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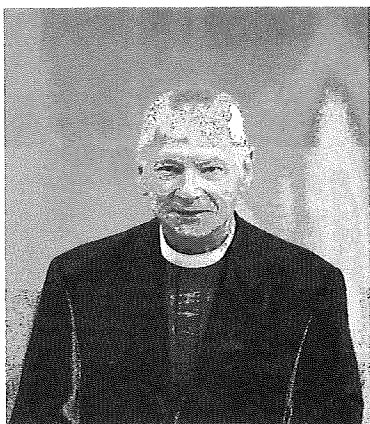
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In Memoriam

† Kurt E. Marquart †

1934–2006

The Reverend Kurt Erik Marquart, D.D., well known for his defense of confessional Lutheran theology, died at home at the age of 72 on September 19, 2006. He had been diagnosed the previous December with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a progressive neurodegenerative disease also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. He had been a Lutheran minister for forty-seven years and taught at the seminary for nearly thirty-one years. At the time of his death he was associate professor of systematic theology and had served in previous years as that department's chairman.

Dr. Marquart was born in Tallinn, Estonia, on June 20, 1934, to Kurt Arved and Margarita Angelica (née Ulk) Marquart. To escape the Soviet invasion, he moved with his family in 1941 to Vienna, Austria, and lived for a time in the Displaced Persons (DP) Camps in North Germany (1945) and then came to the Hudson River Valley of New York where he was brought up. In 1952 he was confirmed in the Lutheran congregation in Nyack, New York. His upbringing in Russian and German schools provided him an avenue into the international Lutheran world. He also served as an instructor in French, which later served him well in his mission trips to Haiti where he frequently lectured at its Lutheran seminary.

Though students who did not attend the Preparatory School of Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, New York were required to take three years at its Junior College to receive the Associate of Arts degree, he received it in two years, receiving his diploma in 1954. He then entered Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, from which he received the Bachelor of Arts in 1956 and Bachelor of Divinity in 1959 for which degree he wrote a thesis comparing Gustav Aulén and Francis Pieper on prolegomena. From the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada in 1982 he received his M.A. degree for a major paper titled "Bio-Teleology Reconsidered: Prolegomena to Some Future Metaphysical 'Episteme'-Shift." In recognition of his lifelong service to Christ and his church, Concordia University—Wisconsin awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 2001.

He served his vicarage at Redeemer Lutheran Church in North Tonawanda, New York (1957–1958) and was ordained on July 19, 1959, to serve Trinity Lutheran Church, Weatherford, Texas. In 1961 he became the pastor of Redeemer and Good Shepherd congregations, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. Dr. Marquart was a member of the Lutheran Church of Australia's Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, the Queensland District Church Council, and Concordia College (Toowoomba) Council.

In 1975 he joined the seminary faculty, a few months before it moved from its Springfield, Illinois, campus to Fort Wayne. His classroom style in engaging students in a lively theological discussion made him popular with students and instilled in them a love of the Lutheran Confessions. His faculty colleagues expressed their admiration for him by electing him to the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations (1976–1981, 1983–1992, 2001–2007). It is unlikely that anyone will surpass the number of years in which he served this commission. He was also a member of the ALC–LCMS Fellowship Commission (1978–1981). He had a lively interest in apologetics and lectured in universities and other venues against evolution. He was strongly opposed to abortion and was active in pro-life groups.

Dr. Marquart's articles appeared in many popular and theological journals and periodicals first in Australia and America. His bibliography extends to many pages. A vital source into the events leading to disruptions in the LCMS is his *Anatomy of an Explosion: A Theological Analysis of the Missouri Synod Conflict* (1977), as well as *"Church Growth" as a Mission Paradigm* (1994). He also authored *The Church and Her Ministry, Fellowship, and Governance* for the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series (1990) and at the time of his death was preparing the volume on prolegomena for this series. His influence was extended through numerous scholarly articles in the *Concordia Theological Quarterly*.

Widely sought after as a speaker at pastoral conferences, district meetings, and congregational events, Dr. Marquart will be long remembered for his incisive mind, quick wit, and genuine concern. He was regarded by all as a gentleman. In May of 2006 the graduating class provided a perpetual remembrance of him by presenting a portrait of him to the seminary, which can be seen in the lower hallway of Loehe Hall. Faculty colleagues will especially miss his thoughtful and cordial presence, recalling his particularly gracious words only two weeks before his death at the 2006 Fall Faculty Forum. There he thanked them for his service with them. He was in the classroom one week before his death and only his death prevented him from attending what he knew would be his last meeting with the commission on theology. He was buried from the seminary chapel on September 22 with over 130 robed ministers honoring his memory with their presence. Committal was at Covington Memorial Gardens. Dr. Marquart is survived by his wife, Barbara (née Martens) and five children—Danny, Cynthia (Johnson), Barry, Angela (Hill), and Anthony—eighteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

We mark his passing not as those without hope, but confident in the unfailing promises of the very Christ whom Dr. Marquart himself confessed and is confessing. "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. But it is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works" (Ps 73:26–28).

Justification by Faith is the Answer: What is the Question?¹

Stephen Westerholm

Let me begin with an outrageous claim, a bright idea spawned and supported solely by my own spotty reading—though, such is my perversity, that I would have voiced it with less rather than more confidence had it been the result of a hundred polls. No article published in the twentieth century on a New Testament topic garnered more attention, provoked more debate, or exercised greater influence than Krister Stendahl's "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West."² Stendahl himself meant his article to do for Paul what Henry Cadbury had done for the Gospels when he wrote *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus*.³ To lift Paul out of his first-century context is to distort him. And the ancients, among whom we must include the apostle Paul, were apparently not given to introspection. According to Stendahl, Augustine—not Paul—"express[ed] the dilemma of the introspective conscience," and he "may well have been one of the first" to do so.⁴ Nor should we attribute Luther's inner struggles to Paul; they mark the reformer rather as "a truly Augustinian monk" and an example of "late medieval piety and theology."⁵ In Luther's day, "penetrating self-examination reached a hitherto unknown intensity," bringing great "pressure" to bear on its practitioners. "It is in response to *their* question, 'How can I find a gracious God?' that Paul's words about a justification in Christ by faith, and without the works of the law, appears as the liberating and saving answer."⁶

¹ This paper was prepared for oral presentation at the 2006 Symposium on Exegetical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. I have retained the oral style of the presentation and added only a few footnotes by way of documentation and clarification.

² Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963): 199–215; reproduced in Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 78–96.

³ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1937).

⁴ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 83.

⁵ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 82–83.

⁶ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 83.

But their question was not Paul's question, which concerned rather "the place of the Gentiles in the Church and in the plan of God."⁷ Hence "the West for centuries has wrongly surmised that the biblical writers were grappling with problems which no doubt are ours, but which never entered their consciousness."⁸ "Where Paul was concerned about the possibility for Gentiles to be included in the messianic community, his statements are now read as answers to the quest for assurance about man's salvation out of a common human predicament."⁹ Stendahl later summarized his differences from Ernst Käsemann, his most noted and sharpest critic,¹⁰ along similar lines: "The first issue at hand is whether Paul intended *his* argument about justification to answer the question: 'How am I, Paul, to understand the place in the plan of God of my mission to the Gentiles, and how am I to defend the rights of the Gentiles to participate in God's promises?' or, if he intended it to answer the question, which I consider later and western: 'How am I to find a gracious God?'"¹¹

How one construes Paul's claim that we are "justified by faith, not by the works of the law" thus depends on the question one believes it addresses. Stendahl's posing of the issue—not "How can a sinner find a gracious God?" but "On what terms can Gentiles gain entrance to the people of God?"—has become something of a mantra for proponents of what we now call "the New Perspective on Paul." So E. P. Sanders writes of Galatians 2-4 and Romans 3-4, the primary chapters in which Paul discusses justification: "The subject matter is not 'how can the individual be righteous in God's sight?', but rather, 'on what grounds can Gentiles participate in the people of God in the last days?'"¹² And again: "The discussion of 'being righteoused by faith' is substantially the same [in Romans as in Galatians]. The problem is, again, that of Gentile inclusion in the people of God."¹³ And again: "The question is not about how many good deeds an individual must present before God to be declared righteous at the judgment, but, to repeat, whether or not Paul's Gentile

⁷ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 84.

⁸ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 95.

⁹ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 86.

¹⁰ Ernst Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History in the Epistle to the Romans," in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 60-78.

¹¹ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 131.

¹² E. P. Sanders, *Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 50.

¹³ Sanders, *Paul*, 66.

converts must accept the Jewish law in order to enter the people of God or to be counted truly members."¹⁴

James Dunn, too, has read his Stendahl. He writes: "The leading edge of Paul's theological thinking was the conviction that God's purpose embraced Gentile as well as Jew, not the question of how a guilty man might find a gracious God."¹⁵ And again:

When Paul said in effect, "All are justified by faith and not by works," he meant *not* "Every individual must cease from his own efforts and simply trust in God's acceptance," however legitimate and important an interpretation of his words that is. What he meant was, "Justification is not confined to Jews as marked out by their distinctive works; it is open to all, to Gentile as well as Jew, through faith."¹⁶

We have got the point, but we will give Dunn one more shot at its formulation: "Justification by faith was Paul's answer to the question: How is it that Gentiles can be equally acceptable to God as Jews?"¹⁷

Both the view of justification espoused by the New Perspectivists and the one they reject emerge clearly from their comments on "the works of the law" that Paul repudiates in favor of faith. Traditionally, these "works of the law" have been understood as human good deeds that Pelagian heretics, of one century or another, imagine lead to salvation. Paul's point, then, is that only by grace through faith can we be saved, not by any good works that we do. Not so, say the New Perspectivists. On their view, when the first-century Paul spoke of the "works of the law," he had in mind things like circumcision, food, and festival laws; and his point was that these distinctively Jewish practices need not be observed by Gentiles in order to belong to the people of God. Let Tom Wright speak for their position: "[Israel] was determined to have her covenant membership demarcated by works of Torah, that is, by the things that kept that

¹⁴ E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 20.

¹⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 232.

¹⁶ James D. G. Dunn, "The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith," *Journal of Theological Studies* 43 (1992): 14.

¹⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 340.

membership confined to Jews and Jews only.”¹⁸ Or, again, we may cite Dunn: “‘Works of the law’ are what distinguish Jew from Gentile. To affirm justification by works of the law is to affirm that justification is for Jews only, is to require that Gentile believers take on the persona and practices of the Jewish people.”¹⁹

My purpose in this paper is not to review further the contemporary debate,²⁰ but to ask quite simply whether Stendahl and others who followed in his footsteps have correctly identified the question Paul addressed in saying that justification is by faith. Did he mean that faith alone, not the observance of distinctively Jewish works of the law, is required for Gentiles to be included in the people of God? Or was his point that sinners are declared righteous by faith alone, apart from the righteous deeds that the law requires? Justification by faith is the answer, but what is the question?

Our main focus will naturally be on Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Romans; but I mean to begin, not with letters central to our topic, nor even with letters indisputably Pauline, but with several epistles whose Pauline authorship is contested by many scholars and with one letter definitely not by Paul, whose stance, indeed, is widely thought to be *anti*-Pauline. Let us look first, albeit briefly, at Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, then at the Epistle of James.

In Ephesians 2:8–9, we read familiar words: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”²¹ The “you” addressed in these verses were once “dead” in “trespasses and sins” and destined for God’s judgment as “children of wrath” (Eph 2:1–3). But now, we are told, they have been saved by grace as a sheer gift from God, apart from any works of their own. The whole scenario is recreated in Titus 3:3–7:

¹⁸ N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 130.

¹⁹ Dunn, *Theology*, 363–364.

²⁰ I cannot, however, be accused in good faith of shying away from the task in other contexts; see my *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 99–258; and “The ‘New Perspective’ at Twenty-Five,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Vol. 2, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 1–38.

²¹ Biblical quotations are taken from the *English Standard Version*.

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Similarly, 2 Timothy 1:9 stresses that God "saved us . . . not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace."²²

Whatever their authorship, each of these passages echoes and reformulates the justification texts in Paul's undisputed letters, particularly Romans 3-4: here, as there, one reads of a God who justifies (Titus 3:7; Rom 3:26, 30; 4:5) by his grace (Eph 2:8; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:7; Rom 3:24) through faith (Eph 2:8; Rom 3:22, 28; 4:5) and not through works (Eph 2:9; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5; Rom 3:20, 28; 4:2, 6), thus eliminating any grounds for boasting (Eph 2:9; Rom 3:27; 4:2). In Ephesians and the Pastorals, the works repeatedly rejected as playing a role in salvation are good works in general, deeds done in righteousness, as Titus 3 puts it. And those saved or justified by divine grace are sinners, plain and simple, slaves of their sins and otherwise destined for divine judgment; they are not Gentiles inquiring about entrance requirements to a desired community.²³ In broad terms at least, the interpretation of these texts is not controversial.

Now nothing in these texts allows us to decide what question Paul addressed in Galatians and Romans when he spoke of justification by faith, apart from the works of the law. The suggestion is often made—and a plausible suggestion it is—that a Pauline formula originally designed to address a particular mid-century crisis (so Galatians and Romans) was later reformulated and generalized when the original crisis had passed (so

²² On these texts, see Andrew T. Lincoln, "Ephesians 2:8-10: A Summary of Paul's Gospel?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 617-630; and I. Howard Marshall, "Salvation, Grace and Works in the Later Writings in the Pauline Corpus," *New Testament Studies* 42 (1996): 339-358.

²³ Ephesians (but not the Pastoral Epistles) does emphasize Paul's role in proclaiming the divine mystery by which Gentiles participate together with Jews in the people of God (2:11-3:6; cf. Col 1:25-27). But the language of *faith*, *works*, and *justification* is not used in that context.

Ephesians and the Pastorals). Something along these lines is, from the perspective of the New Perspectivists, what must have happened. What can be said with certainty, however, is that already in the first century the Pauline justification texts were invoked to address the predicament of sinners facing God's wrath; and already in the first century they were used to insist that God offers such sinners salvation in Jesus Christ by grace through faith apart from a demand for righteous deeds that they are in no position to meet. The claim that such a reading modernizes Paul can only be maintained if we date the onset of modernity prior to the composition of Ephesians.

We move on to the Epistle of James. When the Epistle of James declares that "a person is justified by works and *not* by faith alone" (Jas 2:24), the formulation, though inverted, must ultimately be based on the justification texts of the apostle Paul: it was Paul who introduced the language of justification by faith, not by works.²⁴ Whomever James may intend to refute, the *position* he dismisses holds that God approves sinners because of their faith regardless of whether or not that faith leads to righteous behavior. Paul himself (one suspects) would not have vouched for justification in the terms James rejects. Even in Galatians he insists that we reap what we sow (Gal 6:7), that those who practice the "works of the flesh . . . will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:19–21), and that faith finds expression in love (Gal 5:6). Nonetheless, from James as well as from responses to Paul reflected in his own letters it is clear that some of his listeners and readers interpreted Paul's message along antinomian lines already in the first century—as, indeed, some have done ever since.²⁵ For our purposes, we should note that the terms of Gentile inclusion in the people of God are not an issue for the Epistle of James; very much an issue, however, is whether people can be justified by faith apart from any accompanying works. And the works in question are not circumcision or the observance of food and festival laws, but such good deeds as clothing the naked and feeding the hungry (Jas 2:14–17). Does James, too, represent a modernized and westernized reading of Paul?

We turn now to Paul's undisputed writings, though not yet to texts that have figured centrally in the debate. In 1 Thessalonians we find no trace of

²⁴ Cf. Friedrich Avemarie, "Die Werke des Gesetzes im Spiegel des Jakobusbriefs: A Very Old Perspective on Paul," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 98 (2001): 282–309.

²⁵ Rom 3:8; 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23; cf. Rom 6:1; Gal 5:13.

justification language or any discussion of circumcision or Jewish festival and dietary laws. The dual omission may suggest to some readers a link between the items omitted: justification language is only adopted when Gentile observance of Jewish practices is an issue. The linkage will concern us when we come to the letter to the Galatians. Evidence in the negative for our question, however, is not all that 1 Thessalonians has to offer. The content of the letter leaves no doubt about the substance of Paul's missionary proclamation to the Thessalonians. The latter (like all human beings) are the creatures of a God whom they have not worshiped (1 Thess 1:9), whose expectations for moral behavior they have not met (1 Thess 4:5), and whose outpouring of wrath is imminent (1 Thess 1:10; 5:2-3). Had Paul posed the dilemma facing the Thessalonians in terms of a question, it would necessarily have been something like: How can I, a sinner facing divine judgment, find a gracious God?

And that is the question that Paul's message to the Thessalonians was designed to answer. In turning from idols to the "living and true God," they were placing their faith in his son Jesus, "who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:9-10). "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. While people are saying, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape" (1 Thess 5:2-3). Believers in Jesus, however, belong to the day, not the night, and they should live accordingly. "For God has not determined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him" (1 Thess 5:9-10). If, for Dunn, "the leading edge of Paul's theological thinking was the conviction that God's purposes embraced Gentiles as well as Jews, not the question of how a guilty man might find a gracious God"²⁶; and if, for Stendahl, the latter question marks the concerns of the later West,²⁷ then it must be said that Paul's message to the Thessalonians left them in the dark about the core of his thinking while pointlessly answering a question that they were born in quite the wrong time and place even to dream of raising. Permit me an alternative proposal: to my mind, 1 Thessalonians suggests that the

²⁶ Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 232.

²⁷ Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, 131.

danger of modernizing Paul lies in displacing the centrality of sin, judgment, faith, and salvation from his message.²⁸

On to Corinth, where Paul's message has not changed. His goal, in Corinth as elsewhere, is to do whatever it takes to save those who hear his message.

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not myself being under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, *that by all means I might save some*. (1 Cor 9:20–23; cf. 10:33; emphasis added)

Salvation in Thessalonians meant deliverance from God's wrath and judgment; it means the same in Corinthians. The world, according to 1 Corinthians 11:32, faces condemnation; its people, according to several texts, are the perishing (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3). And they are perishing because their deeds merit perdition: the "unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9; cf. 2 Cor 6:14). To those otherwise perishing, Paul brings a gospel of salvation from sin and its condemnation for all who believe the gospel message.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . . It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. (1 Cor 1:18, 21)²⁹

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. (1 Cor 15:1–2)

We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to the one a fragrance from death to

²⁸ Cf. R. Barry Matlock, "Almost Cultural Studies? Reflections on the 'New Perspective' on Paul," in *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies: The Third Sheffield Colloquium*, ed. J. Cheryl Exum and Stephen D. Moore (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 439.

²⁹ Note that the context stresses that the same message brings salvation to "both Jews and Greeks" (1 Cor 1:22–25).

death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor 2:15–16; cf. 6:1–2)

There is no question, then, about the heart of Paul's message when he arrived in Corinth.

Significantly for our purposes, the language of *righteousness* and *justification*, absent from Thessalonians, is used in 1 and 2 Corinthians, though not prominently. The Greek verb we render *justify* (δικαίωω) comes from the same stem as the words for *righteous* (δίκαιος) and *righteousness* (δικαιοσύνη); it means to "find (or declare) righteous," "to acquit." Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 4:4 that he himself is not aware of sin in his life; but since God, not he, is the judge, his own sense of innocence does not mean he is justified.³⁰ That is, God alone can pronounce on whether or not people are righteous. And to be righteous, in this (quite ordinary) sense of the word, is to have met one's moral obligations.³¹ Conversely, the unrighteous are those who do not live as they ought, and Paul has lists at hand of the kind of sinful deeds they practice (1 Cor 6:9–10). One way, then, of putting the dilemma addressed by Paul's gospel is to say that the world is peopled by the unrighteous who, as such, cannot hope to survive divine judgment. The gospel responds to that dilemma by offering the unrighteous a means by which they may extraordinarily be declared righteous or justified.

Such language, to repeat, is not prominent in Corinthians; but it is there, and it deals neither with whether Gentiles need to be circumcised and keep Jewish food laws (those questions are not an issue in Corinthians), nor with how Gentiles can be made equally acceptable before God as Jews (in fact, Jews no less than Gentiles need to be "saved" [1 Cor 9:20–23; cf. 1:18–25]). Paul invokes the language of *righteousness* and *justification* when he indicates how sinners can find the righteousness they need if they are to stand in the face of God's judgment.³² That Christ is "our righteousness," as 1 Corinthians 1:30 declares, addresses the issue in the most succinct way possible: Christ is the means by which people, themselves unrighteous, can be found righteous by God. The same basic point is made in 2 Corinthians

³⁰ ESV here reads "acquitted."

³¹ See Westerholm, *Perspectives*, 263–273.

³² Both, too, are "called" (1 Cor 1:24; cf. Rom 9:24); see also the remarks of Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 155.

5:21: "For our sake," Paul writes, "[God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." The verb "to justify" is used in 1 Corinthians 6:11 in a context where those said to be "justified" (or "declared righteous") are explicitly the "unrighteous." Paul has just reminded the Corinthians that "the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9). After listing various categories of the "unrighteous," he continues: "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor 6:11). Justification, then, has to do with the removal of sins that would otherwise condemn the unrighteous.

One other text from the Corinthian correspondence should be mentioned here. In 2 Corinthians 3, the covenant under which Paul serves is said to be one of righteousness (in the sense of "acquittal") in contrast with the Mosaic covenant, which, though divine and glorious, brings condemnation and death to its subjects (2 Cor 3:7-10). Here Paul does not pause to explain why the Mosaic covenant condemns and does not acquit; but, in light of what he writes elsewhere, his thinking on the matter is not in doubt. The Mosaic covenant promises blessing to those who obey its commandments (Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12) but curses all who transgress them (Gal 3:10). It thus becomes a covenant solely of condemnation and death (as in 2 Cor 3:7, 9) only on the assumption that all its subjects are sinners who transgress its prescriptions; and that, of course, was Paul's conviction (cf. Rom 8:7-8). "In Adam *all* die" (1 Cor 15:22)—and the law of Moses, far from remedying that situation, only pronounces their condemnation (cf. 1 Cor 15:56).

Conversely, Paul's service under the new covenant involves bringing a message of righteousness (or justification) and life to those condemned by the law. In short, the Corinthian Epistles link the language of *righteousness* and *justification* to the message that the Corinthian and Thessalonian Epistles alike identify as the central concern of Paul's mission: How sinners can be saved from merited judgment. Justification through the gospel of Jesus Christ represents Paul's answer to the question inevitably provoked by a message of pending eschatological doom: How can I find a gracious God? Perhaps we should add, however, that an eschatological framework such as Paul's is hardly the only ancient, non-Western setting in which such a concern could arise. In Job, too, we read: "Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?" (Job 4:17). Such, it seems, is a perennial concern of the religiously alert.

Before we look at Galatians, perhaps we should tally up the scorecard to this point. On the one side we have the "Stendahl Revisionists." Stendahl, explaining Luther's concern to find a gracious God, labeled him an Augustinian monk. That label will do for our purposes: the "Stendahl Revisionists" are taking on the "Augustinian Monks." To this point we have looked at Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, James, 1 Thessalonians, and the letters to the Corinthians. The terms by which Gentiles are to be admitted to the people of God are not discussed in any of these writings, leaving the "Stendahl Revisionists" scoreless at this point in the game. For their part, the "Augustinian Monks" can claim in their favor that Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, and James read Paul's justification texts much the same way they do; that 1 Thessalonians and the Corinthian Epistles show that the central question provoked by Paul's missionary message (How can sinners find a gracious God?) is precisely the question that Paul's justification language, on their understanding, is designed to satisfy; and that in Corinthians Paul clearly uses justification language for precisely that purpose. If the "Monks" have a decent middle reliever and a closer in their bullpen, this game is over. We should not forget, however, that right from the outset the "Revisionists" have banked their hopes on Galatians.

It is in Paul's letter to the Galatians that we find for the first time the formula "A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal 2:16). Here we also encounter, for the first time in Paul's letters, a debate about whether Gentile believers in Christ should be circumcised.³³ Clearly the formula is linked to the debate; but what, more specifically, is the linkage?

Presumably Paul's initial message to the Galatians differed little from his initial message to the Thessalonians and the Corinthians. In that case he presented Christ as God's answer to the dilemma faced by sinners otherwise condemned to divine wrath. When the "Lord Jesus Christ . . . gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age" (Gal 1:4), the deliverance at least includes, if it is not to be equated with, deliverance from the judgment that hangs over the "evil age" and its denizens. In neither Thessalonica nor in Corinth had the question arisen whether Gentiles needed to be circumcised or keep other distinctively Jewish laws. Presumably, Paul did not raise the issue in Galatia either. Had he done so,

³³ 1 Cor 7:17-19 hardly amounts to a debate.

it could only have been to deny such requirements; and the Galatians, so prepared, would presumably not have been swept off their feet when later confronted by such demands.

How, we may well wonder, was a demand for circumcision made convincing to Galatian believers in Christ? In itself circumcision would hardly have seemed a desirable operation to undergo; it could only have been urged upon the Galatians as part of a bigger picture. God had chosen the seed of Abraham as his people. At Sinai he had entered into a covenant with them. By the laws of that covenant God's people were to live. Those laws included circumcision. If males wanted to belong to God's people, they must start by getting circumcised. So, plausibly enough, the teachers who followed Paul into Galatia would have argued.

They saw no conflict between the requirement for circumcision and a recognition of Jesus as Messiah. They, too, proclaimed the gospel (cf. Gal 1:6) that the God who chose the Jewish people had now sent them their Messiah; for these teachers, too, it was incumbent upon all to believe in Jesus and be baptized in his name. But the advent of Messiah was a Jewish hope, and its fulfillment was no reason for abandoning a Jewish way of life. If Judaism meant life lived under the Mosaic covenant and its laws,³⁴ then these teachers came to Galatia to promote a sect that had recently begun to take shape within Judaism, distinguished from other Jews precisely (but only) by its faith in Jesus as Messiah. In the view of these teachers, the framework within which all God's people were to live remained that of the Mosaic law and covenant.

Paul's formula of justification—"A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ"—sums up his opposition to this position. The question we need to answer is what part (or parts) of the position it opposes. A minimalist interpretation would see him denying only the demand that Gentiles be circumcised and submit to the

³⁴ This corresponds nicely with E. P. Sanders's well-known understanding of Judaism as "covenantal nomism," though stressing (as "covenantal nomism" does not) that adherence to the Mosaic laws represents the ancestral way of life of the Jewish people. Cf. John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan [323 BCE–117 CE]* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 410; Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 7–8, 92–93, 182; Martin S. Jaffee, *Early Judaism* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997), 9–10.

distinctively Jewish laws of the Mosaic covenant. Such a denial is itself quite intelligible within the boundaries of first-century Judaism. After all, Jews of the period were by no means united in their understanding of how Gentiles could gain God's favor.³⁵ Some (like those Christ-believing Jews who followed Paul into Galatia) thought Gentiles had to become Jews; but others thought it necessary only that Gentiles maintain basic standards of morality. On this reading, Paul—no less than the Galatians' new teachers—came to Galatia to propagate a Christ-believing sect within a Judaism defined by its adherence to the Mosaic law, though in his case without requiring such adherence of Gentiles. On this reading, moreover, justification by faith represents, as the New Perspectivists claim it represents, Paul's answer to a question whether Gentile believers in Christ should be circumcised and adopt a Jewish way of life.

This minimalist interpretation, however, must ignore or explain away the whole argument of Galatians. The Galatians' new teachers may have assumed that the Sinaitic covenant remains in place as the framework within which God's people are to live; but that is the very point at which Paul attacks them. Circumcision (he argues, in effect) is not to be required of Gentiles, not because this part of a still valid Mosaic economy is inapplicable in their case, or even because the whole of a still valid Mosaic economy is not meant for Gentiles, but because the Mosaic economy itself has lost its validity. Its day has past. At the best of times, righteousness was simply not achievable by means of the Mosaic economy. Lacking the means to justify sinners, it could only curse and enslave them. In the plan of God the covenant and laws of Mount Sinai played an important but temporary role as guardian of God's people until Messiah should come and deliver them. For Gentile believers in Christ to be circumcised now would be a disaster, not because they would be unnecessarily taking on requirements binding only on Jews, but because they would be abandoning Christ, whose death is the sole means by which Jews and Gentiles alike can find righteousness; and they would be embracing life under a covenant that can only condemn them. Such is the thrust of Galatians.

³⁵ See Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 51–74; E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 206–212.

Let me briefly develop critical parts of these claims.³⁶ First, when Paul talks about justification, in Galatians as in his other Epistles, he is talking about how sinners can be found righteous. That Gentiles were sinners was self-evident to Jews (Gal 2:15); but if Jews like Peter and Paul sought justification in Christ, then they, too, proved to be sinners (Gal 2:16–17). If justification had been achievable by other means, Christ need not have died; clearly, then, his death represented the only way that sinners could be justified (Gal 2:21). According to Galatians 3:22–24, all were “imprisoned . . . under sin” until “Christ came in order that we might be justified by faith.” Paul’s message of justification thus does not address a need peculiar to Gentiles, but the need of all human beings—Jews like Peter and Paul no less than Gentiles like the Galatians—inasmuch as all are sinners.

If righteousness is only possible through the death of Christ, then righteousness is not possible by means of the Mosaic law. So Paul asserts (Gal 2:21; 3:21–22), but he also explains why. The law tells people what to do and promises God’s blessing if they do it: its operative principle is thus “The one who does [what the law demands] shall live by [so doing]” (Gal 3:12, citing Lev 18:5). Paul sees no need to dispute the further claim, axiomatic among Jews, that the law prescribes means to atone for sins inevitably and regrettably committed by people otherwise oriented toward serving God; he knows no such people.³⁷ Conversely, other Jews would not have disputed Paul’s claim that the law condemns the incorrigibly sinful. Paul differs from other Jews not so much in his understanding of the requirements of the law as in his assessment of human sinfulness.³⁸ His more pessimistic anthropology, by which all are hopelessly enslaved to sin, seems to have followed from his conviction that the Messiah died to redeem humankind from its sins: so drastic a remedy implies a drastic dilemma, and Paul revised his earlier, more optimistic, assessment of the

³⁶ For a more detailed treatment, see my *Perspectives*, 366–384.

³⁷ That “the law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in . . . maintenance or reestablishment of the covenantal relationship” is, for E. P. Sanders, one of the items that makes up “the ‘pattern’ or ‘structure’ of covenantal nomism”; *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 422. He illustrates the point in his discussion of a variety of Jewish texts; *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, e.g., 157–180, 298–305, and 338–341.

³⁸ Cf. Mikael Winninge, *Sinners and the Righteous: A Comparative Student of the Psalms of Solomon and Paul’s Letters* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993), 264, 306–307. Also Timo Laato, *Paul and Judaism: Anthropological Approach* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995).

human condition accordingly.³⁹ The desperation of a humanity whose sinfulness is illumined by the death of Christ cannot possibly meet the measure of obedience required—on any interpretation—by the Mosaic covenant.⁴⁰

When Paul declares, then, that “a person is not justified by works of the law” (Gal 2:16), he is, to be sure, denying that Gentiles should be circumcised; but the point of the formula, and the reason why Gentiles ought not to be circumcised, is that God’s favor cannot be enjoyed by sinners under a covenant that demands compliance with its laws as its condition for blessing.⁴¹ The justification “by works of the law” that Paul rules out in Galatians 2:16 is no different from the justification “through the law” that he deems inconceivable in Galatians 2:21, where no restriction to particular, boundary-defining commandments (like that of circumcision) is in view. Elsewhere, too, the alternative Paul rejects is not a justification linked with particular demands of the law, but justification by

³⁹ Cf. Phil 3:4–6. In fact, covenantal nomism only works on the assumption that the people of the covenant can adequately fulfill its demands; cf. Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 65.

⁴⁰ Cf. Lev 18:5; Deut 10:12–13; 11:26–28.

⁴¹ Being circumcised means entering a covenant that requires obedience to all its laws: such would be the obligation of the Galatians, should they be circumcised (Gal 5:3)—as indeed, it had been the obligation of Jews (like Paul) as long as they lived “under the law.” The captivity under the law from which Jewish believers in Christ had been delivered (Rom 7:4–6; cf. 6:14–15; 1 Cor 9:20; Gal 4:5; 5:18, etc.) is not one that Gentiles should now enter (Gal 4:21–5:1). Indeed, for Paul, Jewish believers themselves must *not* comply with the law if it keeps them from walking “in step with the truth of the gospel” (Gal 2:14, in context). Romans 14 strikes a more conciliatory note; yet even here compliance with the law is only a matter of individual conscience (see Rom 14:5, 13–14, where Paul makes it clear that treating any day as different from another is optional, and where he sees himself free to eat any food whatever [cf. 1 Cor 10:25–27]; in 1 Cor 9:19–23, Paul explains his own occasional compliance with [distinctively Jewish] demands of the law as strategically motivated). However accommodating to Jewish sensibilities Paul’s position in Romans 14 may appear to be, John Barclay notes that the apostle appeared as an apostate to his fellow Jews (John M. G. Barclay, “Paul Among Diaspora Jews: Anomaly or Apostate?” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 60 [1995]: 118–119; *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 384–385, 395), and that his treatment of Torah observance as optional for Jewish believers could only undermine such observance (“‘Do We Undermine the Law?’ A Study of Romans 14.1–15.6,” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law*, ed. James D. G. Dunn [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001], 287–308).

the law itself, whose requirement of righteous works distinguishes it from the path of faith and grace:

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does [its commands] shall live by them." (Gal 3:11-12, quoting Hab 2:4; Lev 18:5)

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. (Gal 5:4)

Second, the problem posed by the law is indeed not simply its inability to give life to the dead or to justify the sinner (Gal 3:21-24). It curses all who transgress its commandments: "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them" (Gal 3:10, quoting Deut 27:26). If all are "imprisoned . . . under sin," then none can "abide by" the things written in the law. It follows that all are subject to "the curse of the law"; and the benefits of Christ's death must go beyond justification for sinners to include deliverance from that curse (Gal 3:10, 13; cf. 4:5).

Third, Paul underlines his point by introducing an allegorical interpretation of the mothers of Abraham's sons (Gal 4:21-5:1). Taking Hagar and Sarah to represent two covenants, Paul sees Hagar, whose child was born into slavery, as representing the covenant of Mount Sinai, which corresponds to "the present Jerusalem" (Gal 4:25); believers in Christ are then, like Isaac, the free offspring of Sarah. Why does Paul associate life under the Sinaitic covenant with slavery? No doubt because he sees its subjects as imprisoned under sin and subject to the law's curse.

Fourth, why, then, did God bother to give a law that can only curse its adherents? That Paul raises the issue, as he does in Galatians 3:19, shows again that the question whether Gentile believers should be circumcised cannot, for Paul, be answered without raising fundamental issues pertaining to the nature and purpose of the law itself. And a Paul who feels constrained to explain why God would even give the law can only be a Paul who has denied that the law serves the function that others attribute to it. The purpose Paul proposes is a limited one indeed: God gave the law to supervise the imprisonment of people who would later be set free; to serve as a guardian for those whose lot was then no better than slaves, though they were destined to inherit God's blessings as his children (Gal 3:21-4:7). For our purposes, the point to be emphasized is that the law's hegemony, for Paul, was temporary. It did not come into force until 430

years after God gave his promise to Abraham; and it remained in force only until Christ came, "the offspring . . . to whom the promise had been made" (Gal 3:17, 19). So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian (Gal 3:24–25; cf. 4:4–5; 5:18). Clearly, for Paul the Mosaic economy and its laws no longer provide the framework within which God's people are to live; and, inasmuch as they are sinners, it was never a means by which they could be justified.

Hence Paul can speak of Judaism itself as belonging to his past: "you have heard of my former life in Judaism" (Gal 1:13–14).⁴² In Paul's view, the community of those who believe in Jesus represents an alternative, even a rival, to "Judaism": he once showed his zeal for the latter by persecuting the former (Gal 1:13–14), then abandoned his life in Judaism when he began to preach "the faith he once tried to destroy" (Gal 1:23). For Paul, devotion to Judaism means devotion to the ancestral laws of the Jews (Gal 1:14; Phil 3:5–6) and the pursuit of the righteousness that is based on their observance (Phil 3:6, 9; Rom 9:31; 10:3–5). In short, Judaism is life within the framework of the Mosaic covenant (cf. Gal 4:24–25).⁴³ Paul by no means denies the divine origins of that covenant; but he sees it as a temporary stage in the history of God's dealing with his people. Judaism, as Paul employs the term, belongs to his past.

So how do things now stand as we approach the final innings of our contest? Consideration of Galatians gives the "Stendahl Revisionists" a run, maybe two, but it falls far short of the rally for which they hoped. Paul is indeed answering the question "Should Gentiles be circumcised?" when he insists that justification is by faith, not works of the law. But even in Galatians Paul's formula of justification relates, as the "Augustinian Monks" have always claimed it relates, to the extraordinary means by which God declares sinners righteous. If Paul uses the formula to deny that Gentiles should be circumcised, it is only because he believes

⁴² See Barclay, "Paul Among Diaspora Jews," 113; Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 154. Against Dunn, Chester rightly notes that Paul does not speak of abandoning a particular *form* of Judaism (i.e., Pharisaic Judaism, which is then taken to represent a distorted form of true Judaism!): "the way Paul speaks makes his former life appear not as the worst of Judaism, but rather as the best. His use of the term *genos* means that Paul is evaluating his progress against that of the nation as a whole" (*Conversion at Corinth*, 161).

