most reliable guide to finding the *sensus mysticus* is an explicit explanation from the New Testament, for example, John 3:14. But he also sees the *sensus mysticus* in passages with no explicit testimony from the New Testament. He does not concede defeat to the opinion of those who demand that one must have the gift of *theopneustias* (divine inspiration) and an extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit in order to investigate the hidden sense of the sacred letters. It is too "severe" when it is claimed that only Christ himself and his apostles were able to discover the *sensus mysticus*.<sup>74</sup> Who is guilty of saying this? Rambach begins by attributing to the Socinians the idea that, for a passage to have a mystical meaning, it must have an explicit explanation by Christ or the apostles. Rambach also finds this idea in the writings of Philippus van Limborch and other Dutch writers, as well as in a treatise by the Lutheran Valentin Veltheim.<sup>75</sup>

After identifying his opponents, he gives his major argument.

However, just as it is certain that many prophecies of the OT have to do with Christ and His kingdom, which are nowhere explicitly explained in the books of the NT concerning Christ, so also we hold that many types

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For proof, he cites Hosea 6:2; Luke 12:50; Psalm 69:3; Hebrews 13:12-13; and Revelation 12:6-14.

<sup>70</sup> Usually the literal sense of parables is a *moral sense*, but in many there is also a prophetic sense present. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 20. E.g., Matthew 13:24-30, 37-43; 21:33; 22:1; 25:1.

<sup>71</sup> Hence the miracles are called "signs" in the Gospels. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 21-23.

<sup>72</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 19 (ch. 5).

<sup>73</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 21 (ch. 5).

<sup>74</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 24-25 (ch. 7). Cf. Stroh, "Hermeneutik im Pietismus," 49-50.

<sup>75</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 26-27 (ch. 7). Veltheim (1645-1700) was the successor of Musaeus at Jena. See Paul Tschackert, s.v. "Veltheim, Valentin," in ADB.

are given in the Old Economy concerning Christ and concerning things pertaining to Christ, which the Holy Spirit nowhere declared to be destined to that end. It suffices that we accept the key from divinely-inspired men, which we are able and ought to use happily in order to uncover the mystical sense of many passages.<sup>76</sup>

This parallel between prophecies and types seems to be Rambach's key argument on why it is legitimate to look for the *sensus mysticus* in passages not explicitly identified in the New Testament. Rambach quotes Herman Witsius, who finishes by saying that in Hebrews 9:5 the apostle did not intend to list all of the types exhaustively.<sup>77</sup> Rambach does, however, give a caveat with regard to this parallelism. Although types are nothing other than substantive prophecies (*prophetiae reales*), one cannot argue from prophecies to types absolutely. For the interpretation of prophecies depends on the meaning of the words, which is made known by use (*ex usu*). The fact that something represents another analogous thing, however, depends on the will of God alone. This will of God must either be indicated *a priori*, or be concluded *a posteriori* by certain clues.

This is the question under discussion: What are the clues by which it is legitimate to suspect that the *sensus mysticus* is hiding somewhere?<sup>78</sup> The key to answering this question is the example of the exegesis used by Christ and the apostles. If we have the key, we do not need an explicit New Testament explanation for every type, according to Rambach. By examining the examples of the divinely inspired writers we can form rules "from whose presence it can be recognized and with the highest probability decided that in this or that part of Scripture, the mystical sense, fitting for the divine wisdom and beneficial for our souls, is hiding."<sup>79</sup> Rambach's caution here can be easily overlooked. He is not arguing that without an explicit testimony of the New Testament we can know with total certainty that the mystical sense is present but is arguing instead that we can "decide with the highest probability."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 27 (ch. 8).

<sup>77</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 27–28 (ch. 8).

<sup>78</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 28 (ch. 8). Rambach notes a controversy on this subject between Vitringa and Limborch, reviewed in Henr. Muelius, *Discussio controversiae inter Limborchium ac Vitringam de sensu Scripturae mystico agitatae*.

<sup>79</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 29 (ch. 9).

