

# Spiritual Identification with Christ: Jon Sobrino, the CDF and St Paul

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## Abstract

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued a Notification criticising Jon Sobrino's Christology. In their criticism of Sobrino's description of Jesus as a man of faith, they risk introducing a semi-Docetism by emphasising Jesus' closeness to his divine Father and his relative distance from us. Paul, on the other hand, brings Christ and believers very close together – he gives them a 'spiritual identification' in a common experience of death, burial, sonship, heirship and resurrection. A parallel is also drawn between the faith/faithfulness of Christ and all Christian believers who, according to Paul, are made righteous (justified) through their faithfulness.

## Keywords

Sobrino, CDF, Paul, spiritual identification, faithfulness.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has recently notified us, in a document dated 26 November 2006, signed by Cardinal Levada and Archbishop Amato, and approved by Pope Benedict, that aspects of the theological writings of Jon Sobrino SJ do not conform to the traditional faith of the Catholic Church. Whether the CDF has been fair to Sobrino is not for me to say, though some think it a narrow and undeservedly harsh reading. Nor would I want to respond to the suggestion that some other theologians, such as Hans Urs von Balthasar, might be equally deserving – or undeserving – of censure.<sup>1</sup> What I want to focus on is the use in the notification by the CDF of the *communicatio idiomatum* and its consequential statements on the self-consciousness of Jesus.

In Section III of the Notification 'The Incarnation of the Son God', the CDF is justifiably critical of Sobrino's use of the *communicatio*

<sup>1</sup> See the letter by Nicholas Lash in *The Tablet* 24.3.2007 who quotes a passage from Volume One of *The Glory of the Lord* which looks equally as "assumptionist" - British theologians would customarily say "adoptionist" - as that which the CDF quotes from Sobrino.

*idiomatum*. For those who are not familiar with patristic Christology, this is a principle adopted in the fifth-century for testing a person's orthodoxy about the incarnation and for determining what creedal statements can be made about Jesus Christ, God incarnate. The Latin expression has been translated in a number of ways but I suggest it means 'the interchange of attributes (or characteristics)'. It reflects the statement of the Council of Chalcedon of AD 451 that '... our Lord Jesus Christ [is] the same [person] perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man... of one being (*homoousios*) with the Father as to the divinity and of one being with us as to the humanity'. He is one person (Jesus Christ) of two natures (divine and human). This means that, because of the oneness of Jesus, whatever can be said of one of his natures can be said of the other. This leads to some odd statements but they are the mark of someone who really believes in the incarnation. So if we can say, as we surely can, that Mary changed the underwear of a human child in Nazareth, an orthodox Christian can also say that Mary changed the underwear of God in Nazareth. And the other way about, God created all things at the beginning of time, we can also say that Jesus created all things in the beginning, and this is what the New Testament does say though not very often: John 1.1–3 + 14; Colossians 1.15–17; Hebrews 1.1–3.

The test case in the fifth-century was whether one could affirm that Mary is 'the mother of God'. Roman Catholics are so familiar with this expression from the Hail Mary prayer that they don't usually notice what an odd expression this is. She is not just the mother of a baby, not just the mother of Christ, the mother of the saviour, but the mother of God. How can God have a mother? Well, because of that belief that marks Christianity from other religions: the incarnation - Jesus as God and man. Sobrino is being criticised by the CDF for denying the use of divine predicates to the human subject Jesus, and if the CDF is not misquoting him, then Sobrino is not orthodox in this regard.

My difficulty with the CDF's Notification of 26 November 2006 is some of the statements made in Section V on 'The Self-consciousness of Jesus' that they take to follow from the *communicatio idiomatum*. This section is about the man Jesus. He is the incarnate one but here the CDF is telling us about Jesus', shall we say, interior life: what he actually experienced, what he thought, how he understood things as he walked the paths of Galilee and went to his death in Jerusalem. How would we find out about these things? As they are historical matters, only by empirical evidence. But as we are talking about Jesus' interior life, the evidence would have to come from Jesus' own words and perhaps some of his actions, and immediately we have the problem that New Testament scholars have to deal with all the time and that is the historical authenticity of the actions and particularly the sayings

attributed to Jesus in the Gospels. In this context John's Gospel might not be useable. John 17, for example, shows Jesus on very intimate terms with his Father but there was no one there to hear Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane; it is an expression of John's belief in Jesus as the incarnate son of God and not a historical report. This is not to say that we cannot establish with reasonable confidence any of these things, but there is a problem that has to be addressed. And, of course, any historical, *a posteriori* statement can never be certainly true but can only have a level of probability. So what reasonable evidence can be brought forward to justify these statements produced by the CDF to support their position?

