

**MATTHEW 12:30; MARK 9:40; LUKE 9:50; 11:23 –
“WITH AND FOR” OR “AGAINST”?¹**

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“Faithful shepherds,” Dr Martin Luther states, “must both pasture or feed the lambs and guard against wolves so that they will flee from strange voices and separate the precious from the vile”. Thus, the Formula of Concord says, “it is essential not only to present the true and wholesome doctrine correctly, but also to accuse the adversaries who teach otherwise.”² Faithful shepherds who condemn the false teaching of other Christians encounter scholars and laity who question the condemnations by referring to Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50,³ where Jesus says: “For the one who is not against us (or “you”, plural) is for us (or “you”,

¹The author acknowledges the constructive reviews of an early draft of this paper by then Pastor-elect Jody A. Rinas and Rev. Mark A. Sander.

²SD R&N:14, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 506. Tappert’s edition does not give a citation for the Solid Declaration’s quotation of Luther. Nor does the newer Kolb edition (eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000]), where the translation is slightly different: “it is necessary not only to present the pure, beneficial teaching correctly, but also to censure those who contradict it and teach other doctrines (1 Tim. 3[:9]; Titus 1[:9]). For, as Luther states, true shepherds are to do both: pasture or feed the sheep and ward off the wolves, so that they may flee from other voices (John 10[:4b-5, 16b] and ‘separate the precious from the vile’ (Jer. 15[:19, Vulgate]))” (529-30).

This author searched unsuccessfully for the source of this Luther quotation until Divine Providence led him to it in Ewald M. Plass’s *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959). There, the quote appears as part of #3351 under the heading of “Polemics”, and compiler Plass gives the source as Luther’s 1523 exposition of I Peter 5:2 (WA 12:389; EA 51:483; W² 9:1100 f.). Plass quotes Luther in a slightly different translation and at greater length than the Formula:

A preacher must not only feed the sheep so as to instruct them how they are to be good Christians, but must also keep the wolves from attacking the sheep and leading them astray with false doctrine and error; for the devil is never idle. Nowadays there are many people who are quite ready to tolerate our preaching of the Gospel as long as we do not cry out against the wolves and preach against the prelates.

But though I preach the truth, feed the sheep well, and give them good instruction, this is still not enough unless the sheep are also guarded and protected so that the wolves do not come and carry them off. For what sort of building is it if I throw away stones and then watch another throw them back in? The wolf can readily tolerate a good pasture for the sheep; he likes them the better for their fatness. But what he cannot endure is the hostile bark of the dogs. Therefore it is of vital importance to set our hearts on truly feeding the flock as God has commanded it. (1053)

³See citations below for such comments by scholars. This author personally experienced laity using these references to question such teaching and preaching.

plural).”⁴ The faithful shepherd can counter, however, with Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23, where Jesus says: “The one not being with Me is against Me, and the one not gathering with Me is scattering.”⁵

Some think these two passages contradict each other,⁶ but, as will be seen in this paper, they do not. Each complements the other and together they teach how to regard those outside the true confession of the faith. This essay explores this thesis by examining the two sayings in context and noting their particularities, comparing and contrasting the two sayings, briefly surveying St Augustine’s uses of them in *Against the Donatists*, reviewing Luther’s uses of the passages, and considering implications for today’s faithful shepherds. Though little treated in the last half-century of periodical literature,⁷ the combined teaching of these passages is especially relevant in our time of relative truth and least-common-denominator ecumenism.⁸

⁴This and other Biblical citations are this author’s translation unless otherwise noted. The NA²⁷ text of Mk 9:40 has ἡμῶν, while at Lk. 9:50 the word is ὑμῶν. In each place the other or combinations of the two are variant readings. Lenski writes: “As far as the pronoun ‘you’ is concerned . . . this refers to them as disciples of Jesus and thus involves Jesus as much as ‘we’ does” (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1946], *ad loc.* Lk. 9:50, 550).

Because multiple commentaries by the same author will be cited in this essay, as well as single sources dealing with more than book, the notes will indicate the specific place from where the comment comes when it is not self-evident on which specific verse the comment was made.

⁵The NA²⁷ text of Mt. 12:30 and Lk. 11:23 are identical.

⁶Plummer writes: “Renan hastily pronounces the two sayings to be *tout à fait opposées* (*V. de J.* p. 229)” (Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Luke*, The International Critical Commentary [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914], *ad loc.* Lk. 9:50, 260). The French expression, according to Rev. David Milette of Moncton, New Brunswick, means “completely opposed to” or “precisely the opposite”. Of St Luke’s account in 9:50, Marshall writes: “The saying stands in a certain tension with 11:23” (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978], 399), and he writes that 11:23 “stands in paradoxical relation to 9:50” (478).

⁷This author’s search of 50 years of the *Index to Religious Periodical Literature* and its successor *Religion Index One: Periodicals* found no articles directly comparing the diverse statements. There were only a handful of entries on one or more of the texts in question, and still fewer in English. In addition, the verses are given scant attention in commentaries. This essay draws on the little that is found in both older and more recent works of this type.

⁸Despite this relevance, preachers have little opportunity to expound these texts. The Lutheran Hymnal’s lectionary includes only Lk 11:23 as part of the Gospel reading for the 3rd Sunday in Lent (Lk 11:14-28). None of the four verses are included in the one-year lectionary of *Lutheran Worship*, and its 3-year lectionary includes only Mk 9:40 as part of the Gospel reading for Pentecost 19 in the B cycle (Mk 9:38-50).