<sup>80</sup> Rambach also quotes Guilielmus (Willem) Saldenus, who argued that the Old Testament believers were able to discover the *sensus mysticus* by means of the instruction of the prophets, their own attentive consideration, divine illustration of the mind, and prayer. Rambach states that he used the first lines of this argument in his

## II. The Criteria of the Mystical Sense

The main part of Rambach's book deals with the criteria of the mystical sense. His method is to give a criterion, confirm it with reasons and authorities, and finally to illustrate it with examples. In addition, he sometimes adds a restriction to warn against possible misunderstanding of what he has set forth. The criteria are divided between internal and external, and are subdivided within each category. Among the internal criteria, some are found in things (*in rebus*) and others are in words (*in verbis*).

### III. Internal Criteria *in Rebus*

The internal criteria *in rebus* are those clues drawn from the things (*res*) expressed by the literal sense. For each criterion, "We say, therefore, that the character of the things proposed supplies the criteria of the mystical sense."<sup>81</sup> In the *res* expressed by the literal sense, the clues of the mystical sense exist if the *res* contains something "not fitting enough for the most high wisdom of God, or for the persons of sacred men, or if they are clothed with circumstances so singular and admirable, and apt for signifying a more illustrious thing, that they draw the mind of the reader, even unwilling and resistant, to consider more sublime things."<sup>82</sup> Rambach does not leave it here, however, but continues to explain what he means.

There are four internal criteria *in rebus*. The first is present "if nothing in the *res* occurs which is especially worthy of the divine wisdom and the other perfections of God."<sup>83</sup> That is, if we see something in Scripture that does not seem to support God's perfections, there is probably a divinely-intended type present. Rambach brings forth Leviticus 14:2-32, the laws for the cleansing of a leper, as an example. After describing the ritual process, Rambach asks, if you stop here with the literal sense, what is there which is fitting to be said of God?<sup>84</sup> His point is that if there is not a *sensus mysticus* here, then this would seem to be a ludicrous ceremony which could only serve to encourage superstition. But such thoughts about God's intentions in this ceremony would not fit with his perfections. Therefore, God was intending to teach something else by means of this ceremony. Rambach is not denying the literal sense of Leviticus 14, but is only saying

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*Institutiones herm. sacrae*, and will now amplify and confirm them. *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 29 (ch. 9).

<sup>81</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 30 (ch. 12).

<sup>82</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 30 (ch. 12).

<sup>83</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 30 (ch. 12).

<sup>84</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 31 (ch. 12).



that one cannot stop there. Another example given is God's command that Hosea should marry a prostitute.<sup>85</sup>

The second internal criterion *in rebus* is present "if the literal sense contains something unfitting for the persons of holy men."<sup>86</sup> When something unworthy of holy people is done in Scripture and God does not rebuke it, we have just cause for seeking "something more sublime under the shells of the words."<sup>87</sup> Unless God intended a *sensus mysticus* in these places, readers and hearers would easily be lead to imitate these evil actions. This danger ceases, according to Rambach, if it is agreed that there are "mystical causes" under the unworthy events. For example, in Judges 14:1-4, Samson's desire for a Philistine woman was not fitting for him as a savior of Israel and as a Nazirite. Moreover, it displeased his parents. Rambach, however, says that the reader "will have a different opinion if he considers that Samson prefigured Jesus Christ, the Son of promise, brought forth from a virgin by the power of God, who loved the Church which was being gathered from the nations and being united with Him through the obedience of faith and of love in a spiritual marriage."<sup>88</sup> Other examples include the suicidal death of Samson,<sup>89</sup> Abraham's sending Hagar and Ishmael into the desert, and the polygamy of the patriarchs.<sup>90</sup>

The third internal criterion *in rebus* deals with Old Testament occurrences that thoroughly surprise the reader and inspire more sublime thoughts. "If events [*res gestae*] are narrated under the Old Economy and are clothed with such admirable circumstances that they deeply overpower the mind of the reader and inspire thoughts more sublime,"<sup>91</sup> then it is legitimate to investigate the mystical sense. Rambach uses a quote of Vitranga to explain that he is speaking especially of narratives where divine providence was working miraculously (*extra ordinem*). For example, the young lion slain by Samson was found to have honey in it (Judges 14:5-9). This is nowhere explained in the New Testament with explicit

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<sup>85</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 31-32 (ch. 12). This symbolized God's kindness toward the people of Israel, who had been polluted with spiritual fornication, but would be joined to God by means of a new covenant.

<sup>86</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 32 (ch. 12).