⁴³ Or, indeed, "covenantal nomism," which Sanders, too, believes Paul came to reject.

circumcision belongs to a covenant that provides no answer to the still more basic question, "How can a sinner find a gracious God?" To that question, in Galatians as elsewhere, justification by faith is the answer. Give the "Augustinian Monks" a grand slam.

And so we come to Rome. To the Thessalonians Paul brought a message of salvation from impending doom for those who believe in Christ, though he (apparently) did not use the language of *justification*. To the Corinthians Paul brought the same message, now referring specifically to how God justifies the unrighteous, though the terminology is not yet prominent or formulaic. It is both in Galatians, prompted by the debate over circumcision. By the time we reach Romans, the terminology and formulas Paul invoked in response to the Galatian crisis have been fully assimilated into his evangelistic repertoire. Writing to a community he had not founded, Paul thinks it important to articulate the gospel that he proclaims without shame wherever he goes (Rom 1:14-16); and the substance of that gospel is now summed up in the language of righteousness (or justification): "The righteous shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17, quoting Hab 2:4). Such a gospel is necessary because human beings—Gentiles and Jews alike—are *not* righteous in the ordinary sense of the word: they have not lived as they ought, and as a result, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth" (Rom 1:18). "They knew God," but "they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him." The refusal to acknowledge the true God led to worship of the creature rather than the creator and to conduct practiced and praised despite an awareness that it merits death (Rom 1:18-32).

All this can be said without reference to the law of Moses, since God expects all human beings everywhere to do what is good and judges all according to their deeds (Rom 2:6-11). The law of Moses merely spells out—for the benefit of Jews, to whom it was given—the good that God requires of all (Rom 2:17-20). Its underlying principle—"the doers of the law . . . will be justified" (Rom 2:13)—represents the basic moral principle on which the world is run. But it is a principle by which sinful human beings cannot live. And since all—Jews and Gentiles alike—are sinful, and all the world is culpable before God (Rom 3:9-20, 23), the formula of Galatians 2:16 bears repetition here: "by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20). Unrighteous people can be found righteous only by extraordinary means, and God has provided that means in the gospel. In Paul's terms, the gospel introduces a righteousness "apart

from the law" (Rom 3:21), by which he means not merely that Gentiles can experience this righteousness without being circumcised, but that Jewish and Gentile sinners alike can be found righteous even though they have not met the requirements of righteous behavior set forth in the law. That is why the act by which God declares them righteous is a gift, an act of divine grace (Rom 3:24). Such is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Rom 3:22).

Later chapters in Romans repeat the language of righteousness (or justification) to the same effect. For those who trust the God who "justifies the ungodly," their "faith is counted as righteousness" (Rom 4:5). David speaks of the "blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from [righteous] works" when he speaks of those whose sins have been forgiven (Rom 4:6–8). That justification by faith is not in the first place an answer to whether Gentiles should be circumcised is clear when Paul discusses the justification of ungodly Abraham and sinful-but-forgiven David (Rom 4:1–8) before even asking whether the same path to righteousness is open to uncircumcised Gentiles (Rom 4:9–12). The answer, of course, is that it is, for the righteousness of faith has nothing to do with whether one is circumcised and everything to do with whether one shares the faith of father Abraham. Chapter 5 stresses again that those who God justifies are sinners, God's enemies, who, by being justified, are "saved from the wrath of God" (Rom 5:6–10). Justification as a free gift offsets the condemnation that became the lot of all human beings through Adam's sin (Rom 5:16–17).

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Rom 5:18–19)

In Romans, then, as in Galatians and Corinthians, Paul uses justification language as the answer to the human dilemma apparent already in Thessalonians: How can sinners find a gracious God? God shows himself gracious by providing, in Christ, justification for all who believe.

One other passage in Romans requires our consideration. At the end of chapter 9 and in the opening verses of chapter 10, Paul contrasts "the righteousness that is based on the law" with the "righteousness that is by faith." The fundamental principle of the former path, here as in Galatians 3:12 and Romans 2:13, is that "the person who does the commandments shall live by them" (Rom 10:5, again citing Lev 18:5); and to this day, Paul

says, Israel continues this pursuit without attaining their goal (Rom 9:31). They still live by the terms of the Sinaitic covenant, not realizing that its path to righteousness, never attained by sinners, has now been set aside with the coming of Christ: "for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4). "For everyone who believes," because "there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles" (Rom 10:11-12). Yet it is largely Gentiles—not known for their pursuit of righteousness—who have attained the "righteousness that comes from God;" that is, the "righteousness that is by faith" (Rom 9:30; cf. 10:20). For Jews and Gentiles alike this is the path to salvation, "for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:13).

Paul returns to the contrast between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith in Philippians 3, here to say that he himself once pursued the former. He abandoned it, he says, so that he might "gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of [his] own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith" (Phil 3:8-9). For Paul himself, justification by faith was perceived as the answer to a question. That question, however, had nothing to do with circumcision and everything to do with how Paul was to stand before God. To be found righteous was the goal, and two paths to its attainment came into question: first, that based on his own compliance with the law; and second, that received as a gift from God through faith in Christ. He opted for the latter.

It feels strange indeed to argue in the journal of a Lutheran seminary that justification by faith is Paul's answer to how sinners can find a gracious God. However obvious to many of us that claim may appear, it is much in dispute among Pauline scholars today. There is plainly plausibility in the counterclaim: It is first in Paul's letter to the Galatians that justification by faith becomes thematic, and Galatians presents Paul's response to those who insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised if they are to belong to God's people. In fact, however, Paul uses justification language to speak of God's extraordinary offer in Christ Jesus of righteousness to the *unrighteous* who respond in faith. Galatians is no exception. No, Paul says, Gentiles must *not* be circumcised because circumcision marks entrance into a covenant that, however divine in its origin, was limited in its purpose and scope. It articulated God's demands for righteous behavior, his blessing for those who obey his commands, and

his curse on transgressors. With sinful human beings the curse alone is operative.

How, then, can sinners find a gracious God? The question is hardly peculiar to the modern West; it was provoked by Paul's message wherever he went. Paul was commissioned, not to illuminate a crisis, but to present to a world under judgment a divine offer of salvation. In substance though not terminology in Thessalonians, in terminology though not prominently in Corinthians, thematically in Galatians and regularly thereafter, Paul's answer was that sinners for whom Christ died are declared righteous by God when they place their faith in Christ.

Resurrection as Justification in the Book of Acts

Peter J. Scaer

If you are looking for a thorough biblical discussion of justification by faith, turn to Galatians or Romans. The book of Acts has hardly anything, at least explicitly, to say on the matter. This may seem strange, especially since Acts tells the story and records the preaching of Paul, the chief theologian of justification. If anything, one might say that Acts is a book of justification for Paul himself. That is to say, Acts “justifies” the place of Paul in the church, and more particularly “justifies” his position as an apostle of our Lord.

In an article entitled “Justification in Luke-Acts,” Richard Gaffin notes that “monographs and articles on the theme of justification in Luke-Acts are few indeed.”¹ In a footnote, he goes further: “Strictly speaking, unless I have overlooked something, there is none.”² J.A.O. Preus shows, in his eminently-readable work *Just Words*, that the truth of justification is spoken of throughout the Scriptures in a great variety of ways.³ That having been said, the technical language of justification occurs rarely in Luke-Acts. The lone example in Luke’s Gospel is found in the story of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, where we are told that the Tax Collector “went home justified rather than the other” (Luke 18:14). Here Luke’s primary focus is on the proper posture of humility towards God. As such, the language of justification is present, but the theology of justification is not developed. Likewise, only one passage in Acts employs the language of justification. At Antioch of Pisidia, Paul proclaims, “Everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. By him everyone who believes is justified” (Acts 13:38). The term justified occurs three times. As Jaroslav Pelikan notes, moreover, it has a strong parallel to Romans 4:8, where Paul writes of God who

¹ Richard B. Gaffin, “Justification in Luke-Acts,” in *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 108.

² Gaffin, “Justification in Luke-Acts,” 271n7.

³ Jacob A. O. Preus III, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000).

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"reckons righteousness apart from works."⁴ As such, here is good evidence for the skeptic that Luke was familiar with Paul's teaching on justification.

Still, it has to be said that Paul's emphasis in Acts 13 is on the contrast between the law of Moses and belief in Christ. Justification may be assumed, but it is not explained. As such, one can sympathize with Richard Hays who comments, "The effect of this single, rather awkward, reference is simply to highlight the complete absence of justification as a theme of Christian proclamation elsewhere in Acts."⁵ Whether or not one agrees with Hays, the fact that Luke, a companion of Paul, wrote a quarter of the New Testament and spoke of justification only twice is quite remarkable. This has led scholars to ask: Did Luke know, understand, or care about the doctrine of justification?⁶

Again, to say that the theology of Acts does in no way conflict with that of the Pauline Epistles is necessary and true. Others have made the argument well. But then we do well to ask: In what way does Luke's theology complement Paul's? We should, perhaps, think about it in another way. How does Paul build upon Luke or upon the message Luke presents? In what way, if any, can the writing of Luke, through his presentation of Jesus, help us to understand the doctrine of justification?

I. Paul's Salutation to the Romans

Perhaps, it would not be out of order to take one more look at the book of Romans. Mark Seifrid, in his wonderful book *Christ, Our Righteousness*, shows that, contrary to much revisionist thinking, justification by faith is the central message of Romans. Seifrid takes Romans 1:16-17 as a "summary of the gospel which Paul elaborates in the course of the letter" and as a theological introduction to the letter as a whole.⁷ Likewise, Stephen Westerholm, arguing against the New Perspective, holds that Romans 1:16-17 is Paul's "opening summary of the message he proclaims" and that that message is that "sinners are justified, apart from the law, by

⁴ Jaroslav J. Pelikan, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 158.

⁵ Richard B. Hays, "Justification," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:1133.

⁶ For a brief review of the topic, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 145-147.

⁷ Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 36.

faith in Jesus Christ.”⁸ Both Westerholm and Seifreid prove worthy champions of the doctrine of justification and bold confessors of Christ crucified.

Given the theological centrality of Romans 1:16–17, what are we to make of the first fifteen verses of Romans? Do they consist simply of epistolary niceties? N. T. Wright disarmingly suggests that when reading Romans we should start where Paul starts: “with a passage which many readers have leapfrogged in their eagerness to get to what exegetical tradition has declared to be the main theme stated in 1:16–17.”⁹ If you want to find out the meaning of a Pauline letter, begin at the beginning.

Students of the New Testament soon come to realize that if you want to find the theme of a Pauline letter, you do well to comb through the salutation. Paul does much more than introduce himself in the salutation. He lays the groundwork for themes he will address throughout the epistle. For example, in his letter to the Corinthians, he introduces the topics of church unity and eschatology, subjects he will emphasize throughout the letter. Likewise in Galatians, Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the one who “gave himself to deliver us from the present evil age” (Gal 1:4). From such words, we see the theme of apocalyptic eschatology that resonates throughout Galatians.¹⁰

What then can we learn from the salutation in Romans? Paul begins by introducing himself as “a servant of Christ Jesus, set apart as an apostle for the gospel of God” (Rom 1:1). The phrase “gospel of God” is, admittedly, an odd one. Paul helpfully provides a definition, describing the gospel as that “which [God] promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead” (Rom 1:3–4). Here Paul defines the very nature of the gospel, which proceeds from the Father and is centered on the person of his Son. Typically, though, exegetes have made little theological hay out of these verses. For starters, it is difficult to understand what exactly Paul is talking about. Cranfield summarizes well

⁸ Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The Lutheran Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 385, 401.

⁹N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 242.

¹⁰ See J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

the exegetical difficulty: "The fact that two of the most difficult verses in the whole epistle occur so very near its beginning is an acute embarrassment to the interpreter of Romans who is anxious that his readers should not become discouraged and give up before ever they have had a chance to get really interested."¹¹ Bultmann suggested that verses three and four are a "Pre-Pauline formula" that accentuates the human and divine natures of Christ.¹² In a similar manner, Cranfield surmises that Paul is probably "making use of the language of an already existing confessional formula."¹³

Paul was, in many ways, an outsider to the church at Rome. Romans is the only Pauline Epistle written to a church that Paul himself had not founded. By beginning in this way, Paul establishes himself as a creedal Christian and demonstrates the common ground upon which he and his Roman audience stood. According to this line of thinking, Paul is doing the same thing he did in 1 Corinthians 15; that is, he is claiming that his gospel is the same gospel as that of the apostles and the church catholic: "That what I have received, I have passed down to you" (1 Cor 15:3). As Fitzmyer puts it, "He quotes something traditional that he expects will resonate with the Roman Christians."¹⁴ Paul wants his readers to know that, as Luke Timothy Johnson says, "What he preaches fundamentally agrees with the traditions of the churches."¹⁵

If Paul is simply drawing upon liturgical or confessional language, the creed of Romans 1:3-4 seems, in a way, deficient. To be sure, the creed touches upon Christ's humanity and divinity, proclaiming him to be, in the words of Ambrosiaster, "truly God and truly man."¹⁶ Christ's humanity is clearly established in that he is called the son of David "according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3).

¹¹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 4.

¹² Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952-1955), 1:50.

¹³ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 57.

¹⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 230.

¹⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 346.

¹⁶ See Gerald Bray, ed., *Romans*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament 6 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 7.

What, however, are we to make of the phrase that follows: "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom 1:4)? Some have seen this as an example of a primitive—even adoptionistic—Christology, according to which Christ assumes the role of God's Son only after his resurrection. Some have seen this as a tension in Paul's own theology between an early Christology and a later more developed confession. Others attribute this Christology to the creed, but not to Paul. For instance, Käsemann writes, "Unlike Paul himself the formula does not presuppose the preexistence and divine sonship of the earthly Jesus."¹⁷ Such a reading implies that Jesus was the son of David by birth, but only later became the Son of God.

Would Paul make use of a creed that was at odds with his own Christology? Orthodox commentators are rightly quick to point out that Jesus was not made the Son of God in the resurrection, only that he was declared to be so by this action. Chrysostom, seeking to champion the ontological divinity of the Son, interprets the phrase to mean that in the resurrection Jesus was "shown," "manifested," "judged," and "confessed" to be the Son of God.¹⁸ That is to say, the resurrection is simply a revelation of what was true all along, namely, that Jesus was and is divine. Likewise, John of Damascus: "By his miracles and resurrection and by the descent of the Holy Spirit, it was made plain and certain to the world that Christ was the Son of God."¹⁹ In a similar vein, Melanchthon interprets the phrase to mean that Jesus' divinity is not established by the resurrection but simply pointed out by it. Melanchthon writes, "The meaning is that this person was certainly acknowledged to be the Son of God through these testimonies: that he rose from the dead; that he showed his boundless power by many miracles, as when he resurrected Lazarus; that he now gives to the church the Holy Spirit, who strengthens the minds against the devil and performs many great miracles."²⁰ In other words, for Melanchthon, the resurrection is one miracle among others which prove

¹⁷ Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 12.

¹⁸ John Chrysostom, "The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969–1976), 11:340.

¹⁹ John of Damascus, *Orthodox Faith* 1.4; quoted in Bray, *Romans*, 11.

²⁰ Philipp Melanchthon, *Commentary on Romans*, tr. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 63.

that Jesus truly is God's Son. Among modern commentators, Robert Mounce likewise says that the resurrection "authenticates his claim to deity."²¹ Thus, the creed is still orthodox, as is Paul.

Anders Nygren, taking a slightly different approach, proposes that the entire creed refers to the eternal Son of God. Nygren writes, "*The resurrection is the turning point in the existence of the Son of God. Before that, he was the Son of God in weakness and lowliness. Through the resurrection he becomes the Son of God in power.*"²² Nygren's suggestion, especially in respect to what we refer to as Christ's state of humiliation and exaltation, has a certain appeal. In the resurrection, Jesus takes up powers of which he has not availed himself during his earthly life. Yet it still seems that in Romans 1:3–4 it is precisely the man born of the virgin who is declared to be the Son of God in power.

Something else, I would propose, is going on here. The term ὁρισθέντος means, at its root, "delimits," and has, as Cranfield notes, the meaning of "appoint, constitute, and install."²³ As Fitzmyer notes, "It suggests rather a decisive act of divine appointment or establishment."²⁴ The word, moreover, is used with some frequency in the book of Acts (see 2:23; 10:42; 11:29; 17:26, 31). In Acts 10:42, Peter declares that Jesus is "the one appointed (ὁ ὁρισμένος) to be the judge of the living and the dead." Again, in Acts 17:31, Paul proclaims that God "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed (ὥρισεν); and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." Thus, in both cases, the term is applied to Jesus, who has received from God the authority to execute eschatological judgment.

We can conclude that ὁρίζω means both designated and appointed. It is used in the same way that we would say that John Roberts was appointed chief justice of the Supreme Court. Who then is appointed the Son of God in the resurrection? According to Paul in Acts 17:31, it is specifically a man (ἄνθρωπος) whom God has appointed: Jesus of Nazareth. Reading Romans 1:3–4 this way means that the one who comes from the seed of David has been appointed or designated the Son of God. The orthodox person rightfully

²¹ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 61.

²² Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949), 51.

²³ Cranfield, *Romans*, vol. 1, 61.

²⁴ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 235.

asks, "Was not Jesus always the Son of God?" The answer, of course, is yes. In the resurrection, however, God declares or appoints Jesus the man to be the one who will judge all of humanity. This is an important christological statement. The one who sits in final judgment of the world is the crucified one. The man Jesus is our God. This does not mean that Jesus was not already the Son of God by virtue of the incarnation. Sonship, however, is more than ontology or birth. Sons of Abraham are defined, ultimately, not by genealogy or circumcision, but by their faith. Those who are disobedient show themselves rather to be sons of the devil. True sons of God act like their heavenly Father. Thus, sonship is also defined by obedience. The true Son does nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing (John 5:19). This means that as a man, Jesus would have to prove himself to be the true Son by virtue of his obedience to the Father. Jesus' death is the ultimate act of filial obedience. The resurrection then is the Father's recognition of what the Son has done.

II. Resurrection in Luke-Acts

In the Gospel of John, Jesus walks as God among men. He is the Word made flesh, who has the glory as of the only Son from the Father (John 1:14). This is graphically illustrated on the Mount of Olives, where the soldiers who come to arrest him fall down, overwhelmed by his divine presence (John 18:6). In every way Jesus actively offers up his life, and so also he rises by his own authority and power. Jesus, as the eternal Logos, has the power to raise himself, saying, "I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down, and I have the authority to take it up again" (John 10:18). Thus, in this way, John's "Christology from above" emphasizes the ontological deity of Christ, who has the power of life within him (John 1:4).

Luke looks at the resurrection from a different vantage point. In the Synoptic Gospels, and more particularly in Luke-Acts, the death and resurrection of Jesus are spoken of mostly in the passive voice. In the third Gospel, Jesus dies as an obedient son. His death is a necessity brought about by the Scriptures and his Father's will. Typical of the Lukan passion predictions are the words of Jesus in Luke 9:22: "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Likewise, in Luke 18:33-35, Jesus predicts that "[h]e will be delivered to the Gentiles and he will be mocked, mistreated, and spit upon, and after scourging, they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." Again, following his

resurrection, Jesus notes that his death and resurrection occurred according to the necessity of God: "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise" (Luke 24:46). In each case, Jesus dies and rises in accordance with the Scriptures and in obedience to God's will.

This view of the resurrection becomes even clearer in the book of Acts, where God is the subject of the resurrection, and Jesus the object. Consider Peter's Pentecost sermon, where he says, "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death" (Acts 2:24). Likewise, Peter refers to our Lord as "this Jesus" whom "God raised up" (Acts 2:32). At Solomon's portico, Peter refers to Jesus as God's "servant" whom he has "raised up" (Acts 3:26). Again, Peter speaks of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:24). As Peter preaches, so also Paul. To the Christians of Antioch of Pisidia, Paul speaks of Jesus as him whom "God raised from the dead" (Acts 13:33) and "the one whom God raised up" (Acts 13:37). Thus, the resurrection functions primarily as God's vindication of Christ. The one who was put on trial has been "appointed to be judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42). God has vindicated the one whom the Jewish leaders killed by raising him from the dead. Thus, Jesus is the man raised by God. This theological understanding of the resurrection is, in the words of N. T. Wright, "very close to what Paul says in Romans 1:4."²⁵

Again, some see in such passages of Acts a more primitive Christology. There is, however, a sophisticated narrative theology at work. The resurrection of Jesus is depicted as God's vindication of Jesus, the man of Nazareth. Jesus, however, is not simply any man, he is the Man. For both Luke and Paul, Jesus is the representative man of a new humanity. The resurrection, therefore, is not simply an event in the life of Jesus, but it is the decisive turning point in the history of humankind, of which Jesus is the new first-born Son.

III. Where Luke and Paul Meet: Jesus as the New Adam

The theology of Christ as the new Adam is strong in Paul, especially in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. Paul uses Adamic imagery in 1 Corinthians to proclaim the resurrection as objective good news for all people: "For as

²⁵ Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 451.

by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam *all* die, so also in Christ, *all* shall be made alive" (1 Cor 15:21-22; emphasis added). In Romans, Paul ties together the new life of Christ and the justification of humanity. Adam's disobedience brings about the objective downfall of all humanity, while Christ's obedience brings objective righteousness to all. Paul writes, "Therefore, just as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" (Rom 5:18). Thus, Paul ties together resurrection and objective justification as the foundation of the gospel message.

Then it seems no coincidence that Luke, a companion of Paul, has a strong theology of Jesus as the new Adam. Luke's theology is not primarily didactic, but narrative in form. Paul teaches about the new Adam, while Luke tells the story upon which Paul's theology is based. While Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham (Matt 1:1-17), emphasizing Jesus' role as the true Israel, Luke's goes back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38). For Luke, then, Jesus is the new Adam of a new humanity.²⁶ He is the son of Adam, the Son of God (Luke 3:38). As the new Adam, his goal will be to usher the repentant evildoer back with him into paradise (Luke 22:43). The first Adam defined himself through disobedience, which is the opposite of faith. To be God's Son, one must do God's will. Through his willful disobedience, Adam demonstrated that he was not a true son of God, and in the first Adam all mankind was condemned. It was not enough, therefore, for the second Adam to be God's Son ontologically. To bring humankind back into paradise, he would have to prove himself, by virtue of his obedience, to be God's Son.

In Luke's baptismal scene, the Father does not say, "This is my Son," (as reported by Matthew in 1:17), but "You are my Son" (Luke 3:22). The words "You are my Son" are not meant primarily as a signal to the world, but as a word of encouragement to Jesus. It is up to Jesus now to demonstrate his true Sonship—not through miracles or power, but through obedience. Luke immediately follows his baptismal account and Adamic genealogy with the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert. Jesus, the new Adam, is led out into the wilderness by the Spirit. Just as the serpent tempted Adam to be like God, the devil tempts the new Adam to

²⁶ See Peter J. Scaer, "Lukan Christology: Jesus as Beautiful Savior," *CTQ* 69 (2005): 70-72.

prove that he is the Son of God through acts of divine power. Satan tempts him, saying, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread" (Luke 4:3). By turning the stone to bread, Jesus could have very well proven his ontological Sonship and inherent divinity. Jesus knows, however, that he has not come to turn stones to bread, but to turn Gentile stones into God's children (Luke 3:8). Thus, the man Jesus demonstrates his true Sonship not by the performance of divine miracles, but through his reliance on God and faithful obedience to his Father. Precisely in his humility and humanity does he show himself to be God's Son. Of course, all is done in accordance with the Scriptures, which Jesus quotes.

This scene of temptation is resumed on the Mount of Olives. In this "hour of darkness" Jesus once again wards off the temptations of the devil, and shows himself, once more, to be the true and obedient Son. He is the one who follows the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Praying, "Let not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42), the obedient Son willingly takes the cup of sorrow and wrath that his Father has given him. Fittingly, the one who received the Spirit of Sonship in his baptism obediently commends his spirit into the Father's hands at the hour of death (Luke 23:46).

Though Luke does not make much of the language of justification, it is noteworthy that he does refer to Jesus as the just or righteous one. At Solomon's portico, Peter refers to Jesus as "the Holy and Righteous One" (Acts 3:14). Facing death, Stephen recalls Jesus, "the Righteous One" (Acts 7:52). While visiting Jerusalem, Paul says, "The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth" (Acts 22:14). In obedience to his Father, Jesus went to the cross. While standing at the foot of the cross, the Lukan centurion declares, "Certainly, this man was righteous" (Luke 23:47). Compared to the centurion's confession in Matthew ("Surely, this was the Son of God"; 27:54), the Lukan passion seems underwhelming and anticlimactic. Yet, the centurion's confession in Luke is a necessary theological building block. Christ's righteousness in life and death is the prerequisite for being declared the Son of God in the resurrection. Having completed his earthly course in righteousness, the man is rightly raised and declared the righteous and true Son of God. Furthermore, since Christ is the representative man of the new humanity, in him all of humanity receives the declaration of righteousness.

IV. Resurrection is Objective Justification

Romans teaches not only justification, but also the doctrine of objective justification. Just as all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, so also are *all* "justified by his grace as a gift, through his redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom 3:23–24). This does not mean that all will be saved (subjective justification), but it does mean that God has declared the entire human race not guilty in the person of Christ. This verdict first took place in the resurrection, where God declared the man Jesus to be righteous. Objective justification is a necessary foundation that keeps subjective justification from turning into an if-then proposition.

The resurrection of the obedient Jesus is the objective or universal justification of all humanity. "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" (Rom 5:18). Again, "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19). This is not to be equated with universalism. Paul speaks of his belief that "there will be resurrection of the just and the unjust," at which time Christ will act as the final judge (Acts 24:15). Nevertheless, the resurrection of Christ is good news for all humanity even as the resurrection is the sure hope of all humanity.

For this reason, preaching and teaching on the resurrection dominates the book of Acts as well as much early Christian preaching. The day of Jesus' resurrection is the basis and proof for the resurrection of all humanity. We are told in Acts 4:2 that Sadducees were "greatly annoyed because they [Peter and John] were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead [plural]." In Jesus is the resurrection of all humanity and a reinstatement of mankind to its proper relationship to God.

Although Romans 1:16–17 is the strongest statement of justification by faith, it stands on the foundation of Romans 1:3–4, which proclaims the gospel of God who raised Jesus from the dead. Paul's most concentrated teaching on justification continues through the end of chapter four. How then does he summarize his discussion of justification? Paul speaks of "Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25). The resurrection of Jesus declares that he is the Righteousness of God for all mankind. Thus, Romans 1:3–4 and Romans 4:25 may profitably be viewed as theological bookends. Our justification stands firmly on the foundation of Jesus' death and

resurrection. Furthermore, as Seifrid says, justification is “in Christ” and cannot be separated from his resurrection from the dead.²⁷

So, we may again ask, “Is justification taught by Luke?” Not very explicitly, though I have no doubt it is implicit in everything that Luke writes. Here I am more than content to agree with Richard Gaffin who writes that Luke’s doctrine of justification is the fruition of the good news announced by Jesus, and “more importantly, was actualised in his death, resurrection, ascension, and baptism with the Holy Spirit.”²⁸ More precisely, Luke emphasizes the foundation of subjective (or individual) justification, namely objective (or universal) justification, which is the resurrection of Jesus. No person can be righteous apart from the one who was declared righteous in his resurrection. Properly preached, resurrection is objective justification. Justification, apart from the resurrection of Christ, is simply a lifeless theological formula. The resurrection, properly preached, is justification. The resurrection must then always stand at the center of Christian preaching.

V. Baptism: Our Incorporation into the Justification of Christ

Such preaching then places a premium on baptism which, thankfully, Paul also emphasizes in Romans. Jesus was justified on account of his works and faithful obedience to the Father. He acted obediently on our behalf. Only Jesus has been justly declared righteous. To think that we may be declared righteous because of our works is only to add the sin of pride and ungratefulness to our ledger. By depending on one’s own good works, a person chooses to stand on his own, and thereby places himself outside of God’s righteous verdict in Christ. As Seifrid writes, “Our righteousness is found in Christ crucified and risen.”²⁹ What needs to happen for the salvation of the individual then is to be incorporated into the person of Christ. For it is precisely through the baptismal waters that the individual is united with the one righteous man. In baptism, we are placed in Christ, in the Jordan River, and on the cross. In Christ, all humanity is declared righteous. This becomes a reality for the individual in baptism, where “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father . . .” (again, note the passive voice) “. . . we too walk in the newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united

²⁷ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 174.

²⁸ Gaffin, “Justification in Luke-Acts,” 125.

²⁹ Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 175.

with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom 6:4-5). To borrow words from Stephen Westerholm, "The baptized are no longer 'Adam-people' but, by a divine transference, 'Christ-people,' members of the new humanity, whose terms of existence are defined not by Adam's disobedience, but by the obedience and righteousness of Christ."³⁰

It may be noted that the book of Acts falls providentially after the Gospels and before Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The Gospels provide the theological and christological foundation upon which the kerygmatic preaching of Acts is based. Besides being an introduction to the person of Paul, Acts may well be seen as primarily a proclamation of Christ's resurrection. As such, Acts takes a certain precedence over Romans. And, contrary to the way we normally think, perhaps we need to place Luke before Paul theologically as well as canonically. For the resurrection of Jesus is the foundation for the objective (or universal) justification of all humanity. The theology of Acts, which proclaims that Christ was "designated the Son of God in power" in the resurrection, is a good starting point for understanding Paul, who aims to preach that Christ was raised for our justification, and that our justification is attained not by works, but given by faith. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the good news for all humanity, and justification by faith is its most wonderful result.

³⁰ Stephen Westerholm, *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 108.

The Chronicler's David: Saint and Sinner

Daniel L. Gard

David was both saint and sinner. There is nothing surprising or novel about his sinfulness, as anyone who has attended Sunday school can attest. The great king's failures are known to anyone with a passing knowledge of the Old Testament. Yet Chronicles, unlike Samuel, presents David as the ideal king whose glory was exceeded only by that of his son Solomon. In fact, without Samuel/Kings, David's biography would be one of a saint who was nearly sinless.

That the picture of David given us by the Chronicler is substantially different than that of Samuel/Kings is a well established fact. Gerhard von Rad underscored the importance of the Chronicler's David by arranging *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes*¹ according to the themes of David's relationship to the ark, cultic personnel, the temple, the cult, and Israel. The idealization of David begins with the battle of Gilboa and the resulting death of Saul. With few changes, the Chronicler reports the events of the battle (1 Sam 31:1-13; 1 Chr 10:1-12) but adds that Saul died for his unfaithfulness because YHWH slew him "and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse" (1 Chr 10:13-14).

One barometer of the quality of a king in 1 and 2 Chronicles is that king's involvement in warfare. A faithful king will have either peace or, if war comes about, victory. Thus, the long account of David's successful foreign wars in 2 Samuel (8:1-12:31) is repeated almost verbatim in 1 Chronicles (18:1-20:3). Other wars are left unmentioned: the long civil war between David and the house of Saul in 2 Samuel 2-4,² the rebellion of Absalom in 2 Samuel 17-18, and the abortive rebellion led by the Benjaminite Sheba in 2 Samuel 20, perhaps incited by Absalom's failed

¹ Gerhard von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes*, Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930).

² The Chronicler acknowledges the war only in passing while enumerating David's army in 1 Chr 12:23. Of the entire narrative of civil war, only 2 Sam 3:2-5 (the sons of David born at Hebron) finds its way into the Chronicler's history, and that by transposition to the genealogies in 1 Chr 3:1-4.

revolt. For the Chronicler, David's accession to the throne had come without civil war; he had been crowned by all Israel at Hebron (1 Chr 11:1-4). His throne could not be threatened from within his own house, especially since the reason for the rebellion—David's murder of Uriah—is unreported in the Chronicler's account. Nor could a revolt from outside David's house threaten the throne.

Although the Chronicler faithfully transmits his *Vorlage*'s statement that "David remained at Jerusalem" (2 Sam 11:1; 1 Chr 20:1), he omits the events in Jerusalem: the adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, the murder of Uriah, and the rebuke of David by Nathan the prophet. As a result, the disasters associated with Amnon and Absalom (2 Sam 13:1-18:33), directly linked by Nathan to their father David's sin against Uriah (2 Sam 12:11), are also omitted by the Chronicler.

This does not mean that the Chronicler's David is without fault. The Chronicler includes the census of Israel (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21) and even adds the sentence, "But God was displeased with this thing, and he smote Israel" (1 Chr 21:7). It may be that "he tells the full story of the Numbering because it culminates in the providential choice of a site for the Temple (chap. xxii.1)"³ Yet the connection between the census and the choice of a temple site is not in the *Vorlage*, only in Chronicles. Further, David's rejection for a role in the actual building of the temple is explained by the Chronicler because he has shed much blood (1 Chr 22:8) and is a man of war (1 Chr 28:3) and not because of his sin.

It is to this anomaly of the sinful census in 1 Chronicles 21 that we direct our attention. The saintly king was also the sinful king, even in the Chronicler's account.

I. The Text of 1 Chronicles 21

Before examining 1 Chronicles 21, it is necessary to acknowledge the issue of the text used by the Chronicler. Was his *Vorlage* the same as we have before us in the canonical Samuel/Kings? To answer this question, it is important to focus on the differences between the received Masoretic Text (MT) of Samuel/Kings and of Chronicles. One possible reason for these differences is that the Chronicler's own theological *Tendenz*

³ W. Emery Barnes, "The David of the Book of Samuel and the David of the Book of Chronicles," *The Expositor* 7th ser., 7 (1909): 49-59.

determined the material he added, modified, or omitted.⁴ Closely related to this is the possibility that the Chronicler omitted material simply for the sake of brevity.⁵ Such an approach normally assumes that the Chronicler had before him a *Vorlage* similar or identical to the MT of Samuel/Kings.

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, this assumption has been challenged by F. M. Cross⁶ and his students, especially Werner Lemke⁷ and Eugene Ulrich.⁸ Their work suggests that the differences between Chronicles and Samuel/Kings in the MT are often the result of different text types underlying the books and that many differences in individual readings arise from textual differences rather than a *Tendenz* on the part of the Chronicler. Thus, a second approach looks first to explanations based upon the text critical evidence and, secondarily, to the Chronicler's *Tendenz*.

Beyond the complex questions on the level of textual criticism lie the equally complex problems of the literary history of the Chronicler's *Vorlage*. It has long been recognized that distinct layers can be found in the Septuagint (LXX) text of Samuel/Kings.⁹ This, coupled with a number of

⁴ This position is that taken, for example, by Adrien M. Brunet, "Le Chroniste et ses sources," *Revue biblique* 60 (1953): 481–508, and "Le Chroniste et ses sources," *Revue biblique* 61 (1954): 349–386.

⁵ Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986).

⁶ Frank M. Cross, "The Contributions of the Qumran Discoveries" *Israel Exploration Journal* 16 (1966): 81–95; "The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of the Discoveries in the Judean Desert" *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964): 281–299.

⁷ Werner E. Lemke, "The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History," *Harvard Theological Review* 58 (1965): 349–363.

⁸ Eugene C. Ulrich Jr., *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 19 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978). Ulrich and others believe that the text of the Chronicler's Samuel *Vorlage* is of the same type as the LXX, especially the Lucianic recension and Josephus. In Ulrich's analysis, a different Hebrew text, much closer to that of the LXX than that which underlies the MT, was before the Chronicler: "That textual tradition, or more pointedly, a Samuel text exceedingly close to 4QSam^a, provided the basis in early post-exilic Judah for the Chronicler's recasting of his people's history. Furthermore, it was, in a less expansionist form, much closer than the Masoretic tradition to the Hebrew basis of the pristine Egyptian (Old Greek) translation produced in the late third or early second century. In its more expansionist form it provided the basis for occasional additions and corrections in the early stratum of the Lucianic Greek recension." Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus*, 257.

⁹ H. St. J. Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of the Four Books of Kings," *Journal of Theological Studies* 8 (1907): 262–278; *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship, a Study in Origins*,

issues surrounding critical theories of the "Deuteronomistic History"¹⁰ and its "double redaction,"¹¹ raises serious questions about the extent and nature of the *Vorlage* before the Chronicler.¹² The dependence of the Chronicler upon Samuel/Kings is generally recognized. Yet there are large blocks of material in Samuel/Kings which have no parallel in Chronicles. It is possible or, in the view of some scholars, even probable that at least some of this material was not in the Chronicler's *Vorlage*. Thus, the apparent omission of material by the Chronicler is attributed by some scholars not to the Chronicler's ideological editorializing but to the text of Samuel/Kings before him.¹³

Schweich Lectures 1920 (London: Milford for the British Academy, 1921), 9–28.