1. SAYING PARTICULARITIES⁹

a. *Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50*

In the Holy Gospel accounts of both St Mark and St Luke, Jesus says: “the one who is not against us is for us.” In both accounts this saying comes after the disciples see an unknown man driving out demons in Jesus’ name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου ἐκβάλλοντα δαιμόνια). The disciples repeatedly tried to hinder the unknown exorcist because the man was not following with the disciples. Like Moses who answered jealous Joshua’s complaint,¹⁰ Jesus told them to **stop** hindering him, because “No one is able to do powerful deeds in My name and immediately speak evil of Me.”¹¹ In the immediate context of both Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50 is also the issue of who is the greatest, which Jesus addressed by using a little child to teach them humility.¹²

The unknown exorcist successfully used the name of Jesus and thus demonstrated his own faith fellowship with Jesus.¹³ Instead of the work of a disciple being a mark of superiority, Jesus says it demonstrates inward agreement with Him. Not just a miracle demonstrates this, but even a simple cup of water given in Jesus’ name.¹⁴ With such affinity demonstrated, Jesus urges the disciples to patiently let the man’s faith develop, but He does not

⁹For ease of comparison and following the ensuing discussion, the readers may wish to open the *Synopsis Quatuor Evangelium*, edited by Kurt Aland. In the 14th revised edition published in 1995, the relevant sections and pages are: §117, p. 167; §167, p. 248, and §188, p. 270.

¹⁰Num. 11:24-30 (see Marshall, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:49-50, 398, *et al.*).

¹¹Mk 9:39. Lk. 9:50 does not include the longer explanation as to why. Note that John first uses the word “hinder” (κωλύω) which Jesus then repeats. It is used in relation to persons with the sense “hinder, prevent, forbid ... stand in the way” and significantly mostly of positive spiritual occurrences, such as: preaching the Gospel (Acts 16:6; 1 Thess. 2:1), Jesus blessing little children (Mt. 19:14; Mk 10:14; Lk. 18:16), Baptism (Acts 8:36), the work of the Office (Heb. 7:23), people entering heaven (Lk. 11:42), of God in general (Acts 11:17), and perhaps most significantly of getting in the way of someone being welcomed into fellowship (III Jn 10) (BAGD 461). Though no antonym is specifically mentioned or implied in Mk 9:40 or Lk. 9:50, it may be that while Jesus does not want the apostles to hinder the man He would want them to bring him into their fellowship (see the following discussion in this section and in part 3).

¹²Just notes that “Despite appearances, 9:49-50 belongs with the report of this [greatness] argument”, and he finds the strong link in the Ἀποκριθεὶς of 9:49 (Arthur A. Just, Jr, *Luke*, 2 vols., Concordia Commentary: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996-97], 1:414). The humility Jesus teaches here is not, as Plummer suggests, “the Humility of Toleration” (Plummer 258). Whatever the lesson, it may be one that the Sons of Thunder were slow to learn, as the next pericope in St Luke’s account suggests (9:51-56).

¹³Just, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:46-50, 415, especially n. 2.

¹⁴Ezra P. Gould, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel according to St Mark*, ed. Alfred Plummer (Edinburgh: Clark Constable Ltd. , 1983), *ad loc.* Mk 9:38-50, 175.

urge them to tolerate the man apart from their group.¹⁵ The passage must not be misapplied, as R. C. H. Lenski explains:

It could not apply to men who are merely indifferent to Jesus and thus not actively against him. Such indifference and coldness as a response to Jesus and his revelation would be “against” Jesus in a most decided way. To be lukewarm and neither hot nor cold is fatal. Thus, not to be against Jesus means, indeed, to be for him at least to some degree.¹⁶

It would appear that though the man believed in and used Jesus’ name, he did not yet publicly confess it: “The chances were that this man believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but he had not yet gained the understanding that he ought to join the disciples of Jesus and follow after Him, thus confessing his faith before men.”¹⁷ The unknown exorcist did not associate with the revealed Church.¹⁸

While prepositions are often slippery in meaning, they are significant, especially here. The prepositions used in this saying are “against” (κατά) and “for” (ὑπέρ). The word κατά in Mark 9:40 designates “such a position or state of mind in a different way [as to] be against someone”. With this sense in Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50 κατά is used opposite ὑπέρ,¹⁹ which is used in a general way meaning “be for someone, be on someone’s side”.²⁰ In Matthew

¹⁵R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964 printing), *ad loc.* Mk 9:39, 398. See also below, where St Augustine understands there to be something about the unknown exorcists that needs correction.

¹⁶Lenski, *ad loc.* Mk 9:40, 398. Cf. Lenski, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:50, 550. Lenski alludes to Rev. 3:15. As examples of what Jesus teaches here, Kretzmann gives the different motives for preaching to which St Paul refers in Phil. 1:14-19 and in different ways of serving (Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible: The New Testament*, vol. 1 [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921], *ad loc.* Mk 9:40, 217).

¹⁷Kretzmann, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:49-50, 319.

¹⁸The formulation of “following us” in Lk. 9:49-50 is generally taken to refer to membership of the church (Marshall, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:49-50, 398, citing R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* [Göttingen: n. p., 1958⁴], 23f; E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* [Göttingen, 1968], 110f. ; and J. M. Creed, *St Luke* [London: Macmillan, 1930], 138f.). What the Apostle John says in v. 49 (οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ μεθ’ ἡμῶν.) is noticeably different from Jesus’ expressions.

¹⁹BAGD 406. The entry does not include all NT passages; Lk. 9:50 is an omitted example of κατά used in the same sense opposite ὑπέρ.

