

Law

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Dogmatic, ethical, and exegetical questions intertwine with each other in the theology of law. Along with the question regarding an ethical orientation towards God's will, what is also under discussion in the theology of the law is the law's significance for salvation, especially in its distinction from, and relationship to, the Gospel. In addition, we must also always ask how, and by what means, the will of God is expressed in the law.

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Editorial Note

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1. Introduction

Hardly any other genre in the biblical texts is as present in debates in theology and the wider society as are the commandments found in the first and second testaments. In addition to the Ten Commandments in the Torah, Jesus's admonitions in the Sermon on the Mount as well as Paul's ^{GND} moral directives are also widely perceived and received as ethical guidelines by those outside of the Church and theology.

There was, however, theological controversy already in early Christianity as to the actual nature, scope, and content of the divine law. Where does the orienting and normative ground of Christian morality lie? Where and how is the will of God recognized? These questions merged together in the problem regarding the nature of the law.

The ethical dimension of the law has not been the sole subject of debate. Its significance for salvation – if one looks at the Pauline mission, for example – has also been disputed since the beginning of the Christian movement. Does the divine law play a role in justification? Is it possible for us to keep the law or is it even necessary for righteousness before God? How does the law relate to God's Gospel in Jesus Christ?

This is only a sample of the questions that have emerged in relation to the concept of the law in the history of theology.

The association of the law with the notion of the so-called “Orders of Creation” (*Schöpfungsordnungen*) became prominent in the twentieth century. In addition to the biblical commandments and the revelation in Christ, does the divine will perhaps also reveal itself in history, people (*Vo lk*) (cf. art. Internationalism/ Nationalism), “race,” family, profession, class, or estate in society? Often uncritical of National Socialism, representatives of conservative Lutheranism in particular promoted this theory.

The lasting theological significance of debates about the law derives from the fact that they touch upon societal-political issues and probe into the law's normative status. Today, an uncritical approach that too hastily associates law with order hardly finds any theological representatives.

The theology of the law will be presented here in broad brushstrokes. Augustine ^{GND} is treated first as the representative of late-antique theology. This will be followed by descriptions of the theology of the law developed by Thomas Aquinas ^{GND}, Martin Luther ^{GND}, and John Calvin ^{GND}. The controversy surrounding the relation between law and order in the twentieth century will then be outlined. Primarily due to the proximity of many of its protagonists to National Socialism, these debates about the law and its relation to order were abandoned relative abruptly after World War II. The historical portion of the outline therefore ends with these debates. Looking forward and expanding the debate to incorporate a position that is sensitive to plurality, the article concludes with a contemporary account of the law from the perspective of queer theology.

2. “Classical Positions”

2.1. Late Antiquity: Augustine

According to Augustine ^{GND}, the law is a manifestation of the eternal and immutable will of God. On this front, Augustine's theology is thoroughly shaped by ancient stoicism and its notion of a “*lex aeterna*” – an eternal law.^[1] Above all, this law serves and demands ethical and intellectual education.^[2]

Augustine characterizes this “*lex aeterna*” as the eternal and immutable will of God^[3] that humans encounter as the “*ordo amoris*” – the order of love. Augustine therefore traces the divine law's legal requirements back to the love commandment.^[iv] This order of love is grounded in God's act of creation that orders the world. Augustine already

demonstrates how, in the history of theology, the question of the law has been analyzed in close connection with supposedly discernable orders and their legitimation by the divine will.

