A ROMANTIC THEOLOGY OF THE EUCHARIST.

THE CATHOLIC TÜBINGEN SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNAL
CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY.

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In the first half of the 19th century, the creative atmosphere of German Romanticism
provided fertile ground for an active dialogue between theology and philosophy. Although a
fascinating period of study, in the area of liturgical studies and sacramental theology this era
still remains largely unexplored. In an attempt to turn the tide, this article aims at highlighting
the contribution of the Catholic Tübingen school – one of the leading theological schools in
Germany at the time – to the field of Eucharistic theology. As neither the Eucharist nor the
liturgy were the primary focus of the Catholic Tübingen school, the reflections of these
theologians have never been widely ‘received’ in the history of the liturgy; at most, liturgical
handbooks and overviews mention them in passing.1 Nevertheless, intensive study of the
works of some Tübingen scholars from the perspective of liturgical studies and sacramental
theology reveals a number of interesting topics with regard to the subject of Eucharistic
theology. In addition, a striking overlap emerges vis-à-vis the aims of the 20th century
Liturgical Movement. In particular, I will focus on the aspect of community in the writings of
some of the main representatives of the Tübingen school.

Throughout the article, I will draw attention to four aspects of communal celebration
which became most central to Tübingen theology, namely the broadening of the Tridentine
Eucharistic perspective, the active participation of laity in liturgy, the universal priesthood,
and the use of the vernacular. Wherever possible, I will attempt to draw parallels between the
work of Tübingen scholars and related trends in the Liturgical Movement. In the final
paragraphs, I will also address the question of the contemporary relevance of the Catholic
Tübingen school’s community thinking. Here, a content-based comparison will be developed

1 See among others: Albert Gerhards & Benedikt Kranemann, Einführung in die
Liturgiewissenschaft, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 2006; Bernard Sesboüé, Les
signes du salut: Les sacrements, l’Église, la Vierge Marie, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 1995; Maurice
Brouard (ed.), Eucharistia: Encyclopédie de l’eucharistie, Cerf, Paris, 2002; Franz-Josef Nocke,
Sakramentenlehre: Ein Handbuch, Patmos, Düsseldorf 1997; Keith F. Pecklers, ‘History of the
Roman Liturgy from the Sixteenth until the Twentieth Centuries’, in Anscar J. Chupungco (ed.),
1, pp. 153-178.
between 19th century Tübingen theology and a more recent Tübingen scholar, namely Cardinal Walter Kasper.

With regard to the key figures of the 19th century Tübingen school, focus will lie on renowned theologians such as Johann Sebastian Drey (1777-1853) and Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838), but also Johann Baptist Hirscher (1788-1838) and Franz Anton Staudenmaier (1800-1856). In the first half of the 20th century, Rupert Geiselmann put the Tübingen school back on the theological agenda, and many general introductions and overviews have been written since. Much of the scholarship on these 19th century authors has, during the last three decades, focused more on whether the Catholic Tübingen school represents a genuine theological ‘school of thought’ and less on treating their actual theological importance. Nevertheless, recent scholarship still considers the study of Catholic Tübingen theology to be a worthwhile endeavour. This theology is distinguished for the high level of its scientific discourse and for its place in the development of historical theology. But it is also noteworthy because of these authors’ interaction with and integration of contemporary modes of (philosophical) thinking, for their practical involvement in and loyalty towards the Church,

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2 Hereafter, references to the ‘Tübingen school’ envisage the Catholic one, and not the two other well-known protestant Tübingen schools.

3 Johann Rupert Geiselmann republished different works of both Drey and Möhler and wrote several books on early Tübingen theology, see: Die katholische Tübinger Schule: Ihre theologische Eigenart, Herder, Freiburg, 1964; Lebendiger Glaube aus geheiligter Überlieferung. Der Grundgedanke der Theologie Johann Adam Möhlers und der katholischen Tübinger Schule, Herder, Freiburg, 1966.

4 A good overview of the discussion(s) on the Tübingen school is provided by Stefan Warthmann, Die Katholische Tübinger Schule. Zur Geschichte ihrer Wahrnehmung, Steiner, Stuttgart, 2011.

while at the same time the Tübingen scholars maintained an independent position towards Church authority. In this article I hope to show that these Tübingen scholars were equally creative in their treatment of the liturgy and Eucharistic theology.

COMMUNAL CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE TÜBINGEN SCHOOL

None of the Tübingen scholars in the first half of the 19th century were liturgiologists or sacramental theologians by training. Nevertheless, these scholars developed some ideas on the celebration of the Eucharist. In their writings on the liturgy and the Eucharist, the communal character of celebrating seems to have been highly important. Intensive study of the writings of the Tübingen theologians themselves shows that different aspects of ‘community-thinking’ with regard to celebrating the Eucharist can be distinguished. I will present four such lines of thought, starting with the broadening of the Tridentine perspective, after which I will discuss the active participation in the liturgy. Two other aspects of community thinking found in the writings of the Tübingen scholars are the universal priesthood and the importance of vernacular performance of the liturgy.

I. Broadening of the Tridentine Perspective on the Eucharist: the Early Church as a Model

It is commonly accepted that Tridentine Eucharistic theology had a strong focus on the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. The council of Trent restricted its reflections on the Eucharist to three themes, each of which was discussed separately: the real presence (session XIII), Communion (session XXI) and the Mass and its sacrificial nature (session XXII). Obviously, this restriction had to do with the goal of the council, namely to counter the

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6 For reflection on a full list of identity markers see, among others: S. Warthmann, Die Katholische Tübinger Schule, pp. 499-538.

7 Indispensable for this study was the work of S. Lösch, who was able to attribute authorship to the articles and reviews in the first volumes of the Theologische Quartalschrift, which were originally published anonymously. See: Stephan Lösch, Die Anfänge der Tübinger Theologischen Quartalschrift (1819-1831). Gedenkgabe zum 100. Todestag Joh. Ad. Möhlers, Bader'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Rottenburg, 1938.

statements of the Reformation on the Eucharist. However, as Jungmann observes, in subsequent ages, theologians failed to integrate the council’s teaching in a comprehensive manner.\(^9\) Subsequently, this became the “time that the Communion of the faithful became more and more disjoined from the Mass as a devotional practice in its own right.”\(^10\) It is exactly this kind of theology and praxis which the Tübingen theologians tried to alter.