But the knowledge and love of our Divine Redeemer, of which we were the object from the first moment of His Incarnation, exceed all that the human intellect can hope to grasp.

For hardly was he conceived in the womb of the Mother of God when he began to enjoy the Beatific Vision. (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* 75)

By its [sic] union to the divine wisdom in the person of the Word incarnate, Christ enjoyed in his human knowledge the fullness of understanding of the eternal plans he had come to reveal. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 474)

How can anyone know whether these statements are true? Certainly not on the basis of reliable historical information extracted from the canonical Gospels. Were we the object of Jesus' knowledge and love from the first moment of his incarnation? If Jesus was like any other foetus, he wouldn't have been aware of anything in the womb and he wouldn't have been able to think in that state because he didn't have any language. Presumably he had to learn his mother-tongue as an infant from his parents just as we did. If he understood how God's eternal plans would end, he wasn't prepared to reveal it to anyone: 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Mark 13.32; Matthew 24.36). And as for Jesus walking through Galilee with the beatific vision ever before his eyes. . . .

Of course, the CDF do not present these as probable inferences drawn from empirical evidence, they are examples of theology being performed as a deductive "science" (science in the Latin sense of *scientia* or the German *Wissenschaft*) drawing logical implications from the doctrine of the incarnation.<sup>2</sup> This much is clear when the CDF says, 'The filial and messianic consciousness of Jesus is the direct consequence of his ontology as Son of God made man'. Now there is good historical evidence of Jesus' 'filial consciousness' - his understanding of the special sense in which God was/is his

<sup>2</sup> This is what medieval theologians meant by theology as a sub-alternate science. See G Turner, 'St Thomas Aquinas on the "Scientific" Nature of Theology', *New Blackfriars*, November 1997, especially pp. 468-480 and 471f.

Father<sup>3</sup> - and maybe also of his messianic consciousness at the end of his life. This latter has been a much disputed issue and NT scholars generally prefer to leave the topic alone these days but E P Sanders is probably right to say that Jesus never *claimed* to be messiah but that he may have consciously acted out a messianic role from his entry into Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> But the point is that using the *communicatio idiomatum* is an exercise, a practical but rather artificial exercise, in *theological grammar* and it cannot be used to tell us anything about the historical life of Jesus, mental or bodily.

What I find disturbing about the picture of Jesus that comes from Pope Pius XII and the CDF here is that it opens the door to a sort of semi-Docetism. Certainly not pure Docetism because they clearly affirm belief in Jesus as God *and man*.<sup>5</sup> Yet they have a picture of this ne'er-do-well Galilean prophet, this religious tramp from Nazareth having a mental life that incorporates all possible knowledge, heavenly and earthly, past, present and future. It might just be true but how could we ever know? The only sensible position is one of theological discretion based on our own human, historical lack of knowledge.

There has been a strong tendency in Catholic piety towards a semi-Docetic christology, particularly since the Council of Trent perhaps, though I don't see why the Reformation should have provoked this. That is, a tendency to see Christ as not really one of us. You can see this in Sacred Heart statues for example. We make all the right affirmations of Jesus Christ being human but in the end there seems to be a gulf between him and us: he is the risen one, ascended into the heavens, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity. It is not easy in one's devotions to see him as one of us, with all our bodily and mental functions: eating and excreting, sleeping, learning languages, laughing, getting headaches, being exhausted, experiencing fear, being puzzled and, of course, dying. Yet Jesus was a man and that was how it was for him as it is for us. Like us in all things apart from sin (Hebrews 4.15).