²⁰BAGD 838. The only other listed use of ὑπέρ with κατά is Rom. 8:31, where God “for” us summarizes the Gospel and emphasizes the resulting confidence in the face of enemies (see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975], *ad loc.* Rom. 8:31, 435). A Logos Strong’s number search revealed a total of 17 verses using both ὑπέρ and κατά. The only other relevant verses (where they carry the same sense) are I Cor. 4:6 (of pride in one leader against another) and II Cor. 13:8 (of what one does for or against the Truth).

12:30 and Luke 11:23 κατά is used with the same sense but is used opposite μετά.²¹

b. Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23

In their accounts of the Holy Gospel, St Matthew and St Luke both record Jesus' saying: "The one not being with Me is against Me, and the one not gathering with Me is scattering." This saying also comes in the context of casting out a demon. This time, however, Jesus healed a man (ἐθεράπευσεν, Mt. 12:22) by casting out a demon (ἦν ἐκβάλλων δαιμόνιον, Lk. 11:14). As a result the people began to think that perhaps Jesus was the messianic Son of David, but the Pharisees suggested that Jesus had His authority from Beelzebub, the prince of demons.²² In reply Jesus said that a kingdom divided against itself would be ruined and a house divided against itself would not endure. Thus, Jesus inferred that He, a stronger man, has entered the strong man's house (that of Satan) and tied him up in order to carry off his possessions.²³

The Pharisees, by not following and acknowledging Jesus, disrupted and hindered the work of Jesus who gathers the scattered children of God (Jn 11:52).²⁴ Though no object for the gathering or scattering is given in the text,²⁵ sheep seem to be in view.²⁶ Martin Franzmann well summarizes the verse in its context:

²¹BAGD 406.

²²McNeile suggests Matthew saw Jesus as gathering and the Pharisees as scattering (Alan Hugh McNeile, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1955], *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 177).

²³St Mark's account includes the discussion of the strong man (3:23-27), but does not include the saying in question.

²⁴Otto Michel, s. v. σκορπίζω, in *TDNT* 7:420.

²⁵Both Mt. 12:30 and Lk. 11:23 have as a variant reading the insertion of με after σκορπίζει. Metzger suggests copyists inserted this complement to produce a balanced expression, but he calls it an "almost meaningless ... scribal blunder" with "disastrous consequences for the sense!" (Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, corr. ed. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1975], 32 and 158; cf. Marshall, *ad loc.* Lk. 11:23, 478.) If, however, Christ is talking about His Body, the Church, which is made up of those who believe in Him, such a reference to Himself would not be meaningless but quite significant. Acts 9:1-5 serves as a case in point: Jesus refers to Saul persecuting Him (vv. 4, 5), though in fact Saul was persecuting those who belonged to the Way (v. 2). The point is: What one does to believers, one does to Him in whom they believe. The early transcribers of Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23 may have wanted to make more explicit that it was indeed Jesus' Body, the Church, being scattered.

²⁶So R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1951), *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 482. Though Lenski there also considers grain or fish, he refers to Mt. 9:36; 10:6; and Jn 10:12, the last of which also uses σκορπίζει in relation to sheep. Cf. Lenski *ad loc.* Lk. 11:23, 640; Marshall, *ad loc.* Lk. 11:23, 478, where he cites B. S. Easton, *The Gospel according to St Luke* (Edinburgh: [n. p.], 1926), 181; and W. D.

Jesus is the Messianic Shepherd who gathers anew the people of God, and there is now no room for neutrality. Each man is called on to decide whether he will gather the flock with Him or scatter it (12:30). Men cannot stand by and just say things. Here is the presence of the Spirit of God, the manifested creative working of God Himself which man cannot gainsay and dare not contradict; for that is the ultimate blasphemy, the eternally unforgivable sin (12:31,32), unforgivable because it cuts off repentance at its root.²⁷

Not just contradiction, but even criticism and indifference are tantamount to opposition.²⁸ Moreover, attitudes “for” or “against” Jesus “have their immediate effect on others: the one gathers, the other scatters.”²⁹

The prepositions used here in relationship **to Jesus** are “with” (μετ’ ἐμοῦ) and “against” (κατ’ ἐμοῦ). In Classical Greek and secular and New Testament koine Greek, the word μετά with the pronoun in the genitive case suggests “in the midst”, “between”, “among” people, or “to be or act in fellowship with”.³⁰ However, when it comes **to God and man**, as in Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23, it emphasizes a unique being “with” the other. Another example is found in St Luke’s account: the angel telling Mary that the Lord is with her (ὁ κύριος μετὰ σοῦ, 1:28). More significantly, St Matthew’s account refers to Jesus as the fulfilment of the long-promised Immanuel, God with us (Μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός, 1:23). Hence, Jesus “is the expression, sign and actualisation of the covenant of God with men, taking away their sins, Mt. 1:21; 26:28.” When Jesus promises to be present where two or three gather in His Name, this is the same as being “with” them (18:20). This abiding of the Son of God Himself with His Church through Word and Sacrament continues to the end of the age (ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἶμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, 28:20). Therefore, “What is said fundamentally at the beginning of the Gospel is thus extended both to the community and also to the messengers. He who is ‘God with us’ shows

Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, gen. ed. J. A. Emerton, C. E. B. Cranfield, & G. N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 343, and n. 53 where they also refer to Is. 13:14; 40:11; Jer. 23:2; Ezek. 34:13; Zech. 13:7-9; and Mt. 26:31 par. Plummer rules out the gathering of seed or fruit and suggests the object is either sheep or a band of followers (Plummer, *ad loc.* Lk. 11:23, 303).

²⁷Martin H. Franzmann, *Follow Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew*, Concordia Heritage Series (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 101. Later Franzmann connects this saying with the judgment of the last day, referring to Mt. 25:32, 33 (183).