In his very rich article on the liturgy, Drey, for example, criticizes the council of Trent for having understood the Eucharist almost exclusively from a sacrificial perspective.\(^11\) Instead, Drey points to a double meaning of the Eucharist: the sacrificial meaning of making present Jesus’ salvific death on the one hand, and the mystical institution of the new covenant between God and humankind on the other.\(^12\) Not only are we cleansed from our sins by Christ’s death, but He also brings us into relationship with the Father through sharing his body and blood. Both meanings are present in the celebration of the Eucharist according to Drey. He then enters into dialogue with the sixth chapter of session XXII (1562). The passage on which Drey comments reads as follows:

The holy council would certainly like the faithful present at each mass to communicate in it not only by spiritual devotion but also by sacramental reception, so that the fruits of this sacrifice could be theirs more fully. But, if this does not always happen, the council does not for that reason condemn as private and illicit masses in which only the priest communicates. Rather, it approves and commends them, for they too should be considered truly communal masses, partly because the people communicate spiritually in them, and partly because they are celebrated by an official minister of the Church, not for his own good alone but for all the faithful who belong to the body of Christ.\(^13\)

Although, at first sight, the council Fathers seem to favour regular Communion, clearly, the idea of the Eucharist as communion, as conceptualized by Drey, is not present in this

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\(^9\) “Theologians in the subsequent age should have integrated into a comprehensive context what the Council had treated in separate parts for purpose of careful *ad hoc* clarification. This integration, however, was achieved only in part.” See: J. J. Jungmann, *The Mass*, p. 87.

\(^10\) *Ibidem*, p. 87.


\(^12\) *Ibidem*, pp. 247-255.

statement. The council Fathers only refer to the fruits of the sacrifice. Drey, commenting on this passage, states:

It is regrettable that the council did not fully restore the second constitutive meaning of the Mass that had already been forgotten long before its time. On the one hand it itself wishes that all believers not just attend Mass, but that they may also receive the Eucharist every time. On the other hand, however, it contents itself with this wish, and with the justification of the Mass in its contemporary form, without giving an order or without prescribing any significant measure by way of which its wish could have been fulfilled or brought closer to its fulfilment.  

With regard to the restoration of the communion between God and humankind in the Eucharist, the act of receiving Communion is of main importance, while by sharing in the body and blood, we find ourselves in unity with the Father through the Son. In Drey’s time, however, the faithful rarely received Communion, and this trend had been duly approved of by the council of Trent. The above quotation indicates that one of the main reasons for this approval was the efficacy of ‘spiritual Communion’. Communion can be fruitful even when one does not physically partake in it. In contrast to this Tridentine statement, one should, according to Drey, look at the early church as a model for the vividness of the aforementioned second, communal meaning of the Eucharist. This movement of ressourcement is the first very important parallel between the Liturgical Movement and the Catholic Tübingen School. Drey refers, among others, to Cyprian’s *De dominica oratione* and his *Epistula ad Tibaritanos*, to Basil’s *Epistula ad Ceasariam* and Ambrose’s *De Sacramentis*. In addition, he repeatedly appeals to ancient liturgical practices as described, for example, in the Canon of the Apostles. By these appeals, it is clear that Drey opposes the practice of spiritual Communion and consequently also the Tridentine canons. Apart from pointing out that there is no historical precedent for the practice of a solely ‘spiritual Communion’ in the early church, Drey also criticizes the habit of spiritual Communion from a systematic theological perspective. One can summarise his contention as follows: if the right disposition suffices to receive the sacrament – which is the argument used in favour of spiritual Communion – then

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15 Apart from these, Drey also refers to works of Eusebius, John Chrysostom, Augustine and Epiphanius. See: *Ibidem*, p. 253.
16 Drey was very familiar with this ancient liturgical source as he wrote an extensive study on it: *Neue Untersuchungen über die Constitutionen und Canones der Aposteln*, Laupp, Tübingen 1832.
one could also baptize and confirm people in a spiritual way, and when taken to its extremes, the sacraments would cease to be sacraments. 17

A similar position concerning the sacrificial meaning of the Eucharist is adopted by Drey’s colleague, Hirscher, who was a pastoral and moral theologian. His point of view can be most clearly discerned in one of his first monographs, in which he reflects on the essence of the Eucharist for its correct celebration. 18 Hirscher, just as Drey, holds the early church as a model and source of inspiration for his conceptual interpretation of the Eucharist. 19 Concluding the first and most theoretical part of his writing, he states:

But they, who call the Mass a sacrifice, (even assuming they have a correct and not at all the commonly accepted understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice), and who believe that in doing so they have exhausted the complete meaning of the Mass, also err to some extent. 20

With this statement, Hirscher clearly criticizes the reception of the Tridentine formulations on the Eucharist which, according to him, often maintain a false understanding of the sacrificial nature of the mass and limit the meaning of the Eucharist to its sacrificial nature. For Hirscher the Eucharist is, in the first place, the communal celebration of the mystery of Christ’s death and our salvation. Hirscher goes on to express his view on the nature of the Eucharist, which extends even further than this first monograph; the Eucharist is to be found at the centre of his thinking and comes to the fore in several of his writings, including his most famous work, Die christliche Moral. 21 His emphasis on the communal aspect of the Eucharist is clearly present here when he states:

18 Johann B. Hirscher, Missae genuinam notionem eruere ejusque celebrandae rectam methodum monstrare tentavit, Laupp, Tübingen, 1821.
19 In the beginning of his Missae he states: “Cujus de genuina ss. coena destinatione si quis defendionis fontes desiderat: sacram scripturam et Antiquorum testimonia in medium proferimus.” See: J. B. Hirscher, Missae, p. 6. Throughout his work, Hirscher indeed sustains his arguments time and again with reference to and quotations from the Fathers, as for example Justin Martyr, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Ignatius, Clemens of Alexandria and others. Hirscher also takes as point of reference the various old and non roman-liturgies, of which he clearly had a good knowledge. He not only refers to the well-known Apostolic Constitutions, but also to the liturgy of Constantinople, the Nestorian Rite, the Malabar Rite, the liturgy of Saint James, the Mozarabic Rite, the Gallican Rite, etcetera.
20 J. B. Hirscher, Missae, p. 63.
As from the beginning, so also today all believers continue to gather at the communal celebration of the holy supper. (…. ) It is not irrelevant whether one attends a private Mass or the proper communal celebration of the Supper. Only in the case of the latter does the kingdom visibly present itself as the unification of all with Christ, and (in Him) with the Father and with one another.  