<sup>87</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 32 (ch. 12). On Francke's use of "shell and nut" imagery, see Stroh, "Hermeneutik im Pietismus," 45-46.

<sup>88</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 32 (ch.12).

<sup>89</sup> Judges 16:28-30. This also was done as an image of Christ, "qui pro gloria Dei & populi sui salute, vitae prodigus, plus nocuit hostibus moriens, quam vivus." Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 32 (ch. 12).

<sup>90</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 33 (ch. 12).

<sup>91</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 33 (ch. 12).

words, but Rambach states that it is nevertheless legitimate to find the *sensus mysticus* here. Rambach does not, however, give an actual explanation of the mystical sense of the story. Other examples include Israel's passing through the sea, the Jordan, and the desert; the destruction of the Midianites by Gideon; "and other similar, prodigious events."<sup>92</sup> At this point Rambach adds a caveat. Do all extraordinary events of the Old Testament have a typological significance? A quote from Guilielmus Saldenus denies this, and apparently Rambach does as well.<sup>93</sup> It is unfortunate, however, that Rambach does not give a concrete example at this point. With a specific example of a passage which has no typological significance, Rambach would be able to shape and give substance to his precaution. In fact, this is a weakness which will continue throughout *De sensus mystici criteriis*. Abundant examples are given of passages which have the *sensus mysticus*, but opposite examples are usually, though not always, lacking.

The fourth internal criterion *de rebus* is present "if the circumstances of an Old [Testament] history have such a conspicuous and evident reference to an event of the New Testament, that an attentive reader is unable not to think of it repeatedly while reading, except by either closing or averting the eyes with which he observes that very little thing, after having exerted himself to pay attention."<sup>94</sup> That is, a very obvious similarity to an event of the New Testament is likewise a good reason to investigate the *sensus mysticus*. Despite appearances, this is not a *subjective* observation, but a similarity that the divine author has intended. It was "ordained by the Holy Spirit, who wanted the New Testament to be hidden in the Old, and the Old to be opened in the New, and who shows us Christ most clearly depicted and prefigured in certain passages, so that we might also seek him all the more eagerly as He is hiding more deeply in other passages."<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, a "nude similarity between two events" does not suffice for the *sensus mysticus* to be said to be present.<sup>96</sup>

Rambach spends extra time proving this criterion. Perhaps this is because this criterion can be easily misunderstood. Though a type is a sign of another thing (*signum alterius rei*), one cannot find just any similarity between two things and claim that it is a type intended by the Holy Spirit. Therefore Rambach disagrees with the sort of exegesis that would see the

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<sup>92</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 34–35 (ch. 12).

<sup>93</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 34–35 (ch. 12).

<sup>94</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 35 (ch. 12).

<sup>95</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 35 (ch. 12).

<sup>96</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 35 (ch. 12).

history of David and Goliath as a type of Luther's struggle against the pope. Likewise, Rambach questions the Jesuit Gretserus's assertion that Absalom hanging from a tree was a type of Christ on the cross.<sup>97</sup> Here we have two rare examples from Rambach on what he considers an illegitimate use of typology.

So if not just any similarity will do, what sort of similarity *will* do? For Rambach, if there is similarity between two things, such as there is between a man and his image, painted by an artist, then an exegete is not pertinacious who ascribes such a similarity to the will of the "most wise Arbiter of all things [*omnium rerum*]." <sup>98</sup> One is either blind or surrounded with the fog of prejudice if he does not recognize Joseph as a type of Christ, "especially in his profound humiliation and unexpected exaltation."<sup>99</sup> The same kind of typology can be found in the histories of Abel, Enoch, Aaron, Moses, David, Jonah, and others. Rambach's intention is to make a distinction. "Therefore we hold that one must distinguish between *any similarity whatsoever*, and between an *adequate similarity which befalls the eyes of all*."<sup>100</sup> Rambach is right to make a distinction, but "the eyes of all" seem to keep this criterion in the realm of the subjective.

In an attempt to keep the *sensus mysticus* objective, Rambach continues by reviewing four requisites for a genuine analogy between a *rem significantem* and *significatam* (a signifying and signified thing).