Here we can learn a lot from reading Paul. There is no tendency to Docetism in Paul's letters. On the contrary he draws Christ and us surprising close together in almost every respect. Apart from being divine, whatever Paul says of Christ, he says also of us. Of course, Paul famously wrote very little about the course of Jesus' life, as almost everything is focused on his death, resurrection and glorification.

<sup>3</sup> See J Jeremias, 'Abba' in *The Prayers of Jesus*, SCM Press, London 1967, pp. 11-66.

<sup>4</sup> E P Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, SCM Press, London 1985, pp. 306-8.

<sup>5</sup> Although John Paul II is quoted by the CDF with approval in this context, he is more cautious in what he writes about Jesus' self-consciousness: 'His [Jesus'] eyes remain fixed on the Father. Precisely because of the knowledge and experience of the Father which he alone has, even at this moment of darkness he sees clearly the gravity of sin and suffers because of it. He alone, who sees the Father and rejoices fully in him, can understand completely what it means to resist the Father's love by sin' (John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 26).

But among the few bits of information Paul gives us about Jesus, he does tell us that Jesus addressed God as his father using the Aramaic *abba* (Romans 8.15; Galatians 4.6). In a special sense Jesus was aware of being ‘son of God’. Yet Paul says the same of us, we too are sons (and daughters) of God. And just as he is the heir to his Father, so we too are fellow heirs.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children (*huioi*) of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8.14-17 NRSV)

So according to Paul we can expect to share a similar experience of suffering and glory.

So too with death and resurrection. Christ died on the cross and we too have died in baptism,

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6.3-4)

So, dead, buried and raised, like Christ. Not quite. First, we are not literally dead, but nonetheless what we have experienced in baptism is a real death, a spiritual death, a death to the life that has gone before. But we have not yet experienced resurrection, that is a promise for the future:

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Romans 6.5)

...for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. (1 Corinthians 15.22f.; see also 1 Thessalonians 4.13-17)

Paul is very careful with his use of tenses: we have died, we will be raised. What we have now is ‘newness of life’ or ‘a new life’. In a very real sense we are to share the destiny of Christ; he leads the way, we follow. Beginning with baptism, we are spiritually identified with him. In this language there is little distance between Christ and the rest of us; we are brought so close together in this *spiritual identification* that we are almost one. Christ is not “the other”, he is “the other me”; my brother but closer than a brother. This is what Paul is getting at when he repeatedly says that we have to live ‘in Christ’.

Udo Schnelle points out that Paul was not the creator of the expression ‘in Christ’ because in 1 Corinthians 1.30, 2 Corinthians

5.17 and Galatians 3.26-28 he uses pre-baptismal formulae, though Schnelle adds that 'he can still be regarded as the real champion of this image'.<sup>6</sup> The expression is very common throughout Paul's letters: 56 times in the definitely authentic letters according to Dunn (with a slightly different count in Schnelle).<sup>7</sup> One block of references is about God's action 'in Christ': the love of God is given us in Christ Jesus (Romans 8.39), as is the grace of God (1 Corinthians 1.4), 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2 Corinthians 5.19), 'the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 6.23). Some describe where the transformation of our lives takes place: 'They are justified [made righteous]... through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3.24), we have been set free in Christ (Romans 8.2), 'in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Corinthians 15.22), Gentiles receive the blessing of Abraham in Christ (Galatians 3.14), in Christ Jesus circumcision and uncircumcision no longer count for anything (Galatians 5.6).

Dunn identifies a further block of references as more subjective, 'where Paul regularly speaks of believers *being* "in Christ" or "in the Lord"'.<sup>8</sup> So we must be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6.11), those in Christ Jesus are uncondemned (Romans 8.1), 'we are all one body in Christ' (Romans 12.5), 'you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3.28 which is about baptism), 'if anyone is in Christ, new creation!' (2 Corinthians 5.17) and so on.