In the above quotation, Hirscher initiates his argument by mentioning the ancient tradition of the Church (“as from the beginning”), referring in footnote to the Apologia of Justin the Martyr, to the fifth book of Cyril of Jerusalem’s mystagogical catechesis and to the Apologia of Tertullian. Hence, here again, the words of the Church Fathers function not only as background information, but also as an argument for an increased emphasis on the communal celebration of the Eucharist and a model to balance the strictly sacrificial understanding of the post-tridentine period.

In addition, Hirscher extensively argues for the practice of regular Communion for the faithful, as was common in the early church. In this regard, he refers to the Apostolic Canons and also to numerous councils, including the council of Trent. In particular, he refers to the same chapter six of the twelfth session of Trent, quoted above, which drew criticism from Drey. While Hirscher applies it as an argument in favour of regular Communion, he also comments upon the Tridentine statements concerning masses in which the priest is the only person to communicate. He does not wish to label these masses as ‘sacramentally unlawful’, but states that “they correspond little to the institution of our Lord”. According to Hirscher, the Church’s primary theological concern should be “how the public and communal receiving of the most holy Supper can be promoted”.

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22 Johann B. Hirscher, Die christliche Moral als Lehre von der Verwirklichung des göttlichen Reiches in der Menschheit, Laupp, 1836, vol. 3, p. 256. Also notice the theme of the kingdom of God being mentioned here. This will be further elaborated on in the second paragraph.

23 Ibidem, p. 256 (footnote). Concerning Cyril’s mystagogical catechesis, it should be noted that Hirscher makes a mistake. He refers to “Cyril. Alex. Cat. myst. 5”, although such work from this particular author is unknown to us. Nevertheless, at several other points in different writings, Hirscher refers – correctly – to the mystagogical catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem. Presumably he intended to do the same here, but switched the names by mistake.

24 J. B. Hirscher, Missae, p. 78-86.

25 Expressed in the second part of the aforementioned chapter 6, but also in the anathema of canon 8 of the same session (XXII): “If anyone says that masses in which only the priest communicates sacramentally are unlawful, and so should be abolished: let him be anathema.” N. P. Tanner & G. Alberigo, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, p. 736.

26 J. B. Hirscher, Missae, p. 87.

27 Ibidem, p. 87.
One may conclude that the Tübingen theologians do not really oppose the teaching of Trent – apart from Drey’s criticism of spiritual Communion – but rather seek to widen the Eucharistic perspective. Whereas most post-tridentine theology failed to see the broader picture, and thus, over-developed the centrality of sacrifice, the Tübingen scholars attempted to integrate Tridentine reflections into an encompassing Eucharistic theology. Foundational for this kind of Eucharistic theology is the conviction that communion with God implies a communal celebration of the liturgy, as is to be observed in the practices and writings of the early church. Therefore, lay people should be allowed and even encouraged to receive Communion regularly and to play a more active role in the liturgy, a concern which would thus seem to predate the Liturgical Movement of the beginning of the 20th century. This active participation is exactly the second aspect of Tübingen community-thinking, which will be subsequently discussed.

II. The Active Participation: das Mitfeiern.

The active participation of the faithful in the life, and more particularly, in the liturgy of the Church, became one of the main features of the liturgical reform movements which have arisen since the beginning of the 20th century. During the Second Vatican Council, more specifically in the dogmatic constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium, the concept of active participation acquired its place in the life of the Church. Strikingly, Hirscher, who was greatly indebted to the liturgical reform movement of the Katholische Aufklärung, had already in his own time put strong emphasis on the active participation of the laity in Eucharistic practice and on the authentic celebration of the liturgy within the whole community.

Hirscher states that the kingdom of God, the central theme in his theology, is anticipated and even effectively manifest through communal worship. He argues that God’s kingdom is being mediated in and through the Eucharist. In an important article, Über einige Störungen in dem richtigen Verhältnisse des Kirchentums zu dem Zwecke des Christentums, he explicitly connects these thoughts on the kingdom and the Eucharist to the notion of unity. This unity,
or community within the kingdom of God, is the meaning and goal of the Eucharist. The Church is not only a consequence of, but also a fundamental goal of the Eucharist, the latter having been instituted by Christ for this particular reason. The Eucharist is the feast of what Hirscher calls “a universal family of Christ,” in which all take part, whether they are present or absent, living or deceased. Sharing the same bread and eating Christ’s body makes this community into a whole:

In this union around the one table, the one community shall be present, which Jesus has bought with His blood and sanctified with His spirit – the community of God’s children on earth. As truly as we, in receiving the Holy Sacrament, eat from the one bread, so we accordingly must truly live in mind and deed as members of one family and as brothers among one another, and, rising from the table of love, perform acts of charity, of forgiveness, of peace and generosity.

Given the fact that the Eucharist is of crucial importance in creating this community of love, Hirscher – very much like the protagonists of the Liturgical Movement – reacts against the common liturgical practice of his time. According to Hirscher, distance between the faithful and the clergy eventually leads to a situation in which the faithful merely attend, rather than truly participate, in the celebration. The communal aspect of the liturgy is essential, and this concept of participation, ‘das Mitfeiern’, can be found in a number of his writings. For example, in his well-known critique of scholasticism, Hirscher states that it was Jesus’ intention and our duty “to celebrate the Mass as a public act, belonging to the entire community, communal with the priest”. This fundamental conviction concerning the essence of the liturgy as a communal act leads him to advocate certain practical reforms of the

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31 J. B. Hirscher, Missae, p. 27; Johann B. Hirscher, Betrachtungen über sämmtliche Evangelien der Fasten mit Einschluß der Leidensgeschichte, Laupp, Tübingen, 1829, p. 408.
32 J. B., Hirscher, Missae, pp. 24-25.
33 J. B. Hirscher, Betrachtungen über sämmtliche Evangelien, p. 408.
35 In his work against scholasticism, he formulates it as follows: “So ist nichts mehr zu wünschen, als daß die Katechumenen angeleitet werden, diesen ihren Cultus nicht bloß als Anwesende, sondern als wesentlich Theilnehmende zu begehen.” See: Johann B. Hirscher, Über das Verhältniß des Evangeliums zu der theologischen Scholastik der neuesten Zeit im Katholischen Deutschland zugleich als Beitrag zur Katechetik, Laupp, Tübingen, 1823, p. 123.
36 Ibidem, p. 124.
liturgy, such as the already mentioned promotion of regular Communion, the introduction of the vernacular in the liturgy – which will be discussed below – the distribution of Communion under both species, the celebration of the mass *versus populum* and the rejection of the practice of celebrating more than one mass at the same time in a single church.