According to Augustine, the divine law does not only function as a rule for life. As a negative foil, it also exposes human sin.^[4] It serves as the basis for God's reward and punishment of humans.^[5] The fear of the law is thereby supposed to lead to Christ. What comes to the forefront here is the law's pedagogic function.^[6]

For Augustine, it is crucial to emphasize that the law is never fulfilled outside of God's grace. Humankind can comply with the law only "sub gratia." The absolute contrast between law and grace tends to dominate in Augustine's thought. In faith gifted through grace, the law operates as the interior and motivating driving force (*Grundhaltung*) of human beings.^[7]

2.2. Middle Ages and Early Modern Era

2.2.1 Thomas Aquinas

As a theologian of the middle ages and a reader of Aristotle ^{GND}, what is of central importance before all else for Thomas Aquinas ^{GND} is the close connection between divine, natural, and human law. This connection establishes the importance of the natural law as a supra-positive norm.^[8]

Thomas therefore differentiates between a "lex aeterna" (the eternal divine law), a "lex naturae" (the will of God inscribed in nature that humans can discern by means of their reason), and the "lex humana" that governs the state. According to Thomas, the "lex aeterna" is the foundation of this set of laws. The different facets of the law mutually ground each other, stand in a critical relation to each other, and all relate back to God's will.^[9] Theologically speaking, it is significant that Thomas views the eternal will of God as embodied both in the natural law inscribed in nature and in the biblical text. There is also a hierarchical structure within the biblical texts themselves. Thomas regards the first Testament as the "lex veta" – the old law. He interprets the second Testament as the new law – the "lex nova"^[10] – that surpasses and supersedes the old law. The first Testament is the prescriptive and commanding old law, while the second Testament is proof of God's saving grace.^[11] There is an underlying devaluation of the first Jewish Testament operative here that must be viewed critically today.

2.2.2. Martin Luther

In contrast to Thomas, Luther ^{GND} does not differentiate between various laws. He only distinguishes different "uses" or functions of the one law. For this purpose, Luther developed the teaching on the "usus legis." This teaching has shaped the debate about the law up to the modern age and is central still today. Foregrounded here are the effects of the law on the person who encounters it as the word of God. With regard to the law's uses, it is debated within the literature whether Luther teaches that there are two or three uses.^[12]

According to Luther, the law places demands on humans and addresses them as acting beings. What takes center stage in Luther's work is the theological or disclosing function of the law ("usus theologicus" or "usus elenchticus").^[13] When serving this function, the law leads to knowledge of sin. Especially in the fact that it is impossible to fulfil its demands, we recognize in the law that we are sinners before God. This knowledge drives us to God's Gospel where we experience saving justification. It is from here that Luther formulates his by now classic distinction between "law and Gospel." According to Luther, God gives his Word as both law and Gospel.^[14]

Another use of the law that Luther clearly articulates is the political use ("usus politicus"). Here the law's function is to maintain the order established by God. As with Thomas, the natural law serves as the source of knowledge of God's will for the human community. The law preserves civil justice, organizes the state, and protects individuals. However, this is always the law that upholds the already existing estate system.^[15]

What remains contentious among interpreters of Luther is the so-called “tertius usus legis” – the third use of the law. This function of the law is as indispensable for believers as is the Gospel. Although the law never brings about salvation – only grace does – it still expresses God’s loving will for believers. The central convictions of the Wittenberg Reformation were collected by Philipp Melanchthon ^{GND} in his “Loci Communes.” Even more pointedly than Luther, Melanchthon here formulates a teaching on the continuing significance of the law for believers. He clearly opts for a threefold use of the law and teaches that there is a use of the law for, as he puts it, those who are “born again.”^[16] By articulating a “tertius usus,” Melanchthon is inquiring into the continuing significance of the law for believers.^[17]

2.2.3. John Calvin

While it remains debated whether Luther teaches a “tertius usus legis,” Calvin explicitly teaches a “threefold use” of the one divine law. The primary reason for this is that, even more explicitly than Luther, Calvin understands the law to be the expression and the content of the enduring covenant between God and humans.^[18] The meaning of the law derives from the fact that it is God’s covenantal law. It is based explicitly on God’s grace.^[19] Calvin views the first and second Testaments as different forms of the one covenant. Accordingly, he considers the law in its entirety to be a guideline for the Christian life. The third, enduring function of the law is central for Calvin. Here the law functions as God’s good instruction for Christians seeking to live responsibly before God.^[20] It serves as a constant reminder and instruction on the path of sanctification.