Paul also uses the expression 'with Christ' especially when he considers our future destiny. We are to be with Christ in heaven (Philippians 1.23; 1 Thessalonians 4.17; 5.10), we shall appear in glory with Christ at the end (1 Thessalonians 4.14 and in Colossians 3.4) and, just as Christ lives by the power of God, so 'we shall live with him' (2 Corinthians 13.4). Dunn rather denigrates these last references by suggesting that they 'may simply denote "in the company of" rather than any mystical, sacramental, or salvation-historical participation "in Christ"'. But these are not second-rate references, they are about how our lives will follow the pattern of Christ's life right to the end.

<sup>6</sup> U Schnelle, *Apostle Paul, His Life and Theology*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2005, p. 481.

<sup>7</sup> J D G Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1998, p. 396f.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398. In addition to 'in Christ', there are 34 uses in total of 'in the Lord' in the definitely authentic letters by Dunn's count. The so-called subjective uses of 'in Christ' are: Romans 6.11; 8.1; 12.5; 16.3, 7, 9, 10; 1 Corinthians 1.2.; 30; 4.10; 15.18; 2 Corinthians 5.17; 12.2; Galatians 1.22; 2.4; 3.26, 28; Philippians 1.1; 2.1; 4.7, 21; 1 Thessalonians 1.1, 14; 4.16; Philemon 23. See note 42 in Dunn, p. 398. I have excluded some references to those letters of Paul that are not accepted by everyone as being authentic, though I would be happy to accept 2 Thessalonians. Subjective uses of 'in the Lord' are: Romans 16.2, 8, 11, 12, 13, 22; 1 Corinthians 4.17; 16.19 Philemon 16.

This language of Paul's has for some time been described as being about "participation", a "mystical" sharing in the life of Christ.<sup>9</sup> This idea of participation is reinforced by the associated expression 'body of Christ' with Christ the head and we its members (1 Corinthians 12.12–27). Schweitzer even went so far as to make the silly remark that there is 'an actual physical union between Christ and the Elect'.<sup>10</sup> Our relationship to Christ is certainly not physical. And not so much 'union' or 'participation' as *identification* in the sense that whatever has happened to him will happen to us. There is a conformity in the pattern of our lives. This is why we must have 'the mind of Christ' (*tapeinophrosune*, humble-mindedness<sup>11</sup>) as in Philippians 2.5 'let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus' with its implication for ethics.

There is another way in which Paul exhorts us to follow the pattern of Christ's life: his faith or faithfulness. The CDF, by contrast, has taken great exception to Jon Sobrino's suggestion the Jesus had faith like us, on the grounds that it diminishes his distinctiveness from us and undermines his divine status. It is worth quoting the whole paragraph.

Citing Leonardo Boff, Father Sobrino affirms that "Jesus was an extraordinary believer and had faith. Faith was Jesus' mode of being" (Jesus the Liberator, 154). And for his own part he adds: "This faith describes the totality of the life of Jesus" (Ibid, 157). The Author justifies his position citing the text of Hebrews 12:2: "Tersely and with a clarity unparalleled in the New Testament, the letter says that Jesus was related to the mystery of God in faith. Jesus is the one who has first and most fully lived faith (12:2)" (Christ the Liberator, 136-137). He further adds: "With regard to faith, Jesus in his life is presented as a believer like ourselves, our brother in relation to God, since he was not spared having to pass through faith. But he is also presented as an elder brother because he lived faith as its 'pioneer and perfecter' (12:2). He is the model, the one on whom we have to keep our eyes fixed in order to live out our own faith" (Ibid, 138).<sup>12</sup>

The CDF then refers to the unique relation that Jesus had with God and supports this with a reference to John 6.46 and a Q saying Matthew 11.25-27//Luke 10.21-22.

No New Testament scholar that I know or know of would see John 6.46 or any of the many other similar sayings in John as examples of

<sup>9</sup> It is not particularly germane to this discussion but I broadly accept Wright's view that Christ is normally used as a title in Paul's 'Christ Jesus', still with its original Jewish sense of 'messiah' - N T Wright, *Jesus and Victory of God*, SPCK, London 1996, p. 486f.