²⁸On criticism, see Marshall, *ad loc.* Lk. 11:23, 478, and on indifference see, for example, McNeile, *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 177. Compare, however, Gould, who argues against equating “seeming indifference” with “real hostility”, writing that the point of the passages is “that friendliness and hostility are incongruous, and cannot therefore exist together” (Gould, *ad loc.* Mk 9:40, 177).

²⁹Lenski, *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 482.

³⁰Walter Grundmann, s. v. σύν-μετά, *TDNT* 7:767, 769, and 771-72.

in His promises that He is this right on to the consummation of the age.”³¹ Though Holy Scripture rarely speaks of one “with” God,³² the “withness” of the follower with Christ relates to the Church as He gathers the believer into the community by Baptism and gathers it around the Gospel and Sacraments.³³ That Jesus continues this saying in terms of gathering and scattering also demonstrates that the revealed Church is in view.³⁴

2. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE TWO SAYINGS

As has been seen, the Church is in view in both sayings of Jesus. Nearly all commentators agree that both sayings emphasize the impossibility of neutrality when confronted by Jesus. Though both sayings come in relation to exorcisms, the contexts are different. In the case of Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50, the exorcist in question is a believer, though, oddly enough, one

³¹Grundmann 776.

³²Grundmann 779-80.

³³Grundmann details other reflections of this unique “withness”, such as the liturgical salutation and apostolic blessing: “the Lord is present with His gifts in the congregation assembled for worship and also ... equips leading men in the congregation to declare His word and will to it with due authority” (778). Grundmann documents and emphasizes the Baptismal connection, though St Paul uses *σύν* of this “withness” (789-92, but compare, for example, 795 on *μετά* in Jn 13:8). Furthermore, there is the “withness” of table fellowship, especially that with sinners, Matthew 9:11 and Luke 15:2 (796). In short, Grundmann concludes: “salvation is effected in the participation in Christ’s destiny by which we are made in His image and in the being with Him in which God binds himself to man” (797).

³⁴Some in the so-called Church Growth Movement speak of the Church in two modes: gathered and scattered. Typical is: “The church is gathered on the Lord’s day around the Word and Sacraments only to be scattered again throughout the community” (Kent R. Hunter, *Foundations for Church Growth* [New Haven, Missouri: Leader Publishing Company, 1983], 28). Nothing could be further from Biblically and Confessionally shaped speech. Michel observes “the OT and Jewish expectation that in the future the dispersed people of God will be gathered again, Is. 43:5 ff; Ezek. 34:12 f. ; Ps. Sol. 8:28” (Michel 421). This expectation is fulfilled in Christ (see not only Mt. 12:30 and Lk. 11:23, but also Jn 11:52). As to the Confessions’ use of terms, SC 2:6 refers to the Holy Spirit “gathering” the whole Church on earth (LC 2:45, 53 and SD 2:49 are similar). LC 2:62 says the work of gathering is not done. SD 2:50 speaks of gathering the Church out of the human race. The use of Mt. 23:37 in SD 2:58 and SD 11:41 suggests those not gathered (that is, the scattered) are in the darkness of unbelief and therefore lost. Though the Confessions can speak of believers scattered throughout the world, those believers are gathered to churches: the Preface to the Apology par. 19 mentions “scattered churches”; Ap 7/8:10 refers to men scattered but says they have the same sacraments, which of course means they are “gathered” into congregations wherever they are “scattered”; likewise par. 20 where they are recognized by the marks of the Church; and finally Treatise 16 in mentioning “the kingdom of Christ scattered over all the earth” in the same sentence goes on to illustrate that statement with the “many churches in the East”. See also Klemet Preus’s evaluation of Kent Hunter’s *Confessions*, “The Theology of the Church Growth Movement”, in *Logia* 10.1 (Epiphany 2001): 45-51.

outside the revealed Church. In the case of Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23, Jesus' exorcising a demon reveals the Pharisees' opposition to the Church.³⁵ In each case the response to the message is different, and consequently so is the saying of Jesus. Lenski puts it this way:

One states who are for Jesus, the other who are against him. ... Whoever comes in contact with Jesus and develops no hostility toward him and his is already to a degree won for him and will soon confess it; but whoever comes in contact with Jesus and forms no attachment for him is already to a degree against him and will soon reveal it. The two dicta thus belong together, each makes the other clearer.³⁶

Based on the contextual changes and changes in the personal pronouns in St Luke's account, Arthur Just distinguishes the passages along the lines of "intra" Christian relationships (that is, between so-called Christians) and "inter" Christian relationships (that is, between so-called Christians and others).

[Lk. 11:23] has to do with acceptance or rejection of Jesus ("me"). The saying in [Lk.] 9:50 is guidance for Jesus' followers in assessing the relationship between themselves ("you") and others who also serve in the name of Jesus, and who therefore are also "for" Jesus and "for" his disciples. In 9:50 the third party ("whoever") was casting out demons in Jesus' name, doing the work of God's kingdom, so he was "for" Jesus and "for" his disciples. But [in Lk. 11:23] the third party ("the one who") refers to those in the crowds who accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan and those skeptics who demand a miracle (11:15-16)³⁷

A similar conclusion is reached by those who suggest the key to the apparently contradictory sayings is considering both to whom Jesus is speaking and about whom He speaks. Alfred Plummer explains this view this way:

[In Lk. 11:23] Christ gives a test by which His disciple is to try *himself*: if he cannot see that he is on Christ's side, he is against Him. [In 9:50] He gives a test by which His disciple is to try *others*: if he cannot see that they are against Christ's cause, he is to consider them as for it.³⁸

³⁵Cf. *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, gen. ed. Robert G. Hoerber (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), *ad loc.* Lk. 9:50, 1567.