Hirscher’s emphases on the active participation of the laity in the liturgy are characteristic of his being a pastoral theologian. These pleas for practical reforms are less outspoken in the writings of the other, more speculative, Tübingen theologians. Nevertheless, Drey also alludes to the participation of the faithful in his understanding of the liturgy as the work of the people (λειτουργία), referring again to the early church. He explains that public worship “essentially consists in this: that all those who come together for religious edification, act together with the priest and with each other”. Here, Drey is not only concerned with communal prayer, but also stresses the common action of all present, both minister and faithful. For a long time, this took place under the form of ‘representation’, mainly through the figure of the altar boy representing the faithful and who – according to Drey – simply murmur some Latin phrases without comprehending their true meaning. Drey perceives this to be completely insufficient for a true and active communal celebration of the Eucharist, which in the end can only be achieved by removing “the partition of all that is public and communal: the foreign language of the missal“.

If they are to teach us anything, the examples set by Hirscher and Drey, who despite their many differences both make a plea for genuine, active participation in liturgy, should make it clear that any quest for a more community-centred liturgy must have implications for the process of concrete liturgical reform. The celebration of the covenant between God and humankind and participation in God’s kingdom of unity should be expressed in real acts and should result in actual liturgical choices.

**III. The Universal Priesthood**

A third aspect of the community theology of the Tübingen school is to be found in their reflections on the universal or shared priesthood. In his early work *Die Einheit der Kirche*,

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37 Hirscher’s demand for the use of vernacular is also characteristic of his work, but the same could be said for virtually every Tübingen theologian. The pervasiveness of this topic at Tübingen will be further analysed below.


39 *Ibidem*, p. 244.

Möhler rediscovers the concept of the universal priesthood of the faithful.\textsuperscript{41} In his reflections on the bishop as a sign of unity, Möhler explicitly states that in the first century every Christian was endowed with priestly dignity.\textsuperscript{42} As he explains at the end of the work, this should be seen in relation to the celebration of the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{43} He argues:

Furthermore, it is said that the entire Church, including the whole of the faithful, sacrifices Christ to the Father in the holy sacrament. (…) So in the priest, the entire community sacrifices, since he is their unity, or all share a spiritual activity, which concentrates and expresses itself in the priest.\textsuperscript{44}

Drawing form several patristic sources, Möhler concludes that nobody can be ‘his own priest’, and by doing so he opposes private masses. The Eucharist has always been seen as an act of the community and should be restored in that sense\textsuperscript{45}.

Möhler’s reflections on the universal priesthood are exemplary of the pervasiveness of the Romantic \textit{Organismus} motif in Tübingen theology.\textsuperscript{46} This organic principle, which

\textsuperscript{41} At the council of Trent, this concept had become discredited because of the Reformation, and during the following centuries it was neglected in theological reflection, until Möhler and his Tübingen colleagues – and independently from them also J. H. Newman – retrieved it in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. See: Michael Root, ‘B. Universal Priesthood’, in Jean-Yves Lacoste (ed.), \textit{Encyclopedia of Christian Theology}, Routledge, New York, 2005, vol. 3, pp. 1282-1284.


\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibidem}, pp. 309-310.


\textsuperscript{46} Influenced by the Romantics and building on scholars as Sailer, Gügler and Baader, the Tübingen theologians stressed the organic and living character of the Christian faith and theology. This reveals itself for example in the strong connection Hirscher draws between scholarly thinking and Christian being and living. Möhler’s famous ecclesiology is based on an organic understanding of the Church. Drey compares Christianity and its tradition with a plant and its roots. This organic metaphor also explains the strong pneumatological and trinitarian thinking of the Tübingen theologians, particularly in Staudenmaier’s theology. Another example is the prominent place ‘Leben’ and ‘Lebendigkeit’ takes in all of their writings. Evidently, Paul’s illustration of the body and its members (1 Cor 12:12-26) is one of the favourite metaphors in the writings of the Tübingen scholars discussed. Finally, one could say that their typical historical theology, stressing continuity and development in tradition, their theology of revelation, and the strong concept of unity were all influenced and
connects the parts and the whole in unity, played an equally important role in their reflections on the Eucharist. For Möhler, Christ unites us with the Father. But to reach this unity, Christ uses the community of the faithful; therefore, all take part in his unifying ministry, and “the priest is used as synecdoche of all the faithful, as he represents their unity (…) in him everything individual is intimately and vividly connected with one another and mutually transmits existence and life.”

In Möhler’s later works a shift is perceptible from a more pneumatological to a more Christological theological perspective, however the idea of the universal priesthood is still present, albeit in a less outspoken manner. In his major work, the Symbolik, he widely criticises the idea of the universal priesthood as understood by Luther and the Reformation. According to Möhler, “Luther laid hold of the old Christian idea of a universal priesthood, disfigured it, and then applied it to his new scheme”. In this attempt at dialogue with the Reformation, a stronger hierarchical interpretation of the Church and the universal priesthood comes to the fore. However, these particular statements on universal priesthood take place in the context of ecclesiological issues. A careful study of Möhler’s reflection on the sacraments and the Eucharist in the Symbolik clearly reveals his emphasis on the communal aspect of Eucharistic celebration. When Möhler reflects on the Mass as a sacrifice of grace and thanksgiving, he states: “While the community, in the person of the priest, performeth [sic] this [act], it confesses perpetually what Christ became, and still continues to be, for its sake”. Again, it is essentially the community which performs the Eucharistic sacrificial act, so for Möhler, the infrequent involvement of the laity in Communion represented an abuse characterized by the romantic idea of the organic. For the organic idea of the Tübinger Schule, see among others: Josef R. Geiselmann, ‘Die Glaubenswissenschaft der Katholischen Tübinger Schule in ihrer Grundlegung durch Johann Sebastian v. Drey’, in ThQ 111 (1930) 49-117, here 54-66; J. R. Geiselmann, Lebendiger Glaube; Hermann J. Brosch, Das Übernatürliche in der katholischen Tübinger Schule, Ludgerus–Verlag Wingen, Essen, 1962, pp. 79-82.