1. *That which produces itself by easy work*, and throws itself into the eyes of the attentive reader as by its own will. 2. *That which shines forth not from a conflict of the individual parts of the type, but by the comparison of the whole*. . . . [T]hus we should not make judgment on the basis of the truncated limbs of the type, but we must consider the whole series; if it squares with Jesus or a thing [*res*] of Jesus, it becomes clear by all means that a typological condition [*schesin*] is underneath. 3. *That which is proper to the prefigured thing by way of excellence*, not indicated as such in another more express way in the Word of God, that is, so peculiar to it that in this manner and degree it does not fall into other things. 4. That which has been provided individually to illustrate, strengthen, and assist the doctrine both of truth and of piety according to the Scriptures.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 36 (ch. 12).

<sup>98</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 36–37 (ch. 12).

<sup>99</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 37 (ch. 12).

<sup>100</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 38 (ch. 12).

<sup>101</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 39 (ch. 12). Rambach is following Guilielmus Saldenus, *Otia Theologica, sive Exercitationum subcisivarum, Varii Argumenti, Libri Quatuor* (Amstelodami: Apud Henricum & Viduam Theodori Boom, 1684), 292.

The meaning seems to be that in order for something to be a type of one thing, it must not be able to be more easily a type of something else. As an example of this caveat, Rambach mentions Jonah. Jonah prefigured Christ, not in *every* way, but only in that he was in the fish for three days and came back alive.<sup>102</sup> Here Rambach has given rules to put limits on how and where the mystical sense can be found, and has even illustrated it with an example. It would have been even more helpful, however, had he illustrated each of the four requisites with examples and counter-examples.

#### IV. Internal Criteria *in Verbis*

After discussing the internal criteria *in rebus*, Rambach next turns to the internal criteria *in verbis*.

In *words* and the form of writing itself, the traces of a more sublime meaning [*sensus*] are detected if the assertions [*praedicata*] are expressed with such distinguished and magnificent ways of speaking, that according to every emphasis by which they are powerful, they fit very little with the subject understood literally. In this case we must think of another mystical subject, in which those illustrious assertions [*praedicata*] take their complement.<sup>103</sup>

Words can be an indicator of the *sensus mysticus*, according to Rambach, if what is said is expressed so fully and magnificently that they do not fully correspond to the literal subject. But what does this mean? Is the literal subject *not* accepted, or is it indeed accepted, but, due to the exalted rhetoric, another subject is being spoken of *in addition*? From what follows in Rambach, it seems that the latter is the case.

The first internal criterion *in verbis* is present "when the assertions [*praedicata*], or at least some of them, were conceived with such illustrious and magnificent words, that they do not entirely square with the subject literally accepted."<sup>104</sup> It is Rambach's high view of Scripture and its inspiration by the Holy Spirit that leads him to the criteria *de verbis*. Rambach argues that because it is the Holy Spirit who is using the human author as an amanuensis he is able to "mix in" words that do not properly square with the subject literally denoted. The conclusion is this: Either the Spirit of Truth has transgressed the bounds of truth (*quod longissime absit!*) or it must be conceded that another subject is being mystically indicated.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 39 (ch. 12).

<sup>103</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 40 (ch. 13).

<sup>104</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 40 (ch. 13).

<sup>105</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 40 (ch. 13).

This argument depends totally on the inspiration and full truthfulness of the Scriptures.

As examples of this criterion, Rambach points to the things said of Jerusalem and Zion in Psalm 48:3, 4, 9 and Psalm 132:14. These things are signifying a more majestic reality than the earthly Jerusalem actually was. Thus, the heavenly Jerusalem was signified, a fact which Rambach corroborates with reference to Galatians 4:26 and Hebrews 12:22.<sup>106</sup> If Rambach was saying that these passages are not literally about the earthly Jerusalem, then it would be better to understand this as metaphorical language within the literal sense. But since Rambach includes this as part of the mystical sense, he seems to be saying that the psalm verses are speaking literally about the earthly Jerusalem using exaggerated language and are speaking mystically about the heavenly Jerusalem *without* exaggerated language.