<sup>10</sup> A Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, p. 127, quoted by Dunn, *Op. cit.*, p. 392.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the vocabulary and meaning of Philippians see P Doble, "'Vile Bodies" or Transformed Persons? Philippians 3.21 in Context', *JSNT*, 86, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> *Notification on the Works of Father Jon Sobrino SJ*, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, para 8.

historical reportage, though the Q saying might be. These are John's words put in the mouth of Jesus to express the beliefs - and totally orthodox beliefs, of course - of John and his community. Moreover the passage quoted at length above suggests that the CDF author is not aware of Paul's phrase *pistis christou*, which on the surface certainly means 'faith of Christ' (Galatians 2.16 and elsewhere). So how is it with Paul?

Paul the theologian is best known for his doctrine of "justification by faith", so let us explore Paul's language of faith and where he might have got it from. Although "justification" (*dikaioisune*) is the language of the law courts, there is no doubt that Paul got the language from scripture. Paul was a very Jewish writer. He frequently quoted scripture and he made linguistic connections with other passages, and nowhere more than in Romans, the letter where he gave his most considered expression of the theology centred on "justification by faith". Paul's Bible was the Greek Old Testament, though word differences between the quotations in his letters and the Septuagint show that he was either using a non-standard text, or he had a faulty memory, or, more likely, he felt free to adapt quotations to his own purpose. Now anyone who prays the Divine Office will know that the Psalms constantly speak about 'righteousness' (*dikaioisune*) and 'faith' or 'faithfulness'. And in Romans, Paul quotes from the Greek version of the Psalms 24 times.<sup>13</sup> These are passages that he presumably meditated on in synagogue worship. So, even though Paul's two principle quotations in Romans are from Genesis and Habakkuk, the frequency of citations suggests there is a strong possibility that he got his doctrine of righteousness/justification from the Book of Psalms.

'Righteousness' is perhaps the dominant theme of the Psalms. In the first place it refers to the righteousness of God himself. His righteousness is shown by establishing his covenant with Israel. People become righteous by being incorporated into the covenant with his elect people, the Israelites. This is a matter of status rather than moral rectitude. The Israelites maintain their position of being counted righteous primarily by avoiding idolatry (i.e. remaining within the covenant) and also by keeping God's law. Rather surprisingly perhaps, there is not a great deal in the Psalms about 'law' but Psalm 118 (LXX)/119 (MT) makes up for that with its repeated emphasis on God's statutes, commandments and ordinances which indicates the importance of keeping God's law as evidence of being faithful to the God of the covenant. So the Israelites are righteous through faithfulness and the mark of this is the avoidance of idolatry and keeping Torah. This theology is perhaps best exemplified in Hosea

<sup>13</sup> There are 15 direct, though sometimes modified quotations at 2.6, 3.4, 3.10, 3.11, 3.14, 3.20, 4.7-8, 8.36, 10.18, 11.9-10, 15.3, 15.9, and 15.11. There are 5 adaptations, sometimes loose, of Psalm passages at 1.16, 1.23, 3.14, 5.5 and 9.5. And there are 4 cases of free use of or connections with the Psalms at 2.21, 3.2, 7.14 and 8.30.



2 with the righteousness of God being demonstrated in taking back the faithless Israel, represented by the drama of the prophet and his Baal-worshipping wife.

The other associated theme in Psalms is of God proving *his* faithfulness by vindicating his righteous ones who are being persecuted by the unrighteous. Despite present tribulations, the Psalmist remains confident that God will show his faithfulness to his covenant by not abandoning his faithful ones, but vindicating them and punishing their enemies who are, of course, the Gentiles. They will receive God's 'wrath', a view echoed by Paul in Romans 1.18-32.