48 Ibidem, p. 315. (Original italicisation).
50 J. A. Möhler, Symbolism, pp. 318.
51 Ibidem, pp. 304-310; p. 331.
52 Ibidem, p. 239.
This stance was largely based on his esteem for the practices of the early church, where regular Communion by all was common and on Eucharistic prayers, which “presuppose the sacramental Communion of the entire congregation”.54

Another Tübingen scholar who gives consideration to the Eucharist is Staudenmaier, whose dissenting views on community and the (universal) priesthood add an important counterbalance to the position of Möhler and his colleagues in Tübingen.55 More than the other Tübingen scholars, Staudenmaier, when reflecting on the Eucharist’s redemptive character and on the communion between the faithful and God, emphasizes the importance of the priest. The priest as the liturgist is the starting point for his reflections on the liturgy in his *Encyklopädie*.56 It is the priest who distributes the sacraments and – through the liturgy – provides reconciliation and salvation. In fact, Staudenmaier’s writings contain not a single trace of the universal priesthood and clearly attribute an exalted position to the priest.57 For him, the community is strictly divided into the priesthood on the one hand and the laity on the other. Both ‘parts’ have their own tasks, although he also points to the need for cooperation (*Mitwirkung*). Unlike some of his fellow Tübingen theologians (Hirscher and Möhler for instance), he does not support the presenting of the cup to the laity: the priest’s drinking of it is sufficient.58 Nonetheless, one can argue that Staudenmaier’s thinking is profoundly communal: he develops the Eucharist as “the great sacrament of unification,” through which the Church as “community of love” enters into the most solid community with Christ.59 Staudenmaier focuses on the community between God and his people – which he probably inherited from his tutor Drey – albeit without sharing the practical consequences his fellow Tübingen theologians drew from it.60

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55 Mention could also be made of Hirscher. He refers to the universal priesthood only once, saying “*Alles Volk is ein geheiligt Priesterthum*” (referring to 1 Pe 2:5.9 and Re 5:10), but without expanding on it, which is the reason he has been left out for discussion here. See: J B. Hirscher, *Die christliche Moral*, vol. 3, p. 260.
57 Franz A. Staudenmaier, *Der Pragmatismus der Geistsegaben oder das Wirken des göttlichen Geistes im Menschen und in der Menschheit*, Laupp, Tübingen, 1835, pp. 122-126.
58 Franz A. Staudenmaier, *Encyklopädie der theologischen Wissenschaften als System der gesammten Theologie*, Florian Kupferberg, Mainz; Karl Gerold, Wien, 1840, p. 786. He strictly follows Trent on this point, even making reference to Session XIII, can. 3.
60 This may have been partially caused by the diminishing influence of the Enlightenment.
IV. Liturgy in the Vernacular

One of the most important issues of practical reform aspired to by the Tübingen school was the celebration of the liturgy in the vernacular, an ambition which can even be found in Staudenmaier’s writings. The early Tübingen theologians must certainly have inherited this concern for the liturgical language from the reform movements of the Katholische Aufklärung. Nonetheless, this shared concern stems from different motifs: the Aufklärer – such as Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg (1774-1860) – mainly advocated the vernacular on pedagogical and emancipatory grounds, while the Tübingen scholars call for the dismissal of Latin as a liturgical language was grounded in their community-based thinking. As such, they held a nuanced position on the replacement of Latin with the vernacular, which appears to be very similar to the pleas of the 20th century Liturgical Movement.

Hirscher, for example, makes a fierce case for the liturgy in the vernacular throughout his entire career, but particularly in his Missae. German prayer books for private use by the faithful – even during mass – already existed in his day, but, he observes, when each congregant focuses solely on his or her individual prayer book, communal worship is hampered rather than improved. The use of prayer books also meant that few worshipers actually listened to the Latin prayers present in the mass. Another, more pragmatic argument developed by Hirscher was that the use of Latin conceals the ignorance of many priests with regard to the liturgy. If priests were forced to celebrate in German, making it possible for the people to understand them, they would have to make greater effort to improve their ars celebrandi. For these reasons, Hirscher even wrote two German “Orders of Mass” himself, published as appendices to his Missae. However, he still considered a larger liturgical reform as being indispensable, in order to pay due attention to the formation of both the priests and the laity. After some warnings from Rome, Hirscher became more cautious and also began to point out the arguments in favour of the Latin language in the liturgy (e.g.


62 J.B. Hirscher, Missae, pp. 68-78.

63 Ibidem, pp. 76-77.

64 Ibidem, pp. 108-144.
upholding the mysterious character of the Eucharist). In a similar vein, Drey opposed the use of Latin in the liturgy. In the early church, he argues, the liturgy was strictly public and common, and celebrated in the native language of the community. In his own day, however, people found themselves confronted with a veil that covered this essential characteristic of the liturgy, again understood as the work of the people (λειτουργία). The fact that some people had their own personal (German) prayer books did not as yet transform the liturgy into a common act of all those present. In his early works, Drey makes an impassioned case for dismissing the use of Latin in the liturgy, saying, “the Mass itself will not become a communal act as long as this [practice] remains”. In commenting more than a decade later on the new Freiburg Ritual – the book which contains the prayers and rubrics for the administration of the various sacraments and also various blessings and sacramentals – Drey is more reticent in his demand to replace the Latin with the vernacular. Here, he applauds the choice of the bishop to omit every liturgical form in Latin and provide two corresponding German forms at the same time. Drey expresses himself more critically regarding the instructions given to the use of the new Freiburg Ritual, which he believed was unclear and – at least for the forma sacramenti – tended to give preference to the Latin formulations. The same nuanced position is formulated in his advice to the bishop of Limburg, who consulted Drey before publishing a new Ritual:

I have repeatedly argued for the administration of the sacraments and the rest of the ecclesial rite in the German language, (...), yet I do not want to see the Latin administration pushed aside either; (...); it is self-evident that the German forms – whether these are translations or newly composed – must be simple, popular, speaking

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66 Johann B. Hirscher, Die kirchlichen Zustände der Gegenwart, Laupp, Tübingen, 1849, p. 65.
67 For this and the following see: J. S. Drey, ‘Ehrerbietige Wünsche’, pp. 240-247.
69 Ibidem, p. 244.
more to the heart than to the mind, expressing the Christian and ecclesial idea, held in a devotional tone.\footnote{This quotation can be found in the attachment of Drey’s letter to Bishop Johann Wilhelm Bausch of Limburg, Tübingen, 1836, November 11th. Words in italics are underlined in the original document. See: Rudolf Reinhardt, ‘Johann Sebastian Drey und das Limburger Rituale von 1838. Neue Quellen’, in \textit{Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte} 12 (1993) 57-67, here p. 62.}

According to Drey, celebrating the liturgy in the vernacular corresponds with the Christian and ecclesial idea. By this, he means that the Eucharist must be understood as the bond between God and humankind and among human people.