The second internal criterion *in verbis* is similar to the first. If the thing described is clothed with such full and sublime terms so that one cannot understand them of the "subject literally accepted" without diluting or weakening the meaning, then we should look for the *sensus mysticus*. Again, a high view of Scripture is his support. Not a word of Scripture is idle (*otiosum*), nor is anything ever said so majestically without the most exact truth. The Holy Spirit is not playing games with exaggerated words in a serious thing (*sesquipedalibus verbis in re seria*).<sup>107</sup>

Examples include Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 26–28 regarding the destruction of Tyre.<sup>108</sup> These prophecies can only be accepted in a diluted sense concerning old Tyre. In Ezekiel 26:15–28:23, *all* peoples of the world will come and mourn over Tyre. This would be an excessive hyperbole according to Rambach, unless the Holy Spirit had intended a *sensus mysticus* here. The *sensus mysticus* teaches that one day there would be a city, greater than Tyre, in which the characteristics of Tyre could be seen much more clearly, and in whose destruction God's providence, justice, and wisdom would be shown "with the stupor of all other nations." The *sensus mysticus* of Tyre is the Roman pontiff, according to Rambach. The same typology is also shown in Revelation 18:23, where the characteristics

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<sup>106</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 40–41 (ch. 13).

<sup>107</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 41 (ch. 13).

<sup>108</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 44 (ch. 13). Another example from Rambach is 2 Thessalonians 2:4 (son of perdition) and Isaiah 14:13–14 (fall of Lucifer). Isaiah is speaking of the pride of the king of Babylon, but Paul says that this pride will reach its height in the antichrist.

of Rome are taken from Isaiah 23:8.<sup>109</sup> It is noteworthy that Rambach is using the book of Revelation to corroborate the *internal* criterion under discussion, rather than using it (or the New Testament) as the criterion itself. Other examples cited by Rambach include Noah (Gen 5:29), Judah (Gen 49:8–12), Asher (Deut 33:24), and Eliakim (Isa 16:5; 22:20–25).<sup>110</sup>

Rambach ends chapter 13 with the observation that there is sometimes a “deliberate silence” among the criteria of the *sensus mysticus*. For example, Scripture is silent on Melchizedek’s place, birth, death, and successor in his double office of priest and king. From this, Hebrews 7:3 can see him as a type of Christ’s eternity and royal priesthood.<sup>111</sup> It is interesting that the exegesis of Hebrews is seen as an example of how we, too, can do exegesis of the Old Testament, not as an exception.

### V. Explicit External Criteria

The external criteria for discovering the mystical sense of Scripture are those which are found outside of the text which has the mystical interpretation. The explicit external criteria seem to be the most obvious ones, and the most easily accepted. For example, the fact that Melchizedek was a type of Christ, the high priest and king, is proved from Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7.<sup>112</sup> Other examples abound. The bronze serpent is a type of Christ lifted up on the cross (John 3:14–15). Jonah is a type of Christ’s burial and resurrection (Matt 12:40). The rock in the wilderness is a type of Christ (1 Cor 10:4). Adam is a “type of the coming one” (Rom 5:14). The typology of Abraham’s two wives is made explicit not only by Galatians 4:22–31, but also by Isaiah 54:1, for the latter is Paul’s proof passage in Galatians 4:27. The most holy place of the Mosaic tabernacle is a type of the highest heaven. The curtain is a type of the flesh of Christ (Heb 9:9, 11, 24; 10:20). The entry of the high priest annually was a type of Christ’s entry to the throne of divine glory with his own blood (Heb 9:12, 20).<sup>113</sup>

At this point Rambach responds to an objection brought forth by Richard Simon and Jean le Clerc. In response to their claim that the arguments which Christ and the apostles made from the mystical sense “truly have nothing of strength in them,” Rambach states: “Nevertheless, since the Jews of their time admired that sense and did not usually reject

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<sup>109</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 44 (ch. 13).

<sup>110</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 45 (ch. 13).

<sup>111</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 49 (ch. 13).

<sup>112</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 50 (ch. 15). It is interesting that Psalm 110 is considered an *explicit* criterion.

<sup>113</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 50 (ch. 15).

arguments produced from it, however minimally demonstrative [*quamvis parum apodictica*], the apostles considered themselves permitted to assault them with weapons of their own character."<sup>114</sup> Rambach here is defending the apostles' and Christ's use of the *sensus mysticus* in arguments. It appears that, at least for Christ and the apostles, the *sensus mysticus* was indeed *argumentativus*, able to be used to prove doctrine to others.