Far from rejecting this doctrine of "righteousness through faithfulness", Paul has taken it over complete. He has made just one change to it but it is a change which changes everything. He christologises it. Because of his belief in the incarnation, faithfulness to God is now shown through faithfulness to Christ. Keeping the law is no longer the measure of our faithfulness, now it is keeping to Christ. And we must persevere to the end - no falling away! Faithfulness. Douglas Campbell has forcibly argued that on almost every occasion when we find *pistis* in Paul, we can and should translate it as 'faithfulness', with the alternatives 'fidelity', 'trust' or, I would add, 'loyalty'.<sup>14</sup>

The problem with Sobrino and the CDF is that they both make *pistis* too much a matter of the head. At the risk of doing them an injustice, I have the sense that the CDF sees faith as a poor sort of knowledge: because we don't *know* God, we have to resort to belief. It is only we men and women who have to resort to this, not the incarnate one who has a direct vision of God. And the passages from Sobrino quoted by the CDF suggest that for him *pistis* means assenting to things, a sense that became increasingly common by the end of the first-century when *pistis* sometimes referred to the content of faith, i.e. doctrine. The Psalmist, on the other hand, can speak of the faithfulness of God ('For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness', Ps 33.4 [MT]), as can Hosea ('I will betroth you to me in faithfulness', Hosea 2.20, where the context shows it is *God's* faithfulness, as well as his righteousness and mercy in the preceding verse), and as can Paul ('Does their [the Jews'] faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?', Romans 3.3). So there is a clear sense in which God can be said to have faith or faithfulness.

Similarly, Paul speaks in a number of places of *pistis Iesou Christou*, the faith or, better, faithfulness of Jesus Christ: Romans 3.22, 26; Galatians 2.16, 20; 3.22; Philippians 3.9.

English translations do not help here as they invariably translate it as an objective genitive: 'faith in Jesus Christ', but there has been an extensive scholarly debate that increasingly suggests it is a subjective

<sup>14</sup> D A Campbell, *The Quest for Paul's Gospel*, T & T Clark, London 2005, ch.9 'The Meaning of "Faith" in Paul's Gospel', pp. 178-207.

genitive and should be translated as ‘the faith/faithfulness of Jesus Christ’.<sup>15</sup> So in this perspective on Paul’s doctrine of what I suggest should be called “righteousness through faithfulness” we have:

- (i) God who, we may be sure, will remain faithful to his own covenant,
- (ii) Abraham, who in Romans 4 is taken as the prototype of the faithful man, and who holds to God’s promises despite all appearances and is rewarded with descendants (‘his faithfulness was reckoned to him as righteousness’, Romans 4.22 quoting Genesis 15.6),
- (iii) Christ who remained faithful to his destiny, who saw it through to the end and was vindicated through resurrection from the dead, and
- (iv) the rest of us, faithful men and women, who show their faithfulness by holding to Christ. We will remain righteous/justified so long as we see it through to the end. So *pistis* is not primarily something which, as it were, goes on in one’s head; nor is it about possessing some special knowledge (*gnosis*); it is about the orientation of one’s life and it requires stickability. In Jesus’ own words, ‘he who endures to the end will be saved’ (Matthew 24.13).

Although not by Paul, the faithfulness of Christ is well captured by the author of Hebrews, aptly quoted by Sobrino. Jesus, we are told, is the *archegos* and *teleiotes* of our faith, usually translated ‘pioneer and perfecter’, but it could equally well be rendered ‘origin and goal’ of our faith, or ‘first and last’ though the grammar doesn’t quite work if you do that. However, the point is that Jesus Christ is our exemplar in the whole pattern of our life: we have died with him, been buried with him, like him we are sons and daughters of God, we have become fellow-heirs, and have received the promise of a resurrection like his. Like him, we have to remain faithful to the end. He is,

The pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. (Hebrews 12.2-3)

He is the one with whom we became identified in baptism.

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<sup>15</sup> Schnelle, *Op. cit.*, p. 523, as a good Lutheran, still opts for the objective genitive reading, but he refers readers to the two sides of the debate in Richard Hays, ‘PISTIS and Pauline Christology’ in *Looking Back, Pressing On*, ed. By E Elizabeth Johnson and David M Hay, vol 4 of *Pauline Theology*, Scholars Press, Atlanta 1997, pp. 35-60 for arguments for the subjective genitive (one might also read the more recent D A Campbell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 208-232), and for the objective genitive J D G Dunn, ‘Once More: Pistis Christou’ in the same volume pp. 61-81, and also *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, pp. 379-385.