¹⁰ Martin Noth, hypothesized that Deuteronomistic History is the work of a single exilic writer, Deuteronomist. *The Deuteronomistic History*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 15 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981). Frank M. Cross found a primary, pre-exilic edition (Dtr¹) and a secondary exilic edition (Dtr²). "The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic. Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1973), 274–289.

¹¹ Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 18 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1981).

¹² Such questions are not confined to the books considered in this paper. In some cases, the LXX may preserve an earlier edition of a book or some section thereof. This is believed to be the case in Jeremiah, as Emanuel Tov concludes. "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, ed. J. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985), 213–237; "Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah," in *Le livre de Jérémie: Le prophète et son milieu, les oracles et leur transmission*, Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium 54, ed. P. M. Bogaert (Leuven: University, 1981), 145–167. On the one hand, LXX and 4QJer^b preserve a shorter edition (Tov's "edition I"). On the other hand, the MT of Jeremiah, 2QJer, 4QJer^a, and 4QJer^c show a later expansion (Tov's "edition II"). Some witnesses to other texts display, in a secondary edition, intentional expansion, as in the harmonizing tendency of 4QpaleoExod^m over against the MT. See Judith E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran: 4QpaleoExod^m and the Samaritan Tradition*, Harvard Semitic Studies 30 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1986).

¹³ An example of this is 1 Samuel 17–18, the story of David and Goliath, which is set before the kingship of David, outside the period in which the Chronicler is interested. However, it does illustrate the problem of multiple editions within the Samuel narrative. In studies by four scholars the narrative is approached from four perspectives; see Dominique Barthélemy, David W. Gooding, Johan Lust, and Emanuel Tov, *The Story of David and Goliath: Textual and Literary Criticism: Papers of a Joint Research Venture*, Orbis biblicus et orientalis 73 (Fribourg, Suisse: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1986). All agree that there are two literary

While recognizing the important implications of these textual and literary questions for the study of Chronicles, I will focus on one "window" into the literature of Israel's history, the MT. The evidence of Qumran is not as certain as it is often represented to be, since, for the Chronicler's Samuel *Vorlage*, we have merely fragmentary evidence from 4QSam^a representing only about 5 to 10 percent of the text.¹⁴ Nor do

editions to the story. Tov and Lust conclude that the earlier edition preserved in the LXX witnesses to the Old Greek and that the MT has an expanded narrative. Such examples within Deuteronomistic History could, of course, be multiplied. Four blocks of material are generally recognized in the Samuel material, with variations on the beginning and end of each block found among scholars:

1. The History of David's Rise (1 Samuel 16 [or 15]–2 Samuel 5)
2. The Ark Narrative (1 Samuel 4–6 and 2 Samuel 6)
3. The Succession Narrative (2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2)
4. The Appendices or Miscellany (2 Samuel 21–24)

When these blocks and their individual units were added to the text of Samuel forms an important issue for determining the shape of the text before the Chronicler. Did the Chronicler have, for example, the material of the Succession Narrative (SN) before him? Leonhard Rost's study has been influential in this, delineating two major complexes of material in 2 Samuel, the SN and the History of David's Rise (HDR); *The Succession to the Throne of David*, trans. Michael D. Rutter and David M. Gunn (Sheffield: Almond, 1982). It is not insignificant that at 2 Sam 10:1 the LXX^b radically changes and represents the so-called *kaige* recension. It is beyond my purpose to attempt a resolution of the potential problems of the literary history of 2 Samuel. Rather, what is significant for our purposes is the recognition of the problems posed if SN were not a part of the Chronicler's *Vorlage*. In this case, it would be difficult to speak of the Chronicler omitting material which was, in fact, not before him. Thus any conclusions regarding the Chronicler's *Tendenz* concerning David and his house based solely on the absence of this material from Chronicles would be suspect and subject to revision. Elements of SN are, of course, present in Chronicles. The capture of Rabbah (2 Sam 11:1, 12:26–31), minus the Bathsheba/Nathan material (2 Sam 11:2–12:25), is present in 1 Chr 20:1–3. Likewise, David's foreign wars (2 Sam 10:1–19) are found also in 1 Chr 19:1–19. Missing in Chronicles are the internal struggles of the house of David (2 Sam 13:1–20:26).

¹⁴ The situation with the Chronicler's *Vorlage* of 1–2 Kings presents different problems. The Qumran evidence for Kings is far less substantial and generally agrees with the MT of Kings. The following information is derived from Steven L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 33 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 114–115. Fragments of K have been found in caves 4, 5, and 6. Cave 5 contains three fragments of 1 Kgs 1:1, 16–17, 27–37. Cave 6 contains ninety fragments, most of which have yet to be identified; eighteen have been identified and comprise parts of nine passages: 1 Kgs 3:12–14; 12:28–31; 2 Kgs 5:26; 6:32; 7:8–10; 7:20–8:5; 9:1–2; 10:19b–21. The 4QKgs^a material contains fragments of 1 Kgs 7:20–21, 25–27, 29–31, 31–42; 8:1–9, 16–18. Since McKenzie's study, the 4QKgs has been published by Julio Trebolle Barrera, "A Preliminary Edition of 4QKings (4Q54)" in Julio Trebolle

theories of a different *Vorlage* to Chronicles account for the equally possible redaction of 4QSam^a towards the text of Chronicles. Finally, it is the MT, not the texts of the LXX or Qumran, that is the received text within the community of faith.

II. A Reading of 1 Chronicles 21:1–22:1

The census of Israel described in 1 Chronicles 21:1–22:1 stands in stark contrast to the Chronicler's overall portrayal of David. Relying upon his *Vorlage* 2 Samuel 24:1–25, the Chronicler follows his source but with very different emphases. Much of the preceding material in 2 Samuel about David's mistakes was not included by the Chronicler and thus his purpose for the information about David's sinful census is not as a culmination of prior sinful acts as it is in 2 Samuel. Rather, by the additional information found only in 1 Chronicles 21:27–22:1, the Chronicler uses this material to connect David with the choice of the temple site. Note the difference in these two accounts:

Barrera and Luis Vegas Montaner, eds., *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid, 8–12 March 1991* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), I:229–246. Moreover, the majority of Codex Vaticanus (1 Kgs 1:1–2:11; 22:1–53; 2 Kgs 1:1–25:30) is, as Dominique Barthélemy observed, representative of the *kaige* recension toward a proto-Rabbinic text. *Les devanciers d'Aquila*, *Vetus Testamentum*, Supplements 10 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 89–143. Even Josephus is less helpful for establishing the *Vorlage* of Kings since he consistently parallels the Chronicler at those places where the Chronicler has non-synoptic material, indicating that Josephus perhaps had a copy of the Chronicler before him. See McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 83. McKenzie, in his study of the MT, Old Greek, and Latin of 13 passages from 1 Kgs 2:12–21:29, reaches the conclusion that the MT of Chronicles and the MT of Kings “reflect a single text type of K[ings], i.e., the Chronicler's *Vorlage* of K[ings] was proto-Rabbinic.” Although McKenzie does not attempt to establish “the affiliation of all these witnesses of the text of K[ings] to each other and to textual families,” his identification of agreements between the MT of Chronicles and Samuel with fragments of 4QKgs^a indicates “that we are dealing with recension within a text type and not just assimilation between K^M and C^M.” *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History*, 119–158. Certainly textual variants may account for some differences between the MT of Kings and that of Chronicles, but those are differences within the same textual family, a situation quite different from that of Chronicles and Samuel.

2 Samuel 24

1 Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel,

and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

1 Chronicles 21

1 Then Satan (שָׂטָן) stood against Israel

1 Chronicles 21 has the appearance of Satan, a transliteration of the Hebrew word for "adversary." The same term is found in Job 1:1-2:13 and Zechariah 3:1 but in those places with the definite article "the adversary." Here it is a proper name. Paul Evans has summarized a scholarly debate about the usage of this term into two primary interpretations.¹⁵ One is that this is a proper name influenced by Persian dualism and by its use the Chronicler shifts responsibility for evil from YHWH to Satan. Others have argued that this represents a human adversary and should be translated as "an adversary." While agreeing with the former that this is a proper name, it seems to me that the influence of Persian dualism is overemphasized since the concept of Satan, if not the name itself, is consistent from the fall in Genesis 3 onward.

2 Samuel 24:1 implies that it was the Lord who incited David to take the census. The Chronicler chooses to emphasize the instrument used, that is, Satan. It is also of note that the Chronicler does not repeat his source in saying "Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" since the Chronicler had not reported any of David's prior sinful acts.

2 Samuel 24

2 So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him,

"Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people."

1 Chronicles 21

2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army,

"Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

¹⁵ Paul Evans, "Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology," *Biblica* 85 (2004): 545-558.

3 But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it,

but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

4 But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army.

So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

1 Chronicles 21:3–4 states that Joab, David's faithful general, objected to the census. It is not that the census itself was evil; rather, the motivation for it was wrong: "Why should my lord require this?" (1 Chr 21:3). As the Chronicler will later demonstrate in warfare narratives, it is not the number of troops that matter. Only trust in the Lord wins battles. David here demonstrates not faith and trust in God but faith and trust in the size of the army of Israel.

2 Samuel 24

9 And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

3 But Joab said, "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are!

Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?"

4 But the king's word prevailed against Joab.

So Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came back to Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 21

5 And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword, and in Judah 470,000 who drew the sword.

6 But he did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.

1 Chronicles 21:6 is unique to Chronicles. The Chronicler does not reproduce his source's description of the process of census taking (2 Sam 24:5–8) but only the total, 1,100,000 troops. He further notes that Joab did not count Levi and Benjamin (1 Chr 21:6) so David's army would have been even larger had he done so.

2 Samuel 24

10 But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people.

And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

1 Chronicles 21:7 is unique to Chronicles, emphasizing that David's action was literally "evil in the eyes of God" and that, as a consequence, God struck Israel. It is not, as in 2 Samuel, a matter of David's conscience bothering him which resulted in his repentance; rather, David's repentance is the direct result of YHWH striking Israel:

2 Samuel 24

11 And when David arose in the morning, the **word of the LORD** came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

This explains David's repentance and the choices of punishments offered by God (1 Chr 21:8–15a; 2 Sam 24: 10–16a). The Chronicler also emphasizes the intermediary role of the prophet as one who hears YHWH. He does so by eliminating the circumlocution "the word of."

2 Samuel 24

14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

1 Chronicles 21

7 But God was displeased with this thing, (וַיִּרַע בְּעֵינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים) and he struck Israel.

8 And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

1 Chronicles 21

9 And **the LORD** spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

1 Chronicles 21

13 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let **me** fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is **very** great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

The three choices—famine, enemy destruction, and the sword of the Lord—were precisely the punishments decreed for covenant failure in Deuteronomy 28:15–25. David's choice is to trust the mercy of YHWH (1 Chr 21:13).

2 Samuel 24

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of **Araunah** the Jebusite.

1 Chronicles 21

15 **And God sent** the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of **Ornan** the Jebusite.

16 And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

David's reliance on the mercy of God is apparent in both accounts. But the Chronicler, even more than Samuel, emphasizes the king's own responsibility by pleading in the first person singular rather than plural. What happened to the nation has happened to the king himself. In both accounts, God sends a pestilence that kills 70,000 people (2 Sam 24:15; 1 Chr 21:14). But divine mercy prevents the destruction of more; God stops the "angel" from further destruction as the angel approaches the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

It is significant that the Chronicler, unlike his *Vorlage*, specifically attributes the intended destruction of Jerusalem to YHWH himself. As he does when he attributes the death of Saul to YHWH (1 Chronicles 10) and the later destruction by the Babylonians to YHWH (2 Chronicles 36), the Chronicler indicates that all things come from the hand of God. Israel was not at the mercy of the abstract fates of history but under the hand of God.

2 Samuel 24

17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

1 Chronicles 21

17 And David said to God, "**Was it not I who gave command to number the people?** It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house. **But do not let the plague be on your people.**"

Here the events of the numbering are directly connected to the selection of the temple site. There are several differences between the 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles accounts, some of which may reflect on the manuscript difficulties of the traditional Hebrew text of Samuel. The angel was stopped over a particular spot, the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (Araunah in 2 Samuel). This spot is then dedicated for the altar of the Lord. Note also that the Chronicler, much more than his *Vorlage*, accents David's acceptance of personal responsibility.

The Chronicler intensifies David's acknowledgment of his culpability by inclusion of the question "Was it not I who gave command to number the people?" and the plea "But do not let the plague be on your people." Both sin and its consequences belong to the guilty, not to innocent bystanders.

2 Samuel 24

25 And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

1 Chronicles 21

26 And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

In 21:26, the Chronicler notes that the offering was burned with fire from heaven, something not known from 2 Samuel 24:25. This was a powerful indication of the Lord's approval. He sent fire on the offerings at the time of Aaron's offering (Lev 9:24), at the time of Solomon's offering for the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 7:1), and as confirmation of Elijah over the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:36-40). David's role as the one who sacrifices demonstrates his priest-king identity, an identity given him earlier in 1 Chronicles 15:25-29 and 16:1-3. David is a unique king in that he embodies the promise of the future priest and king, the Messiah (see Zech 6:9-15 and Psalm 110). The divine approval is further noted by the Chronicler's note that "Then the LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath" (1 Chr 21:27).

1 Chronicles 21

28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon, 30 but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD. 22:1 Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

The final material in this narrative is unique to Chronicles. Here the Chronicler notes that David, though not the builder of the temple, is in fact responsible for everything about the temple, even its site. The chapters which follow (22–29) further develop the role of David as architect and planner, though not builder of the temple, with only a few verses in this final section which are found also in 2 Samuel. This lengthy section comes from other sources and emphasizes David as the organizer of temple (chapters 23–26) and governmental personnel (chapter 27). These actions are encased in two speeches regarding his son's succession to the throne and role as builder of the temple. The first is a private speech to Solomon and the leaders of Israel (chapter 22); the second is a public charge to Solomon preceding David's death (chapters 28, 29). In this way, the Chronicler maintains both the legitimacy of the temple and the Davidic line through Solomon.

III. David: The Paradigm of Saint and Sinner

David as Paradigm of Rebellion

Because the Chronicler does not mention the better known sins of David, the census of 1 Chronicles 21 is all the more important. Apart from this one incident, David is presented as the model king. And yet this stands as a paradox throughout the rest of the book. The tragedy of David's sin does not overshadow his role as the one to whom future kings will be compared and found wanting; in other words, David is the standard by which his descendants are judged. Good kings are positively compared to David (Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29:2 and 2 Kgs 18:3; Josiah in 2 Chr 34:12 and 2 Kgs 22:2) while evil kings are unfavorably compared. Ahaz, for example, is introduced by the negative comparison: "And he did not do what was right in the eyes of YHWH as his father David had done, but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel" (2 Chr 28:1b–2a; 2 Kgs 16:2a–3). The reign of Ahaz, in polar opposition to that of David, is marked by military defeat. However, he remains the legitimate king as a descendant of David. Even Jehoiakin, who was replaced by his uncle Zedekiah (2 Chr 36:10; 2 Kgs 24:17) at the command of Nebuchadnezzar, remains the generational link of the line of David (1 Chr 3:16–24). The divine covenant with David is not negated by the failures of his successors.

What was wrong, however, with the taking of a census? Why was this even an issue that would bring the wrath of YHWH? The Old Testament has a significant number of census figures throughout the history of Israel. The Chronicler even provides a listing of David's army divisions and their

numbers from a later census (1 Chr 27:1-34). This particular census was different because of the answer to the question posed by Joab, "Why does my lord want to do this?" (1 Chr 21:3). A more precise translation is: "Why does my lord seek (יִבְקֹשׁ) this?" This word, one of two words frequently used by the Chronicler for "seek,"¹⁶ is used to reference either the seeking of YHWH or the seeking of false gods. Joab's question then is quite pointed: Why does David seek this rather than seeking YHWH? It is not the act of taking a census, which is in and of itself a neutral thing; it is rather the motivation.

In the prior chapters, the Chronicler had recorded the military victories of David, largely taken verbatim from his source in 2 Samuel. The list of defeated enemies (1 Chr 18:1-20:8) is a "Who's Who" of the ancient world in 1000 BC: Gath, Moab, Arameans of Damascus, Hamath, the Edomites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines. So great was his power that the Chronicler would note, "YHWH gave David victory everywhere he went" (1 Chr 18:13). But despite all this, David wanted to know the strength of his numbers. The point was not in a simple counting of heads but in the reason for the counting: David thought that there would be security in statistics. That neutral thing thus became an indicator that David trusted his "calculator" far more than God.

In the non-synoptic texts of 2 Chronicles, later kings of Judah would know the impotence of numbers.¹⁷ Some, like Abijah, Asa, and perhaps Jehoshaphat, would be outnumbered by a ratio of 2 to 1 when they faced enemy armies and yet come out victorious because YHWH fought for them. On the other hand, Judah can outnumber the enemy and yet lose the battle. In the case of Joash, Judah's army outnumbered the enemy yet was defeated:

¹⁶ Although the Chronicler prefers the term יִבְקֹשׁ, which he uses 25 times, he does employ בִּקֵּשׁ with essentially the same meaning eleven times (1 Chr 4:39; 14:8; 16:10; 16:11; 2 Chr 7:14; 9:23; 11:16; 15:4; 15:15; 20:4; 22:9).

¹⁷ Text	King	Tally
1 Chr 21:5	David	1,100,000 in all Israel, including 470,000 in Judah
2 Chr 11:1	Rehoboam	180,000
2 Chr 13:3	Abijah	400,000
2 Chr 14:8	Asa	580,000
2 Chr 17:14-18	Jehoshaphat	1,160,000
2 Chr 25:5	Amaziah	300,000
2 Chr 26:10	Uzziah (early years)	307,500

Though the army of the Syrians had come with few men, YHWH delivered them into their hand a very great army, because they had forsaken YHWH, the God of their fathers. Thus they executed judgment on Joash. (2 Chr 24:24)

The use of numbers in this way underscores the meaning of history for the Chronicler as he addresses the postexilic community in the Persian period. Judah might be powerless before the world. Other nations might exert tremendous military force against them. From the perspective of other nations, and indeed of Judah's citizens themselves, the situation would have been bleak. The Chronicler, however, does not understand the history of the nation in this way. When Judah was outnumbered and comparatively weak in the past on the one hand, or strong and powerful on the other, YHWH determined their fate. In this way, David's census warns the continuing people of God about reliance on numbers as an indication of power rather than on the Lord.

David as Paradigm of Repentance

David in 1 Chronicles 21 also serves as a paradigm of repentance. The Chronicler's description of David's sin and repentance focuses attention on several aspects. First is the role of Satan who "incited David to number Israel." Lutherans often speak of their three great enemies as the world, the devil, and the flesh. In the case of this census, it is no less an enemy than the great deceiver himself who worked to tempt the great king of Israel to rely on human rather than divine strength.

David, however, does not lay the blame at the feet of Satan. There is no claim that "the devil made me do it." Instead, David accepts personal responsibility: "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly" (1 Chr 21:8). This is a matter of accountability of the sinner. Appeals to the accountability of others do not suffice, whether one has superiors or, as in the case of David, one is at the top. Each person is responsible for his own sin.

That David is a repentant sinner is further emphasized by the Chronicler in his expansion of his *Vorlage* at 1 Chronicles 21:17. There he records David's words acknowledging that he alone is responsible for his decisions. It was David and no one else who gave the command; therefore he, not the people he ruled, should bear the consequences. With great authority granted by God comes great responsibility for the exercise of that authority.

It is this contrite David who throws himself on the mercy of YHWH. He speaks to the prophet Gad and pleads, "Let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great" (1 Chr 21:13). The preposition used here (כִּי) is simply translated "for" or "because." He does not ask to fall into the hand of the Lord "in order that" God's mercy might be great, as if David's contrition were the cause of divine mercy. Nor does he fall "into the hand of the Lord" with the hope that the Lord's mercy might be great because of the quality or sincerity of his own contrition. On the contrary, David understands that the mercy of God is great even before or without his contrition. In other words, God's great mercy exists and is objectively true even before David acknowledges his sin. It is the cause, not the result, of David's decision to fall into the divine hand.

The Chronicler's adaptation of 2 Samuel's account of the census of Israel thus serves not only the historical narrative but also the soteriological narrative. David, the guilty sinner, obtains mercy from YHWH at the site where the angel sheathed his sword, the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. It is this site that David designates to be the site of the temple. This is not the first or the last time that the temple mount would appear in the Biblical narrative. It is at this site that another act of divine mercy had occurred when YHWH stayed the hand of Abraham as he was about to offer up his son Isaac (Genesis 22). Abraham gave a name to the place in the region of Moriah where the binding of Isaac took place and YHWH provided the substitutionary sacrifice of a ram. This site is identified in 2 Chronicles 3:1 as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem,¹⁸ where countless animals would be offered upon the altar. It is on this site in the Second Temple period where Christ, the final lamb offered for the sin of all humanity, would appear. Thus the divine mercy toward Abraham, David, and the world is located here.

This sacred site, of course, would not be developed from threshing floor to temple by David himself. Yet the chapters following 1 Chronicles 21, unique to this history, continue the theme of David's relationship to the temple. In these chapters, the Chronicler makes no further mention of David's census. Where God's grace is, sin is remembered no longer. It is true that David is not permitted to build the temple but that prohibition is

¹⁸ Other texts refer to the temple as "the mountain of the LORD" (Ps 24:3; Isa 2:3; 30:29; Zech 8:3). In modern Jerusalem this site is home to the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim mosque from AD 691. There a rock is the traditional site of Abraham's sacrifice.

based neither upon the census, nor his adultery with Bathsheba, nor any other sinful act of David. It is rather based upon David's role as a man of war who had shed much blood. The role of temple builder would be given to a man of peace, his son Solomon.

In this way, David becomes a paradigm for rebellion and repentance. To briefly examine one example,¹⁹ we turn to 2 Chronicles 12. In a reworking

¹⁹ As a measure of repentance, symmetry of victory and defeat is attained in the Chronicler's account of the reigns of Abijah, Asa, and Jehoshaphat. In each case, both the synoptic and the non-synoptic warfare narratives form an integral part of that symmetry. In the case of Asa, that symmetry is internal to the account. By placing the non-synoptic material within the framework of 1 Kings 15, the Chronicler constructs two parts to Asa's reign. A similar balance was seen within the Chronicler's arrangement of the synoptic accounts of the reigns of Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:1-12:16; 1 Kgs 12:1-14:31), Jehoram (2 Chr 21:1-20; 2 Kgs 8:20-22), Joash (2 Chr 24:1-27; 2 Kgs 12:1-21), Amaziah (2 Chr 25:1-28; 2 Kgs 14:1-22), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:1-23; 2 Kgs 15:1-7), Manasseh (2 Chr 33:1-20; 2 Kgs 21:1-18), and Josiah (2 Chr 34:1-35:27; 2 Kgs 22:1-23:30). A symmetrical balance is also obtained between the reigns of individual kings. Rehoboam, who suffered military disaster, is balanced by the military success of his son Abijah. The reigns of Asa and his son Jehoshaphat are likewise balanced by an intricate interweaving of synoptic and non-synoptic material. The pattern continues throughout the Chronicler's history of Judah. Jehoram (2 Chr 21:1-20), a cultically unfaithful king, loses territories to the east and south—precisely the areas in which cultically faithful Asa and Jehoshaphat had been successful. Uzziah (2 Chr 26:1-23), in the initial phase of his reign, is successful militarily, in contrast to the defeat by Israel at the close of his father Amaziah's reign (2 Chr 25:1-28). Jotham (2 Chr 27:1-9) is successful in war; his son Ahaz (2 Chr 28:1-27) meets defeat at the hands of Syria, Israel, Edom, Philistia, and Assyria. The disaster of Ahaz is then balanced by the cultically pure Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:1-32:33), for whom YHWH sends an angel to fight. Military defeat is ascribed to Hezekiah's son Manasseh (2 Chr 33:1-20), whose own son Amon (2 Chr 33:21-25) is cultically unfaithful. Josiah, though a religious reformer, fails to hear the word of YHWH through Neco and dies in battle (2 Chr 34:1-35:27) and is succeeded by a series of kings who are both evil and defeated in war (2 Chr 36:1-21). For the Chronicler, such a balance was necessary. Warfare must be explained whether it ends in victory or defeat. A faithful king will be victorious, either consistently or during that part of his reign in which he is faithful. An unfaithful king will meet defeat; that defeat, however, can be either averted or reversed through repentance. Yet there is more to this symmetry than merely explaining what the Chronicler found in his sources. A pattern is established which speaks to the Chronicler's own community. Each generation determines its own fate in the affairs of nations. The fact that the Chronicler's Judah was not a world power does not preclude its potential to become one again, no more than, for example, Ahaz's failure precluded Hezekiah's success. History is cyclical. Where one generation finds itself is dependent on its own relationship to YHWH through his institutions.

of the account of the first king of Judah after the division of the Kingdom, the Chronicler presents Rehoboam as one who followed his grandfather's paradigm. Though Rehoboam had the military, economic, religious, and familial blessings listed in 2 Chronicles 11, in 12:1 we read: "When the rule of Rehoboam was established and was strong, he forsook the law of YHWH, and all Israel with him." The Chronicler notes a shift in the character of Rehoboam when he forsook the law of YHWH. The verb "forsake" (עָזַב) is a key concept in the Chronicler's theological vocabulary, used elsewhere for irregular worship²⁰ or the worship of foreign gods.²¹

The result of this forsaking of the law of YHWH is an invasion by Shishak of Egypt (1 Kgs 14:25; 2 Chr 12:2).²² Shemaiah the prophet approaches Rehoboam and the princes of Judah in Jerusalem with the message, "Thus says YHWH, 'You have forsaken (עָזַבְתֶּם) me so I have forsaken (עָזַבְתִּי) you to the hand of Shishak'" (2 Chr 12:6). Note that the very thing David wanted to avoid (falling into the hands of men) is imposed on Rehoboam. But the word of Shemaiah was received with a confession of guilt²³ on the part of Rehoboam and the princes of Israel,²⁴

²⁰ 2 Chr 13:10–11; 21:10–11; 28:6; 29:6.

²¹ 2 Chr 7:19, 22; 24:18; 34:25. עָזַב is used in the same way here so that this description may be taken as a summary of 1 Kgs 14:22–24: "And Judah did what was evil in the sight of YHWH, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places, and pillars, and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree; and there were male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which YHWH drove out before the people of Israel." In other words, the Chronicler summarizes three verses in 1 Kings 14 by the use of one word, עָזַב.

²² English versions of 2 Chr 12:2 normally place (d) after (b), thereby obscuring the dependence of the Chronicler on his *Vorlage*. Verse 2d marks the point where the Chronicler departs from his *Vorlage*, which he will rejoin at verse 9b, "He took away the treasures of the house of YHWH. . . ." All that comes between (2 Chr 12:2d–9a) is the Chronicler's addition to his *Vorlage* and is the result of Judah's unfaithfulness (מַעַל) to YHWH. This is marked by the *inclusio* of 2d and 9a, where the phrase "Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem" recurs.

²³ Simon J. de Vries defines "Confession of Guilt" as "a statement in which a defendant formally acknowledges his guilt and often discloses his action and/or the circumstances." *1 and 2 Chronicles, The Forms of the Old Testament Literature* 11 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 429. Cf. 1 Chr 17:16–17; 21:8; 2 Chr 28:13.

²⁴ Some see the change from "princes of Judah" in 2 Chr 12:5 to "princes of Israel" in 2 Chr 12:6 as indicative of the Chronicler's view of "an unbroken continuation of tradition in the south with the Israel of the united monarchy." H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles, The New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 247;

"Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, 'YHWH is righteous'"²⁵ (2 Chr 12:6). As when David and the elders humbled themselves after the census, it is the humbling of themselves that brings reprieve from YHWH. "When YHWH saw that they humbled themselves" (2 Chr 12:7a) he mitigated the punishment to be inflicted by Shishak. This is almost certainly an application of the programmatic statement of Solomon's dedicatory prayer at the Temple: "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chr 7:14). In response to the humbling of themselves, YHWH grants three things (2 Chr 12:7b):

1. I will not destroy them;
2. I will grant them some deliverance (or deliverance for a while);
3. My wrath will not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.

These are significant because they indicate who is responsible for the potential destruction of Judah. It is not ultimately Shishak, but YHWH himself. Shishak is but an instrument in his hands.

YHWH thus limits the destruction of Jerusalem by Shishak in 2 Chronicles 12:8–11 but uses it as a way of teaching his people: "They shall be the servants to him, that they may know my service and the service of the kings of the lands" (2 Chr 12:8). Implied in this is the opportunity to learn the difference between serving YHWH and other kings with its correlative that they will have future opportunities to serve YHWH.

The actual booty taken by Shishak (2 Chr 12:9b–10) is simply copied with minor changes as the Chronicler returns to his *Vorlage* (1 Kgs 14:26–28). Both the treasures of the temple and palace of the king are carried away, including the gold shields made by Solomon. Rehoboam is forced to have his guards carry bronze shields (2 Chr 12:10). Though the looting of Jerusalem was extensive, the Chronicler adds an instructive note to his *Vorlage*: "And when he humbled himself the wrath of YHWH turned from him, so as not to make a complete destruction; moreover, conditions were

and Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977), 106–110.

²⁵ The same terminology of confession is used also in the more extensive confessions Exod 9:27, Ezra 9:15, Neh 9:33, Dan 9:14, Ps 119:137, and Ps 129:4.

good in Judah" (2 Chr 12:12). The destruction was quantitatively limited; it was not complete. In this sense, the כִּנְעַם of 2 Chronicles 12:7b is more quantitative than temporal. The destruction is quantitative in that, while extensive looting took place, Judah still survived; indeed, conditions were good. Yet the limitation of destruction is also temporal in so far as the wrath of YHWH is temporarily lifted and will not be poured out by the hand of Shishak. Rather, it will be poured out later by the hand of the Chaldeans.

IV. Conclusions

What can then be said about David as saint and sinner? Here are four observations.

First, the grace of God that extended to the sinner David is precisely that known from the continuing theological narrative of the canon: the objective justification of the world. The righteousness of David is not a righteousness that arose from David himself. This directly addresses a fundamental theological error of the popular *Prayer of Jabez*, a book based upon 1 Chronicles 4:9–10.²⁶ According to the author of this book, Jabez was heard by God because he was "more honorable than his brothers," a faulty translation of the biblical text.²⁷ Moreover, when sin is mentioned as a barrier to God, it is discussed only as something that the sinner himself can make right.²⁸ This radically misrepresents not only the text of 1 Chronicles 4 but also the theology of the Chronicler. David was not heard because of his righteousness but because of the exceedingly great mercy of the LORD.

Second, repentance requires the acknowledgement of personal responsibility. One may not plead that an act was justified because others assented to it or that it appeared to be a necessary and correct act at the time it was committed. This was David's sin in numbering the people. He wanted to measure the power of his kingship through a census of his subjects rather than to rely solely on the power of his God. External

²⁶ Bruce H. Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking through to the Blessed Life*, The Breakthrough Series (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2000).

²⁷ The Hebrew word כָּבֵד in the niph'al stem is better translated as "honorable," as the ESV does for other occurrences of the same form of this verb (cf. Gen 34:19; 1 Sam 9:6; 2 Sam 23:19, 23; 1 Chr 11:21, 25). In following an English tradition at 1 Chronicles 4:9, the ESV wrongly gives the impression that it is the character of the one who prays which determines God's hearing and answering of that prayer.

²⁸ Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez*, 85.

powers, whether that of the armies surrounding ancient Israel or the threatening power of cultural forces surrounding the people of God of every time, cannot alleviate the guilt of one who trusts his own strength of numbers rather than the power of God. Whenever the power of the law is exerted, the object of the law's accusation must accept personal responsibility for the actions taken.

Third, the call to repentance, while a gracious call to all people, is especially a call to those who have been placed in positions of leadership among the people of God. When David sinned in the exercise of his office, his people suffered. When he repented, he pled not for his own life but for his people. The first commandment, "You shall have no other gods," and Luther's explanation, "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things," was a difficulty for David in his census; it remains so for all who hold office among the people of God. When something or someone other than God becomes the object of fear, love, and trust in the mind and heart of one called to lead the people of God, it affects not just the leader but the church.

Finally, whenever sin is forgiven by God, it is truly forgiven. To be justified is to be made holy, righteous, and free from condemnation. David the sinner remained David the saint, one who received that great mercy of YHWH. His biography is a prominent example of the life story of every believer.

The Spirit of Holiness: The Holiness of Man

William C. Weinrich

Two basic data of the evangelical narratives governed, directed, and finally determined the church's trinitarian and christological faith. First of all was the fact that the content of the gospels was the life, death, and resurrection of the man Jesus. Although confessed to have risen from the dead, to have ascended into heaven, and to have given forth the Spirit, the preaching and the worship of the earliest apostolic church was of the man Jesus, that is, of the son of Mary who precisely in his deepest humility was confessed to be God.¹ St. Paul gives expression to this foundational fact of early Christian conviction: "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23–24). The second important datum of the gospel narratives is the fact that they conclude by noting the mission of the church under the aegis of the exalted Lord and through the power of the Holy Spirit. According to the Gospel of John, the resurrected Jesus spoke to his disciples, saying, "As the Father has sent me, so also I send you." And breathing upon them, he said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:21–22). The sequence of narrative at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles is also significant: first there is the ascension of Jesus, then the descent of the Holy Spirit, then the narrative of the church in its life, mission, and teaching.

The life of Jesus was not a self-enclosed story, a pure history so to speak. The life of Jesus was a life constituted in the Holy Spirit and for that reason it was a life that was itself the destiny of man.² In the life and death of this man, the destiny of humankind is given and secured. According to the Gospel of John, knowing that "all things were perfected" (ἤδη πάντα τετέλεσται), Jesus took drink to "complete the Scripture" and said, "It is accomplished" (τετέλεσται) and bowing his head, "he handed over the Spirit" (παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα; John 19:28–30). The finality of Christ, the life

¹ See especially Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

² John Zizioulis, "Apostolic Continuity and Orthodox Theology: Towards a Synthesis of Two Perspectives," *Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 19 (1975): 85: "The event of Christ must be understood as constituted pneumatologically . . . because Christ is not Christ unless he is an existence in the Spirit, which means an *eschatological existence*."

that he lived and completed in his crucifixion, is the basis and source for the handing over of the Spirit. That is to say, to use the words of the Nicene Creed, the mission of Christ was "for us and for our salvation." The life of Christ would remain in the past, as though locked there, were it not communicated to us. As Jesus himself said, "If I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). The significance of Christ for man and his salvation cannot be disassociated from the sending and reality of the Spirit.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Jaroslav Pelikan begins his summary of the discussion concerning the Holy Spirit leading to the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 by writing that "the issue that brought the homoousios to a head and thus helped to formulate the doctrine that Christ was divine was not so much the doctrine of Christ as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."³ The issue can be perceived already in the New Testament. A decisive passage occurs in Paul: "Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you" (Rom 8:9-11). Such an apostolic claim would be confessed by the Council of Constantinople in the words "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life" (τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν). However, such a confession was now placed within a comprehensive understanding of the reality of that God who made himself known and communicated himself through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Who is that God who wills to make us alive by the communication to us of his own life? And in what manner does God exist so that he can and does bestow upon the creature, given over to sin and death, that life which is his own? These questions were implicit in the proclamation of Jesus as the Savior of the world.

At the end of Book 3 of his *Against the Heresies*, Irenaeus complains of the Gnostics who revive the *deus otiosus* of the Epicureans, the god who exercises no direction over earthly affairs, takes care of neither himself nor

³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1:211.

others, and is without providence.⁴ The narrative of the Scriptures had instructed Irenaeus otherwise. This narrative begins with a Word that creates and in this creating there begins a story of a people whose story is nothing other than the story of the activity of God who in and through Israel (and the nations) is moving humankind toward its destiny of eternal life in communion with God. As the Wisdom of Solomon says, "God did not create death" but created man "unto incorruptibility" (Wis 1:13; 2:23: ἐπ' ἀφθαρσίᾳ). It was, however, in the man Jesus that the utter identity of the life of God and the life of man was perceived. In him the Word through whom all things were made was made one with flesh from the Virgin Mary. In the striking words of one fourth century document, "The Word of God is not called God by grace, but his flesh together with him is said to be God. He did not say that the Word became God, but 'the Word was God' . . . and that this God became flesh, so his flesh would become God the Word."⁵ In other words, the life of the man Jesus is the perfect human form of the life of God, and this not by way of an external imitation, but by way of an intimate and intrinsic participation and unity.

This was the controlling point of Irenaeus' polemic against the spiritualizing of the second century Gnostics. Not unlike the philosophy of the Greeks, the Gnostics conceived of the divine transcendence as implying a fundamental dissimilarity, an absolute otherness to the reality of the created order. Irenaeus did not wholly disagree. But he located the otherness of God and the creature "within the context of the positive relation of creation, of God's granting creation its existence as a gift."⁶ The distinction between God and the world of man is not one of sheer opposition and unlikeness, "but of the asymmetrical correlation brought

⁴ Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.24.2, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 1:458-459.