As with Luther, Calvin also views the law as a mirror for sin. It meets humanity as “usus elencticus.” In serving this function, the law reveals our inability to fulfill it.^[21] According to Calvin, humanity recognizes in the law its sin against the God who, so to speak, descends to us in the covenantal law.

In its political use as natural law, the law restrains fallen humanity and protects the political community. The divine law is therefore simultaneously both the moral law and the order of creation. Calvin discerns in this political function of the law a correspondence between the law and the order of nature.^[22] In so doing, he explicitly interprets the law in relation to the Jewish Torah.^[23]

2.3. Theology of the 20th Century

2.3.1. Karl Barth

Probably no theologian in the twentieth century made the law as central a theme as did Karl Barth ^{GND}. For Barth, it was crucial that the law be understood as an *equal* part of the *one Word of God*.^[24] Barth views the law in its entirety in terms of Christology. It is never to be understood as a second source of revelation alongside the Gospel – as was the case among representatives (Althaus ^{GND}, Eiert ^{GND}, Brunner ^{GND}) of the order-of-creation theology (cf. art. Order of Creation).

According to Barth, the unequivocal Christological orientation of the law is pivotal.^[ii] While the theology of the Middle Ages and the early modern period as well as the theology of the 19th century understood the law primarily as a conservative principle, Barth’s theology grants it first and foremost a critical function. It is directed against societal conditions that we no longer have control over – such as the excesses of unbridled capitalism.^[25] The law therefore possesses a “usus politicus” that, in contrast to what we find in (neo)Lutheran theology, does not serve to restore or preserve the already existing order but instead stands in contradiction to it.

Barth interprets the law as having a claim – grounded in the divine election by grace (*Gnadenwahl*) and covenant – upon the entirety of human life and upon all dimensions of human social life. There can be no domain of human life that does not stand under the critical judgment of the law.^[26] This explanation of the law automatically rules out any independence of the law from Christ and the Gospel. Here we come to a major point of contention between Barth and neo-Lutheran theology, as well as, for example, between Barth and Emil Brunner ^{GND}.

As with election and covenant, Barth understands the law first of all as an event of God's love. He thereby formulates a thoroughly positive account of the law. This is present already in his programmatic 1935 lecture, "Evangelium und Gesetz" ("Gospel and Law") in which he reverses the traditional Lutheran order of "Law and Gospel." Here Barth interprets both the law and Gospel as an expression and act of divine grace.^[27] For Barth, the law is therefore above all else the promise of being in community with God. The human community can in turn be formed in correspondence with it.

In his interpretation of the law as an act of God's grace, Barth not only distances himself from the standard ordering that places the convicting law before the liberating Gospel. He also interprets the law as situational, individual, and concrete. It cannot be reduced to timeless norms or values. Rather, the law is spoken by God to the concrete person in the concrete situation. In accordance with his understanding of revelation, Barth characterizes the law as the Word of God sent to and for an individual in a concrete situation. The law therefore calls for the "obedience of a free person to a free God."^[28] Being bound by the law grants the individual freedom and requires that he or she assumes responsibility. With that said, God's law is not something totally different and novel in each situation and for each individual person. Its content is determined more so by its foundation in election and covenant. If it is to be truly understood as God's law in a particular situation, the law must always relate back to Christ. Made concrete in the Christ event, God's covenant therefore grants content to the law.

