

THE APOLOGETIC THEOLOGY OF THE *PREACHING OF PETER**

It is in the nature of apologetic that it be closely related to kerygma: what is defended is that which has been or is being preached.¹ The investigation into the preaching and apologetic of Hellenistic Judaism has recognized this fact.² This connection | may not justify our viewing the second-century Christian Apologies as primarily missionary in character; there are other features that must be taken into consideration.³ But that there is a relation-

* Originally published in *ResQ* 13 (1970): 205–223.

¹ More precisely, the relationship is between kerygma-creed-apology. Vernon H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions* (NTTS 5; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 11, 24, points out that the life situation which produced the creedal formulae has not been adequately considered. For the most part, it has been associated with baptism. He affirms that, although the kerygma is not synonymous with the confession, important associations occur: "It is clear that the essentials of the gospel which the church proclaimed were closely related to the *homologia* to which the Christian community adhered." In practice, the relationship is assumed in NT scholarship. For example, Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (trans. John Bowden; NTL; London: SCM, 1969), 62ff., in reconstructing the content of early Christian proclamation, proceeds from an analysis of the NT creedal formulae. Oscar Cullmann, *Die ersten christlichen Glaubensbekenntnisse* (trans. Hans Schaffert; ThSt 15; Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1943), 18, and Ethelbert Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* (trans. John Marsh; London: SCM, 1955), 235–236, refer to the context of preaching but do not develop the relationship. Thus also Otto Michel, "ὁμολογέω," *TDNT* 5 (1967): 199–220, esp. 212. More to the point is Willy Rordorf, "La confession de foi et son 'Sitz im Leben' dans l'église ancienne," *NovT* 9 (1967): 225–238, esp. 235ff. On the continuing relationship between preaching and apologetic, see Johannes Weiss, *Earliest Christianity: A History of the Period A.D. 30–150* (ed. with new introduction and bibliography by Frederick C. Grant; 2 vols.; New York: Harper, 1959), 1:237ff.; for the view that the creedal formulae served as the foundation of apologetical documents, see Berthold Altaner, *Patrology* (trans. Hilda C. Graef; 2d ed.; New York: Herder & Herder, 1961), 47.

² E.g., Peter Dalbert, *Die Theologie der hellenistischen-jüdischen Missionsliteratur unter Ausschluß von Philo und Josephus* (TF 4; Hamburg-Volksdorf: H. Reich, 1954), 8 and passim; Moriz Friedländer, *Geschichte der jüdischen Apologetik als Vorgeschichte des Christentums* (Zürich: C. Schmidt, 1903); Wilhelm Bousset and Hugo Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (4th ed.; HNT 21; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966), 79ff. Dieter Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief: Studien zur religiösen Propaganda in der Spätantike* (WMANT 11; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964), 52 n. 1, passim, calls for greater precision in the treatment of Jewish apologetic.

³ It is not completely accurate, as Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (3 vols.; Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950–1960; Utrecht/Antwerp: Spectrum, 1964–1966), 1:186, affirms, that the missionary preaching was displaced in favor of predominantly apologetic exposition. We have to do here with a process of development rather than displacement. For the stress on the missionary character of Christian apologetic, see Jean Daniélou, *Message évangélique*

ship between the two cannot be denied, even if the historical, literary, and theological aspects of that relationship still remain to be demonstrated in detail. In order to understand clearly the development from preaching to apologetic one must go beyond merely pointing out the presence of the same *topoi* in the two types of literature. One must also determine the use to which the *topoi* are put by both. In this way their intentions and theologies can be seen in sharper relief, and the two types can be better understood in their relation to each other. It is the limited purpose of this exploratory essay to point to some theological themes in what is perhaps the earliest extant Christian Apology outside the NT,⁴ the *Preaching of Peter*, and to compare them with similar themes in earlier Christian missionary preaching, particularly that of Paul.

THE *PREACHING OF PETER* AND MISSIONARY PREACHING
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

We are dependent for our knowledge of the *Preaching* on Clement of Alexandria, who quotes from it.⁵ Attempts have been made to | reconstruct

et culture hellénistique aux II^e et III^e siècles (BT.HD 2; Paris: Desclée, 1961), 11–19. For a brief, general description of apologetic, see Heinrich Dörrie, "Apologetik," *LAW* (Zürich: Artemis, 1965), 219–222. For a bibliography of other assessments of the genre, see Abraham J. Malherbe, "Apologetic and Philosophy in the Second Century," *ResQ* 7 (1963): 19–32, esp. 19 n. 5. [*Light*, 2:781–796] For apologetic as in some measure an *expositio fidei*, see Malherbe, "The Structure of Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis*," *VC* 23 (1969): 1–20. [*Light*, 2: 807–827] See also Johannes Bernard, *Die apologetische Methode bei Klemens von Alexandrien: Apologetik als Entfaltung der Theologie* (ETS 21; Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag, 1968).

⁴ The apologetic motif is, of course, already present in the NT itself. See Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), and the literature cited by Paul Feine and Johannes Behm, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (ed. Werner G. Kümmel; 14th rev. ed.; Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1965), 85–86, 102–104.

⁵ Origen also knew the *Preaching* from Heracleon's quoting of it, but he does not add to the knowledge we gain from Clement. The fragments have been collected and commented on by Ernst von Dobschütz, *Das Kerygma Petri kritisch untersucht* (TU 11.1; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1893). They are also conveniently gathered by Erich Klostermann in *Reste des Petrus-evangeliums, der Petrusapokalypse und des Kerygma Petri* (vol. 1 of *Apocrypha*; ed. Erich Klostermann and Adolf Harnack; 2d ed.; KIT 3; Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Weber, 1908; repr., 1921). See also Montague R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (2d rev. ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 16–19. For the most recent introduction and English translation, see Wilhelm Schneemelcher's treatment in *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher; English translation edited by Robert McL. Wilson; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963–1966), 2:94–102; also, James K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 20–24. For an extensive bibliography