⁵ [Marcellus of Ancyra], *De incarnatione et contra Arianos* 3, in *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857-1886), 26:984-1028. This work is often ascribed to Marcellus of Ancyra, but the attribution is uncertain. The Greek text of the quote is PG 26:989: καὶ οὐχ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ κατὰ χάριν ἔλαβε τὸ καλεῖσθαι θεός, ἀλλ' ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ σὺν αὐτῷ ἐθεολογήθη. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπεν ὅτι ὁ λόγος θεὸς γέγονεν, ἀλλὰ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος . . . καὶ οὗτος αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς γέγονε σὰρξ, ἵνα ἡ σὰρξ αὐτοῦ γένηται θεὸς λόγος.

⁶ Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), 19.

about by the act of creation.”⁷ This “asymmetrical correlation” is given classic expression in Irenaeus’ programmatic claim that the essential difference between God and man is that “God makes; man is made” (*Deus facit; homo fit*).⁸ The perfect and complete sufficiency of God, his possession of all things, is the divine ground for the activity of his creating, that is, for his giving and bestowal of life. To create is the distinctive mark of the reality of God in his relation to the world. God is revealed to be God in the fact that he gives life to that which in itself possesses no life.

On the other hand, the distinctive mark of the creature is that he receives life from God. The entire relationship of God with man is expressed by the dogmatic phrase “creation from nothing” (*creatio ex nihilo*). For Irenaeus the activity of God’s creating was by no means one of necessity. As Irenaeus put it, God made man in order that he might have someone upon whom to bestow his goodness. Indeed, God’s creating was an act of will rooted in the freedom of God to work as he is. The act of creation, that is, the granting of life to man was an act in which God made himself known precisely as the one who out of the freedom of love gives life. *Deus facit; homo fit*. The very relation of God to man was one marked by freedom, grace, love, and gift. These then are the marks of the reality of God; these demark who the God is who is the true God: “It is not possible to know God as far as his majesty is concerned. For it is impossible to measure the Father. But as to his love—for it is this which leads us to God by his Word—those who obey God always learn that there does exist so great a God, and that it is he who by himself has established and made and adorned and contains all things, including ourselves and our world.”⁹

As Khaled Anatolios has noted, if the transcendent otherness of God is conceived not only in terms of God’s greatness, his sheer otherness, but especially in terms of the granting of life and love, by God’s very intervention in the affairs of humankind, then “the positing of intermediaries between God and creation is no longer seen as safeguarding divine transcendence but even as threatening it.”¹⁰ Therefore, Irenaeus repeatedly makes the point that any notion of God as one who is distant

⁷ Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 19; see George Florovsky, “The Concept of Creation in St. Athanasius,” *Studia Patristica* 6 and *Texte und Untersuchungen* 81 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962), 36–52.

⁸ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.11.2; ANF 1:474.

⁹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.20.1; ANF 1:487.

¹⁰ Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 21.

and himself uninvolved in creation compromises a fitting conception of God and dishonors him: "They blaspheme the creator, who is truly God."¹¹

This distinction between God who is creator and man who is made finds its Nicene expression in the confession that the Son of God is "begotten not made" (γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα) and in the expression that the Spirit is the "Giver of life" (ζωοποιόν). The argument for the deity of the Son and the argument for the deity of the Holy Spirit was an argument concerning whether the Son and the Spirit were intrinsic to that God who is the creator, the Giver of Life. Essentially the argument was a simple one: "Whereas men are capable of wisdom, God partakes of nothing, but is himself the Father of his own Wisdom, of which whoso partake are given the name of wise."¹² The words are those of Athanasius, but the thought is the same as we have noted in Irenaeus. There is nothing in common between the Creator and the creature. Therefore, what God has to give he has to give from himself (*ex substantia eius*, as Irenaeus has it). If the gift of the divine wisdom in Christ makes wise, and if the gift of the Spirit makes alive, then the Son and the Holy Spirit are within the identity of the one God and not extrinsic to it.¹³ If, on the other hand, God's creative energy and instrumentality were external to his divine being, then God could not be said to be Creator. If God's creating, however, entailed the bestowal of

¹¹ Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.24.2; ANF 1:458.

¹² Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos* 1:28, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952-1957), 4:323. Greek: ὁ θεὸς οὐδενὸς μετέχων, αὐτὸς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας πατὴρ ἐστίν, ἧς οἱ μετέχοντες εἰώθασιν σοφοὶ καλεῖσθαι; PG 26:69.

¹³ It is important to note that recent study of the New Testament has reexamined with benefit the relation of the person of Jesus to Jewish monotheism. Crucial is the question of the *identity* of God. Who is the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? See especially Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism & Christology in the New Testament* (Cambridge/Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), and Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*. "The uniqueness of the divine identity was characterized [in the Old Testament] especially by two features: that the one God is sole Creator of all things and that the one God is sole Ruler of all things." Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 25. The New Testament application to Jesus of Old Testament texts (for example, Ps 110:1) that speak of God's creative activity and of his sovereignty over the world is the manner in which the New Testament identifies Jesus as being of the one true God. From this perspective, patristic argument that issued into the conciliar statements of faith represents a strong continuity with the apostolic witness.

life intended as an eternal communion with God who is life, then the creative energy of God must be internal to his divine being.

This is, of course, precisely what the Arians denied. The unipersonalism of Arian monotheism did not allow God to be conceived as a being capable of self-communication. For them the movement of God toward another was necessarily an act of will, and therefore that other toward whom God moves and gives his gifts must necessarily be a creature. For God "to beget" his Word and Son was for God "to create" his Word and Son. Therefore, according to the Arians, to confess God as "Creator" was to worship him rightly and sufficiently. To such a claim Athanasius responded that to speak of God as "Creator" is not to speak of God as he is according to his own nature. Rather it is to speak of God only as he is in relationship to his works. "What likeness is there between Son and work, that [the Arians] should parallel a father's with a maker's function? . . . A work is external to the nature, but a son is the proper offspring of the essence."¹⁴ The phrase "proper offspring of the essence" is important. It is the central assertion in the language of Athanasius that apart from the Son there is none who is or can be called God. Proper to the identity of God is the existence of the Son. But this is simply to say that the Son is proper to the Fatherhood of God, for the name "Father" is a term correlative to that of "Son," and if the Son is intrinsic to the reality of God, then God is Father in a relation to that one who is his only Son. The Father-Son relation is constitutive to the reality of God.

Athanasius often accused the Arians of proclaiming a God who is as barren as a light that does not lighten and as a fountain that does not give forth water.¹⁵ However, such a view, which again renders God's difference from the world in terms of utter opposition, blasphemes the God who is. The divine essence is itself fruitful and generative (γεννητική φύσις), and for that reason the communion and union of God and man that was intended from the beginning is a communion of divine persons in which man was created to partake. The argument of Athanasius is important: "If God creates things that are external to him and did not beforehand exist, by willing them to be and so become their Creator, much more will he first

¹⁴ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.29; *NPNF*² 4:323. Greek: τὸ γὰρ ὁμοιον υἱὸς καὶ ποίημα, ἵνα τὰ ἐπὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν εἴπωσι . . . τὸ ποίημα ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποιούντος ἐστίν, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας γέννημα ἐστί; PG 26:72.

¹⁵ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.19, 2.2; *NPNF*² 4:317, 349.

be Father of an Offspring from his proper essence. If [the Arians] attribute to God the willing about things that are not, why do they not recognize *that in God* [italics added] that lies above the will? Now that which is by nature surpasses will and that he should be Father of his proper Word.”¹⁶ Again, the issue at stake was whether the man of the Gospel narratives was in fact the God who creates and whether, therefore, the gospel is, as Paul writes, “the power of God unto salvation for all who believe” (Rom 1:16). Who God is and how he is, that is, the nature of the reality of God is very much related to the destiny of man.

Athanasius will argue the case for the Son’s natural yet distinct deity within the unity of the one God through a host of Biblical passages and images. For our purposes two will suffice, namely the two we briefly mentioned above, that of fountain and that of light. Quoting Jeremiah 2:13 and Baruch 3:10–12, Athanasius notes that God is called a “fountain” (πηγή), that is, a source of living water. Referring to 1 John 1:5 he notes that God is called “light” (φῶς). However the Son “in contrast with the fountain is called river” (ποταμός, quoting Ps 65:9),¹⁷ and “in contrast with the light, he is called radiance” (ἀπαύγασμα, referring to Heb 1:3).¹⁸ The theological deposit that Athanasius accrues from such Biblical imagery¹⁹ can be seen in

¹⁶ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 2.2; *NPNF*² 4:349. Greek: Εἰ δὲ τὰ ἐκτὸς καὶ οὐκ ὄντα πρότερον, βουλόμενος δὲ αὐτὰ εἶναι, δημιουργεῖ, καὶ γίνεται τούτων ποιητής, πολλῶ πρότερον εἴη ἂν πατὴρ γεννήματος ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας. Εἰ γὰρ τὸ βούλεσθαι περὶ τῶν μὴ ὄντων διδῶσαι τῷ θεῷ, διὰ τί μὴ τὸ ὑπερκείμενον τῆς βουλῆσεως οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκουσι τοῦ θεοῦ ὕπερ ἀναβέβηκε δὲ τῆς βουλῆσεως τὸ πεφυκέναι καὶ εἶναι αὐτὸν πατέρα τοῦ ἰδίου λόγου; PG 26:149.

¹⁷ Ps 65:9 states: ὁ ποταμός τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπληρώθη ὕδατων (LXX). A river is distinct from the fountain of the river, or the source of the river, yet is naturally bound to it by the unity of origin and the oneness of “nature” (*water* from *water*). As is common, the genitive form ὁ ποταμός τοῦ θεοῦ is understood to be equivalent to ὁ ποταμός ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. “God” is the source out of which the river flows.

¹⁸ Athanasius, *Epistulae ad Serapionem* 1.19, in C. R. B. Shapland, *Letters Concerning the Holy Spirit* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 109–110; Greek: PG 26:573. Shapland is the standard English translation of the letters of Athanasius to Serapion of Thumis. As Shapland notes, this is the meaning of the Nicene phrase φῶς ἐκ φωτός, rather than as one light kindled from another, as had earlier been the case in Tatian (*adversus Graecos* 5) and Justin Martyr (*Dialogus cum Tryphone* 61; 128); see *Letters*, 109n8.

¹⁹ We note here the understanding of Athanasius concerning why the Scriptures speak in terms of “illustrations” (τοιαῦτα τὰ παραδείγματα, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20). The Scriptures relieve “the impossibility of explaining and apprehending these matters in words.” Athanasius speaks of “a pious and reverent use of reason” (εὐσεβεῖ λογισμῷ μετ’ ἐνλαβείας) and of “thinking legitimately” (μετὰ συγγνώμης νοεῖν, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20).

his development of these images in *Orations against the Arians* 3.3–6. Athanasius places his discussion of the images of the river and the radiance within an interpretation of Jesus' words that "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (John 10:38; 14:11):

For the Son is in the Father, as it is allowed to know, because the whole being of the Son is proper to the Father's essence, as radiance from light and stream from fountain; so that whoso sees the Son, sees what is proper to the Father, and knows that the Son's being, because from the Father, is therefore in the Father. For the Father is in the Son, since the Son is what is from the Father and proper to him, as in the radiance is the sun and in the word the thought, and in the stream the fountain.²⁰

And again:

[Christ said this] in order to show the identity of the Godhead and the unity of the essence. . . . They are two, because the Father is Father and is not also Son, and the Son is Son and not also the Father; but the nature is one, for the offspring is not unlike its parent, for it is his image, and all that is the Father's is the Son's. Therefore, neither is the Son another God, for he was not procured from without. . . . He and the Father are one in propriety and peculiarity of nature, and in the identity of the one Godhead. For the radiance also is light, not second to the sun, nor a different light, nor from participation in it, but a whole and proper offspring from it. And such an offspring is necessarily one light; and no one would say that they are two lights, but sun and radiance two, yet one the light from the sun enlightening in its radiance all things. So also the Godhead of the Son is the Father's; whence it is also indivisible; and thus there is one God and none other than he.²¹

No discussion could more clearly articulate the conviction that the divine unity is one that is constituted in a dynamic communication of self. The

Shapland gives good commentary (*Letters*, 114n6): "To Athanasius the function of reason is not, as for Eunomius, the reduction of revelation to the level of a natural, rationalistic theology. Nor is it the construction of a basis of natural theology upon which a science of revealed truth can be developed. . . . It lies with the sphere of exposition, the co-ordination of the various testimonies of Scripture and the discovery of the ecclesiastical sense."

²⁰ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.3; *NPNF*² 4:395; Greek: PG 26:328.

²¹ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.3–4; *NPNF*² 4:395; Greek: PG 26:328–329.

Father is known and given in the Son, for the Son is naturally from the Father as he who shares intrinsically the Father's essence.

The Father is present and active in the world precisely in the mediation of the Son, for the Son is not alien to the reality of the Father but "proper to the Father" (τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ πατρός). The argument of Athanasius for the deity of the Holy Spirit is a simple extension of this argument.²² If the Holy Spirit is of Christ and from him, then the unity that the Spirit has with the Son cannot be through anything that is not intrinsic to the divine being.²³ In *Letters to Serapion concerning the Holy Spirit* 19, where Athanasius speaks of Christ as radiance and river, he extends the illustration: "As then the Father is light and the Son is his radiance, we may see in the Son the Spirit in whom we are enlightened."²⁴ He continues similarly with the illustration of the fountain and the river: "As the Father is fountain and the Son is called river, we are said to drink the Spirit."²⁵ There is, then, what Athanasius calls a "co-ordination" (συστοιχία) that is and constitutes the single and unique identity of the one God: "If there is such co-ordination and unity within the holy Triad, who can separate either the Son from the Father, or the Spirit from the Son or from the Father himself."²⁶ This συστοιχία constitutes the unity of the one God, and for that reason the work of the Triad from the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit is

²² Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.21; Shapland, *Letters*, 118: "But if, in regard to order and nature, the Spirit bears the same relation to the Son as the Son to the Father, will not he who calls the Spirit a creature necessarily hold the same to be true also of the Son?" To blaspheme the Spirit is also to blaspheme the Son. But then to blaspheme the Son is to blaspheme the Father himself. The formula of the Nicene Creed comes to mind: "who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified."

²³ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 128: "The Spirit, therefore, is distinct from the creatures, and is shown rather to be proper to the Son and not alien from God." Greek: Ἄλλο ἄρα τῶν κτισμάτων ἐστὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ δέδεικται μᾶλλον ἴδιον εἶναι τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ οὐ ξένον τοῦ θεοῦ; PG 26:588. Also, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25: Εἰ δὲ ὁ υἱὸς, ἐπειδὴ ἐκ τοῦ πατρός ἐστιν, ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας αὐτοῦ ἐστιν, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ λεγόμενον, ἴδιον εἶναι κατ' οὐσίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ; PG 26:588-89.

²⁴ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.19; Shapland, *Letters*, 110-111. Greek: Τοῦ τοίνυν πατρός φωτὸς ὄντος, τοῦ δὲ υἱοῦ ἀπαυγασματος αὐτοῦ, ἔξεστιν ὁρᾶν καὶ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἐν ᾧ φωτίζομεθα; PG 26:573. Athanasius quotes Eph 1:17-18: "that he may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened."

²⁵ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.19; Shapland, *Letters*, 111-112. Greek: Πάλιν τε τοῦ πατρός ὄντος πηγῆς, τοῦ δὲ υἱοῦ ποταμοῦ λεγομένου, πίνειν λεγόμεθα τὸ Πνεῦμα; PG 26:573. Athanasius quotes 1 Cor 12:13: "We are all made to drink of one Spirit."

²⁶ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 113.

a work of a singular energy that brings the work of God to its completion and consummation: "As the Son is an only-begotten offspring, so also the Spirit, being given and sent from the Son, is himself one and not many . . . but only Spirit. As the Son, the living Word, is one, so must the living activity and gift whereby he sanctifies and enlightens be one perfect and complete."²⁷ There is, therefore, "one sanctification that is derived from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit."²⁸

There is, therefore, "a Triad, holy and complete," and this is none other than "the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which the Lord gave, the Apostles preached and the Fathers kept."²⁹ Upon this confession of the one, true God, manifested in Christ and given in the Holy Spirit, "the Church is founded."³⁰ Shapland makes the crucial observation that "whenever the titles and figures which express the reality and character of the divine Son are correlated with the particular *operation* of divine power which gives them . . . we find Scriptures testifying that it is the Spirit who works."³¹ We find the same manner of argumentation in the work of Athanasius.

As we have noted, true deity gives, bestows, and communicates. True deity does not itself partake in anything else, for it is itself sufficient, whole, and perfect. Athanasius makes this claim also of the Holy Spirit: "He, therefore, who is not sanctified by another, nor a partaker of sanctification, but who is himself partaken, and in whom all the creatures are sanctified, how can he be one from among all things or pertain to those who partake of him?"³² Athanasius illustrates the point through a number of claims:

²⁷ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 116-117. Greek: Καὶ γὰρ ὡςπερ μονογενὴς ὁ υἱὸς ἐστίν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα παρὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ διδόμενον καὶ πεμπόμενον, καὶ αὐτὸ ἐν ἐστὶ καὶ οὐ πολλὰ . . . ἀλλὰ μόνον αὐτὸ Πνεῦμα. Ἐνὸς γὰρ ὄντος τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος λόγου, μίαν εἶναι δεῖ τελείαν καὶ πλήρη τὴν ἁγιαστικὴν καὶ φωτιστικὴν ζῶσαν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ δωρεάν; PG 26:580. Also *Ep. Serap.* 1.30; Shapland, *Letters*, 135.

²⁸ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 116. Greek: [We are to believe that] ἐν εἶναι τὸν ἁγιασμὸν, τὸν ἐκ πατρὸς δι' υἱοῦ ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ γινόμενον; PG 26:577.

²⁹ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.28; Shapland, *Letters*, 133-134. Greek: Τριὰς τοίνυν ἁγία καὶ τελεία ἐστίν, ἐν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι θεολογουμένη; PG 26:596.

³⁰ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.28; Shapland, *Letters*, 133-134.

³¹ Shapland, *Letters*, 110 n. 11. Emphasis mine.

³² Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.223; Shapland, *Letters*, 123. Greek: Τὸ τοίνυν μὴ ἁγιαζόμενον παρ' ἑτέρου, μηδὲ μετέχον ἁγιασμοῦ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μεθεκτὸν ὄν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ

- "Through the Spirit we are all said to be partakers of God."³³
- "The Spirit is, and is called, Spirit of holiness and renewal."³⁴ In him we are sanctified and renewed.
- The Spirit is called "a life-giving Spirit."³⁵ Through him we are made alive and quickened.
- "The Spirit is called unction and seal."³⁶ Through him we are sealed in baptism and anointed.
- The Spirit is proper to the Son, and therefore the Spirit is the Spirit of sonship through whom we are made to be children of God.³⁷

This suffices to illustrate the argument of Athanasius that "whenever the titles and figures which express the reality and character of the divine Son are correlated with the particular operation of divine power which gives them," it is the Holy Spirit who is this operative power. "The Triad is [in the Holy Spirit] complete. In him the Word makes glorious the creation, and by bestowing upon it divine life and sonship, draws it to the Father. . . . The Spirit, therefore, does not belong to things originated; he pertains to the Godhead of the Father, and in him the Word makes things originated

κτίσματα πάντα ἀγιάζεται, πῶς ἂν εἴη ἐν τῶν πάντων, ἴδιον τῶν μετεχόντων αὐτοῦ; PG 26:584. Also *ad Serapionem* 1.27; Shapland, *Letters*, 132: "The Spirit is always the same; he does not belong to those who partake, but all things partake of him."

³³ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.24; Shapland, *Letters*, 125. Greek: Καὶ διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος λεγόμεθα πάντες μέτοχοι τοῦ θεοῦ; PG 26:585.

³⁴ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.22; Shapland, *Letters*, 122. Greek: Πάλιν τε Πνεῦμα ἀγισσύνης καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως ἐστὶ τε καὶ λέγεται τὸ Πνεῦμα; PG 26:581. He quotes Paul in Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 6:11; and Titus 3:4-7.

³⁵ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 123. Greek: Πνεῦμα ζωοποιὸν λέγεται; PG 26:584. He quotes Rom 8:11; Acts 3:15; John 4:14; 7:39.

³⁶ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 124-125. Greek: χρίσμα λέγεται τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ ἔστι σφραγίς; PG 26:584. He quotes 1 John 2:27; Isa 61:3; Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 2:15; Gal 4:19; 2 Pet 1:4. "Being thus sealed, we are duly made, as Peter put it, 'sharers in the divine nature'; and thus all creation partakes of the Word in the Spirit." Shapland, *Letters*, 123.

³⁷ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 128-129: "If the Son, because he is of the Father, is proper to his essence, it must be that the Spirit, who is said to be from God (ἐκ θεοῦ), is in essence proper to the Son. And so, as the Lord is Son, the Spirit is called Spirit of sonship. Again, as the Son is Wisdom and Truth, the Spirit is described as Spirit of Wisdom and Truth. Again the Son is the Power of God and Lord of Glory, and the Spirit is called Spirit of Power and of Glory." In each instance the reality of Christ is communicated to the Christian through the instrumentality of the Spirit.

divine. But he in whom creation is made divine cannot be outside the Godhead of the Father."³⁸

However, we might ask, just where is the operative power of the Holy Spirit located? In his book on *Byzantine Theology*, John Meyendorff speaks of the personal reality of the Spirit remaining hidden. The Holy Spirit possesses a certain "kenotic" existence whose fulfillment consists in revealing the Son of the Father.³⁹ This certainly corresponds to the testimony of the Gospels. Through the instrumentality of the Spirit, the Word took flesh of the Virgin Mary and was made man (Luke 1:35; John 1:14). According to the Gospel of John, when the Paraclete comes, whom Jesus will send from the Father, "he will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14-15). First of all, therefore, the kenotic character of the Holy Spirit exists in the fact that he is hidden in the person and reality of Christ himself. However, in the operation of the Son "for us and for our salvation," that is, in the communication of the reality of Christ to the Christian believer, the kenotic character of the Holy Spirit exists in the preaching and sacramental administrations of the church. The Holy Spirit wears a christological face which is to say an ecclesial/sacramental face. For Athanasius, this is perhaps especially the case concerning baptism.

On any number of occasions Athanasius speaks of the Triad being "complete" (τελεία) in the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ The unity of the divine reality is itself disposed into a Triad of communication and co-inherence that finds its perfection in the Holy Spirit: from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. A baptism that is true and efficacious must be, therefore, into the fullness of God, that is, into the three-fold name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In *Orations against the Arians* 2.41-42 Athanasius argues that

³⁸ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 129. Greek: "Σπιριτ ις της Σπιριτ οφ Τρυτη ανδ Παραχλετε εξ ου δεικνυται τελειαν ειναι εν τούτω την Τριάδα. Εν τούτω γ' ουν ο λόγος την κτίσιν δοξάζει, θεοποιών δε και υιοποιών προσάγει τῷ πατρί . . . Ουκ ἄρα τῶν γενητῶν ἐστι τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ἴδιον τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ γενητὰ οὗ λόγος θεοποιεῖ. Εν ᾧ δὲ θεοποιεῖται ἡ κτίσις, οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἐκτὸς αὐτὸ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς θεότητος; PG 26:589.

³⁹ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 168-169.

⁴⁰ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.25; Shapland, *Letters*, 129: "The Triad is in him [i.e. the Spirit] complete." *Ep. Serap.* 1.28; Shapland, *Letters*, 134: "There is, then, a Triad holy and complete, confessed to be God in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

the baptism of the Arians is other than real and true because they do not confess a "true Father, because they deny what is from him and like his essence." The baptismal consecration of the Arians is, therefore, "altogether empty and unprofitable, making a show, but in reality being no help towards religion."⁴¹ In like fashion Athanasius extends this argument to the Tropici. Thinking the Holy Spirit to be a creature, "the rite of initiation which you claim to perform is not entirely into the Godhead."⁴² Whoever is baptized in the name of the Father alone, or in the name of the Son alone, or in the Father and the Son without the Holy Spirit, "receives nothing, but remains ineffective and uninitiated . . . for the rite of initiation is in the Triad."⁴³

Since the Holy Spirit "completes" the reality of the one God, only faith in the Trinity unites and binds one to God. Repeatedly Athanasius asserts that unless the Spirit is divine, proper to the divine Son, then those who receive the Spirit are not bound to God. Commenting on 1 John 4:13, which speaks of God being in us and we in God, Athanasius argues that the Spirit does not unite the Son to the Father, for the Son is proper to the being of the Father as the Father's own Word and radiance. Rather, the Spirit receives from the Word. "But we, apart from the Spirit, are strange and distant from God, and by the participation of the Spirit we are knit into the Godhead."⁴⁴ What the Son possesses by nature, "that he wishes to be given to us through the Spirit irrevocably."⁴⁵ In and through the Spirit, who is proper to the Son, that which is true of the Son is given by grace and

⁴¹ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 2:42; *NPNF*² 4:371. Greek: πῶς οὐ παντελῶς κενὸν καὶ ἀλυσιτελὲς τὸ παρ' αὐτῶν διδόμενον ἐστὶ, προσποίησιν μὲν ἔχον, τῇ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ μηδὲν ἔχον πρὸς εὐσέβειαν βοήθημα; PG 26:236-237.

⁴² Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.29; Shapland, *Letters*, 137. Greek: καὶ ἡ τελείωσις δὲ ὑμῶν, ἣν νομίζετε ποιεῖν, οὕτω φρονούντες, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁλόκληρος εἰς θεότητα γινομένη; PG 26:596. Shapland consistently translates τελείωσις as "rite of initiation." Certainly the Greek indicates the administration of baptism, but it entails the idea that the efficacy and reality of the baptism given and received exists only if the perfection of the Triad is that reality into which one is baptized. That the Triad is "complete" (τελεία) in the Holy Spirit is not apart from the τελείωσις of baptism, that is, its proper form and the proper faith associated with it. Only in this way is the one baptized perfected by union with the one, true God.

⁴³ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.30; Shapland, *Letters*, 140.

⁴⁴ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.24; *NPNF*² 4:407. Greek: ἡμεῖς δὲ χωρὶς μὲν τοῦ Πνεύματος ξένοι καὶ μακρὰν ἔσμεν τοῦ θεοῦ. τῇ δὲ τοῦ Πνεύματος μετοχῇ συναπτόμεθα τῇ θεότητι; PG 26:373.

⁴⁵ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.25; *NPNF*² 4:407.

adoption to those who believe.⁴⁶ And in this gift of the Spirit in whom the Son is given, we become children of God and he becomes our Father.⁴⁷ Referring to baptism, Athanasius asks those who deny the deity of the Spirit, if this is your belief, "who will unite you to God?"⁴⁸

However, it is important to note that through the Holy Spirit the person of faith is not united or knit to the deity of the Son directly. Rather, faith unites with the humanity of Christ that in union with the Word has become the "flesh of the Word." When Athanasius says that the Word is "the expression of the Father's person,"⁴⁹ he is referring to Jesus Christ, not the λόγος ἄσαρκος. As we noted above, the life of Christ as narrated in the Gospels is understood to be the human form of the life of God. Born of the Spirit and flesh from the Virgin Mary, Jesus is "true man" and "true God," and this in identity of person.⁵⁰ "Whoever sees me, sees the Father" (John 14:9). As Athanasius puts it, "What things the Son does are the Father's works, for the Son is the form (τὸ εἶδος) of the Godhead of the Father who did the works."⁵¹ In this context we must note that, extending the image,

⁴⁶ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.25; *NPNF*² 4:407: "that the Spirit should be freely given (χαρίζεται) through him to those who believe, through whom we are found to be in God, and in this respect to be conjoined (συνάπτεσθαι) in him."

⁴⁷ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.25; *NPNF*² 4:407: "For since the Word is in the Father, and the Spirit is given from the Word, he wills that we should receive the Spirit, that, when we receive it, thus having the Spirit of the Word which is in the Father, we too may be found on account of the Spirit to become one in the Word, and through him in the Father."

⁴⁸ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.29; Shapland, *Letters*, 138. Also: "The faith in the Triad, which has been delivered to us, joins us to God." Shapland, *Letters*, 139. For discussion of this entire issue, see the little-known study of Karl Bornhäuser, *Die Vergottungslehre des Athanasius und Johannes Damascenus*, Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie 7 (Gütersloh: 'Der Rufer' Evangelischer Verlag, 1903), 13–48.

⁴⁹ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.9; *NPNF*² 4:311. Greek: χαρακτήρ γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς ὑποστάσεως; PG 26:29. Also, *C. Ar.* 3.6; *NPNF*² 4:396: "the fullness of the Father's Godhead is the being of the Son, and the Son is whole God." Already in Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.6.6, 4.20.7; *ANF* 1:469, 490: "the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son is the visible of the Father" and "the glory of God is a living man, and the life of man is the vision of God."

⁵⁰ Note this important claim: *Ep. Serap.* 1.31; Shapland, *Letters*, 145–146: "When the Word visited the holy Virgin Mary, the Spirit came to her with him, and the Word in the Spirit moulded (ἐπλαττε) the body and conformed (ἡρμοζεν) it to himself, desiring to join (συνάψαι) and present all creation to the Father through himself, and in it (i.e., the body) 'to reconcile all things.'" Greek: PG 26:605.

⁵¹ Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.6; *NPNF*² 4:396. Greek: PG 26:332.

Athanasius can also say that the Spirit is the perfect image of the Son. "The Son is in the Spirit as in his own image."⁵² Similarly, the Spirit is said to be the "unction" and the "seal" of Christ.⁵³ For the baptismal thinking of Athanasius these are important claims concerning the Holy Spirit and the life of the Christian. Through the instrumentality of the Spirit, who is the "image" and the "seal" of Christ, those who are baptized into the "perfection" of the Triad receive the form of Christ. "The seal has the form of Christ who seals, and those who are sealed partake of it, being conformed to it."⁵⁴ Those who partake of the Spirit receive in the Spirit the form of Christ, that is, the life he lived according to the flesh. The canonical narrative is the literary form of the life of Christ and, for that reason, also of the life of the one "in Christ."

In his treatise on the Lord's Supper against Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Luther adds his so-called "Great Confession" (1528). He orders the confession by way of a trinitarian economy in which life and righteousness is restored to the sinner. To be noted is Luther's insistence on the self-communication of the persons of the Trinity. In this Luther is at one with Athanasius and the central tradition of the early Fathers. Salvation consists in the participation of man with God and this by way of God's granting himself in the three-fold economy of the Spirit through the ministry of the church, of the Son in and through the Spirit, and of the Father in and through the Son. The "Great Confession" is as follows:

These are the three persons and one God, who has given himself to us wholly and completely, with all that he is and has. The Father gives himself to us, with heaven and earth and all the creatures, in order that they may serve us and benefit us. But this gift has become obscured and useless through Adam's fall. Therefore the Son himself subsequently gave himself and bestowed all his works, sufferings, wisdom, and righteousness, and reconciled us to the Father, in order that restored to life and righteousness, we might also know and have the Father and his gifts. But because this grace would benefit no one if it remained so

⁵² Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.20; Shapland, *Letters*, 115. Greek: "Ὡς γὰρ ἐν ἰδίᾳ εἰκὼν ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ Πνεύματι, οὕτω καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ; PG 26:577.

⁵³ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 124. Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 1.47; *NPNF* 4:334.

⁵⁴ Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1.23; Shapland, *Letters*, 124. Greek: ἡ δὲ σφραγὶς τὴν μορφὴν Χριστοῦ τοῦ σφραγίζοντος ἔχει, καὶ ταύτης οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι μετέχουσι, μορφοῦμενοι κατ' αὐτήν; PG 26:585.

profoundly hidden and could not come to us, the Holy Spirit comes and gives himself to us also, wholly and completely. He teaches us to understand this deed of Christ which has been manifested to us, helps us to receive and preserve it, use it to our advantage and impart it to others, increase and extend it. He does this both inwardly and outwardly – inwardly by means of faith and other Spiritual gifts, outwardly through the gospel [i.e. preaching], baptism and the sacrament of the altar, through which as through three means or methods he comes to us and inculcates the sufferings of Christ for the benefit of our salvation.⁵⁵

In this summary statement of the trinitarian reality of the justification of the sinner, Luther speaks in a manner not foreign to Athanasius and the Greek Fathers. Justification consists in the self-communication of the Triune God who in the ecclesial operation of the Holy Spirit makes the sufferings of Christ our own and so gives us salvation and knowledge of the Father. In the work of the Spirit who is the image of the Son we become conformed to Christ by receiving all that he is and has, and so in the Spirit we become sons of God. Δικαιοποίησις = υἱοποίησις = θεοποίησις.

⁵⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 37:366.

Iustitia Imputata Christi: Alien or Proper to Luther's Doctrine of Justification?

R. Scott Clark

When Martin Luther traveled to Schmalkald to present his articles to the princes in December of 1537, one of those with him was Andreas Osiander (1498–1552) who had been with him also at Marburg (1529) and was a trusted, even if controversial, friend.¹ At Schmalkald, Luther was confessing and preaching that “through faith we receive a different, new, clean heart and that, for the sake of Christ our mediator, God will and does regard us as completely righteous and holy. Although sin is not completely gone or dead, God will nevertheless not count it or consider it” (SA III, 13, 1).²

While Luther was saying what he had “consistently taught,” Osiander was suggesting quite another doctrine, namely justification by faith on the basis of the indwelling Christ. By 1548 Osiander became more explicit and by 1550 publicly controversial. After Luther's death and because of an academic position in Königsberg (in eastern Prussia; now Kaliningrad, Russia), he was required to articulate his views publicly. He did so in a 1550 disputation in which he rejected what he considered, in David Steinmetz's words, the “cold doctrine of forensic justification.”³ However cold it might have been, a heated conflict erupted immediately.⁴ His views

¹ P. Tschakert, “Osiander, Andreas I.,” in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson and Lefferts Augustine Loetscher (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1908–1955. Reprint, 1977), and Gottfried Seebaß, “Osiander, Andreas,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans Joachim Hillerbrand, 4 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

² Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 324.

³ David C. Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings* (Grand Rapids: Baker 1981), 94–95. Steinmetz continues by arguing that Luther's doctrine of justification included both personal union with Christ and the forensic aspect. See Andreas Osiander, *Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebaß, 10 vols. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1975–1997), 9.422–446.

⁴ See Martin Chemnitz, “Judgment on Certain Controversies Concerning Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession Which Have Recently Arisen and Caused Controversy,” in *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and James

were denounced on all sides as contrary to the Protestant understanding of Scripture.

Since that time, despite the many internal disagreements on other questions, there has been among confessional Protestants a remarkably unified doctrine of forensic justification, that is, the notion that justification is a definitive divine declaration that a person, though intrinsically sinful, is in fact legally righteous in "*in foro divino*."⁵ Nevertheless, in the modern period there has been a vigorous assertion to the effect that, despite the fact that he was rejected by Protestant confessionalists in the sixteenth century, Osiander's doctrine of justification was more faithful to the Scriptures than that of the Protestant confessional tradition, which is seen as originating from Philipp Melanchthon.

This essay is in four parts. In the first section, I survey the ways Luther has been interpreted in the modern period. In the second, Luther's doctrine of justification is set in its medieval context. The third section sketches the development of Luther's doctrine of justification. The last section offers a detailed survey of Luther's doctrine of justification as it came to expression in 1535-1536.

A. Nestingen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 208-212. See also Calvin's reaction, *Institutio* 3.11 in P. Barth and W. Niesel ed., *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1926-1954), 4.185.19-22, 4.187.9-14, 4.194.11-13, 4.192.33-193.2.

⁵ The *Confessio Augustana*, Part 1, Art. 4 says that believers are "*iustificantur propter Christum per fidem . . .*" [Phillip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 3.10.] The *Second Helvetic Confession*, Art. 15.3-4 (Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.266-67) affirms that the ground of justification is "*the iustitiam Christi*" that God imputes to us. God justifies sinners "*propter Christum*" and they receive that grace "*per fidem*" and "*sola fide in Christum . . .*" *Belgic Confession* Art. 23 says that sinners are justified "*propter Iesum Christum*" and that by faith we "*solī Iesu Christi crucifixi obedientiae innixi . . .*" [H. A. Niemeyer, *Collectio Confessionum in Ecclesiis Reformatis Publicatarum* (Leipzig: Julius Klinkhardt, 1840), 374.] *Heidelberg Catechism* question 60 says that before God we are "*iustus*" "*sola fide in Iesum Christum*" whereby "*mihi perfecta satisfactio, iustitia et sanctitas Christi, imputetur ac donetur*" so that it is as though "*eam obedientiam, quam pro me Christus praestitisset*" (Niemeyer, *Collectio*, 442). Finally, the *Epitome of the Formula of Concord* 3.2 says that God "*donat atque imputat nobis iustitiam obedientia Christi*." In 3.3 "*solam fidem esse illud medium et instrumentum*" by which the sinner lays hold of Christ and his righteousness (Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.116).