Möhler, the famous student of Hirscher and Drey, also holds a demanding plea for the liturgy in the vernacular.\footnote{See also: L. Swidler, \textit{Aufklärung Catholicism}, p. 18.} In a book review, for instance, he opposes an author who rejects the modernistic demand for the vernacular.\footnote{Johann A. Möhler, reviewing Ferdinand Walter, ‘Lehrbuch des Kirchenrechts mit Berücksichtigung der neuesten Verhältnisse’, in \textit{ThQ} 5 (1823) 263-299, here pp. 293-299.} Möhler’s first argument in this review is related to the early church and church history – the Greek church celebrated in Greek, the Latin in Latin, and so on. Describing the history of Latin as the vernacular and liturgical language in the West, he argues that the differentiation between the vernacular and the liturgical or religious language was a gradual and natural process. Möhler goes on to say of the Latin language that:

Every natural reason for its existence (...) as a liturgical language has therefore disappeared, and it thus stands there as an unfounded thing. (...) But after the natural reason for retaining the Latin language in the liturgy has expired, other reasons are put forward; so although solid reasons no longer exist, they nonetheless appear to do so.\footnote{\textit{Ibidem}, pp. 296-297.} 

Möhler then – in a rather ironic style – counters several arguments made by the defenders of Latin as the sole language of liturgy. He first engages the argument that liturgy takes place in a large building which, as such, can never possibly be audible or understandable to all those present. Möhler dismisses this argument immediately, taking the inaudibility of the liturgy to some as no reason for the perpetuation of its incomprehensibility to all. Second, some authors point to the ancient dignity of Latin as a reason for its continued use, to which Möhler responds that if this holds true, one should make use of the – much older – Hebrew in the liturgy. Third, according to the author of the book Möhler reviews, Latin is a symbol for the unity of the Church. Möhler, for whom unity was an important theological matter, reacts by
stating that the unity of the Church lies in “the doctrine, the essence of the liturgy and in the structure laid down by Christ”\textsuperscript{75}, not in some external symbol such as a language. Moreover, he contends: “What kind of exalted unity [is this], when not a single community in the entire Catholic world understands its priest!”\textsuperscript{76} Here, Möhler accuses the author of defending the continued use of Latin simply because of the (erroneous) belief that translations are half-hearted and poor. Möhler, by contrast, holds that one should pray in the specific language which God himself gave to each of us. Language is a constitutive element of culture and an indication of its development, evolving alongside it. As such, the language of the liturgy should be adjusted to contemporary cultural developments.\textsuperscript{77} In another review, he states: “In the chief moments of the Mass, the priest and the people must engage in the innermost exchange; and what will accomplish this if not the bond of language”.\textsuperscript{78} With Möhler, a strong connection between the celebration of the Eucharist and the concept of community is once again apparent. In addition, Möhler’s opinion on liturgical language and its relation to culture could also be interpreted as an early plea for inculturation, which became a major issue before and mainly after the Second Vatican Council.\textsuperscript{79}

Finally, Staudenmaier explicitly refrains from making a judgment about Latin as liturgical language,\textsuperscript{80} which is certainly not one of his main concerns. On the other hand, he has no problem with the use of the vernacular for the liturgy if this corresponds to the needs of the community. He perceives liturgy in the vernacular as a possible rapprochement between the Catholic and Protestant Churches, because, in the end, only spiritual things are truly important for the Catholic Church and not this kind of external matter. Besides, he

\textsuperscript{75} Ibidem, p. 298.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibidem, p. 298.

\textsuperscript{77} Möhler refers for this to pope John VIII and his probation of the liturgies in the Slavonic languages, see also: Sebastian Scholz, ‘Johannes VIII’, in Bruno Steimer (ed.) Lexikon der Päpste und des Papsttums, Herder, Freiburg, 2001, pp. 183-85.


continues, the use of the vernacular “can, even beyond this, become a means of bringing priest and people to a true inner and powerful bond during the cultic actions”.

As such, even for Staudenmaier – but also for Hirscher, Drey and Möhler – concern for liturgical language that enables the faithful to understand and participate in the celebration of the Eucharist is firmly grounded in a zeal for a public, more communal, and authentic celebration.

**TÜBINGEN COMMUNITY THEOLOGY: ITS RELATION TO THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENT AND ITS CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**

I. The 20th Century Liturgical Movement

After discussing these four elements of community, it is clear that the concerns of the Tübingen school greatly overlap with those of the twentieth century Liturgical Movement – especially in relation to community, the liturgy, and the Eucharist. The Liturgical Movement explicitly promoted the need for a more communal celebration of the Eucharist, drawing heavily on the teachings of the Church Fathers. They advocated the active participation of the faithful, grounding the rationale for this practice in the shared priesthood of all in Christ. Celebrating the liturgy in the vernacular was of major importance during the reforms of the 20th century. Although it still remains to be seen whether the protagonists of the Liturgical Movement, e.g. Dom Lambert Beauduin and Odo Casel, were actually familiar with the liturgical writings of the Tübingen scholars discussed in this paper, a content-related comparison reveals a number of similarities. What becomes clear in considering both the Liturgical Movement and Tübingen theology is that a genuine return to the Fathers of the Church often compels theologians to advocate a more communal approach to the Eucharistic celebration. As such, the Tübingen scholars were not merely foreshadowing the Liturgical Movement – and for that matter, the general return ‘ad fontes’ – but were genuinely influential on the development of theology in the first half of the 20th century. The key-figure here is undoubtedly Möhler, whose writings – especially his *Einheit* – had a clear influence on