## VI. Implicit External Criteria

Rambach also discusses five more implicit clues that Holy Scripture gives toward discovering the *sensus mysticus* in another passage. First, the mystical sense is present in a passage "when Scripture puts forth an antitype under these or those figurative names, taken from the Old Economy of God."<sup>115</sup> Again, the Holy Spirit is not playing games with empty names. For example, Christ is called "David" and "Solomon" by Ezekiel 34:23-24; Hosea 3:5; Psalm 72:1; Song of Songs 3:9, 11. It is interesting that Rambach is trying to prove his christological exegesis primarily from the Old Testament. He could have cited Luke 11:31 alone, but instead he chose Old Testament passages and used the New Testament passage as a capstone to his argument. He is avoiding the idea that christological exegesis is simply reading the New Testament into the Old Testament.

Now that we know the prophets call Christ "David," "Solomon," and "Israel," Rambach says it is legitimate to see the latter persons as types of Christ intended by the Holy Spirit.<sup>116</sup> Rambach does not think the New Testament writers were using metaphorical language when they spoke of Christ as "David" or "Solomon" but instead sees this as an indication that David and Solomon *themselves* were types of Christ. He sees these titles not as a metaphor by a human author based on history but as a prophetic type intended by the Holy Spirit when inspired writers wrote of David and Solomon *for the first time*.

The second external implicit criterion is present "when Scripture refers one thing to another with manifest allusions of words."<sup>117</sup> For example, Isaiah 4:5, speaking of God's defense of the apostolic church, says, "Then the LORD will create about every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire

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<sup>114</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 51 (ch. 15).

<sup>115</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 51 (ch. 16). Cf. Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 377.

<sup>116</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 52 (ch. 16).

<sup>117</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 53 (ch. 16).

by night." The allusion here is to that sign of divine presence by which God "decorated" the Israelites redeemed from Egypt (Exod 13:21). From this allusion we learn two things. First, there is a typological analogy between the status of the apostolic church redeemed by Christ and that of Israel brought out of Egypt by the "symbol of divine glory." Second, the function which the pillar played for Israel prefigured the benefits and help of grace (*auxilia gratiae*) granted to the early church.<sup>118</sup>

Rambach adds a restriction in order to prevent the misuse of this criterion. Quoting Johann Christian Kirchmeier, he lets it be known that not every allusion to a Levitical law (and also to an Old Testament narrative?) necessarily means that a type or figure intended by the Holy Spirit is present in what is alluded to.<sup>119</sup> This is a helpful restriction, but Rambach has not gone far enough. He has said that not every allusion is a divinely-intended type, but he has not told us how to distinguish between an innate type and a type which is "illate" (brought to the text by the reader).

The third implicit external criterion is present "when God in Scripture has testified concerning that *genus* of things under which this thing is contained as a *species*, that it has a typological or mystical meaning."<sup>120</sup> For a *species* is of the same nature as its *genus*. For example, Mosaic ceremonies, as a *genus*, have the testimony of being "shadows of future things, whose body is Christ." Rambach explains, "Whatever, therefore, pertains to those rites, even if we do not figure it out, has been applied individually [*speciatim*, according to *species*] to Christ, and is to be interpreted mystically, and to be compared with those things of Christ and of his mystical body which have an analogy corresponding beautifully and wisely to that [particular] ceremony."<sup>121</sup> The *genus* is explicitly made known to us as typological, and this implies that the *species* of the *genus* are also typological. With this in mind, Rambach's restraint should be noticed. He does not seem to be overly confident that the specific meaning of all the *species* of the *genus* will be discovered. He is simply interested in showing that the mystical meaning is there, even if he cannot discover what it is. So if "Mosaic ceremonies" is the *genus*, what are the *species*? From Paul, Rambach answers: persons, places, times, actions, benefits, and judgments.

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<sup>118</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 54 (ch. 16).

<sup>119</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 56 (ch. 16).

<sup>120</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 56 (ch. 16).

<sup>121</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 57 (ch. 16). Cf. Hofmann, *Institutiones theologiae exegeticae*, 47–48.