I. The Issue and Methodological Problems

Whether and to what degree Philipp Melanchthon was faithful to Luther's theology is a question beyond the scope of this study. It is necessary to note, however, that it has been a controversial question since the mid-1530s and is at the heart of Lutheran denominational disagreements. Melanchthon has long been a convenient whipping boy for those who have wished to separate Luther from Protestant orthodoxy. According to Peter C. Hodgson, the great pietist Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714)

ascribes to Melanchthon an even greater share in the deplorable turn of events that in so short a time were taken by the Reformation. He brought more darkness and error into theology than light and strength, Arnold maintains, since he prepared and opened the way for corrupted reason to suppress the simplicity of Christian doctrine and to pervert the truth by pompous, quarrelsome speculation.⁶

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, at least, it has become a *datum* for many that the confessional Protestant doctrine of justification was not only theologically misguided, but was also Melanchthon's—not Luther's—child.

Virtually any topic in Luther studies is important because Luther is massively important. To some degree, all Protestants derive their identity from Luther. This makes studying him particularly difficult. Whoever controls the "Luther story" has gained a powerful advantage in claiming to represent authentic Protestant teaching. For this reason there have been many Luthers: for pietists, Luther became the man of the *Turnerlebnis*; for modernists, the anti-authoritarian hero; and for some contemporary interpreters of Luther, he has become the theologian of theotic union with Christ.

The study of Luther's doctrine of justification also faces the challenge of the rejection of the forensic understanding of justification. Since the nineteenth century, the relational (or participationist) approach to understanding justification has quite eclipsed the forensic.⁷ Whereas in the

⁶ Peter C. Hodgson, ed., *Ferdinand Christian Baur on the Writing of Church History*, *A Library of Protestant Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 119.

⁷ E.g., Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004). Generally the turn to participationist

earlier period, the real was the rational (or empirical) and *vice versa*, in our age the real is the relational and the relational is the real. The theological influence of this hermeneutical move is evident in a number of recent works. In the present culture, to say that justification is primarily forensic is the rhetorical equivalent of saying that one teaches an implausible, cold, impersonal, and even arbitrary doctrine of justification.⁸

categories is evident in Radical Orthodoxy. For a theological response, see Michael S. Horton, "Participation and Covenant," in James K. A. Smith and James H. Olthuis, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy and the Reformed Tradition: Creation, Covenant, and Participation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), and Justin S. Holcomb, "Being Bound to God," in *Radical Orthodoxy and the Reformed Tradition*. For evidence of the influence of participationist categories in Luther studies see: Paul Louis Metzger, "Luther and the Finnish School. Mystical Union with Christ: An Alternative to Blood Transfusions and Legal Fictions," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 201-213; Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; reprint, 1991-1993): 1.2; Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteousness, Justice and Justification," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 740-745; Rowan Williams, "Justification," in *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 843-849; and Alan Torrance, "Justification," in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, ed. Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, and Hugh S. Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 362-364. The influence of the movement to redefine justification in relational and participationist categories is evident also in Richard B. Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1987), where Paul's central dogma is said to be union with Christ, and in Michael F. Bird, "Incorporated Righteousness: A Response to Recent Evangelical Discussion Concerning the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness in Justification," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (2004): 253-275.

⁸ This approach also appears in Calvin studies. Craig B. Carpenter argues that Calvin's reply to session six of Trent turned to union with Christ rather than to imputation; "A Question of Union with Christ: Calvin and Trent on Justification," *Westminster Theological Journal* 64 (2002): 363-386. Carl Mosser claims that, because of ignorance of patristic theology and the undue influence of Adolph von Harnack, scholars have overlooked Calvin's doctrine of *theosis* through union with Christ; see "The Greatest Possible Blessing: Calvin and Deification," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55 (2002): 36-57. Following on, Julie Canlis writes that Calvin's reaction to Osiander has blinded interpreters to his own interest in deification through union with Christ; see "Calvin, Osiander and Participation in God," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004): 169-184. For a response see Jonathan Slater, "Salvation as Participation in the Humanity of the Mediator in Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: A Reply to Carl Mosser," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58 (2005): 39-58. See also Thomas Wenger, "The New Perspective on Calvin: Responding to the Recent Calvin Interpretations," *Journal of*

Students of Luther's doctrine of justification also face the daunting task of attempting to account for a doctrine that was at the center of one of the most significant theological revolutions in the last two millennia and which is a moving target. Luther's doctrine of justification was one thing in 1513 and became another by 1536. This development, and the failure (or refusal) to observe it carefully, has also contributed to confusion.

In contrast to much, but not all, Luther scholarship since the nineteenth century, I contend that, read against his medieval background, the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness was essential to Luther's Protestant doctrine of justification. Put negatively, the modern attempt to revise the confessionalist account of Luther's doctrine of justification, whereby Luther is said to have taught justification on the basis of a theotic and not legal union with Christ, has the effect of making Luther repudiate his own Reformation doctrine of justification in favor of an intrinsic ground of justification before God, namely Christ's presence by virtue of union. If the revisionist account of Luther is historical, then Osiander was correct to claim that he was the true heir of Luther's doctrine of justification.⁹

II. The Quest for the Luther of History

Over the past century the confessional Protestant account of Luther's doctrine of justification has been called into question as a misrepresentation. The implication is that if we would be faithful to the Luther of history over against the Luther of faith, we should repudiate the accretions layered upon Luther's gospel by Protestant orthodoxy and return to the genuine Luther.

According to the confessional Protestant story, where the medieval theologians and the Council of Trent following them taught a realistic doctrine of progressive justification through sanctification, Luther's great theological breakthrough was a forensic, definitive, non-realistic (i.e., non-infusionist) doctrine of justification. He taught that Christ's righteousness is *extra nos*. The righteousness, on the basis of which sinners are declared righteous before God is alien to them and proper to Christ: it is nothing but

the Evangelical Theological Society 50 (2007): 311–328.

⁹ Lowell C. Green made this point in "The Question of Theosis in the Perspective of Lutheran Christology," in *All Theology Is Christology: Essays in Honor of David P. Scaer*, ed. Dean O. Wenhe, William C. Weinrich, Arthur A. Just Jr., Daniel L. Gard, and Thomas L. Olson (Ft Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000), 174.

his obedience for his people imputed to sinners and received through faith that trusts in Christ and his finished work.¹⁰

Scholars within and without Protestant confessionalism, both Reformed and Lutheran (R. Seeberg, B. B. Warfield, and the more recent scholarship of T. H. L. Parker, Berndt Hamm, François Wendel, W. Stanford Reid, David Steinmetz, and Brian Gerrish) have held that the confessional Protestant doctrine of justification had its roots in Martin Luther.¹¹ The orthodox Lutheran identification with Luther is no surprise, but some might be surprised to learn the degree to which the Reformed orthodox identified with Luther on this point. It was J. H. Alsted, a seventeenth-

¹⁰ Luther's 1536 Third Disputation *De iustificatione*, thesis 27 says, "*Iam certum est, Christum seu iustitiam Christi, cum sit extra nos et aliena nobis, non posse nostris operibus comprehendere.*" Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [Schriften], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 39.1:181–182 (hereafter, WA); Martin Luther, Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 34:153 (hereafter LW). Robert Kolb, however, has argued that the Lutheran orthodox emphasis on Christ's obedience to the law marked a subtle shift away from Luther's doctrine of the atonement. See Robert Kolb, "Not without the Satisfaction of God's Righteousness: The Atonement and the Generation Gap between Luther and His Students," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte: Sonderband: Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa, Interpretation und Debatten*, ed. Hans R. Guggisberg and Gottfried G. Krodel (Gütersloh: Verlaghaus, 1993), 136–156.

¹¹ R. Seeberg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines*, tr. Charles E. Hay, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society), 2:392–393, 402–405; B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. S. G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1956), 489–490; T. H. L. Parker, "Calvin's Doctrine of Justification," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 25 (1952): 101–107; Berndt Hamm "What Was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?" in C. Scott Dixon, ed., *The German Reformation: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 56–90; François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, tr. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), 255–263; W. Stanford Reid, "Justification by Faith According to John Calvin," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 290–307; David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 117–118; B. A. Gerrish, "John Calvin on Martin Luther," in *Interpreters of Luther: Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck*, ed. J. Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 69. See also Joseph Wawrykow "John Calvin and Condiḡn Merit," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 83 (1992): 74, 75, who argues that Calvin and Luther fundamentally agreed on forensic justification. These views are in contrast to that of Adolph von Harnack, who argued that Melancthon and other "*epigones*" of Luther "abandoned the '*sola fides*' doctrine" in favor of "synergism." See Adolph von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7 vols, tr. Neil Buchanan (New York: Dover Publications, 1961), 7:256.

century Reformed orthodox theologian, who said that the doctrine of justification is the *articulus cadentis et stantis ecclesiae*.¹²

In his early account of Luther's doctrine of justification, Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1898) described Luther's view as a personal experience of forgiveness.¹³ He read Luther as a proto-modern. According to David W. Lotz, Ritschl argued that, in response to Roman criticisms and Melancthon's influence, Luther's doctrine of justification converged with Melancthon's more forensic doctrine.¹⁴ As James Stayer has noted, Ritschl argued that after the second century, "speculative metaphysics had encroached upon Christianity. . . ." ¹⁵ According to Gerhard O. Forde, Ritschl found an ambiguity inherent in the Protestant doctrine of justification. Luther never settled the relations between justification and rebirth. The orthodox solution to the problem committed orthodoxy necessarily to abstract metaphysics.¹⁶ Ritschl attempted to solve this problem "by describing Christ's work solely in terms of its actual historical significance in the community rather than in terms of some objective past transaction; in this way the act of justification will always occur simultaneously with the subjective experience of rebirth."¹⁷ Forde contended that Ritschl conflated Luther with Kant and reversed his order of law and gospel.¹⁸

According to Ritschl, Philipp Melancthon is the true founder of the Lutheran church and a symptom of the decline of Protestant orthodoxy. In his *Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung* (1870–1874),¹⁹ Ritschl argued that with his adoption of the law-gospel distinction and in works such as *De servo arbitrio* (1525; which Luther regarded with his *Large Catechism* as

¹² McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2:193, n. 3, attributes the origin of this exact phrase to J. H. Alsted, *Theologia scholastica didactica* (Hanover, 1618), 711.

¹³ David W. Lotz, *Ritschl and Luther: A Fresh Perspective on Albrecht Ritschl's Theology in Light of His Luther Study* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1974), 32.

¹⁴ Lotz, *Ritschl*, 32–33.

¹⁵ James M. Stayer, ed., *Martin Luther, German Saviour: German Evangelical Theological Factions and the Interpretation of Luther, 1917–1933*, McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 4.

¹⁶ Gerhard O. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate: An Interpretation of Its Historical Development* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 103–105.

¹⁷ Forde, *Law-Gospel Debate*, 105.

¹⁸ Forde, *Law-Gospel Debate*, 112–114.

¹⁹ Albrecht Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, tr. John S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 167–169.

his most valuable work) kerygma became dogma: Luther fell victim to the corrupting forces of orthodoxy.²⁰

Adolph von Harnack (1851–1930) chronicled Luther's reformation as a rise and decline of charismatic religion into "doctrine, ceremony and organization."²¹ For Harnack, the German spirit and Protestantism were almost (or should be) indistinguishable.²² Using the kerygma-to-dogma analysis, he argued that Melanchthon and other *epigones* of Luther "abandoned the '*sola fides*' doctrine" in favor of synergism.²³ Harnack's Luther was the restorer of ancient, biblical, Pauline dogma *par excellence*.²⁴ Luther's simple, powerful, and existential religion was corrupted by the *epigones* into systematic theology.²⁵ Justification was not a single doctrine but rather "the fundamental form of the Christian's state."²⁶

What is new is not that in a scrupulous and scholastic way Luther separated the justificatio and sanctification, and regarded the former as a forensic act (*actus forensis*), taking place once for all; that is the wisdom of the Epigones, who were always great in distinctions . . .²⁷

Harnack granted that the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of righteousness is part of what was new about Luther's doctrine of justification, but it is much more than that. Justification is "being righteous and becoming righteous."²⁸ In this conclusion, he anticipated aspects of the so-called Luther Renaissance.²⁹

In a speech delivered in 1906, Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) argued, quite rightly in my opinion, that there was a clear distinction between, as Brian Gerrish summarizes it, *Alt* and *Neuprotestantismus*.³⁰ The pre-modern

²⁰ Stayer, *Luther*, 5–6.

²¹ Stayer, *Luther*, 8.

²² Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:171.

²³ Harnack, *History*, 7:256. Lowell C. Green has challenged the notion that Melanchthon was a synergist. See Lowell C. Green, "The Three Causes of Conversion in Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and the 'Formula of Concord,'" *Lutherjahrbuch* 47 (1980): 89–114.

²⁴ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:175–179.

²⁵ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:195–196.

²⁶ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:207.

²⁷ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:207.

²⁸ Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:208.

²⁹ Stayer, *Luther*, 11.

³⁰ S. A. Riddoch, "The Ernst Troeltsch-Karl Holl Controversy and the Writing of

world was a church civilization, determined by objective, divinely revealed norms. In the modern world, by contrast, authority is determined by the inherent power of an idea to produce conviction through demonstrating its rationality.³¹ Luther, he argued in contrast to Ritschl, belonged to the old, pre-modern, pre-critical world.³² He was asking essentially pre-modern questions, about heaven, hell, and salvation.³³ "Atonement, therefore, becomes the central doctrine of Protestantism. . . ." ³⁴ What Troeltsch recognized, in effect, was that Protestantism was premised on a kind of Creator-creature distinction not shared by most medieval theologians, in that it rejected the notion of an ontological *reditus ad Deum*, but that, in many ways, the Reformation was a re-shaping of medieval ideas.³⁵

Karl Holl (1886–1926), one of the principal sources of the so-called Luther Renaissance, was present for, and horrified by, Troeltsch's argument. He reacted to what he perceived to be Troeltsch's marginalization of Luther.³⁶ He criticized Troeltsch's Luther scholarship as too reliant on secondary material, biased, unhistorical, and colored by his political commitments.³⁷ The so-called Luther Renaissance was marked by

Reformation History" (Ph.D. dissertation, Queens University, 1996), 2. *Altprotestantismus* refers to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century orthodoxy.

³¹ Troeltsch, *Protestantism*, 23–24. Stayer has argued quite persuasively that, in fact, there was no Luther Renaissance. He argues that Holl's supposed re-discovery of the "Luther History" by finding in Luther what was neither familiar to confessionalism or *Kulturprotestantismus* is really more German cultural mythology than history.

³² See his introduction to Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 9.

³³ Riddoch, "Troeltsch-Holl," 2–3.

³⁴ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, tr. Olive Wyon, 2 vols. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931), 2:476.

³⁵ Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, 2:477–484. It might be argued that the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) not only denounced Joachim of Fiore (cap. 2) but asserted a doctrine of analogy. Joachim was condemned, however, for his errors on the Trinity not for teaching an ontic continuum between God and humans. The Council held: ". . . quia inter creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notanda." See H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*. 30th ed. (Friburgi: Herder, 1955), 202. It is not clear that this affirmation of analogy is materially identical to the Reformation distinction between the Creator and the creature.

³⁶ Stayer, *Luther*, xii–xiv, 3–4. Stayer argues provocatively that Holl and the Barthians who succeeded him were actually, like Nietzsche, anti-modern modernists.

³⁷ Carolyn Donine Ocheltree, "The Medieval and Renaissance Luther: A Study of Ernst Troeltsch's and Karl Holl's Interpretation of Luther" (M.A. thesis, University of

a new sophistication in Luther study, the recovery of source materials such as Luther's lectures on Romans, the use of the relatively new Weimar edition of *Luther's Works*, the interpretation of Luther against the broader backdrop of the history of Western theology, and a careful reading of Luther in his original context.

These methods were not in themselves objectionable. As Thomas Brady, James Stayer, and others have noted, however, Holl's study of Luther, was not naïve. It occurred in multiple contexts. First, he had a polemical interest in Luther. He had a passionate hatred for Roman Catholicism and was responding to virulently provocative criticism of Luther by Roman scholars such as Heinrich Denifle (1844–1905), who argued that Luther's doctrine of justification necessarily produced immorality.³⁸ These criticisms were not new but they had a new plausibility and posed a greater threat because Denifle had trumped Lutheran scholars by re-discovering Luther's lectures on Romans. These criticisms may have spurred Holl toward distancing Luther from Lutheran orthodoxy.

In response, Holl engaged in a sort of quest for the historical Luther, parallel to the quest for the historical Jesus.³⁹ He rejected Luther's own recollection about his breakthrough as the confused or self-interested recollection of an old man.⁴⁰ This move allowed Holl to blur the distinction between Luther's earlier sub-Protestant views from his later more developed views.⁴¹ Thus, according to Holl, as with Ritschl and von Harnack, Luther made no sharp distinction between being made righteous and being declared righteous.⁴² That distinction belonged to orthodoxy. He identified Luther's Augustinian turn, in the course of the *Dictata super psalterium* (1513–1514), with Protestantism. The wedge driven between

California Los Angeles, 1982), 41.

³⁸ Heinrich Denifle, *Luther and Lutherdom*, tr. Raymond Volz (Somerset, OH: Torch Press, 1917), 384–389.

³⁹ T. A. Brady, s.v., "Luther Renaissance," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*.

⁴⁰ Stayer, *Luther*, 33. Holl's interpretation of the preface has been under challenge for several decades. See Otto W. Heick, "Just Shall Live by Faith," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 43 (1972): 579–590.

⁴¹ This approach has been influential not only among Ritschlians, but also among modern Evangelicals. G. W. Bromiley, "The Doctrine of Justification in Luther," *Evangelical Quarterly* 24 (1952): 91–100.

⁴² Stayer, *Luther*, 33–38.

Luther and Melanchthon by Ritschl, Harnack, and Holl has become a *datum*.⁴³

Second, Holl had a powerful cultural interest in Luther. For Holl, as for Ritschl and Harnack, German culture was closely identified with Luther. Troeltsch had argued that Calvinism was better suited to the modern world than Lutheranism. In turn, Holl saw the First World War as a conflict between Lutheranism and Calvinism.⁴⁴ In his 1917 address, *What did Luther Understand by Religion?*, he waxed eloquent on Lutheran Christianity and German identity. Brady argues that, having rejected German liberalism and the identity of Luther with Wilhelmine culture after the war, Holl found in Luther the basis for post-liberal theology, a way to marginalize both pietism and orthodoxy and a reason to continue to identify Luther with German Christianity.⁴⁵ To suggest that Luther was no longer relevant was, in effect, to suggest that Germany was no longer relevant. Indeed, according to Brady, the chief aim of the so-called Luther Renaissance was to "demonstrate the relevance of Martin Luther's theology to the Modern world."⁴⁶

Alister McGrath has added his voice to those who see forensic justification as foreign to Luther. "Luther himself did not teach a doctrine of forensic justification in the strict sense. The concept of a forensic justification necessitates a deliberate and systematic distinction between justification and regeneration, a distinction which is not found in Luther's earlier works."⁴⁷ He argues that it was Melanchthon who turned to the forensic doctrine, inspired in part by Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* (1516), in which Erasmus had replaced the Vulgate's *reputatam* with *imputatam*.⁴⁸

⁴³ So fixed has the Luther v. Melanchthon interpretation become that Carl Braaten (following a 1947 essay by Richard Caemmerer) has even written of a "Melanchthonian Blight" (i.e., synergism) on the Lutheran Church. See Carl E. Braaten, "The Melanchthonian Blight," *Dialog* 25 (1986): 82-83. See also the response by Mark Ellingsen, "Ecumenical Implications of the 'Melanchthonian Blight,'" *Dialog* 25 (1986): 299-301.

⁴⁴ Stayer, *Luther*, 25-27.

⁴⁵ Brady, "Luther Renaissance."

⁴⁶ Brady, "Luther Renaissance."

⁴⁷ Alister E. McGrath, "Forerunners of the Reformation? A Critical Examination of the Evidence for Precursors of the Reformation Doctrines of Justification," *Harvard Theological Review* 75 (1982): 225.

⁴⁸ See Alister E. McGrath, "Justification—'Making Just' or 'Declaring Just'? A Neglected Aspect of the Ecumenical Discussion on Justification," *The Churchman* 96

In a 1994 essay, Stephen Strehle argued that the concept of forensic justification came not from Luther but from Melanchthon's adaptation of Nominalism, beginning in his 1532 commentary on Romans. He turned to the Franciscan-Nominalist and voluntarist understanding of acceptance as an expression of the divine will.⁴⁹ According to Strehle, Melanchthon was caught between Anselm and Ockham.⁵⁰ As a result, Melanchthon reduced Luther's (and Calvin's) doctrine of justification by union with Christ to a one-dimensional, forensic system.⁵¹

The so-called New Finnish School says that Luther did not teach a forensic doctrine of justification, but rather justification by *theosis*, participation in the divine being.⁵² Tuomo Mannermaa argues that, for Luther, there was no real distinction between justification and

(1982): 44–52. In response, it seems that the semantic range of *imputare* is difficult to distinguish from that of *reputare* in Luther's 1525 *De servo*, e.g., WA 18:771, 36 or 18:772, 14. Compare these with the 1536 *Disputatio de iustificatione*, theses 18, 24, 33 (WA 39.I). Lowell Green, however, has argued since 1955 for a distinct difference of meaning in the terms in Luther's usage. See Lowell C. Green, "The Influence of Erasmus Upon Melanchthon, Luther and the Formula of Concord in the Doctrine of Justification," *Church History* 43 (1974): 185–187, 195–197.

⁴⁹ Stephen Strehle, "Imputatio iustitiae: Its Origin in Melanchthon, Its Opposition in Osiander," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 50 (1994): 203–205. This essay was republished in Stephen Strehle, *The Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel: Encounter between the Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Heiko Oberman, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 60 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 66–79.

⁵⁰ Strehle, *Imputatio*, 207.

⁵¹ Strehle, *Imputatio*, 218.

⁵² See Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, ed. Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress Publishers, repr. 2005); Tuomo Mannermaa, "Why is Luther So Fascinating? Modern Finnish Luther Research," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 1–20; Tuomo Mannermaa, "The Doctrine of Justification and Christology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 64 (2000): 206–239; Sammel Juntenen, "Luther and Metaphysics," in *Union with Christ*, 152–153. For a response to the Finnish School see Green, "The Question of Theosis," 163–180; Helmar Junghans, "Luther und die Welt der Reformation," *Luther-Jahrbuch* 58 (1991): 125–129; Carl R. Trueman, "Is the Finnish Line a New Beginning? A Critical Assessment of the Reading of Luther Offered by the Helsinki Circle," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 231–244; R. Scott Clark, "The Benefits of Christ: Double Justification in Protestant Theology before the Westminster Assembly," in *The Faith Once Delivered: Celebrating the Legacy of Reformed Systematic Theology and the Westminster Assembly (Essays in Honor of Dr. Wayne Spear)*, ed. Anthony T. Selvaggio (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2006), 107–134.

sanctification.⁵³ He contends that the “idea of participation and/or *theosis* is fundamental for one’s understanding of various *loci* in Luther’s theology.”⁵⁴ In *Christ Present By Faith*, he sets Luther against Lutheran confessionalism, arguing that, for Luther, “justifying faith does not merely signify a reception of the forgiveness imputed to a human being for the sake of the merit of Christ, which is the aspect emphasized by the *Formula of Concord*.”⁵⁵ Justification means “participation in God’s essence in Christ.”⁵⁶ The happy exchange is not forensic, but personal and even ontic. Christ takes upon himself “the sinful person of a human being and bestows his own righteous person upon him or her.”⁵⁷ Justification is a kind of communication of attributes between the sinner and Christ.⁵⁸ He argues that Luther did not reject the medieval doctrine of justification by *fides formata caritate* because it was realistic, but because the medievals replaced Christ with love.⁵⁹ Further, Luther did not oppose *theosis per se*; he opposed any view of *theosis* that has us moving “toward transcendence” rather than receiving the fullness of Christ’s deity in faith.⁶⁰

Though critical of Mannermaa and affirming the Lutheran confessions, Kurt Marquart (1934–2006) notes Luther’s 1526 comment: “God pours out his dear Son over us and pours Himself into us and draws us into Himself, so that He becomes completely humanified (*vermenschet*) and we become completely deified (*gantz und gar vergottet*, ‘Godded-through’) and everything is altogether one thing, God, Christ, and you.”⁶¹ He appeals to a 1525 sermon in which Luther said that, by union with Christ, we have

. . . everything that He is and can do, be fully in us and mightily work, that we be completely deified [*vergottet*], not that we have a particle or only some pieces of God, but all fullness. Much has been written about

⁵³ Mannermaa, “Justification and Theosis,” in *Union With Christ*, 38.

⁵⁴ Mannermaa, “Why Is Luther So Fascinating?,” 13.

⁵⁵ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 16–17.

⁵⁶ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 17.

⁵⁷ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 17.

⁵⁸ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 17. He says that Luther thinks of the presence of Christ through faith “realistically” (21).

⁵⁹ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 24–28.

⁶⁰ Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*, 29.

⁶¹ Kurt E. Marquart, “Luther and Theosis,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 64 (2000): 182–205. See WA 20:229–230.

how man should be deified; there they made ladders, on which one should climb into heaven, and much of that sort of thing.⁶²

He concludes by lamenting that Lutheranism has lost this aspect of Luther's theology under the influence of alien philosophical influences.⁶³

Most recently, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen has taken the New Finnish school as his starting point for unapologetically reinterpreting Luther's doctrine of justification along theotic lines.⁶⁴ Mark Seifrid has followed this approach arguing that the doctrine of justification on the basis of Christ's righteousness imputed is Melancthon's and not Luther's.⁶⁵

Not everyone, however, adopted the various revisionist analyses.⁶⁶ Paul Althaus (1888–1966), who succeeded Holl as president of the *Luther Gesellschaft*, continued to represent a more or less confessionalist reading of Luther, arguing that for Luther justification (considered narrowly) is the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness to the sinner.⁶⁷ He recognized that Luther was willing to speak of justification

⁶² WA 17.I:438 See Marquart, "Luther and Theosis," 197. The older English translation had, "much has been written about the way we are to become godlike." See Martin Luther, *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, tr. and ed. J. N. Lenker. 7 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 4:2, 280.

⁶³ Marquart, "Luther and Theosis," 197. "When one ponders the lively, full-blooded realism of Luther's theology, one can only wonder how such a legacy could have been so tragically squandered in world 'Lutheranism' over the centuries."

⁶⁴ Kärkkäinen, *One with God*, 37–66. Given the very strong criticisms (see below) of the New Finnish School by historians, it is surprising to see the author simply assuming the correctness of their thesis.

⁶⁵ Mark Seifrid, "Paul, Luther, and Justification in Galatians 2:15–21," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 215–230; idem, *Christ Our Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Justification* (Leicester and Downers Grove: Apollos and Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 175; idem, "Luther, Melancthon and Paul on the Question of Imputation: Recommendations on a Current Debate," *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates*, eds. Mark A. Husbans and Daniel J. Trier (Downers Grove and Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 137–176.

⁶⁶ Contra Seifrid's claim that "[v]irtually everything I have to say here will be regarded as commonplace not only by reformation scholars, but by European theologians in general"; see "Luther, Melancthon and Paul," 138.

⁶⁷ Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, tr. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 227. See also Mickey Mattox, "Althaus, Paul (1888–1966)," in *The Dictionary of Historical Theology*, ed. Trevor A. Hart (Grand Rapids and Carlisle, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. and Paternoster, 2000). See Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel/Paul Althaus/Emmanuel Hirsch* (New Haven and

more broadly, in a way that included moral renewal, but that justification is not proper or before God. He criticized Holl for allowing the latter aspect to overshadow the former so that Holl abandoned Luther's "on account of Christ" in the sense of the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness.⁶⁸

Robert D. Preus (1924–1995) argued that far from corrupting Luther's doctrine of justification, among the much maligned spokesman of seventeenth century Lutheran Orthodoxy no "other article of faith is developed by Lutheran theology with such conscious dependence upon Luther as the article of justification."⁶⁹ Whereas one can read Chemnitz, Gerhard, and Quenstedt for pages on the sacraments with no reference to Luther, when they come to justification they often simply paraphrased Luther.⁷⁰ Gerhard Forde (1927–2005) criticized Holl's account of Luther as still trapped within the Ritschlian paradigm (gospel before law).⁷¹ He argued that Holl made Luther's a "religion of conscience," thus confusing Luther for Kant.⁷² For Bengt Hägglund, the differences between Melancthon and Luther have been over-estimated and overplayed.⁷³ Recognizing divergence over free-will, the Lord's Supper, and church politics,⁷⁴ he nevertheless calls attention to Melancthon's unwavering commitment to *sola gratia* and to Luther's own high estimate of Melancthon. Helmer Junghans has criticized the attempt to find a doctrine of *theosis* in Luther on the grounds that it ignores the fundamental and determinative nature and function of Luther's distinction between the *theologia crucis* and the *theologia gloriae*.⁷⁵

Lowell C. Green has also criticized Mannermaa's construal of Luther for failing to observe the distinction between the earlier and later Luther, and for quoting Luther selectively. From an historian's point of view, Green criticizes Mannermaa's heavy-handed and systematic-theological

London: Yale University Press, 1985), 79–119.

⁶⁸ Althaus, *Theology of Martin Luther*, 241.

⁶⁹ Robert D. Preus, "The Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Classical Lutheran Orthodoxy," *The Springfielder* 29 (1965): 24.

⁷⁰ Preus, "Classical Lutheran Orthodoxy," 24–25.

⁷¹ Forde, *Law-Gospel Debate*, 129.

⁷² Forde, *Law-Gospel Debate*, 130.

⁷³ Bengt Hägglund, "Melancthon Versus Luther: The Contemporary Struggle," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 44 (1980): 123.

⁷⁴ Hägglund, "Melancthon Versus Luther," 124–132.

⁷⁵ Helmar Junghans, "Luther und die Welt der Reformation," 125–129.

appropriation of Luther regardless of the Reformer's context and historical development.⁷⁶ Green notes that in Schmalkald Article I, on justification, Luther spoke not a word about *theosis* or theotic union and much about Christ's substitutionary atonement.⁷⁷ When Luther wrote of the "Joyful Exchange" (*der fröhliche Wechsel*), he never implied an ontological but only a legal transaction.⁷⁸ According to Green, relations between Melancthon and Luther were "much more complex than is commonly recognized . . .".⁷⁹ Melancthon was not "willing to sacrifice evangelical truth upon the altar of metaphysical philosophy."⁸⁰ He rejects completely the notion that Melancthon "merely took Luther's teachings and pressed them into scholastic formulations."⁸¹

Bernd Moeller and others have criticized Holl for failing to locate Luther in his social context. Further, too many modern appropriations of both Troeltsch and Holl have failed to understand them against their own background of the World War I Germany.⁸² Carl Trueman has made some of the most pointed and useful criticisms of the Finnish school. He accuses them of disregarding the methods of modern-Luther historiography and of being inattentive to the hermeneutics and development in Luther's writings. According to Trueman, if the question is whether "in fact" the Finnish School "represents a fair and proper interpretation of what Luther himself actually believed" the answer must be no.⁸³

Heiko Oberman put the question of the relation of justification to union in Luther as clearly as anyone. In 1966 he wrote of an argument between those who interpret Luther to teach "imputatio-justification over against" those who interpret Luther to teach "unio-justification."⁸⁴ This is exactly the question.

⁷⁶ Green, "The Question of Theosis," 168–175.

⁷⁷ Green, "The Question of Theosis," 169.

⁷⁸ WA, 7:25, 34; LW 31:352.

⁷⁹ Lowell C. Green, "Melancthon's Relation to Scholasticism," in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, ed. Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999), 285.

⁸⁰ Green, "Melancthon's Relations to Scholasticism," 285.

⁸¹ Green, "Melancthon's Relations to Scholasticism" 285.

⁸² Riddoch, "The Ernst Troeltsch-Karl Holl Controversy and the Writing of Reformation History," 13–15.

⁸³ Trueman, "Finnish Line," 233, 242–243.

⁸⁴ Heiko A. Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei': Luther and the Scholastic

III. The Medieval Background

It is impossible to understand the development of Luther's Protestant doctrine of justification without some grasp of the views he came to reject. For our purposes, it is essential that one understand that there was a broad consensus in medieval theology that one is ordinarily justified because and to the degree that one is intrinsically sanctified, whether as a necessity because of the divine nature (as in realism) or as a consequence of an apparently arbitrary divine will (as in voluntarism), whether from a strongly predestinarian standpoint (e.g., Bradwardine) or a Pelagianizing approach (e.g., Ockham). Justification was a process begun at baptism and ordinarily concluded only at the judgment. This process was described in different ways with differing degrees of emphasis on the nature and role of human cooperation, but, in virtually every pre-Reformation scheme, God is said to have taken the initiative (*gratia praeveniens*) to infuse within the sinner divine grace. By all accounts, the sinner was obligated to cooperate with that grace toward final justification. In the medieval schemes, grace begins as alien to the sinner but, for righteousness to result, it cannot remain alien but it must become proper. Peter Lombard (c. 1100–1160) represents the consensus through the twelfth century: the ground of justification was proper, intrinsic righteousness, which is the product of created grace and cooperation with that grace.⁸⁵

In his analysis of Osiander's theology, Robert Kolb has noted the influence of neo-Platonism as an underlying ontological assumption in his doctrine of justification.⁸⁶ This dependence, however, did not begin with Osiander. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224–1274) was also deeply influenced by neo-Platonism, which is evident in his doctrine of participation in the divine essence. Grace, he taught, is "God's action in us leading us to union with him."⁸⁷

Doctrines of Justification," *Harvard Theological Review* 59 (1966): 19.

⁸⁵ Peter Lombard, *Magistri Petri Lombardi Parisiensis Episcopi Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, Editio tertia. ed. 2 vols, *Spicilegium Bonaventurianum*, 4–5 (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971–1981), 2.d. 27 cs. 7–10 and 4 d. 47 c. 3, d. 49. c. 1.

⁸⁶ Robert Kolb, "Confessional Lutheran Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 73. See also Green, "The Question of Theosis," 174.

⁸⁷ Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 262.

... Nothing can act beyond its species, since the cause must always be more powerful than its effect. Now the gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the Divine Nature, which exceeds every other nature. And thus it is impossible that any creature should cause grace. For it is as necessary that God alone should deify (*deificet*), bestowing a partaking (*participatio*) of the Divine Nature by a participated likeness, as it is impossible that anything save fire should enkindle.⁸⁸

For Thomas, justification is sanctification and that is participation in the divine nature.⁸⁹ Though the evidence that Luther was directly aware of Thomas's theology is disputed, those who attribute to Luther a doctrine of justification by theotic union are guilty of Thomafying or more accurately, Platonizing him.⁹⁰

Gabriel Biel (c. 1420–1495) upheld the doctrine of justification by proper righteousness. We are justified by grace and free will. With virtually the entire pre-Reformation Western church, merit was said to presuppose the free cooperation with grace. Grace is nothing other than infused charity.⁹¹ Though the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent (1547) met after Luther's death and formulated their language in reaction to Luther, it is nevertheless a pointedly accurate summary of the prevailing medieval doctrine of justification.⁹² Those who argue that Luther taught justification

⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Thomas Gilby, 61 vols. (London and New York: Blackfriars and McGraw-Hill, 1964–1980), 1a2ae 112.1 (resp to obj).

⁸⁹ Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 262.

⁹⁰ On what Luther might have learned about Thomas from Biel, see John L. Farthing, *Thomas Aquinas and Gabriel Biel: Interpretations of St. Thomas Aquinas in German Nominalism on the Eve of the Reformation* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998).

⁹¹ Gabriel Biel, *Sermones de festivitibus Christi* (Hagenau, 1510), Sermo II, in ordine 14, tr. and published in Heiko A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation. The Shape of Late Medieval Thought Illustrated by Key Documents* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), 170. See also Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei*, 52–55.

⁹² According to chapter three, it is only those to whom "the merit of His passion is communicated." In chapter four, justification is "translation" to a "state of grace" effected through the "laver of regeneration." In chapter five, the "beginning of justification" is said "to be derived from the prevenient grace of God." Sinners are "disposed through His quickening and assisting grace." They must cooperate with existing, assisting grace. Justification follows preparation. It is "not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace, and of the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just . .

by theotic union with Christ must show that Luther turned away from one intrinsic ground of justification (prevenient grace and cooperation with grace) to another intrinsic ground, namely Christ inherent in the believer. I do not think that the revisionists have made that case.