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81 *Ibidem*, p. 462.
theologians such as Yves Congar, Henri De Lubac and others. Whether or not, for example, Dreys’ theology of the Eucharist directly influenced Odo Casel’s *mysterientheologie* needs to become a subject for further investigation. Nevertheless, a quick review of Casel’s main works does not reveal any references to Drey, although major similarities become apparent when one starts comparing their thought on the Eucharist, sacrifice and communion. Fridolin Laupheimer attested this resemblance between Drey and Casel for the first time in his doctoral dissertation. Both Drey and Casel put a strong accent on the liturgy as symbolic but real representation of the paschal mystery (*Urmysterium*) and its sacramental grace. The ‘organic’ approach of the liturgy and the mystery of the Eucharist can also be found in the work of both authors. Waldemar Von Trapp considers the Tübingen School to be one of the roots of the Liturgical Movement, although he does so cautiously, rarely attributing direct influence over the Liturgical Movement to Tübingen School scholars (with the exception of Möhler). Whether or not the Tübingen School had a direct, textual influence on the Tübingen School is not a question that can be answered here, since our major focus is the Tübingen School and not the Liturgical Movement. However, it has been shown that Möhlers ecclesiology inspired the 20th century reform movements. In-depth investigation into Tübingen theology now shows that major similarities also exist between the liturgical reflections of the Tübingen theologians and the protagonists of the 20th century Liturgical Movement, on the level of methodology and on the level of theological content, and in their dedication to liturgical reform.

II. Tübingen and its Contemporary’s: 19th Century Theology and Walter Kasper

This intensive study of the writings of the Tübingen scholars attempts to fill a gap in the history of Eucharistic theology on the one hand and the reception of the Tübingen school’s theology on the other. Of course, the context of the Tübingen scholars differs greatly from our

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84 The reception of the Tübinger school in France has recently been well documented by Stephan Warthmann. See: S. Warthmann, *Die Katholische Tübinger Schule*, pp. 339-406.


own, especially in the light of the important changes in the celebration of the liturgy that were realized in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Nevertheless, it is my firm belief that 21st century theologians still have much to learn from their 19th century predecessors. In order to better illustrate the contemporary relevance of studying Tübingen theology on the Eucharist, a comparison will subsequently be drawn between the 19th century school’s thinking on the communal celebration of the Eucharist and the perspective on community as it appears in Walter Kasper’s theology. It is evident that this contemporary Tübingen theologian has been influenced by his 19th century predecessors. References to both Möhler and the notorious Tübingen scholar Geiselmann are numerous in Kasper’s collected contributions on the liturgy and a close-reading of the volume, *Die Liturgie der Kirche* (2010), shows that the legacy of the 19th century Tübingen school is still present in – and indeed remains essential to – theological reflection on the Eucharist today.

All four elements of communal celebration discussed above can be found in Kasper’s work on the liturgy. The title of the volume, *Die Liturgie der Kirche*, already demonstrates how strongly he perceives the connection with the liturgy – especially the Eucharist – and the community that is the Church. At one point Kasper states: “The personal and ecclesial communion is the goal and fulfilment of the Eucharistic celebration.” In numerous other references, Kasper also confirms that the essence of the Eucharist lies in community, referring just as his 19th century predecessors had done, to the Church Fathers. Active participation, the second element discussed above, also has its place in Kasper’s theology. Noteworthy is his emphasis on the “active and inner co-celebration of the Eucharistic event.” In addition, the notion of the universal priesthood is foundational to this active participation, and Kasper even devotes an entirely new introductory chapter to the priesthood of all the faithful in his

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88 For this, I rely on one of the recent volumes of his *Gesammelte Schriften*: Walter Kasper, *Die Liturgie der Kirche* (Gesammelte Schriften, 10), Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2010.
90 Three of the contributions in this volume are new, of which two pertain to the chapter on the Eucharist. One of those two is completely devoted to ‘Eucharistic ecclesiology’, see: Walter Kasper, *Die Liturgie der Kirche*, pp. 314-333.
93 *Ibidem*, p. 67, (italics are mine). As in other post-Vatican II reflections on the active participation, focus lies on the attitude of the faithful, more than on ‘liturgical acts’ of participation.
collected essays. Even the liturgical language of the Tübingen school is still of concern to contemporary theologians, as Kasper shows in his opposition to a literal translation of liturgical texts (he instead favours translations which do justice to the culture of the local churches). Clearly, these elements of communal celebration have not lost theological significance in our time. And beyond these striking similarities, there are also more fundamental issues which arise when confronting both contemporary and 19th century Tübingen theology on the Eucharist. Below a brief analysis will be made of three of these issues.

The first issue of reflection is Kasper’s conviction that at the core of the crisis of the Church today is a deeper crisis related to our understanding of the Eucharist. According to Kasper, contemporary Eucharistic theology still focuses too exclusively on the moment of consecration, the real presence of Christ, and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. When one goes back to Holy Scripture, the Church Fathers and even the Scholastics, Kasper sees a much broader picture. Kasper makes a plea for contemporary theologians to (re)discover the Eucharist as a sacrament of unity, holding that such a focus would also strengthen our ability to cope with today’s crises in the Church. Kasper also warns against an overly ‘individualistic’ way of understanding the Eucharist, stating that “the modern trends of individualism and subjectivism also have found their way into the ordinary understanding of the Eucharist and even more into the Eucharistic praxis.”

All these reflections are also at the heart of what Tübingen theologians hoped to achieve. In counterbalancing the individualism of the Enlightenment and the exclusive focus on the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, they too drew attention to unity and community. This was mainly the result of the deep influence that the romantic perspective of das Ganze had on them. For this reason, they emphasised not only the unity between the Eucharist, the Church and theology, but also the unity of the Eucharist itself in all its meanings, including its communal celebration. Retrieving the theological, and in casu the liturgical, reflections of these Tübingen theologians might be of help in providing answers on the contemporary crisis.
of Eucharistic theology, and, by extension, to the ecclesial impasse in which the Church finds itself today.