2.3.2. Paul Althaus

In sharp contrast to Barth, Paul Althaus ^{GND} connects the law closely with the so-called "Ur-Revelation." In this Ur-Revelation, which is independent of the revelation of salvation in Christ, we learn not only of the existence of God but also of God's concrete will. According to Althaus, God's will is expressed in the "orders of creation" such as family, class, people (*Volk*), and also "races." These orders have ethnic (*völkisch*) connotations.^[29] The individual person experiences the "Ur-Revelation" through the historical reality of his or her people (*Volk*).^[30]

The connection that Althaus establishes between the order-of-creation theology and this notion of an "Ur-Revelation" is characteristic of the representatives of neo-Lutheranism. According to Althaus, this teaching on the "Ur-Revelation" is required in order for there to be a mediation between the "universal human" experience and the Christian proclamation of salvation. For this to work, Althaus interprets nature and history as a realm of God's revelation. A "moral order" can therefore also be found in history.^[31]

Althaus views these orders as expressions of God's creative will. However, they are also under the power of sin insofar as they are given concrete form by humans. Althaus therefore distinguishes between the essential structure (*Wesen*) given to creation by God and the form given to these orders by humans.^[32]

On the basis of his teaching on revelation in history, Althaus adheres to the distinction between the law – manifested in the orders of creation – and the Gospel. However, he also draws a further threefold distinction in his essay "Gebot und Gesetz" ("Commandment and Law"): here Althaus differentiates between the original commandment given by God and the law that this commandment transformed into at the moment of humanity's fall into sin. He therefore replaces "Law and Gospel" with "Commandment, Law, and Gospel." By "commandment," Althaus means God's will as an act of divine love.

The commandment is an act of love and creation. It becomes the law only because of sin and subsequently takes on the form of concrete prohibition. Althaus views commandment and law as distinct only in terms of their form, not their content. The commandment is entirely positive, the law negative.^[33] Christ is, however, the end of the law. Through him the law once again becomes commandment: "The Christian is free from law but not from commandment."^[34] Despite the end of the law, the Christian nonetheless is still always beholden to the orienting function of the "order of creation" that is the expression of God's will in history.^[35]

2.3.3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

In a certain sense, Bonhoeffer's ^{GND} theology of the law can be characterized as a middle way between Barth and Althaus. Even though Bonhoeffer also recognizes God-given orders that are given form by humans and that are traced back to the divine law, they are not independent from Christ and the revelation of salvation in the Gospel, as they are for Althaus.^[i] Bonhoeffer therefore names these orders "Mandates" (*Mandate*) instead of "Orders of Creation."^[36]

In this way, Bonhoeffer – as with Barth – understands the law as the creative Word of God.^[37] However, for Bonhoeffer, the sole means of knowing what the content of the law actually is remains the decatalogue, not some natural law. "Not every human instinct can pass itself off as natural law."^[38] From Bonhoeffer's point of view, knowledge of the law does not come from nature, history, or society.^[39] It is always necessary to bind the law to the Word of God and to the Gospel. The preaching of the law therefore has its origin and aim in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.^[40] In this sense, the law demands that the "way for the reality of Christ be paved."^[41]

The concrete revelation of Christ, which defines the divine commission for humanity, also confronts the individual in the law.^[42] The mandates that are to be given concrete form by human beings depend fully on the law given in the revelation of Christ.

In this way, the orientation of Bonhoeffer's ethics is rooted solely in the law revealed in Christ and not in some historical powers.^[43] According to Bonhoeffer, being a disciple of Jesus Christ requires obeying the law.^[44]

Unified in Christ, the mandates represent four different forms of the law. The concrete law is heard and lived out in the mandates.^[45] They are the expression of the one law of Jesus Christ.

Bonhoeffer designates "Church," "marriage and family," "culture," and "authority" as God's mandates.^[46] Although he connects them closely with Christ and aligns them with the Gospel, Bonhoeffer ultimately does not offer a profoundly new approach to what we find in the conservative orders-of-creation theology.^[47] Bonhoeffer does not wish to engage in a positive sanctification of the existing order of things. The mandates are, however, characterized by a clear "above and below" (*Oben und Unten*). That is, the mandates give the community a hierarchical structure, and this hierarchy is in turn granted divine legitimated.