IV. Luther's Gradual Development

One is sometimes left with the impression that Luther only mentioned his turn to his Reformation view of justification in the 1545 preface to his Latin writings, but such is not the case. The same basic account occurred more than once in Luther's writings. For example, in his 1541 lecture on Genesis 27, he described his frustration with the Roman system of progressive justification.⁹³ He recounted his struggle over and discovery of the true meaning of Romans 1:17. The key to his new understanding was his use of forensic categories. The righteousness by which we are justified is extrinsic and received through faith.⁹⁴

Scholars have too often focused on what Heiko Oberman called the "romantic and unrealistic" notion of a "one-time breakthrough."⁹⁵ For example, Holl failed to recognize the development in Luther's theology in the period 1513–1521. As a consequence, he used as a baseline to determine Luther's doctrine of justification things Luther said in that period but that he later rejected. It is more historical to say that gradually, from 1513 to

. . . We are "not only reputed, but are truly called, and are, just, receiving justice within us . . . according to each one's proper disposition and co-operation." In justification, the "charity of God is poured forth, by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those that are justified, and is inherent therein: whence, man, through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives, in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, all these (gifts) infused at once, faith, hope, and charity." What is significant about this passage is the clarity with which it expressed the medieval conviction that justification is the product of union with Christ, which, in turn, produces inherent, intrinsic righteousness, with which the sinner must cooperate in order to be finally justified. Faith is assent to the dogma of the church, and also a trust in Christ and his merits, but it exists only to the degree it is "formed by love." Since justification is a process, "no one can know with a certainty of faith . . . that he has obtained the grace of God." See Trent, Session 6, chapters 4–7, 9.

⁹³ LW 5:157–158; WA 43:537.

⁹⁴ Scholars have cast doubt of Luther's later recollection of this same episode, but it is completely credible to say that at age 58 Luther could still remember clearly the nature and period of his new understanding of justification.

⁹⁵ Heiko A. Oberman, *The Two Reformations: The Journey from the Last Days to the New World*, ed. Donald Weinstein (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 47–48.

1521, Luther came to reject the doctrine of progressive justification in favor of the forensic doctrine of definitive justification. Denifle, Stayer, and Green are correct in saying that there was an early and later Luther.⁹⁶ Holl's approach to Luther's 1545 preface to his Latin works was clumsy. There is no good reason to doubt the reformer's own account: "I did not learn my theology all at once, but had to search deeper for it, where my temptations took me."⁹⁷

In 1966, Heiko Oberman offered what he justly described as a sober interpretation of the so-called *Turmerlebnis*.⁹⁸ Oberman argued that Luther was not describing a sudden, unprepared vision.⁹⁹ What Luther discovered, in medieval terms, is that "*the heart of the gospel is that the iustitia Christi and the iustitia Dei coincide and are granted simultaneously.*"¹⁰⁰

Green has noted that "scholars have not been careful enough in the past in using the terms *faith* and *grace* in the early Luther."¹⁰¹ As we observed in Holl, as a consequence of this blurry reading of Luther, scholars have overlooked "the process by which he . . . gradually came to" his "mature convictions."¹⁰² Graham Tomlin has also criticized Holl's approach in favor of a progressive understanding of Luther's theological development to his Reformation views.¹⁰³ Recently, Timothy George has suggested quite

⁹⁶ Stayer, *Luther*, 122.

⁹⁷ WATR 1:146, 12–14 as translated in Gordon Rupp, *Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms 1521* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1951), 38.

⁹⁸ Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei,'" 1–26.

⁹⁹ Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei,'" 7–8.

¹⁰⁰ Oberman, "'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei,'" 19. Oberman's point is well taken, that Luther's language "*extra nos esse est ex nostris viribus non esse. Est quidem iustitia possessio nostra, quia nobis donata est ex misericordia, tamen est aliena a nobis, quia non meruimus eam*" (WA, 39.I:109) is directed against the "*fides formata caritate*" (22). It is more difficult, however, to see how "the central concept '*extra nos*' does not stand on the side of an imputatio-justification over against a unio-justification" (21). Oberman concluded that this expression was meant to "show that justification is not based on a claim of man, on a *debitum iustitiae*" (21). As Oberman has shown, Luther understood the implications of the medieval scheme of progressive justification whether construed in Pelagianizing or predestinarian ways. The intent of Luther's language was manifestly to reject justification on the basis of any intrinsic ground, whether by infusion or union, in favor of an extrinsic ground. *Extra nos* means *extra nos*.

¹⁰¹ Green, "The Influence of Erasmus," 187.

¹⁰² Green, "The Influence of Erasmus," 187.

¹⁰³ Graham Tomlin, *The Power of the Cross: Theology and the Death of Christ in Paul, Luther, and Pascal* (Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs. Carlisle, UK:

helpfully that Luther moved toward his mature Protestant views in two stages, first toward Augustinianism ca. 1513–1514 and in 1518–1519 to “a clear and different understanding of justification.”¹⁰⁴ It seems clear now that an appeal to a *Turmerlebnis* cannot determine how Luther’s writing from 1513 to 1521 should be interpreted.¹⁰⁵

In the academic year 1513–1514, his first series of lectures took him through the Psalms. Under the influence of Augustine’s lectures on the Psalms and perhaps through Staupitz’s influence, Luther moved away from Biel’s semi-Pelagianism toward a more thoroughly Augustinian position on original sin and predestination.¹⁰⁶ This was perhaps Luther’s first move toward what became his later mature soteriology. Some have pointed to his exposition of Psalm 71 and his “*mira et nova diffinitio*” (or redefinition) of justice as another crucial step away from the realistic doctrine of justification.¹⁰⁷ Though he was moving in an Augustinian direction, he was still a Nominalist *pactum* theologian.¹⁰⁸ For the early Luther, unless one meets the condition of the *pactum*, “God cannot do it,” that is, justify. In this context, grace still meant a medicinal substance dispensed for sinners by the church and faith was shorthand for the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love.

In the winter of 1515–1516, he began lecturing on Romans, interpreting *fides* in Romans 1:17 as a synecdoche for the theological virtues.¹⁰⁹ Green concludes that before “1518, Luther’s doctrine of faith was definitely pre-Reformational. It was still dominated by the medieval construction of the

Paternoster, 1999), 154–165. His conclusion (p. 155), however, that Luther’s “new theology” was in place by 1515 is only marginally better than Holl’s.

¹⁰⁴ Timothy George, “Martin Luther,” in *Reading Romans through the Centuries*, ed. Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larsen (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 113.

¹⁰⁵ Green, “The Influence of Erasmus,” 193. See also Rupp, *Luther’s Progress to the Diet of Worms*, 38.

¹⁰⁶ See David C. Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei: The Theology of Johannes von Staupitz in Its Late Medieval Setting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 10, 20–21. Idem, *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1980).

¹⁰⁷ Alister E. McGrath, “‘*Mira Et Nova Diffinitio Iustitiae*’: Luther and Scholastic Doctrines of Justification,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 74 (1983): 43.

¹⁰⁸ LW 10:236–237.

¹⁰⁹ Lowell C. Green, “Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development under Luther and Melancthon,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 4 (1973): 70–71.

three theological virtues of *fides, caritas et spes*.”¹¹⁰ At the same time, it seems clear that even in the first course of lectures through Romans, he had abandoned an intrinsic ground of justification. The emphasis in his comments on the first nine verses of Romans 4 was clearly on the extrinsic ground of justification. Justice is reputed to the believer, not because of intrinsic, Spirit-wrought sanctity, but because of faith.¹¹¹ Abraham’s circumcision signified the righteousness of faith.¹¹² This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the *scholia* on Romans 4:7, where he distinguished explicitly between self-justification, which is always intrinsic and justification before God, which is always extrinsic.

The saints are always sinners intrinsically [*inrinsece*], and therefore always justified extrinsically [*extrinsece*]. But the hypocrites are always righteous intrinsically, and thus always sinners extrinsically. I say “intrinsically” to show how in ourselves, in our own eyes, in our own estimation; and the term “extrinsically” to show how we are before God and in his reckoning [*reputatione*]. Therefore we are righteous extrinsically when we are righteous solely by the reckoning [*reputatione*] of God and not of ourselves or of our own works. For his reckoning [*reputatio*] is not ours by reason of anything that is in us or in our own power. Therefore our righteousness is neither in us or in our power.¹¹³

It would be a mistake to read into these comments Luther’s entire mature view, but they do set a trajectory toward what became his mature turn to a strictly forensic doctrine of justification. In the first Romans lectures (especially in the *scholia* in Romans 1:17), faith was a synonym for sanctity, and justification was said to be pronounced in view of intrinsic righteousness setting up a strong tension with his later lectures and *scholia* on chapter 4. That tension, however, was moving toward resolution by 1518.

¹¹⁰ Green, “Faith, Righteousness, and Justification,” 67.

¹¹¹ LW 25:36.

¹¹² LW 25:37.

¹¹³ Revised from LW 25:257. “*Sancti Inrinsece sunt peccatores semper, ideo extrinsece Iustificantur semper. Hipocritae autem intrinsece sunt Iusti semper, ideo extrinsece sunt peccatores semper. Inrinsece dico, i.e., quomodo in nobis, in nostris oculis, in nostra estimatione sumus, Extrinsece autem, quomodo apud Deum et in reputatione eius sumus. Igitur extrinsece sumus Iusti, quando non ex nobis nec ex operibus, Sed ex sola Dei reputatione Iusti sumus. Reputatio enim eius non in nobis nec in potestate nostra est. Ergo nec Iustitia nostra in nobis est nec in potestate nostra*” (WA 56:268–269).

In his *Sermo de triplici iustitia* (1518), Luther described actual sin as the fruit of original sin and as *propria peccata*.¹¹⁴ In this transitional sermon, both sin and righteousness were said to be “natal, essential, original, alien.”¹¹⁵ However much this language might have verged into some idea of proper righteousness, Luther certainly was not teaching justification by theotic union. He quoted Romans 5 to show that the ground of justification is Christ’s *obedientia* by which we are constituted righteous.¹¹⁶

The conceptual fuzziness of that sermon was clarified in his *Sermo de duplici iustitia* (1518–1519), where he distinguished clearly between a first, extrinsic, justice and a second, consequent, intrinsic justice.¹¹⁷ The first justice comes “without our works through grace alone.”¹¹⁸ It is received *per fidem*.¹¹⁹ “This primary justice is the ground, the cause, and the origin of all our proper or actual justice.”¹²⁰

In contrast to the lectures on Romans only a few years earlier, now Luther’s definition of faith was substantially revised. After the *Leipzig Disputation* (27 June–16 July 1519) and by the time he published his second course of lectures on Galatians (1519), he was working with a different notion of faith.¹²¹ In his lecture on Galatians 2:15, 16 he distinguished between his definition of faith and the medieval definition of faith as *habitus*.¹²² Where faith was fundamentally an infused virtue, now it is that thing through which “the heart and the name of the Lord cling together.”¹²³ It is those who “trust in the name of the Lord” whose “sins

¹¹⁴ WA 2:45.

¹¹⁵ WA 2:45. “. . . natalis, essentialis, originalis, aliena . . .”

¹¹⁶ WA 2:44.

¹¹⁷ WA 2:145–152; LW 31:295–306. I have defended this interpretation in more detail in R. Scott Clark, “The Benefits of Christ,” 107–134.

¹¹⁸ WA 2:146. “Haec igitur iustitia aliena et sine actibus nostris per solam gratiam infusa nobis . . .”

¹¹⁹ WA 2:146, “arbitramur hominem iustificari per fidem.”

¹²⁰ WA 2:146, “Et haec iusticia est prima, fundamentum, causa, origo omnis iusticiae propriae seu actualis . . .” This interpretation agrees substantially with that offered by Robert Kolb, “Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness,” in *Harvesting Martin Luther’s Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 47–54. Luther used these same categories in *De servo arbitrio* (1525). “Observa quaeso et hic partitionem Pauli duplicem Abrahae iustitiam recitantis” (WA 18:771).

¹²¹ See Green, “Faith, Righteousness, and Justification,” 81–83.

¹²² LW 27:219; WA 2:489.

¹²³ LW 27:220. “quod cor et nomen domini sint unum simul et sibi cohaerentia” (WA 2:490).

are forgiven, and righteousness is imputed to them."¹²⁴ This is a signal development. When addressing justification directly he taught in forensic, not theotic, categories. On Galatians 2:21 he said:

It follows now that the man who is righteous through faith does not through himself give to anyone what is his; he does this through another, namely, Jesus Christ, who alone is so righteous as to render to all what should be rendered them. As a matter of fact, they owe everything to Him. But he who believes in Christ and by the spirit of faith has become one with Him not only renders satisfaction now to all but also brings it about that they owe everything to him, since he has all things in common with Christ. His sins are no longer his; they are Christ's. . . . Again, Christ's righteousness now belongs not only to Christ; it belongs to His Christian.¹²⁵

This passage illustrates that, for Luther, faith brings the believer into union with Christ and through that union Christ communicates not just the benefit of justification but himself. Nevertheless, it is equally clear that Luther did not have the Christian justified on the basis of anything else but Christ's imputed righteousness. He made a logical distinction between these aspects of union with Christ while not divorcing them.

The development and clarification of Luther's doctrine of justification continued in the early 1520s. As in the 1518–1519 sermons, in *On Christian Freedom* (1520), Luther juxtaposed our sin which is proper to us with Christ's alien merits.¹²⁶ By 1522, "law" and "gospel" as distinct hermeneutical categories were firmly established in Luther's thought.¹²⁷ In his preface to Romans (1522; revised 1546), Luther worked within forensic,

¹²⁴ LW 27:221. "*Sic fit, ut credentibus in nomine domini donentur omnia peccata et iusticia eis imputetur . . .*" (WA 2:490).

¹²⁵ LW 27:241. "*Iam sequitur, quod iustus per fidem nulli dat quod suum est per seipsum, sed per alium, scilicet Iesum Christum, qui solus ita iustus est, ut omnibus reddat quot reddendum est, immo omnia ei debent Qui autem in Christum credit et spiritu fidei unus cum eo factus est, iam non solum satisfacit omnibus, sed id quoque efficit, ut omnia sibi debeat, habens cum Christo omnia communia. Peccata sua iam non sua, sed Christi sunt. . . . Rursum, iusticia Christi iam non tantum Christi, sed sui Christiani est*" (WA 2:504).

¹²⁶ WA 7:51 "*qui pro te passus et resuscitatus est, ut in eum credens alius homo hac fide fieres, donatis omnibus peccatis tuis et iustificato te alienis meritis, nempe Christi solius.*" See also WA 7:55.

¹²⁷ Martin Luther, "Preface to the New Testament," LW 35:357–362.

not ontological or theotic categories.¹²⁸ The law demands righteous obedience. "So it happens that faith alone makes a person righteous and fulfils the law. For out of the merit of Christ it brings forth the Spirit."¹²⁹ "Through faith a person becomes free from sin"¹³⁰ The gospel is "nothing but preaching about Christ . . . who by his death and resurrection has overcome for us the sin, death, and hell of all men who believe in him."¹³¹ Interpreting chapter 7 by an analogy with marriage, the intimate union between Christ and the believer was premised on a legal justification. Nowhere does one find evidence that Luther saw a theotic union in Romans. There is no reason to assume that the relational aspect of his doctrine of justification took logical precedence over the legal.

Though Luther regarded *De servo arbitrio* (1525) as one of his most important works, it does not appear often in expositions of his doctrine of justification. Luther, however, regarded his doctrine of divine sovereignty and his forensic doctrine of justification as corollaries in his repudiation of Erasmus's moralism. Because by nature the will is in bondage, justification by works is impossible. The righteousness of faith is the antithesis to justification by works.¹³² Luther's response to the claim of any intrinsic ground of justification was to point to imputation:

Notice how Paul dwells on the word "reckoned," how he stresses, repeats, and insists on it. . . . He repeats the word "reckon," nearly ten times in this chapter. In short, Paul sets the one who works and the one who does not work alongside each other, leaving no room for anyone between them; he asserts that righteousness is not reckoned to the former, but that it is reckoned to the latter provided he has faith.¹³³

His conception of faith was in strict opposition to the exercise of the free will. He argued: ". . . if there is nothing by which we are justified but faith,

¹²⁸ The text translated in *LW* 35 is based on the 1546 preface, but, on this point, is materially identical to the 1522 preface. See George, "Martin Luther," 116 and esp. n. 28.

¹²⁹ *LW* 35:368; *WADB* 7:6.

¹³⁰ *LW* 35:368; *WADB* 7:6.

¹³¹ *LW* 35:360; *WADB* 6:6.

¹³² *LW* 33:270; "*Altera est fidei iustitia quae constat non operibus ullis, sed favente et reputante Deo per gratiam*" (*WA* 18:772).

¹³³ *LW* 33:271; "*Ac vide, quomodo Paulus nitatur verbo reputandi, ut urgeat, repetat et inculcet Pene decies eo capitulo repetit verbum reputandi. Breviter, Paulus componit operantem et non operantem nec relinquit medium inter hos duos; operanti reputari iustitiam negat, Non operanti vero asserit reputari iustitiam, modo credit*" (*WA* 18:772).

it is evident that those who are without faith are not yet justified.”¹³⁴ In the context of this discussion, the free exercise of the will is that intrinsic virtue, that he contrasted with the extrinsic righteousness of Christ imputed to the sinner and received through faith alone. One finds nothing in *De servo* regarding justification by theotic union.

V. Luther's Doctrine of Justification 1535–1536

It seems clear that it is a mistake to use Luther's transitional statements on justification from 1513 to 1521 as definitive of all other statements. Teachers should hope that their students will understand that what they said recently is more representative of their thinking than what they said prior. It is common sense that we should treat Luther the same way. It remains to be demonstrated, however, that Luther did teach essentially the view that became the confessional Protestant view of justification. Thus this essay turns to three of Luther's clearest mature expositions of justification, namely his 1535 lectures on Galatians and two disputations held in 1536 on justification.

From some secondary literature, one might gain the impression that Luther only spoke occasionally about imputation of an alien righteousness to sinners and indeed such a view might be defensible, if one focuses solely on Luther's earlier writings. If, however, one reads Luther's mature work (post 1521), when his Protestant convictions were more settled, then quite another picture emerges. He had a truly vibrant doctrine of union with Christ through faith, but in his lectures on Galatians he made the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness, not theotic union with Christ, the ground of justification.

In his summary of the argument in Galatians, he distinguished between *iustitia activa* and *iustitia passiva*. The former is that accomplished by Christ and the latter describes what we receive by faith in Christ.¹³⁵ Humans are

¹³⁴ LW 33:275; “Si enim nihil est, quo iustificemur, nisi fides, evidens est, eos qui sine fide sunt, nondum iustificatos esse” (WA 18:775).

¹³⁵ “Quare nullum remedium habet afflicta conscientia contra desperationem et mortem aeternam, nisi apprehendat promissionem gratiae oblatae in Christo, hoc est hanc fidei, passivam seu christianam iustitiam, quae cum fiducia dicat: Ego non quaero iustitiam activam, deberem quidem habere et facere eam, et posito, quod eam haberem et facerem, tamen in eam non possum gratiae, remissionem peccatorum misericordiae, spiritus sancti et Christi quam ipse dat, quam recipimus et patimur” (WA 40.1:42–43).

capable only of civic righteousness. Eternal, divine righteousness comes to sinners only through imputation.¹³⁶

This is our theology, by which we teach precisely to distinguish between these two righteousnesses, the active and the passive, lest morality and faith, works and grace, politics and religion be confused. For both are necessary, but must be kept within their limits.¹³⁷

For Luther, this distinction is essential to the gospel; it is the thing that distinguishes Christianity from all other world religions.

For if the article of justification is lost, the whole Christian teaching is lost. And those in the world who do not hold it are Jews or Turks or Papists or Sectarians, because between these two righteousnesses, the active righteousness of the Law and the passive righteousness of Christ: there is no middle ground.¹³⁸

His distinction between active and passive righteousness was a direct corollary to his distinction between law and gospel. The law demands active righteousness or condign merit. It is this that Christ accomplished *pro nobis*. Passive righteousness comes to us, and that is gospel. It comes to us by imputation of Christ's active, alien righteousness and is received through faith. The ground of justification is a not personal, spiritual union with Christ or Spirit-wrought sanctity with which we cooperate. The ground of justification is Christ's active obedience credited to us.

Just as Luther's view of the ground of justification matured, so did his definition of faith in the act of justification. It is evident in his first series of lectures in Galatians that, by 1519, Luther was no longer defining faith in medieval terms. In the 1535 lectures on Galatians, faith was no mere virtue, no synecdoche for sanctity; rather it was the instrument through which the righteousness that is proper to Christ and alien to us is made our own. Commenting on Galatians 2:16 he said:

¹³⁶ "... nisi per gratuitam imputationem" (WA 40.I:43).

¹³⁷ Modified from LW 26:7. "*Haec est nostra theologia qua docemus accurate distinguere has duas iustitias, activam et passivam, ne confundatur mores et fides, opera et gratia, politica et religio. Est autem utraque necessaria, sed quaelibet intra suos fines contineri debet*" (WA 40.I:45).

¹³⁸ Revised from LW 26:8; "*Siquidem ammisso articulo iustificationis amissa est simul tota doctrina Christiana. Et quotquot sunt in mundo qui eam non tenent, sunt vel Iudaei, vel Turcae, vel Papistae, vel Sectarii, quia inter has duas iustitias, activam legis et passivam Christi, non est medium*" (WA 40.I:48).

Here it is to be noted that these three things are joined together: faith, Christ, and acceptance or imputation. Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him present, enclosing Him as the ring encloses the gem. And whoever is found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous. This is the means and the merit by which we obtain the forgiveness of sins and righteousness. "Because you believe in Me," God says, "and your faith takes hold of Christ, whom I have freely given to you as your Justifier and Savior, therefore be righteous." Thus God accepts you or accounts you righteous only on account of Christ, in whom you believe.¹³⁹

As he continued, *acceptatio* or *reputatio* is extremely necessary because we are not purely righteous, that is, we are not intrinsically righteous.¹⁴⁰ Sin still adheres to our flesh in this life.¹⁴¹ Our sins, however, are hidden from God on account of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. They are "hidden in the sight of God, because Christ the mediator stands between; because we take hold of him by faith" ¹⁴²

Like Melancthon and Protestant orthodoxy, Luther made the forensic doctrine of justification specifically, rather than union with Christ more broadly, the basis of Christian comfort before the terrible law and justice of God.

This doctrine brings firm consolation to troubled consciences amid genuine terrors. It is not in vain, therefore, that so often and so diligently we inculcate the forgiveness of sins and of the imputation of righteousness for the sake of Christ, as well as that a Christian ought to

¹³⁹ LW 26:132; "*Est et hic notandum, quod ista tria, Fides, Christus, Acceptio vel Reputatio, coniuncta sunt. Fides enim apprehendit Christum et habet eum praesentem includitque eum ut annulus gemmam, Et qui fuerit inventus cum tali fide apprehensi Christi in corde, illum reputat Deus iustum. Haec ratio est et meritum, quo pervenimus ad remissionem peccatorum et iustitiam. Quia credis, inquit Deus, in me et fides tua apprehendit Christum quem tibi donavi, ut esset Iustificator et Salvator tuus, ideo sis iustus. Itaque Deus acceptat seu reputat te iustum, solum propter Christum in quem credis etc.*" (WA 40.I:233).

¹⁴⁰ WA 40.I:233.

¹⁴¹ WA 40.I:233.

¹⁴² LW 26:133; ". . . sed absconditum est peccatum, non vult sehen, obstat Christus quem apprehendi fide propter illum apprehensum" (WA 40.I:234). This interpretation dissents from that offered in Mark S. Seifrid, "Paul, Luther, and Justification in Gal 2:15-21," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 223-227 where he construes Luther's definition of faith purely in terms of "union," and overlooks its relations to Luther's forensic definition of justification.

have nothing to do with the law and the sin, especially in a time of temptation.¹⁴³

Oratio led to *meditatio* (the *Turnerlebnis*) on the righteousness of God in Christ and *iustitia aliena imputata* was our ground in *tentatio*.

The later Galatians lectures are an essential part of the background to the series of disputations on justification that occurred in 1536. There are other elements to the background. Among these is the nature of these disputations themselves. Common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, disputations developed as an academic procedure in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a way of coming to a clearer understanding of the truth.¹⁴⁴ A disputation is a dialectic between two people, a master and a respondent. According to Bernd Moller, "It was assumed that, with the help of a dialectical process of understanding, through artful questions and answers to these questions, through the confrontation of assertion and repudiation, through orderly use of authorities and other arguments, and finally by harmonizing contradictions . . ." it was possible to "find the truth again."¹⁴⁵ Luther valued them because it was through them, according to Moeller, that he made his most important breakthroughs in 1518 (Heidelberg) and 1519 (Leipzig). Disputations were a regular part of academic life, which occurred publicly at fixed points on the academic calendar, as part of graduation exercises, and in private between pupils and masters. Special disputations were also held frequently, as in 1536, to resolve a controversial question.

Behind these disputations, both Luther and Melanchthon had a long-running argument with Agricola on the relation of the Christian to the law. Agricola argued the antinomian thesis that the Christian is no longer morally obligated to the law, but only to the gospel. Luther and

¹⁴³ Revised from LW 26:133-134. "*Ista doctrina affert firmam consolationem conscientis in veris pavoribus. Ideoque non frustra tam saepe et tanta diligentia inculcamus remissionem peccatorum et imputationem iustitiae propter Christum; Item, quod Christiano nihil prorsus negotii debeat esse, praesertim in tentatione, cum lege et peccato . . .*" (WA 40.1:235).

¹⁴⁴ P. Michaud-Quantin and J. A. Weisheipl, s.v., "Dialectics" in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., 15 vols (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2003). For an account of how this practice evolved from the seventeenth century, see Ignacio Angelelli, "The Techniques of Disputation in the History of Logic," *The Journal of Philosophy* 67 (1970): 800-815.

¹⁴⁵ Bernd Moeller, s.v., "Disputations," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*.

Melanchthon rejected this position vigorously. They also faced the challenge of Andreas Osiander's doctrine of justification by union with Christ. This, of course, is the great irony of the modern debate. The dominant story is that it was Melanchthon and Calvin who, in reaction to Osiander (and they did reject vehemently Osiander's position) turned to a solely forensic doctrine of justification. The impression is left that Osiander was correct, that he really was the more faithful representative of Luther's doctrine of justification.¹⁴⁶ As interesting as this hypothesis is, it suffers from a serious weakness: it is utterly contrary to fact. Luther was quite aware of Osiander's view and rejected it.¹⁴⁷ For Luther, to turn to justification by *unio-theosis* was to go back to the medieval doctrine of justification by divinization.

Though the chronology is difficult, and fortunately for this study not very important, it appears that the first disputation occurred on 10 October 1536.¹⁴⁸ Luther understood clearly the question at hand, how or whether works can be said to be necessary for justification. In a disputation from this period he said:

. . . Works are necessary to salvation, but they do not cause salvation, because faith alone gives life. On account of the hypocrites we must say that good works are necessary to salvation. It is necessary to work. Nevertheless, it does not follow that works save on that account, unless we understand necessity very clearly as the necessity that there must be an inward and outward salvation or righteousness. Works save outwardly, that is, they show evidence that we are righteous and that there is faith in a man that saves inwardly, as Paul says, "Man believes with his heart and soul is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved" [Rom. 10:10]. Outward salvation shows faith to the present, just as fruit shows a tree to be good.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Strehle suggests just this in "*Imputatio Iustitiae*." The New Finnish School also implies this.

¹⁴⁷ Timothy J. Wengert, "Review of *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*," *Theology Today* 56 (1999): 432-434.

¹⁴⁸ LW 34:148.

¹⁴⁹ LW 34:165. "*Opera sunt necessaria ad salutem, sed non causant salutem, quia fides sola dat vitam. Propter hypocritas dicendum est, quod bona opera sint etiam necessaria ad salutem. Oportet operari. Tamen non sequitur, quod opera ideo salvant, nisi valde necesse intelligamus, quod oporteat esse internam et externam salutem sive iustitiam. Opera salvant externe, hoc est, testantur nos esse iustos, et fidem esse in homine, quae interne salvat, ut Paulus inquit: Corde*

For Luther, works are necessary, but not as a ground or instrument of justification. They are necessary only as the fruit of justification. This is the second justification about which he had preached in 1518.

Thus, he began the disputation, in theses 1–4, by distinguishing between justification *coram Deo* and *coram hominibus*.¹⁵⁰ Works justify us before other people, but one is justified before God by faith (*fide*), even if one finds only ignominy with humans. In the several theses (5–19) following he elaborated on the paradox of civic righteousness.

In thesis 20, however, he turned to *iustitia coram Deo*. Righteousness before God is not about temporal recognition, but looks “*ad futuri Regni gloriam . . .*”¹⁵¹ The saints are righteous because God decrees (*decernit*) them to be righteous.¹⁵² Because the decree is eschatological, and its full actualization is not evident, “we think” (*sentimus*) a man is “not yet” (*nondum*) righteous, but (at best) only on his way toward righteousness.¹⁵³ As the theses begin to move to conclusion, the doctrine becomes more pointed. Despite appearances, “Wherefore, whoever is justified is still also a sinner and nevertheless he is reputed as if fully and perfectly just, forgiven and pitied by God.”¹⁵⁴ Because Christ is our high priest, interceding for us with God, he sanctifies “our beginning of righteousness.”¹⁵⁵ This is taken to be a reference back to our actual, intrinsic righteousness. Christ’s righteousness imputed acts like an umbrella (*umbraculum*) against the heat of God’s wrath toward our inchoate actual righteousness.¹⁵⁶ In thesis 27 he became even more explicit about the exact nature of this umbrella of righteousness before God. “Now it is certain that Christ or the righteousness of Christ, since it is outside of us and alien to us, is not able to be comprehended by our works.”¹⁵⁷ The contrast with the preceding categories is quite clear. What is perfect and

creditor ad iustitiam, ore fit confessio ad salutem. Externa salvatio ut fructus ostendit arborem bonam, ostendit fidem adesse” (WA 39.I:196).

¹⁵⁰ WA 39.I:82.

¹⁵¹ WA 39.I:83.

¹⁵² WA 39.I:83.

¹⁵³ WA 39.I:83. “. . . in ipso motu seu cursu ad iustitiam.”

¹⁵⁴ WA 39.I:83. “Ideo et peccator est adhuc, quisquis iustificatur, et tamen velut plene et perfecte iustus reputatur, ignoscente et miserente Deo.”

¹⁵⁵ WA 39.I:83. “nostrum initium iustitiae . . .”

¹⁵⁶ WA 39.I:83.

¹⁵⁷ WA 39.I:83. “Iam certum est, Christum seu iustitiam Christi, cum sit extra nos et aliena nobis, non posse nostris operibus comprehendi.”

able to protect the sinner from God's righteous wrath is Christ's righteousness. What is imperfect is first our civic righteousness before men and second the beginning of intrinsic righteousness in this life. These two kinds of righteousness are faulty because they are proper to us and this world. The righteousness that stands before God is eschatological and proper to Christ; it is his active righteousness, but it is alien to us. It is outside us and alien. It is this *extra* and *aliena* quality that distinguishes it from the two other kinds of righteousness. It is this that is reputed and not the others.¹⁵⁸

Though he taught clearly that the righteousness by which we are justified *coram Deo* is extrinsic and reputed, his actual interest in this disputation was in the nature of the means by which it is comprehended. Our works (i.e., our cooperation with grace) are insufficient, "but faith, which is from our hearing Christ through the Holy Spirit, is infused by which Christ is comprehended."¹⁵⁹ Ironically, having redefined faith away from the notion of an infused virtue, he was able to return to the metaphor of infusion to describe faith as an instrument. Faith has no virtue of itself (i.e., being formed by love), but its only power is that it lays hold of Christ. The source of faith is not Spirit-wrought sanctity or even union with Christ, but "*ex auditu Christi*." In the preached gospel, the sinner hears the voice of Christ. The word comes from outside and faith itself comes from outside; it reciprocally reaches outside of the sinner, even after infusion, in order to justify the sinner.

This is why *sola fides* (as opposed to *fides formata caritate*) justifies without works. For it is impossible to say, "I made Christ or the righteousness of Christ."¹⁶⁰ It is impossible because it is not Christ formed in me whereby I am justified (contra theotic union and the medieval definition).¹⁶¹ It was Christ, as it were, formed for me. Faith is the only adequate instrument to apprehend Christ. By contrast, it is possible for us to "produce the justice of heaven through the Spirit" (sanctity) or the "justice of the earth through

¹⁵⁸ It is difficult to see how Oberman could say that this thesis is not about imputation-justification.

¹⁵⁹ WA 39.1:83. "*Sed fides, quae ex auditu Christi nobis per spiritum sanctum infunditur, ipsa comprehendit Christum.*"

¹⁶⁰ WA 39.1:83. "*Quare et sola fides iustificat sine operibus nostris; Non enim possum dicere: Ego facio Christum, seu iustitiam Christi.*"

¹⁶¹ Green, "Theosis," 171-172

nature" (i.e., civic justice) because these are proper to us.¹⁶² Having been justified by a righteousness *extra nos* and *aliena nobis*, we can do "*opera bona in Christo*."¹⁶³ This language is arguably a reference to union with Christ and it is worth noting that it does not occur in his discussion of justification, but in his discussion of the consequence of justification, namely, sanctification.

In theses 31, 34, and 35, Luther was quite clear about the logical necessity of good works flowing from justification, and equally clear that they belong to a category of righteousness distinct from that which commends the sinner to God. Luther gave his definition of justification in thesis 33 when he said, "to be justified includes the following: namely, our being reputed just, by faith, on account of Christ."¹⁶⁴ The forensic theme in his doctrine of justification in the October disputation was unmistakable. His logic and categorical distinctions were clear. In this disputation, as in the 1535 lectures on Galatians, Luther was indistinguishable from his orthodox, confessional successors in the *Formula of Concord* and in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

The second disputation of 1536 to be considered was held perhaps in the home of Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558), in November, in response to a controversy that had arisen between Conrad Cordatus (c. 1480–1546) and Caspar Cruciger (1504–1548) over the role of works in justification.¹⁶⁵ In July of 1536, Cordatus heard Cruciger give a lecture in which the latter argued that "in addition to the work of Christ human repentance was also necessary in justification."¹⁶⁶ Cordatus saw this as a threat to the doctrine of justification and he demanded a retraction. Eventually, Cruciger replied by saying that he was not denying the doctrine of justification, but only following Melancthon's lead in trying to account for the role of works in justification. At a graduation disputation between two students, where Cruciger was presiding, he managed to raise the issue directly, which

¹⁶² WA 39.I:83. "*Sicut tamen possum dicere: Ego facio opera sive iustitiae coelestis per spiritum, sive terrenae per naturam.*"

¹⁶³ WA 39.I:83.

¹⁶⁴ WA 39.I:83. "*Quod iustificari ista includit, fide scilicet propter Christum reputari nos iustos.*"

¹⁶⁵ On these two figures see Robert Rosin, s.v., "Cordatus, Conrad," and idem, s.v., "Cruciger, Caspar," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*.

¹⁶⁶ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church 1532–1546*, tr. J. L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 148. This narrative follows Brecht's account.

provoked a reaction from Luther to the effect that Cruciger had returned to the Roman doctrine of penance.¹⁶⁷ Cruciger appealed to the faculty for toleration while Melanchthon defended his own position. The episode came to a head at a disputation in November at Bugenhagen's house "to clarify the matter."¹⁶⁸ Melanchthon supplied the questions and, for the purposes of this disputation, served as the *magister*. Luther responded in writing, which he delivered during the actual disputation.¹⁶⁹ It is to this disputation that we now turn.¹⁷⁰

In his account of this disputation, Martin Greschat suggests that Melanchthon cast himself in the role of prosecutor in this disputation.¹⁷¹ Nothing in the text of the disputation, however, supports such a reading. There is nothing prosecutorial whatever in the tenor of Melanchthon's questions and nothing defensive in Luther's responses. This disputation reads more like a catechism lesson than anything else.¹⁷²

Melanchthon put the same question to Luther repeatedly, namely, whether there is any way in which works or sanctity contribute to

¹⁶⁷ Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 149.

¹⁶⁸ Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 150.

¹⁶⁹ WA 39.1:79.

¹⁷⁰ *Disputatio Philippi Melanchthonis, cum Doctore Martino Luthero Anno 1536*. The text of the disputation is found in Philipp Melanchthon, *Epistolae, iudicia, consilia, testimonia aliorumque ad eum epistolae quae Corpore Reformatorum desiderantur*, ed. H. E. Bindseil and Robert Stupperich (Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975), 344–348. All English translations of this dialogue are mine. The fact that this disputation appears in Melanchthon's works and not Luther's suggests the possibility that the language attributed to Luther in this disputation was modified by Melanchthon. Green, "The Influence of Erasmus," 196–197, suggests that the use of *reputare* reflects Melanchthon's style or influence. He also argues, however, that Luther was quite happy to have Melanchthon rephrase his thoughts. In defense of the authenticity of this disputation, it should be observed that it has strong similarities with the others of the period about which there is less doubt. At all events, even though the style may not be Luther's, the theology is.