³⁶Lenski, *ad loc.* Mk 9:40, 399. Cf. Lenski, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:50, 550-51.

³⁷Just, *ad loc.* Lk. 11:23, 474. Just continues: "'the one who' could even refer to Satan, referred to in the preceding verse (11:22), since *Satan is the one who divides and scatters the church, while Jesus works to gather and unite the church*" (emphasis original).

³⁸Plummer, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:50, 259-60 (emphasis original). Though he does not cite Plummer, McNeile is similar, writing that Mt. 12:30 and Lk. 11:23 are "spoken to the indifferent about themselves", while Mk 9:40 and Lk. 9:50 are spoken "to the disciples about some one else" (McNeile, *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 177). He further suggests that the sayings correspond to the

Such testing can hardly be subjective, however. There is an objective standard: the Truth of God's Word and whether the person in question confesses it and is in fellowship with His Church. In Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50 Jesus tells His followers to not hinder the work that the unknown exorcist was doing; He does **not** tell His followers to tolerate the man apart from their communion, as St Augustine makes perfectly clear.

3. ST AUGUSTINE'S USES OF THE TWO SAYINGS IN *AGAINST THE DONATISTS*

John A. Haas suggests that Mark 9:40 "absolutely repudiates the position that beyond a certain communion there is no salvation." To support his claim, Haas favourably cites St Augustine's treatise, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, where Augustine writes: "But there may be something Catholic outside the Catholic Church, just as the name of Christ could exist outside the congregation of Christ, in which name he who did not follow with the disciples was casting out devils."³⁹ Haas' statement and use of St Augustine from *Against the Donatists* in support of it led this author to further examine St Augustine's use of these two sayings of Jesus in that treatise, which revealed quite an opposite conclusion from what Haas drew.

St Augustine judges that even those who are "for Christ" apart from the one, holy, Christian and apostolic Church scatter. This is clear already in Book I, where he writes: "For all of them who are not against us are for us; but when they gather not with us, they scatter abroad."⁴⁰ Shortly thereafter, St Augustine writes in favour of careful treatment of schismatics and heretics: "the wound which caused his separation should be cured by the medicine of the Church; but ... what remained sound in him should rather be

warnings "Test yourselves" in II Cor. 13:5 and "Judge not" in Mt. 7:1. Cf. also Davies and Allison, *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 344 (they cite McNeile).

The saying of Jesus in Mt. 7:1, however, does not rule out judging and discrimination in, for example, admitting one to or excluding one from the Sacrament of the Altar in Closed Communion. See that verse's following context (Mt. 7:6: "Do not give dogs what is sacred [τὸ ἅγιον "the holy things"]; do not throw your pearls to pigs") and the multiple passages that speak of Jesus and His followers judging (for example, Jn 9:39; Rom. 16:17).

³⁹ St Augustine cited by John A. Haas, *The Lutheran Commentary: Annotations on the Gospel according to St. Mark* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons for The Christian Literature Company, 1895), 166. He cites Augustine, *On Baptism, ag. the Donatists*, Bk VII. , C. 39, 77, which is on page 508 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 4: *St. Augustine: The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint 1983. (This particular treatise is translated by J. R. King, revised by Dr Hartranft.) All of the following citations will be to this edition.

⁴⁰Bk I, c. 6, 8, p. 415.

recognized with approbation, than wounded by condemnation."⁴¹ He cites the saying of Matthew 12:30, but contrasts it with that of Mark 9:38, 39 and Luke 9:50. In commenting on the latter passages, St Augustine is quick to point out that in the case of the unknown exorcist something still needed to be corrected.⁴² Otherwise, he writes,

any one would be safe who, setting himself outside the communion of the Church, severing himself from all Christian brotherhood, should gather in Christ's name; and so there would be no truth in this, 'He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.'⁴³

St. Augustine holds the two sayings in tension by writing:

the man was to be confirmed in his veneration for that mighty Name, in respect of which he was not against the Church, but for it; and yet he was to be blamed for separating himself from the Church, whereby his gathering became a scattering⁴⁴

Later He similarly writes that Christians will be "on the rock on which the Church is built", otherwise the Lord's saying of Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23 will not be true.⁴⁵

To be sure, as Haas' quotation of St Augustine noted at the beginning of this section suggests, St Augustine recognizes that there can be bad in the revealed Church just as there can be good outside of it.⁴⁶ Yet, there is a distinction. Baptism and the gospel, which might be common to both, will not be of benefit outside the one Church.⁴⁷ St Augustine favourably cites Cyprian's maxim that "Salvation is not without the Church", immediately adding, "Who says that it is?"⁴⁸ Those outside the Church scatter abroad.⁴⁹ St Augustine favourably cites Secundinus of Cadius, who associates the saying of Jesus in Matthew 12:30 (about those "not with" being against) with I John

⁴¹Bk I, c. 7, 9, p. 416.

⁴²Cf. n. 11 and the discussion in the text at n. 15 above.

⁴³Bk I, c. 7, 9, p. 416.

⁴⁴Bk I, c. 7, 9, p. 416. Augustine raises the idea of the correction which the unknown exorcist needed several times later as well (for example, Bk IV, c. 10, 17, p. 454).

⁴⁵Bk VI, c. 31, 59, p. 493. This statement comes after favourably citing Secundinus of Carpis, but St Augustine extends the argument: "For they scatter His sheep who lead them to the ruin of their lives by a false imitation of the Lord."

⁴⁶St Augustine writes: "both many who are within act against the Church by evil living, and by enticing weak souls to copy their lives; and some who are without speak in Christ's name, and are not forbidden to work the works of Christ but only to be without, since for the healing of their souls we grasp at them, or reason with them, or exhort them. ... [B]oth some things are done outside in the name of Christ not against the Church, and some things are done inside on the devil's part which are against the Church." (Bk IV, c. 10, 17, p. 454.)