As 1 Corinthians 10:6-11 says, all of these things are *typoi*, types. According to Rambach, Luther observed the same.<sup>122</sup>

The fourth external implicit criterion is present "when Scripture by means and method of its argumentation hints, and even tacitly supposes, that this or that person of the OT is to be numbered among the types."<sup>123</sup> A quote from Herman Witsius notes the rhetorical context of Paul's usage of types from Melchizedek, Hagar, and Sarah. Namely, Paul was using these types *argumentatively* against the unbelieving Jews. He was not appealing to his own authority as an apostle to show that his exegesis of these types was valid. Instead, he argued from the "clearness of reasons and the suitability of deduction." From the apostle's way of arguing, we can conclude that also the memorable people he does *not* explicitly name are types of Christ in many things which they did or which happened to them. So just as Paul made explicit use of Adam, Melchizedek, Isaac, Ishmael, Hagar, Sarah, and others as types, so also it is legitimate to see persons as types which he did *not* use, for example, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Gideon, and Samson.<sup>124</sup> It is interesting that Rambach argues that the mystical sense is argumentative, while at the same time using this fact not to support his own argumentative use of the mystical sense but to support a wider recognition of the *presence* of the mystical sense.<sup>125</sup>

## VII. Objectivity

Rambach is aware that the typological criteria he has set forth can be misused. In order to prevent this, he sets forth ways by which one can be certain that the type found is one intended by the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that types are "substantial prophecies" (*prophetiae reales*), and therefore the same criteria we use for verbal prophecies can be used for types. The general rule is correspondence. "As are the subjects, so must be the things asserted of them. And in turn: As are the assertions, so must they be

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<sup>122</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 57 (ch. 16). Cf. Martin Luther, *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. John Nicholas Lenker and Eugene F. A. Klug, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 4.1:96-103, especially 100-101.

<sup>123</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 58 (ch. 16).

<sup>124</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 58. Cf. Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments*, 365, 376.

<sup>125</sup> I must leave off Rambach's lengthy discussion of the fifth implicit external criterion (logical syllogisms), about which criterion he is also the most tentative. Rambach discusses syllogisms *a toto ad partes*, *a parte ad totum*, *a continente ad contentum*, *a contento ad continens*, from similar to similar, *a causa ad effectum*, *ab effectibus ad causam*, *a minori ad maius*. Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 59-64 (ch. 16). For a critique of syllogisms *a parte ad totum*, see Hofmann, *Institutiones theologiae exegeticae*, 55.

prescribed by their subjects."<sup>126</sup> More specifically, the "mystical subject" can be confirmed by means of the analogy of subject matter (*analogia rei*) and the analogy of Scripture (*analogia Scripturae*).

The *analogia rei* is the exact similarity which exists between the thing which prefigures and the thing which is prefigured. For example, the description of Eliakim in Isaiah 22:20–25 cannot be a type of Luther, since the words describing Eliakim are too exalted. Instead the characteristics used to describe Eliakim apply to Christ (and we know that Christ has these characteristics from the literal sense of other passages).<sup>127</sup> The *analogia rei* is concerned with the correspondence between type and antitype.

Under *analogia Scripturae* one would expect Rambach to say that a type is genuinely intended by the Holy Spirit if it teaches something explicitly stated by the literal sense of Scripture, or at least that it is *not* so intended if it contradicts the literal sense. Instead, Rambach understands the analogy of Scripture as being nothing other than the external criteria of the mystical sense, both explicit and implicit. He gives several examples of how the analogy of Scripture can show us that a type is present, but unfortunately he omits any examples of passages that do not contain a type of Christ. His examples here are only positive, not negative, and therefore it is difficult to see how his *analogiae* could function to exclude an illegitimate type.

Is there anything, for Rambach, which is *not* a type of Christ? We have seen only one example of this (Absalom on the tree). For the most part, however, Rambach seems to agree with Vitringa, whom he quotes with approval:

Christ Jesus is the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1:24, because the meaning of *all things* done formerly in the church, and which will hereafter be done, is established by God in His Son, Christ Jesus. Wherefore if *anything* marvelous and notable should happen to occur in the Word of God, we are to have recourse to Christ, as to the center of divine wisdom, and to consider it in reference to Him.<sup>128</sup>

Without negative examples, Rambach is not leaving us much choice but to think that any and every thing in Scripture is prophetic of Christ.

However, Rambach concludes his discussion of the criteria of the mystical sense with nine precautions, which he brings in "lest one

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<sup>126</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 66 (ch. 17).

<sup>127</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 46–48 (ch. 13).