¹⁷¹ Martin Greschat, *Melanchthon Neben Luther: Studien zur Gestalt der Rechtfertigungslehre zwischen 1528 und 1537* (Wittenberg: Luther Verlag, 1965), 233. In response to an earlier version of this paper, Michael Horton pointed out that the Socratic Method is pedagogical, not prosecutorial.

¹⁷² The questions are obviously leading. These are the pedagogical and catechetical equivalents to "straight lines" in a comedy routine. If Wengert is correct, that by this point Melanchthon's own views and vocabulary had narrowed to exclusively forensic terms and categories, then Melanchthon must be seen to have acted in a purely formal, dialectical capacity so that these questions cannot be thought to reveal his own views.

justification. At the outset of the disputation, Melanchthon raised the fundamental question of the Reformation: "Do you understand man to be righteous whether by intrinsic renewal as Augustine, or by truly gracious imputation, which is outside of us, and by faith, i.e., by trust, that has arisen from the Word?"¹⁷³ Luther's response was unequivocal: "I think this, and am most persuaded and certain that this is the true opinion of the Gospel and of the Apostles, that only by gracious imputation are we righteous with God."¹⁷⁴

Melanchthon then raised the question whether man is righteous "*sola illa misericordia . . .*" or whether our *iustitia* is grounded partly in "a good conscience in works."¹⁷⁵ The questioning continued to probe Luther's resoluteness on forensic justification. Melanchthon asked whether, since Luther had preached (in 1518) a "double justice" (*duplicem iustitiam*) and conceded in previous disputations the logical and moral necessity of good works as the fruit of justification, and since it is understood that the perfection is not required but that faith supplies what is lacking, Luther will concede that "a man is righteous principally by faith, and less principally by works" In other words, since works are necessary and you have already conceded double justification, is it not true that we are not justified *sola fide*?¹⁷⁶

Luther responded unequivocally. To "become just, to be, and to remain just is *sola misericordia*."¹⁷⁷ What justifies us is perfect righteousness that

¹⁷³ Disputatio, 344. "Vos vero utrum sentitis hominem iustum esse illa novitate, ut Augustinus, an vero imputatione gratuita, quae est extra nos, et fide, id est, fiducia, quae oritur ex verbo?"

¹⁷⁴ Disputatio, 344; "Sic sentio, et persuasissimus sum ac certus, hanc esse veram sententiam Evangelii et Apostolorum, quod sola imputatione gratuita sumus iusti apud Deum."

¹⁷⁵ Disputatio, 344; "bona conscientia in operibus . . ."

¹⁷⁶ Disputatio, 344–345; "An homo sola illa misericordia iustus est? Quod non sit sola illa misericordia iustus, videtur, quia necessaria est iustitia nostra, hoc est, bona conscientia in operibus. An non vultis concedere ut dicatur, hominem esse iustum principaliter fide, et minus principaliter operibus, si tamen fides significet fiduciam, et ut illa fiducia maneat certa, intelligatur, quod non requiratur perfectio legis, sed quod fides suppleat ea, quae desunt legi? Vos conceditis duplicem iustitiam, et quidem coram Deo necessariam esse: scilicet fidei, et illam alteram, videlicet bonae conscientiae, in qua hoc quod deest legi, supplet fides. Hoc quid aliud est, quam dicere, quod homo iustificetur non sola fide?"

¹⁷⁷ Disputatio, 345. "Hominem sentio fieri, esse, et manere iustum, seu iustam personam simpliciter sola misericordia. Haec est enim iustitia perfecta, quae opponitur irae, morti, peccato etc. et absorbet omnia, et reddit hominem simpliciter sanctum, et innocentem, ac si revera nullum in eo esset peccatum. Quia reputatio gratuita Dei nullum vult ibi esse peccatum, sicut

opposes death and absorbs God's wrath for us. No mere human is capable of such righteousness and it could never be intrinsic to us. Therefore it is by God's gracious reputation that the sinner is righteous. Only after that reputation, is one righteous and said to produce the fruits of righteousness. Even these fruits are only external work and righteousness, which God requires and rewards, but this is not righteousness before God but evidence of justification before others.

Melanchthon pressed Luther by asking whether, in the case of Paul, his rebirth was the ground of his acceptance before God. Luther replied in the negative: faith brings renewal and faith justified him.¹⁷⁸ Melanchthon asked again whether virtues or works could be less principally grounds of justification? Again, Luther answered that one's virtues and works are righteous only because one's person is righteous (which is righteous by imputation only). Melanchthon followed by asking again how Luther can say that works are necessary but not justifying. Luther answered that they are necessary, "but not of legal necessity, or of co-action, but of gracious necessity, or consequence, or of immutability." He continued to explain that they are as necessary and immutable as sunshine is necessary from the sun. The sunshine does not flow "of law, but of nature." No one has to tell the sun to shine. That is its nature. So, too, the Christian, because he is a "*creatura nova*," created "unto good works," produces sanctity.¹⁷⁹ Melanchthon replied by raising the specter of the Roman critic Cardinal Sadolet (1477-1547) who accused the Protestants of being inconsistent in contending for *sola fide* and the logical necessity of good works. Luther replied that "*falsi fratres et hypocritae*" are often confounded just as it was in Elijah's day with the priest of Baal.¹⁸⁰ Melanchthon again asked whether, in view of our renewal, one could say that Paul was renewed in order to be pleasing to God, so that our works (not because they are ours) to the degree (*tantum*) that one could be said to be pleasing (*placeat*) on account of mercy? Luther would not even accept this very subtle attempt to wedge in

Ioan. dicit . . . Post hanc iustitiam homo est, et dicitur iustus opere seu fructibus, quos et ipsos requirit Deus, et remunerat. Hanc ego externam et operum iustitiam voco . . ."

¹⁷⁸ *Disputatio*, 345-346.

¹⁷⁹ *Disputatio*, 346; "*Necessaria est, sed non necessitate legali, seu coactionis, sed necessitate gratuita, seu consequentiae, seu immutabilis. Sicut sol necessario lucet, si est sol, et tamen lucet non ex lege, sed ex natura, seu voluntate (ut sic dicam) immutabili, quia sic creatus est, ut luceat. Sic iustus creatura nova, facit opera necessitate immutabili, non lege seu coactione: iusto enim non est lex posita. Deinde creati sumus (ait Paulus) in opera bona . . .*"

¹⁸⁰ *Disputatio*, 346.

some intrinsic ground of righteousness, accepted not as *proprium obedientiam* but only *propter misericordiam*. No, Luther replied, Paul's obedience only pleases God because Paul believes, and by faith his person is just in perpetuity. He rejected as an evil division the premise of the question, that the *principium, medium et finem* of a just person can be divided. The beginning and end of justification is gracious imputation of alien righteousness.¹⁸¹ If justification were by anything other than faith, its glory would be eclipsed.

Melanchthon appealed to the necessity that Paul should preach the gospel as an example of some other sort of necessity of good works for justification. Luther replied that there can be no partial cause of justification because "faith is always efficacious or it is not faith." If faith is so, then works (i.e., whatever is intrinsic to the justified and perceptible to the world) is like the radiance of the sun.¹⁸² Melanchthon raised the issue of disagreeing with Augustine on the question of intrinsic righteousness, and Luther politely but firmly held his ground.

The concluding discourse of the disputation was Luther's in reply to a very brief question from Melanchthon as to whether the proposition is true: "*Iustitia operum est necessaria ad salutem* [the righteousness of works is necessary for salvation]."¹⁸³ Works, Luther replied, do not work or obtain salvation, but "they are present to the faith obtaining or they are with" it, just as I am necessarily "present or in the presence of my salvation."¹⁸⁴ The person is justified by the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness, therefore he is just. A just person produces works necessarily; therefore they are necessarily present in the person justified. *Pace* Sadoletto, the one who believes has already fulfilled "the first or primary part of the law" Luther called this the *principium iustificationis seu iustitiae*.¹⁸⁵ That is, he elaborated, "I have in principle, also the other works required after faith."¹⁸⁶ Sadoletto was wrong: Faith is not a "work of precept," but a

¹⁸¹ *Disputatio*, 347; "Imo obedientia placet propter Paulum credentem, alioqui non placeret eius obedientia, et quia persona iusta est, iusta est perpetuo, et tamdiu iusta ex fide, quamdiu fides manet. Mala ergo divisio est, personam dividere in principium, medium, et finem. Opera igitur fulgent radiis fidei, et propter fidem placent, non econtra."

¹⁸² *Disputatio*, 347; "... quia fides est semper efficax, vel non est fides."

¹⁸³ *Disputatio*, 347.

¹⁸⁴ *Disputatio*, 347; "Non quod operentur seu impetrent salutem, sed quod fidei impetranti praesentes seu coram sunt, Sicut ego necessario adero ad salutem meam"

¹⁸⁵ *Disputatio*, 348.

¹⁸⁶ *Disputatio*, 348; "Ergo qui credit, implevit unam vel primam partem legis, et sic habet

"work of promise," that is, "the gift of the Holy Spirit." This gift having been given "makes a person perpetually new, which person yet does new works." New works do not make the new person, but the new person does the new works.¹⁸⁷ For that reason, one "owes no personal righteousness by works before God"¹⁸⁸ There are different qualities of works and rewards, but "they do not justify a person, for all we are equally just in one Christ, all equally loved and pleasing according to person."¹⁸⁹

In this disputation, Melancthon dutifully played the *magister* and Luther the *respondens*. Melancthon poked and probed throughout the disputation looking for any place Luther might concede the point that intrinsic sanctity might be a part of the ground or instrument of justification, and from the outset Luther repudiated any such notions using the same sorts of metaphors and language found in the earlier disputation. For Luther in 1536, the ground of justification is Christ's alien righteousness reputed to the sinner, and faith is the medium by which one apprehends Christ and his alien righteousness. In both disputes, he turned to intrinsic categories *only* when considering the sanctity that flows from justification.

VI. Conclusions

The various attempts to revise Luther's doctrine of justification along wholly relational and theotic contours is ill conceived and largely unhistorical, mostly prosecuted against an empty slate with Luther de-contextualized from his medieval setting.¹⁹⁰ Timothy Wengert is right to remind us that the Finnish interpretation of Luther is not new at all. "In the 1550s, Andreas Osiander insisted that the indwelling of the Son of God

principium iustificationis seu iustitiae. Sed principio habito, requiruntur et alia praecepta opera post fidem."

¹⁸⁷ *Disputatio*, 348; "Nam si fides esset opus praeceptum. . . . At nos dicimus, fidem esse opus promissionis, seu donum Spiritus sancti, quod quidem ad legem faciendam necessarium est, Sed per legem et opera non impetratur. Donatum autem hoc donum, facit personam novam perpetuo, quae persona tamen facit opera nova, non econtra opera nova faciunt personam novam."

¹⁸⁸ *Disputatio*, 348; "Nulla ergo iustitia personalis debetur operibus coram Deo"

¹⁸⁹ *Disputatio*, 348; "Sed personam non iustificat, omnes enim aequaliter iusti sumus in uno Christo, omnes aequaliter dilecti et placentes secundum personam, tamen, differt stella a stella per claritatem."

¹⁹⁰ See Dennis Bielfeldt, "Response to Sammeli Juntenen, 'Luther and Metaphysics,'" in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmann Publishing Co., 1998), 161–166.

makes us substantially righteous. His position found some sympathy among theologians in Wurttemberg, including Johannes Brenz, whose view of justification Luther and Melanchthon had attempted to correct already in 1531.¹⁹¹

Both the so-called Luther Renaissance and the Finnish School share a neglect of the development of Luther's theology from medieval to Reformation. Both interpretations are too anxious to make Luther relevant either to early-twentieth-century German nationalism or early-twenty-first-century ecumenism. The attempt by Ritschl, the Luther Renaissance, and the Finnish school to juxtapose Luther against Melanchthon and against confessionalism ignores the fact that Luther was a writer of symbolic documents himself. It also ignores Luther's own view of Melanchthon. As Wilhelm Pauck has observed, there is no evidence in Luther that he regarded Melanchthon's narrowing vocabulary from 1534 to 1536 as a departure from or narrowing of his own doctrine of justification.¹⁹² The "Luther v. the Lutherans" interpretation, as with the "Calvin v. the Calvinists" school, tells us more about the interpreters than it does about Luther or Lutheran orthodoxy.

There are good reasons to doubt Mannermaa's reconstruction of Luther's doctrine of justification. First, and to his credit, he is explicit about his ecumenical interests.¹⁹³ Second, he shows little historical sensitivity in his interpretation of Luther. This much is evident in Mannermaa's appeal to Luther's first lectures on Romans, where Mannermaa makes no note of the date or transitional nature of these lectures. Third, he freights arbitrarily passages that speak of anything intrinsic even though Luther was not speaking of justification directly.¹⁹⁴ Fourth, Mannermaa loads Luther's joyful exchange with ontic or theotic meaning so that it becomes an "exchange of attributes" wherein Christ "himself takes on the sinful person of man and give to us His own righteous person" so that there is a

¹⁹¹ Timothy J. Wengert, review of *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, *Theology Today* 56 (1999): 434.

¹⁹² Wilhelm Pauck, *From Luther to Tillich: The Reformers and Their Heirs*, ed. Marion Pauck (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1984), 42-43.

¹⁹³ Robert W. Jenson, "Response to Tuomo Mannermaa, 'Why is Luther So Fascinating?'" in *Union with Christ*, 21, is even more explicit about his ecumenical interest in the Finnish revision of Luther.

¹⁹⁴ For example, in "The Doctrine of Justification and Christology," 210, regarding Luther on Rom 7:18 in WA 56:343, 16-21; LW 25:331-332.

communicatio idiomatum not just between the two natures of Christ, but between the sinner and Christ.¹⁹⁵ As fascinating as Mannermaa's point is, Luther said nothing of the kind, not even in the passage Mannermaa quotes. For Luther, the joyful exchange happens by receptive believing, not by theotic union. For Luther, however intimate the union between bride and bridegroom, they are never ontologically confused. The context certainly does not suggest the sort of ontic indwelling that Mannermaa imports into the passage.¹⁹⁶

The attempt by Kärkkäinen to correlate the Finnish view with Luther's *theologia crucis/gloriae* distinction fails to understand the distinction Luther was making. His appeal to the Heidelberg Disputation (1518) as proof of *theosis* is particularly puzzling. It appears that his reading of it stands only if we allow him to read Luther not against his medieval background but against the background of modern European philosophical theology.

Marquart's approach to the question of *theosis* in Luther is more measured than that of the New Finnish school, and he is more sensitive than some to the difficulties of this project. He proposes a twofold test to evaluate whether *theosis* can be said to be an explanation of Luther's doctrine of justification and compatible with Luther's theology of the cross.¹⁹⁷ The first test is that any theotic doctrine of justification must be christocentric. The second test is that it has to have God coming to us. It seems to me, however, that Thomas's program of divinization would pass the test. The only sorts of divinization that Marquart's test filters out would be crassly Pelagian. Marquart's test has the appearance of solving the problem while conceding the very thing Luther sought to prevent.

Earlier I quoted from Kurt Marquart's 1999 essay, in which he quotes a 1525 Sermon on Ephesians 3:13–21 as evidence of a doctrine of *theosis* in Luther. On first reading, Marquart seems to have grounds for his claim. He re-translates the sermon creating the impression that Luther was intending to teach *theosis*. The sermon, however, was about sanctity not divinization.

¹⁹⁵ Mannermaa, "The Doctrine of Justification and Christology," 210.

¹⁹⁶ In a private discussion regarding the relations between Luther's doctrine of justification and ontology, Robert Kolb has suggested that we should speak of Luther's "ontology of the Word of God," so that, Luther's forensic language is not Nominalism, but creative of reality. See Robert Kolb, "Romans 6 and Luther's Understanding of Justification (1535)," *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (1998): 50–53.

¹⁹⁷ Marquart, "Luther and Theosis," 196–197.

Further, even if one concedes that those paragraphs were about *theosis*, Luther concludes the sermon by saying, "But no one should think that such a thing can happen fully to any man in this life."¹⁹⁸ Indeed, we are filled with Adam's fullness (*Adams fulle*). According to Luther, even granting Marquart's revisions, we are not going to be divinized in this life. If justification is divinization, then we are not justified. This conclusion creates the irony of having Luther teach that we are not justified in this life.

Marquart's tests notwithstanding, for Luther, the notion that one is just before God on the basis of the indwelling Christ by theotic union is nothing if not *theologia gloriae* and an improbable reading of Luther. The point of the *theologia crucis* is the necessity of the tension between the already of the declaration of the justification and the not yet of the consummated, glorified, vindicated state. Surely Luther was working with these categories when he said in his 1527 lecture on 1 John 3:2:

We shall be like Him but not identical with him [*Similes erimus, non iidem*], as Pythagoras thought. For God is infinite, but we are finite creatures [*Deus est infinitus, nos creaturae finitae*]. Moreover, the creature will never be the Creator [*Nunquam autem creatura evadet creator*]. Yet we shall be like Him. God is life. Therefore we, too, shall live. God is righteous. Therefore we, too, shall be filled with righteousness. God is immortal and blessed. Therefore, we, too, shall enjoy everlasting bliss, not as it is in God [*non qualis in Deo*] but the bliss that is suitable for us.¹⁹⁹

This was the language of analogy not christocentric *theosis*.

I see no compelling reason to treat Luther's doctrine of union and his doctrine of justification as if they were mutually exclusive. Both doctrines were important to Luther's Protestant development, but they were logically distinct and Luther ordered them quite differently than Ritschl, Holl, and the New Finnish school would have us think. We are justified by virtue of our *legal* union with Christ, who accomplished active righteousness *pro nobis*, and, for Luther, the justified life is lived in vital union with Christ and is inconceivable apart from that union. That is not the same thing as saying, however, that sinners are justified by virtue of a

¹⁹⁸ WA 17:1, 438: "Es soll aber keiner denken, das solchs, hnn diesem leben hrgent ehnen menschen volkomlich widerfare . . ." Cf. Luther, *The Complete Sermons*, 4:2, 280. See WA 17:1, 438. I am grateful to Ryan Glomsrud (Pembroke College, Oxford) for his comments on this section of the paper.

¹⁹⁹ LW 30:268; WA 20:698.

theotic union with Christ. Even if it is discovered definitively that Luther did conceive of some sort of theotic union between Christ and the believer, it is clear that it never entered his doctrine of justification. For Luther, union with Christ is a consequence of the forensic, definitive act of justification.

The Holy Spirit, Sacraments, and Church Rites

David P. Scaer

Exegetical theology begins with a particular biblical text. It examines the words as given by the Holy Spirit—or at least by the text critics. This enterprise can get lost—or so it seems—in a maze of grammatical and linguistic detail, though the biblical writers gave as much attention to grammar as ordinary speakers do. Dogmatic theology works according to topics, the so-called loci method. It presents the topic in the contemporary situation and looks for biblical and historical support for its position. Its concerns are not necessarily those of the biblical writers. There is no once-and-for-all-time-and-for-every-place theology. The loci method puts the topics in a logical pattern which then becomes the system. Inevitably one locus is found to be more important than another. Doctrines are ranked as primary and secondary, fundamental and non-fundamental. For some, faith is considered more fundamental than Baptism. In this case faith is made more important than the dominical institution of Baptism, which originates in Christ's death and resurrection and makes them present, and on which faith depends and to which it is directed. So the method is not without its difficulties.

Typically a theological system identifies a favored locus whose logical derivations constitute the system. Subsequent doctrines (loci) reflect and derive their life and content from the major premise. For Lutherans, justification stands front and center, and so Law and Gospel are placed in the prolegomena. In the Reformed theology, the sovereignty of God is basic; and, for Roman Catholicism, the papacy and the mass are non-negotiable. Fundamentalism and Neo-Evangelicalism begin with an authoritative Bible and the believer's obedient response to it. A unified system testifies to the system's credibility. However, any number of logia of Jesus (Matt 7:24; 28:20) and other parts of Scriptures (Rev 22:18-19) suggest that subordinating one doctrine to another should be reconsidered. When faith is made the controlling factor in ranking the doctrines, we have a position brought into the modern era by Schleiermacher.

By distributing theology into *loci*, each *locus* begins to take on a life of its own. One learns about God but not the Trinity, creation but not the Christ and the Spirit by which it came into existence, about Christ but not the

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Supper, about Baptism but not the Holy Spirit. Even asking how one doctrine relates to another or to Christian life signals that “the silver cord is snapped [and] the golden bowl is broken” (Eccl 12:6). Subordinate doctrines eventually become expendable. When obsession with one locus is full blown, it gives birth to error (Jas 1:15). Arius subjected his understanding of Christ to divine transcendency. Atonement for Calvin was subordinate to divine sovereignty. Pietists took faith, the heart of Luther’s reformation, and turned it into a thing that could be observed and measured. Lost was his view that faith reflects totally on Christ and not on itself. Considered historically, finding one locus more important than another led to union between Lutheran and Reformed churches and was at the heart of the Gospel-reductionism within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the 1970s.

Though biblical scholarship does not in each case produce neat conclusions, the inspired writers thought and wrote topically. Topics were not presented as separate or abstract units but in relation to other topics or church practice. Matthew’s first exposition on the atonement, Christ’s death as payment for the sins of his quarreling disciples, is embedded in a discourse on sanctification or the exemplar theory of Christ’s death (Matt 20:20–28). His second, and greater explanation, is found in the institution of the Lord’s Supper (Matt 26:26–28). This sacrament is not simply a matter of how bread and wine can be Christ’s body and blood, the issue dividing the sixteenth century reformers, but the sacred elements are those which Christ sacrificed to God for his followers. Mark describes Christ’s death in sacramental language (Mark 10:38–39). Luke’s account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus rescues the Old Testament from being regarded as a self-contained revelation by claiming that its entire content is the work and person of Jesus (Luke 24:27). John uses the language of incarnation to explain conversion—or is it the reverse (John 1:13)? Paul points out that sermons which deny the resurrection contradict what the Corinthian congregation confessed (1 Cor 15:3–4). Startling is his showing that this denial stood at odds with their vicarious baptisms for the dead, erroneous as they may have been.

To follow the New Testament pattern, one locus or topic in theology or in preaching must be presented with and within another. When this is not done, theology and preaching soon become abstract dogmatical discourses or ethical injunctions detached from Christ who is the focus of faith. Often the loci (topical) method short circuits involvement with the biblical text, and so the Bible is relegated to a secondary position in providing

evidences for a fixed system logically derived from an agreed upon common principle. Topics or *loci* provide a focus into the biblical documents. Creeds, confessions, and church tradition have this function. The Ethiopian eunuch first understands Isaiah when Philip explains it to him (Acts 8:26–40). However, the church's dogmatic theology cannot be substituted for a direct encounter with the biblical texts. Theology is impoverished when the Bible's only task is providing evidences for what is already known. With a dogmatic map in hand, there are no surprises in the biblical countryside. Atlases are substituted for biblical trips. What will be found is already known. Different texts approached with the same methods produce the same sermons, with the result that the Spirit's witness in the Bible is stifled. The new curriculum of Concordia Theological Seminary intends to bring biblical and dogmatic theologies together to serve proclamation, but with the caution that smashed shells cannot be reconstructed into that perfect apostolic egg, which even then had its fissures.¹

I. Getting Lost in the Shuffle: Pneumatology

With the *loci* method, some doctrines surface first and more often than others. By asking his disciples who he was, Jesus put Christology in the forefront. He never asked them what they thought about the Holy Spirit. Formal resolution about the Spirit came at Constantinople in AD 381 in the third article of what we call the Nicene Creed. Christology remains the issue today but the emphasis has moved from defining his person to recognizing his historical character. Scholars have completed the first and second quests for the historical Jesus and are on their third pilgrimage. No similar crusade is made in search of the Spirit. In his mammoth work, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in the Early Church*, Larry Hurtado showed how the deity of Jesus had to be fit into the monotheistic faith of Israel by first century Jewish Christians.² Binitarianism was prior to trinitarianism and still is. Who the Spirit is and what he does follows Jesus' death and resurrection from which the Spirit emerges with the proclamation of these events as the gospel. Without a clear Christology, the Spirit is seen as hardly more than God's presence in the world.

¹ See John T. Pless, "A Curriculum from and for the Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 70 (2006): 85–93.

² Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003).

Controversies about the Spirit were not foreign to the apostolic age. Corinthian Christians claimed for themselves a special dispensation of the Spirit, and two centuries later the great theologian Tertullian was taken in by a Spirit movement (Montanism). In the Reformation era, agreement on the Spirit's inspiration of the Bible was compromised by the pope's claim of authoritative interpretation. Anabaptists claimed that the Spirit directly spoke to and through them, and this obviated a need for an inspired scripture. Lutherans and the Reformed could both speak about the Spirit's freedom, but each understood it differently. For Lutherans the Spirit is free in whom he converts, which he accomplishes only through the word and sacraments. Zwingli held that the Spirit was free from the gospel in conversion. Reformed theology in general holds that the means of grace testify to the Spirit's work, but they are not the Spirit's channel to create faith. There is no internal exchange between the Spirit and the word and sacraments, what in Christology is called *idomaticum apostelesmaticum* or *communicatio apotelesmaticum*, by which one dwells and works within and through the other. Spirit and word exist side by side; a Nestorian-like existence. Here is the strange contradiction: while Neo-Evangelicals, the heirs of Zwingli and Calvin, adamantly defend biblical inspiration, they confess that the Spirit does not work through the documents he inspired. It was as if the Spirit disowned his own biblical offspring. Eighteenth century Enlightenment scholars, followed by Schleiermacher, turned a Reformed separation of the Spirit from the biblical documents into a permanent divorce, so that their only claim to divinity was a spirit that rose from the community of believers, a position from which most scholars have not ventured far.

II. Sacraments as the *Locus* on the Spirit

Any Lutheran discussion of the Spirit is set against the backdrop of the historical debate with the Reformed, who traditionally have given the Spirit a greater role in church life than Jesus, whose human nature limits him. On that account, Lutheran theology is characterized as christological and Reformed theology as pneumatological. Both parties can speak of the word and the Spirit at work in believers but mean different things. Lutherans see the Spirit embedded in the word and sacraments, but this word is not only the oral proclamation informing the intellect but is Christ, God and man. The "Word" in Luther's hymn, "The Word they still shall let

remain nor any thanks have for it [him],” is Christ himself.³ *Incarnational* applies to a Lutheran understanding of the word and sacraments. Any perceived Lutheran aversion to the Spirit comes in response to the Reformed position that he is the surrogate or replacement for the man Jesus. One picks up the external shell of the sacraments hoping to find Jesus and instead finds the Spirit. This aversion to the Reformed view cannot prevent Lutherans from affirming that the third person of the Trinity is the *Creator Spiritus*, not only in the first chapter of Genesis but in all sacramental actions. He turns earthly elements into divine things.

In the Smalcald Articles, Luther defines the sacraments as the external word through which the Spirit works (SA III, 8, 7 and 10). For the Formula of Concord, the Father draws believers to Christ by the Spirit working through the word and the sacraments (SD XI, 76). The Spirit, who brings about the incarnation and determines the course of Jesus’ life and death, joins himself to the water in John’s Baptism of Jesus and makes it a sacrament. Paul says we are baptized into one Spirit. According to Paul, after the Israelites were baptized into Moses by the cloud and sea, they all ate and drank the same spiritual (πνευματικόν) food and drink, which he identified as Christ (1 Cor 10:1–4). At first glance this passage seems to support the Reformed view that the Lord’s Supper is a non-corporeal food consumed by the soul as opposed to the Lutheran view of an actual eating and drinking of Christ’s body and blood. “Spiritual” here is to be understood not Platonically, in the sense that God cannot squeeze into material things or that their souls were fed with non-material substances, like Christ’s divine nature, but Christ, God and man, was real food and drink provided by the Holy Spirit. The Lutheran dogmatists saw the water and the blood in 1 John 5:7–8 as a reference to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, a passage in which the Spirit is listed as a witness with them. John 19:30, 34 should be understood in the same way. The Holy Spirit functions in, with, and under the sacraments. A christological definition of the sacraments, which characterizes Lutheran thought, that is, that Christ institutes the sacraments and is their content, requires that they be revered as trinitarian acts in which the Spirit brings the work of the Father and Son to completion. Jesus’ promise that he will come with the Father and that he will send the Spirit applies particularly to his coming in

³ Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” in *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006) 656:4.

the sacraments (John 14:22-25). In the sacraments the Spirit is given by the Father and the Spirit gives himself as the gift.

The Word is the instrument of the Holy Spirit (*instrumentum spiritus sancti*; Ep II, 19) to effect conversion (*efficientes causae*). Word and Spirit are the Spirit's only vehicles (*nam per verbum et sacramentum tamquam per instrumenta donatur spiritus sanctus*; CA V, 2). "Therefore we should and must insist that God does not want to deal with human beings, except by means of his external Word and sacrament" (SA III, 8, 10). On this issue the Lutherans' opponents were Zwingli and the enthusiasts who claimed that the Holy Spirit works without means, apart not only from any sacramental activity but also the preached word. They were condemned under the one umbrella of *extra enthusiasticum* and were called fanatics. As diverse as Roman Catholics and Reformed are, they agree that the Spirit works without the word in converting. Luther speaks of those, even infants, who come to faith before Baptism, but in these cases the Spirit does not create faith directly but through the external, that is, audible word (SA III, 8, 7). On this the Formula of Concord is definite: "however, God the Holy Spirit does not effect conversion without means, but he uses the preaching and the hearing of God's Word to accomplish it, as it is written (Rom. 1[:16]), the gospel is a 'power of God' to save" (Ep II, 5).

Some radical reformers dispensed with the sacraments altogether (SD XII, 1-4), but the moderate Reformed theologians held that the Spirit worked alongside of the elements but not through them. Calvin held that the Spirit could work without water and that the assurance of God's election of believers did not depend on the sacraments. In Reformed theology water baptism is not Spirit Baptism. In Lutheran theology they are identical. Calvin delayed the Baptism of infants to the eighth day, and lay Baptism was not allowed for children near death. Both Zwingli and Calvin held that the sacramental rites did not convey salvation and were expendable. Calvin held that the sacraments were given to accommodate human weakness. Lutheran theology takes a diametrically opposing view. The sacraments no more accommodate human weakness than the word does. Baptism places us in Christ's tomb and joins us with the Trinity, and in the Lord's Supper we share in the mystery of the atonement. The sacraments are not only necessary, but they are the highest expressions of grace. In the sacraments, the Holy Spirit, the word of God, and the elements constitute a unity (LC IV, 14-18). Each sacramental celebration is its own Pentecost in which the Spirit creates and confirms faith.

III. Sacraments as the Spirit's Completion of the Trinitarian Work

Even as one never receives the Son apart from the Father who sent him, Christ is never present in the means of grace without the Spirit who proceeds from them, turning ordinary things and words into vehicles of divine grace. Their presence in the means of grace reflects the eternal relationship of one divine person to the other. The Father who eternally begets the Son begets believers as his children in Baptism (John 1:12-13) and makes them coheirs with his Son (Rom 8:17). As the Father is the eternal origin within the Trinity, the Spirit is its eternal completion. What is begun by the Father's creation is accomplished by the Son's redemption and completed by the Spirit's engendering faith (John 3:8). Sacramental theology brings God's trinitarian life into the life of the church. It is not a subordinate locus. Without sacraments the trinitarian presence and work is compromised. The Father is to be found in Jesus, and Jesus is found in the Spirit who works in words and things for our salvation. While the Reformed see created things as obstacles to God's transcendence, Lutherans see created things as fit and waiting vehicles for his grace, even as cloaks for the Holy Spirit. Just as the Spirit brought creation to completion, so also he brings redemption to completion by creating faith through the created things he has designated for this purpose.

Sacramental practice is the church's confession of the Trinity and the acknowledgment of his presence. In the rite of Baptism, prayers are offered to the Father through the Son and in the Spirit that the divine three persons would dwell by water in the baptized. The Proper Preface and the Thanksgiving of the communion liturgy are offered to the Father: "It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God . . ." and "We give thanks to Thee, Almighty God. . . ." ⁴ Through Christ's words, the Spirit turns ordinary things into sacraments to serve divine purposes. As in Genesis, he moves again across the face of the waters of Baptism by bringing creation through Christ's redemption to a completion beyond what was envisioned by our first parents.

⁴ "The Order of Holy Communion" in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 25, 30. In a revised form, the Proper Preface and Thanksgiving are found in *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 241, 251.

A common feature in Eastern liturgies is the *epiklesis*, the invocation of the Spirit on the communion elements to make them Christ's body and blood. Since it has no place in Western liturgies, and might be seen as supporting Calvin's view that the Spirit and not Jesus is in the sacraments, there is reason to exclude it. Putting these reasons aside, its inclusion is biblically and theologically justifiable (Ap X, 3). The Spirit is the Son's agent in the sacramental action in addressing the Son's words to the elements created by the Father. In Christ, especially his transfiguration, mankind reaches God's intended goal, and in the sacraments *things* not only point to the one who created them, but the Creator identifies with them. The Creator who became incarnate in Jesus becomes one with the sacramental elements. The Spirit who moved over the face of the waters wraps himself in the water to make it a baptism. Jesus' going to God's right hand was not a spatial movement. Rather he entered the church's sacramental life with his Spirit to exercise divine power in reconciling sinners to God. For Luther, in Baptism "God's grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts" are present (LC IV, 41). It is a trinitarian act: "For here in the sacrament you receive from Christ's lips the forgiveness of sins, which contains and conveys God's grace and Spirit with all His gifts" (LC V, 70). Creation, redemption, and the church's sanctification emerge from the inner recesses of the trinitarian life into the sacramental life of the church. While confessions are divided on whether confession and absolution is a sacrament like Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to both definitions it is a trinitarian event in which Christ is present in the absolution to comfort the penitent with the Holy Spirit and to bring him back to the Father.

IV. The Spirit in Church Rites

This question must be asked: In what sense, if any, is the Spirit present in those church rituals not ordinarily called sacraments by Lutherans? Without the conviction that the Spirit is involved in a rite, it has no place in the church. Luther had an expansive sacramental sense of reality. He saw Old Testament things, such as the tree in garden, the rainbow, the pillar of fire, the temple, and sacrifices as sacraments because Christ was in them. In the New Testament, fire, hands, the dove, and water are the coverings of the Holy Spirit. Apart from Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Spirit is present in all aspects of church life. He comes in pictures, statues, hands, vestments, creeds, sermons, hymns, and any material or oral form in which the word is proclaimed. In them he forgives sinners, declares them righteous, and shapes their lives after Christ's. Augsburg Confession V

speaks of the giving of the Holy Spirit through the gospel and sacraments but without specifying them. Augsburg Confession XIII and the Apology XIII allow for the working of the Holy Spirit in rites other than Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution.

Lutherans may have wanted to avoid the issue of the number of sacraments, but, because of the Roman Catholic insistence on seven and the Reformed on two, they could not. Luther held to two, and Melancthon allowed for at least three but left the door open for more. The definition of sacraments determines their number. Perhaps matters should rest there. Add to these formal rites the Spirit's work through the informal sharing of the gospel by word of mouth. So it was in Jesus' own life time, and so the Spirit of the Lord still is filling the earth. The ministry is work of the Spirit, since it was established for the sake of the means of grace (CA V). The Spirit's presence and work are co-extensive with the means of grace, which are the boundaries he establishes for himself. Still, how should one view rites which do not measure up to Baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Lutherans opposed the Roman Catholic insistence that ordination, confirmation, marriage, and extreme unction be put on the same level as these dominically instituted sacraments. Unlike indulgences and pilgrimages, they were not abolished but were retained or later found their way back into church life and were adjusted to fit the Reformation understanding as proclamations of grace. Lutherans objected to the Roman Catholic view that grace was a substance, *gratia infusa*, with each rite having its own grace. Baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, and extreme unction formed a sacramental constellation with an accumulative effect. In response, Lutherans say that grace, God's gracious attitude on account of Christ to sinners, is at the core of each rite. One rite differs from the others in function, that is, in what the Holy Spirit intends to accomplish. Whoever has faith also has all of the Holy Spirit, who is faith's sole creator, but the Spirit is no equal opportunity employer. A gift he gives to one he may not give to another. In attempting to replace Moses, Aaron and Miriam were grasping for a gift which the Spirit had given to him but not to them. So he works differently in the various church rites. One size does not fit all. Putting aside the unique history of each rite, one possible umbrella for these rites is that they are administered at critical junctures in life. Confirmation marks the end of adolescence and commendation of the dying, traditionally called extreme unction, life's

end. Marriage marks a passage from one stage in life to another, as does ordination, which confers a responsibility in preaching the word.

Of these rites, marriage stands at the edge or outside of the sacramental ring, since no specific grace is given in the rite; but it may be that one event in life where it is most needed. In spite of Lutheran insistence that marriage is a governmental matter, how we live in marriage determines our standing in the church. Not only is it God's institution, but it reflects God's love for Israel and Jesus' union with the church. In marriage husbands are to emulate Christ's giving his life for the church. As an institution created by God which images Christ's work, it is not devoid of sacramental significance.