⁴⁷Bk VI, c. 31, 59, p. 493; Bk VII, c. 39, 77, p. 508.

⁴⁸Bk IV, c. 17, 25, p. 458.

⁴⁹Bk IV, c. 17, 25, p. 458.

2:18-19 (that those who go out from the Church are antichrists⁵⁰). St Augustine further alludes to Matthew 7:22-23, where the Lord does not know some who have done wonderful deeds in His Name. He presumably does not know them because they are outside of the Church.⁵¹ Haas clearly took his quotation of St Augustine out of context, but the journey further into *Against the Donatists* to establish that fact also proved helpful in establishing a greater understanding of the two sayings of Jesus, especially as it pertains to Holy Baptism. A different controversy over Baptism prompted Luther to make similar condemnations based in part on the passages in question.

4. LUTHER'S USES OF THE PASSAGES

In his biography of Luther, Heiko Oberman comments thusly on the collective judgements Luther made on those not oriented to Wittenberg:

When papists, Jews, and so-called fanatics are condemned as groups, individual differentiation becomes impossible. The individual human being disappears behind a uniform foisted upon him. In the tumult of the Last Days individual qualities are lost in collective judgments and “all who are not with us are against us.” Yet herein lies the paradox, for there is a genuine grain of truth in these collective condemnations, which is easy to overlook in our time. It is for the sake of this timeless truth that Luther’s voice must be heard—however reluctantly.⁵²

Oberman goes on to specifically examine the controversy over Infant Baptism. Though Oberman does not give a specific Luther reference for his statement, a perusal of Luther’s use of these two sayings of Jesus supports Oberman’s conclusion and use of the phrase.⁵³

Luther, as Oberman suggests, used these two sayings against the Reformed. In a 1528 letter to two apparently Roman Catholic priests seeking help in dealing with the Anabaptists, Luther writes:

⁵⁰Cf. Luther’s similar use of I Jn 2:19, *ad loc.* Jn 15:2 (1537-38), AE 24:205-6.

⁵¹Bk VI, c. 18, 30, p. 488.

⁵²Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, tr. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New York: Image Books by Doubleday, 1992), 229. This author is indebted to Dr David P. Scaer, whose reference to this Oberman quotation sparked this author’s investigation into these sayings of Jesus. See Scaer’s unpublished 2000 Ft. Wayne Symposia paper “Death and Resurrection as Apocalyptic Event”, p. 3 and n. 13 on p. 11.

One might take exception to Oberman’s claim that a uniform is “foisted” upon the individual. Individuals voluntarily join congregations that confess a specific faith. A judgement of that confession is not forced upon the individual, but the individual has let it come upon him or her by his or her own doing.

⁵³In the index to the American Edition of *Luther’s Works*, there are a total of 13 references to Mt. 12:30; Mk 9:40; Lk. 9:50; and 11:23. All are at least noted below (with the date of the particular work in the text or in the note).

Since our baptizing has been thus from the beginning of Christianity and the custom has been to baptize children, and since no one can prove with good reasons that they do not have faith, we should not make changes and build on such weak arguments. For if we are going to change or do away with customs that are traditional, it is necessary to prove convincingly that these are contrary to the Word of God. Otherwise (as Christ says), "For he that is not against us is for us."⁵⁴

The Anabaptists, Luther suggests, **claim** to be with the Reformers, but in fact are against them and are scattering, hindering the Gospel. On 13 May 1531, while preaching on John 6:66-67, the disciples who turned away from Jesus after the Bread of Life discourse, Luther commented that false teaching is to be expected and that "schismatic spirits must be identified by their apostasy".⁵⁵

Luther could also use these sayings of Jesus against the Papists; he writes:

We scorn papal bulls and human dreams, but the Holy Scriptures we venerate. If they despise the Holy Scriptures, let them go and worship their water bulls. Christ says: "He who is not with me is against me." We say: All that is not with the Scriptures is against the Scriptures. Their priesthood and its sacrifice and office, their episcopate, are not with the Scriptures ... therefore they are necessarily against the Scriptures and thus against God. But what is against God is the work of the devil.⁵⁶

Between 1527 and 1529, Luke 11:23 came to serve Luther as sort of a rule of thumb for ceremonies and rites, almost like the justification principle in liturgical renewal.⁵⁷ Later, Luther applied the Luke 11:23 rule of thumb in a 1539 disputation on the relationship of philosophy to theology thusly:

Whatever harmonizes with the truth of the faith proves the truth of the faith. The truth of philosophy and of reason is of this kind. Therefore, philosophy proves the truth. Or to put it otherwise: Whatever is on our side is not against us, as Christ says: "He who is not with me is against me." However,

⁵⁴*Concerning Rebaptism*, AE 40:241.

⁵⁵*Ad loc.* Jn 6:66-67, AE 23:187-89. Here, Luther refers to Luke 11:23.

⁵⁶*The Misuse of the Mass* (1521), AE 36:160. Cf. the 1539 treatise *On the Councils and the Church* in AE 41:122: "But if they establish anything new with regard to faith or good works, you may rest assured that the Holy Spirit had no hand in it, but only the unholy spirit with his angels. For in that instance they must act without and outside of Holy Scripture, indeed, in opposition to it, as Christ says, 'He who is not with me is against me.'"