2.3.4. Emil Brunner

While Bonhoeffer presents a Lutheran theology of the law that clearly connects the law to the revelation in Christ and denies the possibility of a natural knowledge of the law, Brunner ^{GND} offers a reformed theology of the law that is committed to thinking in terms of orders of creation.^[48] Like Althaus, Brunner assumes that there is an "Ur-Revelation" discernable in the orders of reality and existence.

According to Brunner, the law manifests itself precisely in the orders of reality and demands their recognition.^[49]

The orders of creation are therefore the central theme in Brunner's theology of the law. This is indicated by the title of his central work on the topic, "Das Gebot und die Ordnungen" ("The Divine Imperative").^[50] Here Brunner develops a social-ethics that is grounded in the law and the orders instead of Christologically. Brunner suggests that individuals are placed in the orders through the "universal-law" (*Weltgesetz*). The commandment requires from individuals a "being-placed-in" (*Hineingestelltsein*) and an aligning-oneself (*Sich einordnen*).^[51]

With that said, Brunner's theology of law – at least in its early stages – is not conservative in the way that Althaus' is. "Das Gebot und die Ordnungen" depicts God as encountering humanity as both creator and redeemer. While God the creator demands submission to the orders, the word of the redeemer pronounces a clear "No" against the world.^[52] By virtue of this dialectic between creation and redemption, Brunner understands his law-based ethic (*Ethik des*

Gesetzes) to be simultaneously “fundamentally conservative” and “revolutionary.” The law therefore entails both resistance and conformity.

However, this tension drops out in Brunner’s second major work, “Gerechtigkeit” (“Justice and the Social Order”). Now the law demands only assimilation to a specific structure of the world.^[53]

3. Remaining Questions

Among other things, the newly emerging and critical considerations coming from the exegetical disciplines – for instance, the so-called “New Perspective on Paul” – necessitate a continual and critical treatment of the traditional concept of the law within systematic theology as well as an updated interpretation of it.

The concept of the law therefore remains contested. As Ulrich Körtner ^{GND} points out: “The theological concept of the law is today problematic. The reason for this is that the plurality of reality calls into question its normative status for the theological understanding of reality in the fields of both ethics and fundamental theology.”^[54] Accordingly, Körtner calls for a theological distinction between God’s law and God’s verdict upon human beings.

It is not only within theology that the concept of the law has once again become the subject of discussion. Taking Paul as their starting point, certain philosophers in recent decades have also inquired into the meaning of the law.

Examples of this are found in works by Alain Badiou ^{GND}, Giorgio Agamben ^{GND}, and Slavoj Žižek ^{GND}.^[55] For the theology of the law, at least three central lines of inquiry arise out of these philosophical debates: does the law have a collective, a societal, and a political dimension? In addition to the individual, does it also reveal the sinful structure of society, that the latter has transgressed the Word of God? Finally and relatedly, in what sense can God’s law perform a utopian function? Can it engender hope for a society beyond totalitarian, power-based, and oppressive structures? Finally, it can be asked whether the law is fixed and timeless or whether the event of the cross and resurrection brings about a profound change in the law.

4. From before the Law to queer Grace

Hanna Reichel ^{GND} has recently shown that the theology of the law can today still be theologically productive and that it can generate a theology that is sensitive to plurality, progressive, and compatible with contemporary discourses. In “After Method: Queer Grace, Conceptual Design and the Possibility of Theology,” Reichel uses the classical teaching on the “triplex usus legis” in order to ask about the possibility of a “good” or much “better” theology.^[56] The “usus elencticus” – the revealing function of the law – serves here to point out mistaken developments within theology. Reichel finds these mistakes wherever theological teachings and patterns of thought are used to exclude or discriminate against persons.

In Reichel’s work, the law becomes the criterion for a non-discriminatory, progressive, and, in the best sense, queer theology that moves beyond the patriarchal, eurocentric, or heteronormative norms of power and discourse. However, it remains the case that the law can never be fulfilled by humans alone and, accordingly, that “good” theology is never possible.^[57] Theology is a human and therefore always failing attempt to speak about God that can only strive for a “better.”