The next issue of attention is the way Kasper further nuances this community paradigm. Today, some theologies and much of the Eucharistic praxis reduce the Mass to a ‘brotherly meal’. We must be aware of the fact that “the sacrificial nature [of the Eucharist] does not exclude the meal and communal nature, but gives it its inner foundation. (...) Sacrifice and unity thus belong together.”\(^{98}\) In Kasper’s view, a one-sided focus on community trivializes the Eucharist and continues to be a great weakness in the envisaged reforms of Vatican II. Sacrifice, restoration, reconciliation and community all belong together since “the Eucharistic community is community under the cross.”\(^{99}\) Although the focus of this article was precisely the communal nature of Eucharistic celebration, it must be clear that Tübingen theology also attaches serious importance to the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. The Tübingen scholars indeed intended to broaden the Tridentine (sacrificial) perspective, not replace it. In all of their publications, the sacrificial nature is indeed the foundation – as Kasper puts it – of their Eucharistic theology. The restoration of the bond between God and humankind, which is Drey’s primary focus, is only possible in and through the sacrifice of the cross – a sacrifice which is celebrated in the Eucharist. Likewise, the theological reflections of Hirscher’s Missae are completely structured around the remembrance and celebration of Christ’s death on the cross. In Möhler’s dialogue with the reformation, Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and its celebration in the Eucharist are taken up as a unified event – and provide the primary theme of the work. For Staudenmaier, ‘Eucharist’, ‘sacrament of unification’ and ‘sacrament of reconciliation’ (through the cross) are all interchangeable terms. As such, retrieving Tübingen theology to its fullest extent demonstrates the strong bond between both sacrifice and community, a bond which must be preserved in contemporary reflections on the Eucharist.

The last issue to be reflected on is Kasper’s treatment of the eschatological dimension of the Eucharist. Although this theme is not thoroughly worked-out, Kasper considers two different points regarding this eschatological dimension. First, he develops the soteriological-eschatological meaning of the Eucharist, which leads him to the understanding of the liturgy as the exaltation of God. The central idea is the unification between the heavenly liturgy of the Lamb of God and its veneration here on earth, which comes to the fore in different elements of the Eucharistic celebration. The Tübingen theologians also attempted to bring about a shift from a more anthropological perspective on the Eucharist – inherited from the


\(^{99}\) Ibidem, p. 300.
Enlightenment – to a more latreutic, God-centred perception of it. Nevertheless, they do not emphasise the eschatological dimension in order to support this shift from anthropological to latreutic, but instead refer more to the mystical nature of the Eucharist. Second, Kasper refers to the eschatological meaning of the Eucharist as the anticipation of the kingdom of God. As such, the Eucharist retrieves its universal-cosmic dimension, for which Kasper refers to Orthodox theology on the one hand, where this dimension is much more developed than it is in the West, and on the other hand to Teilhard de Chardin. It is commonly accepted that the kingdom of God plays a major role in Tübingen theology. Strangely enough, the kingdom of God does not become a main issue in their reflections on the Eucharist, except in the case of Hirscher, as shown above. Drey only refers to Gods kingdom in the margins of his reflections on the Eucharist and Möhler and Staudenmaier never mention it at all. It would be interesting to inquire as to why this is the case, and in what way ‘kingdom of God theology’ has significance for Romantic Tübingen scholars’ theology of the Eucharist. A profound study of the kingdom of God theology of the Tübingen school as such might inspire a deepening of the eschatological dimension of today’s reflection on the Eucharist and on the liturgy in general.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, one must say that with respect to Eucharistic theology, the 19th century Tübingen theologians strove to achieve a high standard of critical and scientific theology in relation to the currents of contemporary thinking of their time. Instead of opposing the philosophical climate which surrounded them, they sought to incorporate it into their reflections. A clear example of this accommodating attitude is the school’s esteem for the Organismus-thinking of Romanticism, which was of prime importance in the Tübingen theologians’ reflections on the Eucharist and community. At the same time, a study of these

\[^{100}\text{This shift is well documented by F. X. Arnold, }Pastoraltheologische Durchblicke,\text{ pp. 172-194. See also: F. Laupheimer, }Die kultisch-liturgischen Anschauungen,\text{ pp. 150-158.}\]
\[^{101}\text{See for example: Johann S. Drey, }\text{Vom Geist und Wesen des Katholicismus’, in }ThQ\text{ 1 (1819) 374-381.}\]
\[^{102}\text{S. Warthmann, }Die Katholische Tübinger Schule,\text{ pp. 532-538.}\]
\[^{103}\text{Hirscher also states: }\text{“So ist das hl. Abendmahl also die vom Herrn gestiftete Handlung, in welcher zu ewigen Zeiten alle Wahrheit und Gnade des Evangeliums in der Gemeine [sic] der Christenheit wirklich wird, das Himmelreich zu ihnen kommt und in ihnen ist” See: J. B. Hirscher, }Über das Verhältniß,\text{ p. 120.}\]
\[^{104}\text{For Drey, see for example: J. S. Drey, }\text{Kurze Einleitung in das Studium der Theologie mit Rücksicht auf den wissenschaftlichen Standpunct und das katholische System, Laupp, Tübingen, 1819, p. 186.}\]
authors’ writings reveals that they are not simply critical towards certain Church practices – that is, dismissive of them – but rather that they attributed great argumentative value to the concrete needs and situation of their time. Their plea for liturgical reforms emanates from a sincere concern for the Church in its contemporary situation. Drey’s integration of systematic theology, the study of the Church Fathers and his genuine interest in and concern for the liturgy may be considered exemplary. Hirscher reminds us of the grassroots of our theological speculation, which is grounded in everyday Church life. Striving for a real and sincere participation in the celebration of the Eucharist should be a constant concern for every Church member and theologian, just as it was for these scholars. Staudenmaier’s highly speculative (but also deeply spiritual) reflections on the Eucharist can be seen as an example of an attempt to integrate modern philosophy and Christian theology and tradition into sacramentological reflections. The concept of the shared priesthood of all the faithful, as reflected upon by Möhler, is a possible enrichment of our theologizing on the function of the lay-people in the liturgical practices of the Church and in our contemporary reflections on ministries. Although liturgy in the vernacular has largely been realized, questions of comprehensibility, (literal) translation, expression and non-verbal liturgical language are highly relevant today. Reflecting on all these subjects, the method applied by the Tübingen theologians – who sought a balance between the tradition and teachings of the Church, the contemporary culture and way of thinking and the actual Church life – remains essential for the relevance of current day theology.