⁵⁷Cf. *ad loc.* Is. 11:10, AE 16:124. This author acknowledges the help of Ms Carol Liboiron, the librarian at the Martin Chemnitz Library of Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario, who provided faxed copies of this and other Luther references not in this author's own collection.

philosophy is not against us but for us. Therefore, philosophy is on the side of theology and not against it.⁵⁸

In that same disputation Luther is clear that whether one is “for” or “against” is based on the faith. He says: “Whoever is for us, that is, has the same faith. All things are for Christ and work together for good in the elect; yet all things do not constitute the gospel.”⁵⁹

On another occasion seven years earlier, Luther seemingly echoed Augustine’s view that there is good outside the revealed Church and evil apparently within it. Luther uses Luke 9:49-50 as he writes of signs and wonders taking place both through pious individuals and evil persons who occupy an office but teach correctly. Here again, the determining factor is whether “the signs aim at praising Christ and advancing your faith.”⁶⁰ To the individual, Luther applies Luke 11:23 quite simply: “to be against Christ is a mortal sin. And not to be with him is to be beyond grace.”⁶¹ There is no neutral position, due to the resulting ontological relationship between Christ and the believer. Luther writes:

The truth of the matter is rather as Christ says: “He who is not with me is against me.” He does not say “He who is not with is not against me either, but neutral.” For if God is in us, Satan is absent, and only a good will is present; if God is absent, Satan is present, and only an evil will is in us. Neither God nor Satan permits sheer unqualified willing in us, but ... having lost our liberty, we are forced to serve sin, that is, we will sin and evil, speak sin and evil, do sin and evil.⁶²

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY’S FAITHFUL SHEPHERDS

Eduard Schweizer writes that in Mark 9:40 Jesus discusses one’s joining the band of disciples and that in Matthew 12:30 Jesus emphasizes one’s confessing His name. Schweizer concludes that “Ecumenical openness

⁵⁸*Disputation on “The Word was made flesh”*, AE 38:249-50.

⁵⁹*Disputation on “The Word was made flesh”*, AE 38:264. Similar is his later statement: “Whatever is in harmony with the truth of the faith supports the truth of the faith, because Christ said: ‘For he that is not against us is for us’” (273).

⁶⁰*The Sermon on the Mount* (1532), AE 21:278-79.

⁶¹*Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), AE 31:65. Luther brings up Lk. 11:23 again in discussing Jesus Christ as the centre of the faith (*Three Symbols* [1538], AE 34:207).

⁶²*The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:115. Cf. earlier in the same treatise: “the Word of God and the traditions of men are irreconcilably opposed to one another, precisely as God himself and Satan are mutually opposed, each destroying the works and subverting the dogmas of the other like two kings laying waste each other’s kingdoms. ‘He who is not with me,’ says Christ, ‘is against me’” (54). Recognizing the rhetoric, it is still hard to imagine God subverting Satan’s dogma!

(Mark 9:40) and the unambiguous demand for a clear confession of Jesus (Matt. 12:30) are certainly compatible."⁶³ To be sure, faithful, confessional undershepherds of the Good Shepherd are ecumenical, in the best sense of the word.⁶⁴ Yet, they will also demand a clear confession by, to paraphrase the Formula of Concord, both presenting the true doctrine and accusing those who teach otherwise. Both sayings of Jesus under consideration support this practice. This has been seen by examining the two sayings in context and noting their particularities, comparing and contrasting the two sayings, briefly surveying St Augustine's uses of them in *Against the Donatists*, and reviewing Luther's uses of them.

The Luther citation made by the Formula of Concord that began this article is made there to emphasize how antitheses are necessary for the unity of the Church. Presenting true doctrine correctly and accusing those who teach otherwise is done "to preserve the pure doctrine and to maintain a thorough, lasting, and God-pleasing concord within the church".⁶⁵ Drawing attention to differences between so-called Christian denominations may appear to be divisive, but errors regarding the chief parts of doctrine "must be refuted to preserve the truth".⁶⁶

When the two passages are taken together, the combination leaves us considering those who are "with and for" Jesus or "against" Him.⁶⁷ Note that even when the person not with the disciples is under consideration, Jesus expresses the opposition most personally.⁶⁸ There is an inherent tension in confessing the truth about Jesus to a fallen world filled with other so-called Christian denominations. Herman Sasse explains the two forces this way: "the Lutheran Church which is faithful to its Confession is the true church of Jesus Christ and the church of Christ is not limited to the church of the Lutheran Confession."⁶⁹ The sayings of Jesus in Matthew 12:30/Luke 11:23

⁶³Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew*, tr. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), *ad loc.* 11:30, 287. Cf. Davies and Allison, *ad loc.* Mt. 12:30, 344.

⁶⁴There are no uses of the four passages in question in the Tappert edition of *The Book of Concord*, according to its index and a database search of the same edition. Nor are any references found in the index of the Kolb edition.

⁶⁵SD R&N:14, Tappert, 506. Kolb's translation reads: "In order to preserve pure teaching and fundamental, lasting, God-pleasing unity in the church" (529).

⁶⁶SD R&N:15, Tappert, 507. Cf. Kolb, 530.

⁶⁷One must never confuse God being on "our" side with our being on "His". Cf. Josh. 5:13-14. God is not "a subservient ally who can be mobilized by us for the accomplishment of our purposes" (Cranfield, *ad loc.* Rom. 8:31, 435).

⁶⁸Note the first person singular pronoun (ἐμοῦ) in Mt. 12:30 and Lk. 11:23, in contrast to the either first person or second person plural pronouns in Mk 9:40 and Lk. 9:50. See also above, n. 25.