In this emancipative and queer framework, the theology of law serves not only to critique societal injustices, discriminating practices, and power relations. It also calls on theology to apply this critical standard to itself so as to become a better theology that corresponds more closely to a queer interpretation of the law.^[58]

Recommended Literature

For recommended literature, see the [German version](#) of this article.

Citations

- ¹ Cf. Augustin, *De libero arbitrio*, 1,13,15.
- ² Cf. Augustin, *De ordine*, 2,25.
- ³ Cf. Augustin, *Contra faustum manichaeum*, 22, 27.
- ⁴ Cf. Augustin, *Ad simplicianum*, 1,1,2.
- ⁵ Cf. Augustin, *De libero arbitrio*, 1,31–33.
- ⁶ Cf. Augustin, *De natura et gratia*, 1,1–7.
- ⁷ Cf. Augustin, *Expositio quarumdam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos*, 54.
- ⁸ Cf. Thomas von Aquin, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Pars Secundae Partis, Quaestio 94.
- ⁹ Cf. Thomas von Aquin, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Pars Secundae Partis, Quaestio 95.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Thomas von Aquin, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Pars Secundae Partis, Quaestio 91 ad.) 5.
- ¹¹ Cf. Thomas von Aquin, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Pars Secundae Partis, Quaestio 91 ad.) 5.
- ¹² Cf. Schubert, Anselm, „Den Glauben aus den Werken zeigen“. Zum Verhältnis von Rechtfertigung und guten Werken bei Luther und Hubmaier, in: Dziawas, Ralf (Ed.), *Gerechtigkeit und gute Werke. Die Bedeutung diakonischen Handelns für die Glaubwürdigkeit der Glaubenden*, Neunkirchen-Vluyn 2010, 52–67.
- ¹³ Cf. Luther, Martin, *Galatervorlesung 1530*, in: Weimarer Ausgabe 40, 479.
- ¹⁴ Cf. Luther, Martin, *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, in: Weimarer Ausgabe 7, 23–24.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Luther, Martin, *Predigt über das 5. Buch Mose*, in: Weimarer Ausgabe 28, 677–678.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Melanchthon, Philipp, *Loci praecipui theologici nunc denuo cura et diligentia summa recogniti multisque in locis copiose illustrati 1559*, *De Lege divina*.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Melanchthon, *Loci 1559*, *De usu legis*; Luther, Martin, *Kirchenpostille*, in: Weimarer Ausgabe 10, 456–457.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Calvin, Johannes, *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion. Institutio christianae religionis*, ed. Otto Weber, Otto/Matthias Freudenberg, Göttingen 2008, II, 10,1–2, 226–227.
- ¹⁹ Cf. Calvin, *Unterricht*, II, 7,1–2, 183–185.
- ²⁰ Cf. Calvin, *Unterricht*, II, 7, 13–14 u. II, 8, 1,190–191 u. 193–194.
- ²¹ Cf. Calvin, *Unterricht*, I, 7, 5 u. III, 2, 27, 43 u. 309–310.
- ²² Cf. Calvin, *Unterricht*, I, 6, 1, u. I, 14, 20, 38 u. 94.
- ²³ Cf. Calvin, *Unterricht*, II, 10, 226–238.
- ²⁴ Cf. Barth, Karl, *Evangelium und Gesetz*, in: Kratzert, Lucius/Zocher, Peter (Eds.), *Vorträge und kleinere Arbeiten 1935–1937*, Zürich 2021, 172–220, 188.
- ²⁵ Cf. Barth, Karl, *Das christliche Leben. Die Kirchliche Dogmatik IV*, 4. Fragmente aus dem Nachlaß Vorlesungen 1959–1961, 363–399.
- ²⁶ Cf. Weinrich, Michael, *Bund*, in: Beintker, Michael (Ed.), *Barth Handbuch*, Tübingen 2016, 318–319. This is also the case in the second thesis of the Barmen Theological Declaration: “As Jesus Christ is God’s assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so, in the same way and with the same seriousness, he is also God’s mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures. We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we

would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords – areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.” Barmer Theologische Erklärung (<https://www.ekd.de/Barmer-Theologische-Erklärung-Thesen-11296.htm>), accessed on 04.11.2025, translation by Dylan S. Belton.