<sup>128</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 69 (ch. 17), emphasis added.

transgress the boundaries of prudence and sobriety in their application."<sup>129</sup> Several points are worth noting. Though some of the precautions are in defense of his treatise, many are aimed at objectivity. Rambach is aware of gray areas in the exegesis of the mystical sense. He states that not all of the criteria he has set forth can bring the student of Scripture to the same level of certainty. Explicit exegesis from the New Testament is always the most certain and firm. He is especially tentative about the certainty that can be derived from logical syllogisms, and he wants the syllogisms to be supported by the other criteria as much as possible.<sup>130</sup> He warns against the idea that all the *minutiae* of a type can be discovered. Confidence in the existence of the *sensus mysticus* in various passages does not lead to overconfidence in being able to discover their meanings in detail.<sup>131</sup> Rambach warns strongly against *inventing* allegories and types. Thinking these up out of our own heart is something that should "terrify" us.<sup>132</sup> Finally, he warns his reader not to despise the literal sense.<sup>133</sup>

### VIII. Assessment

In the year 1754, an assessment of Rambach's work was given by Carl Gottlob Hofmann (1703-1774).<sup>134</sup> He wrote, "On the criteria of the mystical sense of Holy Scripture there is Rambach's peculiar treatise, where he has commented on these infallible criteria indeed learnedly enough, but also too widely and not always exactly."<sup>135</sup> Hofmann, the conservative Lutheran, did not agree with all aspects of Rambach's work, but he recognized that Rambach's treatment of the *sensus mysticus* was not a complete *novum*.

The *De sensus mystici criteriis* does not represent a clean break from previous Lutheran exegetical tradition, though it may possibly contain further developments and refinements beyond what the Lutheran tradition had handed down to him. Working from a standpoint of faith in the

<sup>129</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 70 (ch. 18).

<sup>130</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 71 (ch. 18).

<sup>131</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 77 (ch. 18).

<sup>132</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 73 (ch. 18).

<sup>133</sup> Rambach, *De sensus mystici criteriis*, 75 (ch. 18).

<sup>134</sup> Hofmann was professor of theology in Wittenberg. His *Institutiones theologiae exegeticae* (Wittenberg: Io. Ioach. Ahlfeldius, 1754) was republished by C. F. W. Walther for use as a hermeneutics text at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1876. For Hofmann's life and works, see s.v. "Hofmann, (Carl Gottlob)," in Johann Christoph Adelung, *Fortsetzung und Ergänzungen zu Christian Gottlieb Jöchers allgemeinem Gelehrten-Lexico* (Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1784-1787; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1960).

<sup>135</sup> Carl Gottlob Hofmann, *Institutiones theologiae exegeticae*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Ex officina synodi Missouriensis lutheranae, 1876), 60; cf. 49, 51, 53.

complete inspiration of Scripture and belief in the factual truth of the events narrated by the *sensus literalis*, Rambach's work shows a concern for objectivity. In fact, many of his criteria are successful in giving an objective basis for discovering the *sensus mysticus*. However, because he does not give illustrations of passages which do *not* typify Christ to accompany his precautionary statements, I must agree for the most part with Diestel's assessment. The impression is given that every similarity is a type, no matter how remote. Unlike Diestel, I do not think that Rambach's entire project is flawed. Though his work is not completely objective, it is also not completely subjective, but indeed shows much concern for objectivity. Rambach usually rejects typology which points past the New Testament (for example, to Luther's struggle against the pope) and is instead christological in his exegesis. The types have to do with Christ and his church (if positive) or with his enemies (if negative). Rambach wants to see the exegesis of Christ and the apostles as examples of how Christians should do exegesis, not as exceptions to the rule. He wants to see the original rhetorical function of the types within the New Testament, namely, that they were used by the apostles and Christ to prove Christian truth. Christ and the apostles did not simply rely on their own authority in order to be able to use the type but used the type in order to prove their message. Perhaps the most convincing evidence for Rambach's objectivity, however, is his tentativeness. Though he says types are *present* in many places, he admits that we will not be able to discover their meaning in every case.

Amid the plethora of writings on the mystical sense of Scripture within seventeenth- and eighteenth-century German Lutheranism, Rambach's *De sensus mystici criteriis* is a work whose reading brings forth much fruit. Even if he has not attained his goal, he has nevertheless attained a remarkable level of objectivity in investigating the mystical sense of Scripture.