⁶⁹Hermann Sasse, *Here We Stand: Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith*, tr. Theodore Tappert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1938), 176-77. He cites the Preface of the Formula of Concord (cf. Tappert, 11). He further notes that the condemnations

and Mark 9:40/Luke 9:50 support this, respectively urging both exaltation of the true confession and humility towards those who are true believers but may be in other communions due to weakness or some sort of “felicitous inconsistency”.⁷⁰

Practically ascertaining who is “for and with” and who is “against” Jesus is difficult. It is not impossible, however, as the process is linked to the Means of Grace, the marks of the Church. The Church is the assembly in which the Gospel is preached in its purity and the Sacraments rightly administered.⁷¹ The different natures of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar may even correspond to identifying who is “for” and who is “with”. One baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit may indeed be “for” Jesus, though not fully “with” Him in proclaiming His death until He comes—just as the unknown exorcist was “for” Jesus but not with the disciples. To be sure, different denominations will draw these lines differently than others.⁷²

Where today one might want only to condemn false churches or their teachers and not the individuals in them, the passages in question deal with single individuals. Faith is always a subjective appropriation of the objective

of the Confessions are not to condemn those who err out of simplicity or everyone in an entire church but to condemn the wrong teachings and teachers that conflict with the Word of God.

⁷⁰This is a term Francis Pieper uses for instances where a theologian’s personal faith is at variance with his published views (see, for examples, *Christian Dogmatics* [in three volumes, tr. Theodore Engelder, et. al. , St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1953], 1:x, 72, and 114 n. 167). Though it may be that Pieper coined the term, he claims it is a principle of which Luther was cognizant (1:6). More recently, Dr David Scaer has written of this principle’s universal nature (“Dominus Iesus and Why I Like It”, in *Logia* 10.2 [Easteride 2001]: 57-58). Though Pieper uses it primarily of theologians and their published writings, it can similarly apply to the faith of the individuals’ hearts and the confessions of the altars at which they commune, that is, the confessions of the congregations where they hold membership or regularly attend. Pieper indeed mentions this happy inconsistency while noting that there are true believers in other communions and cites at least one case where Luther did likewise (see, for examples, 1:24, 83-84, 87-88).

⁷¹AC VII:1, Tappert 32. Cf. Kolb, 42-43.

⁷²Scaer points out that Rome treats Lutherans as Lutherans (at least *gnesio*-Lutherans) treat the Reformed: recognizing a valid baptism but not a valid eucharist (“Dominus Iesus”, 57). In the case of the Lutherans and the Reformed, the validity of a Reformed Baptism rests on the use of water and the Divine Name (Pieper, 3:262 n. 17), though Scaer seems to question whether Reformed Baptisms are valid (see “Dominus Iesus” 57, and *Baptism*, vol. 11 in *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics*, ed. John Stephenson [St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 1999] 66). For Rome and the Lutherans, on the other hand, the invalidity of the Lutheran eucharist surely rests on Rome’s failure to recognize the ordination of Lutheran pastors: “Only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [New York: An Image Book published by Doubleday, 1994], paragraph 1411, page 394). Validity (essence, or promises) and efficacy (benefits) are, of course, two different, though related, things in Lutheran theology.

truth. Though individuals hardly gather or scatter, the attitudes of individuals, it has been noted, can impact the success or failure of the Church. Moreover one’s belief or lack thereof determines his or her eternal state. The two sayings introduce tension even in dealing with individuals. According to Mark 9:40 and Luke 11:50, patience is in order, as Kretzmann explains:

This judgment of Christ contains an instruction for all of us to have patience with our weak brethren and sisters. They have faith in their hearts and confess the name of Jesus, but are not so far advanced as to be on a level with established Christians. But the Lord will give them further enlightenment, and it is not for us to set limits too arbitrarily.⁷³

Yet, in keeping with Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23, such patience cannot ignore the ongoing state of confession in which the true Church exists, as Kretzmann again explains:

those that are not part with Christ, on His side, taking His part at all times, are against Him and must be reckoned with His enemies; and he that is not working with Him in every respect must be considered as belonging to those that disperse and scatter the fruits of His ministry and labor.⁷⁴

6. CONCLUSION

This essay began by noting how Mark 9:40 and Luke 9:50—which seem to argue for tolerance of, or at least patience with, an individual confessing Christ apart from the Church—can be used to oppose Matthew 12:30 and Luke 11:23—which seem to argue for condemning an individual for not being and gathering with Christ, and thus scattering Him and His Church. The two sayings are not in opposition, however, but complementary. The former may be more relevant to issues of unionism, while the latter to those of syncretism. In any case, however, one cannot hesitate to call a spade a spade—the truth of the Gospel and the salvation of individuals are at stake. It may well be that individuals come under collective condemnations due to their own weakness, but the exigency of the times demands it.

In the final analysis it is worth remembering Oberman’s observation of the heightened urgency of the eschaton already in Luther’s day. The heightened urgency goes back further than that: in St Luke’s account, the only one to contain both sayings, the more condemnatory saying comes as Jesus has drawn closer to Jerusalem. In these latter days, faithful shepherds do well, for the sake of the Gospel and the elect, to condemn without

⁷³Kretzmann, *ad loc.* Lk. 9:49-50, 319.

⁷⁴Kretzmann, *ad loc.* Lk. 11:17-23, 329.

hesitation those whose belief, teaching, and confession are impure, and thus those who do not gather with them. For, to paraphrase Luther, those whose belief, teaching, and confession are impure are both in mortal sin and beyond grace. Such is somewhat harsh law for those who fail in these regards. The comment paraphrased from Luther, however, comes in the Heidelberg Disputation as proof that Christ alone is our righteousness—righteousness freely given to all who repent and trust in Christ for forgiveness.⁷⁵

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⁷⁵See the *Heidelberg Disputation* quotation above at n. 61.