- ²⁷ Cf. Barth, Karl, Evangelium, 179.
- ²⁸ Barth, Karl, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik. Die Lehre von Gott (KD II/2), Zürich 1948, 623, translation by Dylan S. Belton.
- ²⁹ Cf. Althaus, Paul, Theologie der Ordnungen, Gütersloh, 1934, 10.
- ³⁰ Cf. Althaus, Paul, Die christliche Wahrheit Bd. 1, Gütersloh 1947, 50.
- ³¹ Cf. Althaus, Wahrheit, 80.
- ³² Cf. Althaus, Paul, Grundriss der Ethik, Gütersloh, 1947, 12–15.
- ³³ Cf. Althaus, Paul, Gebot und Gesetz, in: Kinder, Ernst/Haendler, Klaus (Eds.), Gesetz und Evangelium, Darmstadt 1968, 201–238, 206–209.
- ³⁴ Althaus, Gebot, 222, translation by Dylan S. Belton.
- ³⁵ This is also expressed in the “Ansbacher Ratschlag,” co-authored by Althaus, which was published as a counter-proposal to the Barmen Theological Declaration. It states: “It binds everyone to the state to which they have been called by God and commits us to the natural orders to which we are subject, such as family, nation and race (i.e. blood relationship).” (Translation by Dylan S. Belton).
- ³⁶ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Ethik, 393.
- ³⁷ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Schöpfung und Fall (DBW III), Gütersloh 1989, 41.
- ³⁸ Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Theologisches Gutachten zum Primus Usus Legis, in: Glenthøj, Jørgen/Kabitz, Ulrich/Krötke, Wolf (Eds.), Konspiration und Haft 1940–1945 (DBW XVI), Gütersloh 1996, 600–619, 607, translation by Dylan S. Belton.
- ³⁹ Cf. Green, Clifford J., Ethik (DBW VI), in: Tietz, Christiane (Ed.), Bonhoeffer Handbuch, Tübingen 2021, 264–274, 270.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Gutachten, 612.
- ⁴¹ Bonhoeffer, Ethik, 153, translation by Dylan S. Belton.
- ⁴² Cf. Bonhoeffer, Ethik, 392.
- ⁴³ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Ethik, 392.
- ⁴⁴ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Nachfolge (DBW IV), Gütersloh 1989, 119.
- ⁴⁵ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Nachfolge (DBW IV), Gütersloh 1989, 119.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Ethik, 394.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. Bonhoeffer, Ethik, 394.
- ⁴⁸ Cf. Rohls, Jan, Protestantische Theologie der Neuzeit. Das 20. Jahrhundert, Tübingen 2018, 259.
- ⁴⁹ Cf. Rohls, Theologie, 259.
- ⁵⁰ Cf. Brunner, Emil, Das Gebot und die Ordnungen, Zürich 1939.
- ⁵¹ Brunner, Gebot, 111.
- ⁵² Cf. Brunner, Gebot, 112.
- ⁵³ Cf. Brunner, Emil, Gerechtigkeit, Zürich ⁴2002, 61–62.
- ⁵⁴ Körtner, Ulrich H. J., Dogmatik, Leipzig 2020, 193, translation by Dylan S. Belton.
- ⁵⁵ Cf. Finkelde, Dominik, Politische Eschatologie nach Paulus, Wien 2007.
- ⁵⁶ Reichel, Hanna, After Method. Queer Grace, Conceptual Design and the Possibility of Theology, Louisville 2023.
- ⁵⁷ Cf. Reichel, Method, 25–45.
- ⁵⁸ Cf. Reichel, Method, 241–252.

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