If we were to construct that perfect sacramental rite that would appeal to catholic tradition, the Arminian need for decision and the Calvinist view of the family as covenant, and the Lutheran centrality of faith, it would be confirmation. It involves the reading of Scripture, prayers, promises, creeds, profession of faith, and the laying on of hands by the minister and, at times, the participation of parents and sponsors. Its oracular confession of faith was one reason it was reintroduced after it fell into disuse. Reunions that recall confirmation long after the event are common, and the confirmation verse is often used at funerals. Our current liturgy speaks of a giving of the Holy Spirit in the rite itself. "[Mary or John], God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give thee His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and prayer, of power and strength, of sanctification and the fear of God."⁵ This rite has a permanent place in Lutheran church life.

Commendation of the dying is the evangelical practice of extreme unction, a rite which Luther called the pope's invention, having as little value as holy water. Its origins are uncertain, but it may have arisen from the apostolic practice of ministers offering prayers over the sick while relieving the discomfort of the sick person with oil (Jas 5:14-15). Most

⁵ "The Rite of Confirmation" in *The Lutheran Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1950]), 25. The confirmation service in *Lutheran Service Book* and *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda* omit this blessing. However, they retain a confirmation prayer that invokes the Father for the Holy Spirit: "Renew in them the gift of Your Holy Spirit, that they may live in daily contrition and repentance with a faith that ever clings to their Savior." See *Lutheran Service Book*, 274, and *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda*, 31. This and similar prayers also appear in *The Lutheran Agenda*, 26-29.

sicknesses today can be cured or at least alleviated. Until recently this was not the case. Child mortality rates were high, and life expectancy was short. Thus prayers for and over the sick prepared them for death. Like confirmation, the rite of commendation of the dying combines elements of Baptism as well as confession and absolution along with the promises of the resurrection and eternal life, and so it must be considered a rite of the Holy Spirit.

Among Lutherans ordination is such a controversial issue that, for the sake of peace, some would like to see it dropped and the ministerial candidate given a certificate of election signed by the voters. Each of the other ancillary rites are constructs, that is, they are put together from elements found in other rites, but it is not certain if and how they were administered in the apostolic era. Ordination was a New Testament rite. Paul laid hands on Timothy and since then it has been associated with the Holy Spirit. Timothy was expected to do the same. Like Baptism it is a rite of initiation, not into the church but into the ministry. Unlike Baptism and the Lord's Supper, no specific formula is given for its administration, but certain standards had to be met before it was administered. In connection with the ministry of the word in the Apology (Ap XIII, 11), it is given the fourth place after Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and absolution. Taken out of the context of the ministry of preaching, it has no sacramental significance.

The relationship between the laying on of hands and the giving of the Holy Spirit merits further exploration. When the apostles laid hands on those Samaritans baptized by Philip, the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 8:17). This citation does not determine each case of the laying on of hands, but it indicates that the Spirit does not find the hands to be unacceptable instruments for his work. This custom has an ancient pedigree. God commanded Moses to lay hands on Joshua as his successor (Deut 34:9), from which New Testament ordination may have been derived. Jesus employed the laying on of his hands to heal the sick (for example, Mark 8:22-26) and, according to Mark, he gives the children a full-body embrace (Mark 10:16). In these cases something divine is happening because God is working through *things*. Hands are laid various settings, including Baptism, confirmation, absolution, commendation of the dying, the installation of both cleric and laity into specific church responsibilities, visiting the sick, the marriage rite, and on children at the altar rail during communion. Some of these cases lack specific biblical mandate or explicit liturgical rubric, but each is associated with the working of God, specifically the Holy Spirit, on the individual. Again, the principle is

evoked, no size fits all occurrences, but the Spirit works according to the occasion. Baptism initiates faith, and the commendation of the dying intends to lead believers to the promises of Baptism. Just as in Baptism, it is not the water, but the word in, with, and under the water that gives the Spirit and creates faith, so hands by themselves do not accomplish anything; however, hands can be the vehicles of the Spirit. This is hardly a spectacular statement, since all church rites and artifacts are vehicles of the Holy Spirit. In some rites this may be associated with the laying on of hands and in other rites not. The endowment or gift of the Spirit in a particular rite is the Holy Spirit himself and is appropriate for the occasion. Jesus lays hands on children assuring them a place in his kingdom, but they are not healed. Giving the Holy Spirit in confirmation does not mean he was not present before or that the one confirmed becomes a minister, but, as in all rites, the Spirit equips the person for a particular time in life or for a particular task. Again, one size does not fit all.

In the older Lutheran churches a dove was placed over the pulpit to symbolize that the preacher's words were those of the Spirit. When the elector of Brandenburg attempted to introduce the Reformed faith, he shut down the Berlin cathedral and removed the large wooden dove hanging over the chancel. A large bulky dove hanging from the ceiling right up front might be a reminder that the precincts are sacred because there the heavenly dove proclaims the peace of the gospel. He is God's fire, purging what is unacceptable in our lives, and the divine finger on the creating hand of the Father, shaping us to be perfect saints in Christ. If Lutherans suffer from *pneumaphobia*, a fear of the Spirit, they might want to reassess their pneumatology.

Faith in Contemporary Evangelicalism

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

Our Lutheran Confessions speak with clarity about *faith*:

Regarding the righteousness of faith before God, we unanimously believe, teach, and confess on the basis of the general summary of our Christian faith and confession expressed above that poor sinful people are justified before God, that is, absolved—pronounced free of all sins and of the judgment of the damnation that they deserved and accepted as children and heirs of eternal life—without the least bit of our own “merit or worthiness” [SC, “Creed,” 4], apart from all preceding, present, or subsequent works. We are justified on the basis of sheer grace, because of the sole merit, the entire obedience, and the bitter suffering, death, and the resurrection of our Lord Christ alone, whose obedience is reckoned to us as righteousness.

The Holy Spirit conveys these benefits to us in the promise of the holy gospel. Faith is the only means through which we lay hold of them, accept them, apply them to ourselves, and appropriate them. Faith itself is a gift of God, through which we acknowledge Christ our redeemer in the Word of the gospel and trust in him. Only because of his obedience does God the Father forgive our sins by grace, regard us as upright and righteous, and give us eternal salvation. (SD III, 9–11)¹

It sounds simple enough, right? After all, the Formula has spoken and matters are settled. Yet anyone familiar with the history of the church over the last 500 years knows that while Protestants are agreed on the language of *justification by faith*, the way that other traditions understand this language oftentimes differs dramatically. The same can be said of the term *faith* generally. Even within the various traditions there are marked differences over the understanding of justification by faith. After all, immediately preceding the above quotation from the Formula, the authors admitted that a controversy had raged within Lutheranism for a number of years over just what the *righteousness of faith* is. That is why there is an Article III of the Formula!

¹ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 563–564.

So what led to these tensions and problems in Lutheranism? Why the confusion over faith? Let us consider the term *faith* in contemporary evangelicalism. For the purpose of this article, contemporary means anything after 1800. We will examine a well-known parade of characters. First Pietists, then Charles Finney, and finally Joel Osteen will tell us how Luther got faith wrong—or at least incomplete. We will let Luther have the last word.

I. Faith in Pietism

As Lutheranism emerged from the Thirty Years' War and was celebrating its 150th anniversary, some within the Lutheran communion were increasingly concerned about the lack of "lived faith." In the minds of some, times had changed, and the emphasis of Luther and the Formula on faith being *pure passive* had to be updated given the new circumstances. While Philip Jacob Spener recognized that Luther had to speak against works in his context, that context no longer obtained. A revision was in order.

The reason why holiness of life must be dealt with more *now* is because we live in a time when people, from misunderstanding, mostly misuse the gospel and the doctrine of faith. Therefore, we should not speak much now against works when hardly anyone thinks to join works to justification and when most consider them to be neither possible nor necessary We should mostly extol the *power of faith*, which is active through love and holy living.²

One of the basic concerns of Pietism as a movement was discerning who truly had faith and who did not. In a state church setting, inclusion in the church was largely automatic; baptism was offered to children as a normal life event. Children were born into sin and so were in need of forgiveness and regeneration. Baptism offered both, though not in a completed sense. Perhaps it would be better to say that for the Pietists, baptism started the process of conversion, which might later eventuate in conversion and true faith. Why? The inner man could only be reached by a coherent, reasonably stated, and understood articulation of the gospel. Gospel proclamation was information about sin and grace—information that

² Philip Jacob Spener, "Whether Luther Urged Good Works," in *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517–1750*, ed. Eric Lund (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 284.

demanded action. As the father of organized Lutheran Pietism, Spener put it this way:

One should therefore emphasize that the divine means of Word and sacrament are concerned with the *inner man*. Hence it is *not enough* that we hear the Word with our outward ear, but *we* must let it penetrate to our heart, so that *we* may hear the Holy Spirit speak there, that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit and the power of the Word. *Nor is it enough to be baptized*, but the *inner man*, where we have put on Christ in Baptism, must also keep Christ on and bear witness to him in our outward life. . . . The real power of Christianity consists of this.³

What worried Spener and other Pietists was an overemphasis on the external means of grace that seemed, in their minds, to be a return to the *ex opere operato* of medieval Rome. Such a theology, they claimed, simply turned evangelical sacraments into a new form of works righteousness. Sacraments replaced true, living faith—the external for the internal. Worse still, this theology encouraged people to be lax in their sanctification. Spener put it this way:

How many there are who live such a manifestly unchristian life that they themselves cannot deny that the law is broken at every point, who have no intention of mending their ways in the future, and yet who pretend to be firmly convinced that they will be saved in spite of all this! . . . They are sure of this because it is of course not possible to be saved on account of one's life, but they believe in Christ and put all their trust in him, that this cannot fail, and they will surely be saved by such faith.⁴

Such a faith, says Spener, "leads many people to damnation."⁵ Faith as knowledge, assent, and trust—as Lutherans had defined it—was not quite enough. Action needed to be added. Proto-pietist Johann Arndt reflected this concern as well when he critiqued the Lutheran position:

I am baptized into Christ; I have the pure word of God; I hear it; I receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; I also believe and confess all the articles of the Christian faith. . . . I am a Christian in truth, and in the

³ Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. tr. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 117; emphasis added.

⁴ Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 64.

⁵ Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 64.

right way to be saved. This, alas! is the general, but false reasoning of many in these days, who regard their outward performances as constituting true righteousness . . . Look therefore into this, and learn to judge of thyself by the inward frame of thy soul. . . Hast thou received the unction from above, and art thou possessed of the fruits of the Spirit, that demonstrate a Christian?⁶

In place of this over externalized theology, the Pietists turned their hearers inward. "Dost thou truly believe?" was the question. The answer to this question was not to be found in the simple answer: "Yes! I am baptized!" Rather, the answer of the Pietists was more complex. Christ called us to repentance. After it follow the forgiveness of sins, the imputation of his righteousness, and his holy obedience in the power of faith. Without such *inner faith*, Christ is of no use to man, that is, man does not participate in his grace and the fruit of his merit, which must be received with a sorrowful, broken, repentant, faithful, and humble heart.⁷

What is "true worship" and a faithful life, then? It is not "external ceremonies or sacrifices . . . The true, proper worship, which is pleasing to God, consists *internally* in pure faith . . . the practice of faith, love and humility . . . True worship must proceed from the ground of the heart out of faith, love, and humility."⁸ Because anyone could say this, what offered proof? August Herman Franke tells us:

This then, beloved in the Lord Jesus, is the pure and unblemished worship in Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ, considered according to a threefold duty toward oneself, toward one's neighbor, and toward God, and consisting in the practice of the same through the power of the Spirit. Now enter into your hearts and observe there your circumstances in regard to this threefold duty. See how far you have progressed in them . . .⁹

Arndt summarizes: "Have I not preached to you out of which forgiveness comes? Where is *your* repentance? Where is the true living

⁶ Johann Arndt, *True Christianity: A Treatise on Sincere Repentance, True Faith, the Holy Walk of the True Christian, etc.*, tr. A. W. Boehm, rev. ed. Charles F. Schaeffer (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1868).

⁷ Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, ed. tr. Peter Erb (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 43.

⁸ Arndt, *True Christianity* (1979), 132.

⁹ Peter Erb, ed., *Pietists—Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 162.

faith? Where is the renewal of your mind, the church of life? It is there where forgiveness of sins is.”¹⁰

Where? It is located inside of *you*, though made manifest in your sanctified life. Pietism’s pastoral concern over sin and proper critique of it notwithstanding—they did a very good job proclaiming the law—their solution to that problem was to point people to themselves. That is, their understanding of faith made it necessarily reflective. What we will see below is just how radically this departs from Luther’s understanding of faith, which is essentially non-reflective and externally focused. But first, what about Evangelicalism proper?

II. Faith in Evangelical Revivalists

For me, the word *contemporary* really applies to the nineteenth century—so we are getting closer to the present. What did faith mean to nineteenth-century figures? Here, of course, we have to turn to Charles Grandison Finney, the great American Revivalist. Like the earlier Pietists, Finney was especially concerned with the passivity suggested by historic Protestantism. He wanted an active faith—for faith active in works of obedient love was the basis on which the sinner was pronounced justified. Finney picked up the pietistic stress on the sanctified life and largely made it gospel. Finney is Pietism on steroids.

“Faith active in works of love justifies”—does that sounds a little Roman? Personally, I think that might be unfair to Rome, which is merely Semi-Pelagian. In fact, Finney is more Pelagian than Pelagius. And he shows this nowhere more clearly than in what he believes justification by faith is *not*. Read how he expresses himself in this lengthy quotation.

1. Gospel Justification is not the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Under the gospel, sinners are not justified by having the obedience of Jesus Christ set down to their account, as if he had obeyed the law for them, or in their stead. It is not an uncommon mistake to suppose that when sinners are justified under the gospel they are accounted righteous in the eye of the law, by having the obedience or righteousness of Christ imputed to them. . . . I can only say that this idea is absurd and impossible, for this reason, that Jesus Christ was bound to obey the law for himself, and could no more perform works

¹⁰ Arndt, *True Christianity* (1979), 114.

of supererogation, or obey on our account, than any body else. Was it not his duty to love the Lord his God, with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love his neighbor as himself? Certainly; and if he had not done so, it would have been sin. The only work of supererogation he could perform was to submit to sufferings that were not deserved. This is called his obedience unto death, and this is set down to our account. But if his obedience of the law is set down to our account, why are we called on to repent and obey the law ourselves? Does God exact double service, yes, triple service, first to have the law obeyed by the surety for us, then that he must suffer the penalty for us, and then that we must repent and obey ourselves? No such thing is demanded. It is not required that the obedience of another should be imputed to us. All we owe is perpetual obedience to the law of benevolence. And for this there can be no substitute.

2. Justification by faith does not mean that faith is accepted as a substitute for personal holiness, or that by an arbitrary constitution, faith is imputed to us instead of personal obedience to the law.

Some suppose that justification is this, that the necessity of personal holiness is set aside, and that God arbitrarily dispenses with the requirement of the law, and imputes faith as a substitute. But this is not the way. Faith is accounted for just what it is, and not for something else that it is not. Abraham's faith was imputed unto him for righteousness, because it was itself an *act* of righteousness, and because it *worked* by love, and thus *produced* holiness. *Justifying faith is holiness . . .* and produces holiness of heart and life, and is imputed to the believer as holiness, not instead of holiness.

3. Nor does justification by faith imply that a sinner is justified by faith, without good works, or personal holiness.

Some suppose that justification by faith only, is without any regard to good works, or holiness. They have understood this from what Paul has said, where he insists so largely on justification by faith. But it should be borne in mind that Paul was combating the error of the Jews, who expected to be justified by obeying the law. In opposition to this error, Paul insists on it that justification is by faith, without works of law. He does not mean that good works are unnecessary to justification, but that works of law are not good works, because they spring from legal considerations, from hope and fear, and not from faith that works by love. But inasmuch as a false theory had crept into

the church on the other side, James took up the matter, and showed them that they had misunderstood Paul. . . . This epistle was supposed to contradict Paul, and some of the ancient churches rejected it on that account. But they overlooked the fact that Paul was speaking of one kind of works, and James of another. Paul was speaking of works performed from legal motives. But he has every where [*sic*] insisted on good works springing from faith, or the righteousness of faith, as *indispensable to salvation*. All that he denies is, that works of law, or works grounded on legal motives, have any thing to do in the matter of justification. And James teaches the same thing, when he teaches that men are justified, not by works nor by faith alone, but by faith *together with the works of faith*.¹¹

For Finney, Christ's work of living and dying on behalf of sinners did not objectively accomplish the payment for the sins of the world. Rather, Christ fulfilled the law, as he must, *for himself*. Beyond that, however, his faithfulness opened possibilities to those who followed him in a life of obedience to the revealed will of God. Christ's death and resurrection did not accomplish salvation—they *made salvation a possibility*. The realization of that possibility remained the responsibility of the individual Christian who, by acts of the will, chose to live the obedient life. This act of the will coupled with the obedient life is faith for Finney. Thus faith is knowledge, trust, assent, and *obedient action*.

Obviously, this is a massive confusion of law and gospel, and one that goes well beyond the Pietists—Finney really makes Pietism look good. But this confusion finds its application especially in Finney's doctrine of baptism. For him baptism was a means by which the apostles got the attention of their hearers, what he called a *new measure*. But, like all things human, it had lost its attractiveness and appeal, largely due to the church investing it with a mysterious power. As such, Finney believed, it might be useful to develop other practices to incite the hearer to the act of faith. Here his own words in these three paragraphs:

Just so with the awakened sinner. Preach to him, and, at the moment, he thinks he is willing to do anything; he thinks he is determined to serve the Lord; but bring him to the test; call on him to do one thing, to take

¹¹ Charles G. Finney, "Justification by Faith," *The Gospel Truth Web site* (Orange, CA: Gospel Truth Ministries, 1999–2006), http://www.gospeltruth.net/1837LTPC/lptc05_just_by_faith.htm (accessed January 18, 2006); emphasis added.

one step, that shall identify him with the people of God or cross his pride, and his pride comes up, and he refuses; his delusion is brought out, and he finds himself a lost sinner still; whereas, if you had not done it, he might have gone away flattering himself that he was a Christian. If you say to him: "There is the anxious seat, come out and avow your determination to be on the Lord's side," and if he is not willing to do so small a thing as that, then he is not willing to do anything, and there he is, brought out before his own conscience. It uncovers the delusion of the human heart, and prevents a great many spurious conversions, by showing those who might otherwise imagine themselves willing to do anything for Christ that in fact they are willing to do nothing.

The Church has always felt it necessary to have something of the kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles baptism answered this purpose. The Gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ were called on to be baptized.

[Baptism] held the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation of a determination to be a Christian.¹²

For Finney, faith demands action and baptism is an act of faith. Curious as to whether you are a Christian or not? Then look to your acts of faith.

III. Faith in Contemporary Evangelicalism

Evangelical revivalists in the Finney tradition have continued to develop his thought and practice. While some have steered clear of his more egregious denials of the imputation of Christ's righteousness and Christ's atoning work, others have followed in his tendency to interiorize faith and make the decision of the sinner the key to salvation. The sacraments are at best ignored, at worst turned into demands and symbolic obligations that indicate the presence of an already existing interior faith. We could employ any number of examples, but none is more applicable than Joel Osteen, pastor of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. His book, *Your Best Life Now!* had long residence on the bestseller lists, both sacred and secular.¹³

¹² Charles G. Finney, "Lectures on Revivals of Religions: Measures to Promote Revivals," *The Gospel Truth Web site*, http://www.gospeltruth.net/1868Lect_on_Rev_of_Rel/68revlec14.htm (accessed January 18, 2006).

¹³ Joel Osteen, *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Full Potential* (New York: Warner Faith, 2004).

Osteen's approach is straight-forward and accessible. If you want your best life now!, then carry out these seven principles: 1) enlarge your vision; 2) develop a healthy self-image; 3) discover the power of your thoughts and words; 4) let go of the past (which, as an historian, I find *very* offensive); 5) stand strong against opposition and adversity; 6) live to give; 7) choose to be happy. Says Osteen, "happy, successful, fulfilled individuals have learned how to live their best lives now" and he promises that "by following the principles I'm going to share with you . . . you can be happy and fulfilled, starting today."¹⁴ Note the possibilities here—you *can* be happy, *if* you have faith and employ these principles. The converse? If you are not happy, you do not have faith. Let us allow Osteen to tell us this himself in these five paragraphs.

We have to conceive it on the inside before we're ever going to receive it on the outside. If you don't think you can have something good, then you never will. The barrier is in your mind. It's not God's lack of resources or your lack of talent that prevents you from prospering. Your own wrong thinking can keep you from God's best.¹⁵

You must look through your "eyes of faith" and start seeing yourself as happy, healthy, and whole. That means even when your situation looks bleak, when you're tempted to be discouraged or depressed, you must encourage yourself by praying, "God, I know that You are in control, and even though this looks impossible, I know today could be the day that things turn around. Today could be the day You restore my marriage. This could be the day You bring my child home. Today may be the day my business begins to prosper exponentially. This could be the day I see my miracle."

Then keep believing and watching for those good things to come to fruition in your life. *You must make a conscious decision, an act of your will*, to maintain an attitude of expectancy and keep your mind filled with thoughts of hope¹⁶

If you do this, things will improve—they must. For, you see, God wants to make your life easier. He wants to assist you, to promote you, to give you advantages. He wants you to have preferential treatment. But if

¹⁴ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, xi, x.

¹⁵ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 3.

¹⁶ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 15–16; emphasis added.

we're going to experience more of God's favor, we must live more "favor-minded." To be favor minded simply means that we expect God's special help, and we are releasing our faith, knowing that God wants to assist us¹⁷

Live favor-minded. Get up each day and expect it and declare it. Say, "I have the favor of God." Don't sit back passively. *You do your part, and God will do His part.* And you'll have everything you need.¹⁸

Once you do your part, then God will do his part. At that point, you will have everything you need – but not before. Hear Osteen again:

God wants you to be a winner, not a whiner. There is no reason for you to be perpetually living "under the circumstances," always down, always discouraged. No matter how many times you get knocked down, keep getting back up. God sees your resolve. He sees your determination. *And when you do everything you do, that's when God will step in and do what you can't do.*¹⁹

What is the bottom line? In Osteen, we find ourselves back to something like the ledger of good and evil deeds found in medieval Rome.

God is keeping a record of every good deed you've ever done. He is keeping a record of every seed you've ever sown. You may think it went unnoticed, but God saw it. And in your time of need, He will make sure that somebody is there to help you. Your generous gifts will come back

¹⁷ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 38–39.

¹⁸ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 43; emphasis added. See also 82: "Understand, God has already equipped you with everything you need to live a prosperous life. He planted "seeds" inside you filled with possibilities, incredible potential, creative ideas, and dreams. But just because those things are within you doesn't mean they will do you any good. You have to start tapping into them. In other words, you've got to believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that you have what it takes."

¹⁹ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 192; emphasis added. See also, 214: "In my life, I've discovered two kinds of faith—a *delivering* faith and a *sustaining* faith. Delivering faith is when God instantly turns your situation around. When that happens, it's great. But I believe it takes a greater faith and deeper talk with God to have that sustaining faith. That's when circumstances don't change immediately, but you say, "God, I don't care what comes against me, I don't care how long it takes, this thing is not going to defeat me. It's not going to get me down. I know You're on my side. And as long as You are for me, that all that matters." Sustaining faith is what gets you through those dark nights of the soul when you don't know where to go or what to do, and it seems that you can't last another day . . . but *because of your faith* in God, you do."

to you. God has seen every smile you've ever given to a hurting person. He's observed every time you went out of the way to lend a helping hand. God has witnessed when you have given sacrificially, even giving money that perhaps you needed desperately for yourself or your family. God is keeping those records. Some people will tell you that it doesn't make any difference whether you give or not, or that it doesn't do any good. But don't listen to those lies. God has promised that your generous gifts will come back to you. In your time of need, *because of your generosity*, God will move heaven and earth to make sure you are taken care of.²⁰

"Because of your faith," "Because of your generosity," "Because of YOU!" God's gracious and giving actions are conditioned on the frame of mind of the individual, which itself is conditioned on faith of the individual. If things are not going well, *have more faith; believe the right way*. The choice is yours—act!

Still, that nagging question remains: "Do I really believe?" The answer, in a rather profound irony, is found in the external circumstances that are created by your faith. As notes above, if you enlarge your vision, develop a healthy self-image, discover the power of your thoughts and words, let go of the past, stand strong against opposition and adversity, live to give, and choose to be happy, then the material circumstances of your life will change to the point where you will be sure that you have true faith.

A theology of faith and works offers no real and lasting comfort. So where shall we turn for relief?

IV. Faith in Luther

Let us hold on to our history and go back to Luther. In a recent issue of *Pro Ecclesia*, one of the more significant articles on Luther's theology in recent memory has appeared. Titled "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," author Philip Cary addresses Luther's understanding of faith, the sacraments, and justification over against the Reformed/Protestant tradition.²¹ The simple version of his thesis is this: for Protestantism, faith is reflective, internally oriented; for Luther faith is unreflective, externally oriented or located in the sacraments, which bring the word of God

²⁰ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 262; emphasis added.

²¹ Phillip Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant: The Logic of Faith in a Sacramental Promise," *Pro Ecclesia* 14 (Fall 2005): 447–486.

concretely to human beings. The result? The Protestant must always ask, "Do I *really* have faith?" Whereas the Lutheran says: "I am baptized!" The Protestant is left with the question mark; Lutherans have the exclamation point!

Cary notes how surprised Luther would be to be confronted by an American Evangelical revivalist. "Brother, are you saved?" was an easily answered question for Luther: "Of course, I am baptized." Cary notes how Luther pointed outside of himself to the objective working of God in the sacraments. Commenting on this distinctively Lutheran turn, Cary writes: "Someone who gives such an answer does not think a decision for Christ or a conversion experience is necessary in order to be a Christian. It is enough to be baptized as an infant and then believe what you are taught, for instance, in a catechism. Hence it is not surprising that there is no revivalist tradition native to Lutheranism."²²

Rather, in Cary's mind, the logic of faith works differently for Luther. There is a "double structure of God's word: first a scriptural promise of Christ that institutes the sacrament, then an oral word that is part of the sacramental action itself."²³ As such, "the baptismal formula, 'I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,' *is the word of Christ*."²⁴ As a result, "the words spoken in the act of baptizing are Christ's own, so it is Christ who really performs the baptism."²⁵

What, then, is Cary's conclusion?

[F]or Luther Christian faith is quite literally faith in one's baptism. To have faith in Christ is to believe him when he says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Since baptism signifies new life in Christ, faith justifies us by receiving this new life. Faith in effect speaks thus: Christ says he baptizes me, and therefore (since baptism means new life in Christ) I have new life in Christ. Hence for Luther justification does not require us to have a conversion experience or make a decision for Christ. These are acts of will that would detract from Luther's point about faith alone: that we are justified merely by believing what Christ says is true. The logical connection is made by

²² Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 448.

²³ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 450.

²⁴ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 451; emphasis added.

²⁵ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 451.

Luther's motto, "believe it and you have it": to believe in your baptism *is* to have the new life Christ signifies when he baptizes you.²⁶

The importance of this position emerges when we recall just how notoriously fickle human beings really are. Even as Christians, we swing wildly between faith and unbelief, between confidence and despair. The reason for Luther is simple and blunt: "all men are liars."²⁷ As such, dare we make a judgment about someone's faith on the basis of their own claim? After all, we are untrustworthy individuals. "Believe me, I believe!" Oh, do you? Are you sure? Have you sinned this day? Have you lied? Cheated? Stolen? Murdered? If so, I cannot believe you. You are not trustworthy, you are a liar. Luther states plainly, "God alone knows the heart."²⁸ As such, "whoever bases baptism on the faith of the one to be baptized can never baptize anyone."²⁹ For it is impossible to know who has true faith, and that includes the individual himself or herself. Again, as Luther puts it, "the baptized one who receives or grounds his baptism on his faith . . . is not sure of his own faith."³⁰

That every man is a liar includes all human beings, which includes me. I cannot have any faith in my own words. I cannot have faith in my own confession. I certainly cannot have faith in my faith. I cannot have faith in anything that is my own. To do so would be to return to the reflexive faith of medieval Rome—the *curvatus in se*. Rather, I am drawn out of myself by the external word of the gospel to the promises of God in Christ. Again, quoting Cary:

In this sense Luther makes Christian faith profoundly unreflective: faith does not include knowing one has faith. It does not even require *believing* one has faith: for "he who doesn't think he believes, but is in despair, has the greatest faith." Christian faith puts no faith in faith, precisely because it is faith in God's word alone. For faith, Luther teaches, must be certain, which means it cannot put faith in our inadequate ability to believe. So for Luther the doctrine of justification by faith alone means that

²⁶ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 451; emphasis added.

²⁷ Martin Luther, "Concerning Rebaptism," in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 40:240 (hereafter LW).

²⁸ LW 40:240.

²⁹ LW 40:240.

³⁰ LW 40:240; emphasis from Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 452n15.

Christians do *not* rely on faith. Faith does not rely on itself but only on the promise of Christ.³¹

The word of Christ—being a sacramental word—is wholly external. It depends on an external reality—the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ—for its meaning. And its truth is located in the Christ who speaks the sure word of promise, uttered without condition to sinners. There is no demand to the sinner to “have faith”—he cannot. There is only Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, creates faith by means of the proclamation of Gospel.

The implications are profound, and Cary summarizes them well:

This dependence on external circumstances of utterance makes it possible for the word of Christ to use the pronoun “you” to address me in particular. (This understanding of the gospel as a sacramental word of address leads to Luther’s habit of expounding the logic of faith in the first person singular, which I adopt here. Trying to speak in the third person when explaining Luther’s theology—persistently saying “one is baptized,” for instance, rather than “I am baptized”—makes for unbearably awkward prose. This is no accident, of course. Luther wants to make it difficult to overlook the first-person character of faith, which includes the realization that Christ’s life and death, preaching and promise are indeed *for me*. This is the famous Lutheran *pro me*. It is important to notice that the emphasis here is not on personal experience but on the content of the word of God. When the gospel is preached—most clearly of all in the sacraments—Christ himself says “you” and means me. To believe this word is to learn about myself from another, rather than to trust my own personal experience or feeling. Thus the Lutheran *pro me* does not make faith reflective, but precisely explains why it is unreflective: to believe Christ’s word is to be uninterested in the fact that I believe but captivated by what Christ has to say to me. . . . If the gospel alone is the proper object of faith, then the *pro me*—the fact that I am the object of Christ’s love and redemption—is part of the content of faith, whereas an awareness that I believe is not. That is why faith in a word that is explicitly *pro me* is free to be unreflective.)³²

³¹ Cary, “Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant,” 452.

³² Cary, “Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant,” 452–453.

In the Evangelical tradition, as we have seen, faith is largely reflective, though its veracity is located either in the sanctified life (Pietism), the decision and obedience of the individual (Finney), or the life circumstances made possible by a frame of mind (Osteen). In all these cases, the gospel is made conditional on the believer's act of faith. It is essentially and necessarily self-referencing.³³ Nowhere do we see this more clearly than in the conditional preaching of justification. You are justified *if* you believe. For Luther, that leads the sinner back to himself and robs him of the gospel's comfort.

Thus, if Evangelical Protestantism is concerned with a reflexive faith in faith, Luther appeals to us to "cling to externals." In the context of the Sacrament of the Altar, Cary contrasts the effects of this posture for Calvin and Luther: "Calvin will say 'the Sacrament sends us to the cross of Christ,' whereas for Luther if we want to receive what Christ won on the cross we go to the sacrament, not the cross, for it is in the sacrament that that it is actually given to us through the word."³⁴ Why? Because "apart from his word Christ is present everywhere like sunlight, and is equally ungraspable."³⁵ However, while "He is present everywhere . . . he does not wish that you grope for him everywhere. Grope rather where the Word [is], and there you [will] lay hold of him in the right way He has put himself into the Word, and through the Word he puts himself into the bread also."³⁶ And so, summarizing, Cary writes:

This externalistic sacramental piety—groping for God in bread—is indispensable if faith is to be unreflective. A faith that looks away from itself needs somewhere external to look—somewhere quite independent of the experience of faith. If, on the contrary, we must not "cling too tightly to the outward sign" as Calvin says, then the sacraments must direct our attention away from themselves to something more spiritual and heavenly—and that means faith will inevitably become to some degree an adventure of conscious experience, transcending the mere perception of outward things.³⁷

³³ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 457.

³⁴ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 462.

³⁵ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 466.

³⁶ LW 36:342–343; quoted in Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 466.

³⁷ Cary, "Why Luther Is not Quite Protestant," 466.

Note the difference in Luther, who constantly points troubled sinners to the completed work of Christ bound up in the word and sacraments:

Although the work is done and the forgiveness of sins is secured by the cross (John 19:30), it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. How would we know about it otherwise, that such a thing was accomplished or was to be given to us, unless it were presented by preaching or the oral Word (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 1:21)? How do they know about it? Or how can they receive and make the forgiveness their own, unless they take hold of and believe the Scriptures and the Gospel? . . . The treasure, indeed, is opened and placed at everyone's door, yes, upon his table.³⁸

V. Conclusion

The website of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod summarizes the thinking of Osteen and others of the Word/Faith school very nicely:

- Faith is a force, released by words, by which one can create reality: "The force of faith is released or activated by words. Faith-filled words put the law of the Spirit of life into operation."
- The "force of faith" is activated by speaking or positively confessing what one desires and requests from God: "Your right confession will become a reality, and then you will get whatever you need from God." Negative words create negative realities in one's life.
- God wills that every Christian have perfect health and experience complete healing: "God intends for every believer to live completely free from sickness and disease." God has obligated Himself to heal every sickness for those who have faith. The promise to heal is part of Christ's atonement. The failure to be healed is evidence of a lack of faith. To pray "thy will be done" is to destroy faith. In fact, when people die they bear some of the blame, because [*sic*] did not have enough faith.³⁹

³⁸ Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*, *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 461.

³⁹ The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, "Word-Faith Movement," *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Web site* <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CTCR/Word-Faith%20Movement%20ROM%20Eval.pdf> (accessed January 18, 2006).

To put it another way: the gift is free, it is yours, *all you have to do . . .* With those five little words, grace is limited, faith changes from that which receives God's gifts to that which acts to move God to give, and the phrase "saved by grace!" with its exclamation point, to "saved by faith?" with its question mark. The gospel applies to you only if you meet the conditions.

For Luther, on the other hand, the gospel is unconditional and creates its own reality through the working of the Spirit in the sacramental word.

Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe on Him, and have Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 12:3; Galatians 4:6). The work of redemption is done and accomplished (John 19:30). Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, resurrection, and so on (Colossians 2:3) . . . So that this treasure might not stay buried, but be received and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed. In the Word he has the Holy Spirit bring this treasure home and make it our own. Therefore sanctifying is just bringing us to Christ so we receive this good, which we could not get ourselves.⁴⁰

Contrast Luther's certainties with Osteen's potentialities and uncertainties:

Raise *your* level of expectancy. It's our faith that activates the power of God. Let's quit limiting Him with our small-minded thinking and start believing Him for bigger and better things. Remember, *if* you obey God and are willing to trust Him, you will have the best this life has to offer—and more! Make a decision that from this day you are going to be excited about the life God has for you.⁴¹

Is it all about us? No. It is all about Christ who has made us his own in baptism! In contrast to Osteen and in alignment with Luther, therefore, we sing:

God's own child I gladly say it,
I am baptized into Christ
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price

⁴⁰ Luther, *Large Catechism, Concordia*, 429.

⁴¹ Osteen, *Your Best Life Now*, 306.

Do I need earth's treasures many?
I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free,
Lasting to eternity!⁴²

⁴² "God's Own Child, I Gladly Say It," in *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 594:1.

Frederick Henry Quitman and the Catechesis of the American Lutheran Enlightenment

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Frederick Henry Quitman (1760-1832) stands among the most prominent of early American Lutheran theologians largely to be overlooked in the twentieth century. His theology and practices departed from what was considered normative in the Lutheran Church, although he could never escape his thoroughly Pietist Hallensian training. Ordained in 1781, he was sent to Curacao in the West Indies, and from there to New York, where a short visit resulted in his eventually serving four congregations near Rhinebeck. This culminated in his election as president of the New York ministerium following the death of John Christopher Kunze in 1807. As president of the ministerium for twenty-one years, he managed to preach his brand of Christian rationalism as expounded by his teacher Johann Salomo Semler. This version of Christianity attempted to explain away many of the Scriptures' miracles as culturally-conditioned superstitions in which uneducated and illiberal peasants described the most natural of phenomena in terms of signs and wonders. This religion depended upon human potential in overcoming a sin that did not really cripple. Synergism and Socinianism were likewise natural manifestations of a religion that did not understand the gospel because it did not understand the law.

Quitman published his *Treatise on Magic* in 1810 as a means to explain some supposedly supernatural manifestations in Rhinebeck.¹ This was followed by *A Collection of Hymns and a Liturgy* in 1814, co-edited by Augustus Wackerhagen,² as well as a new *Evangelical Catechism* that same year, of which Quitman was the sole author.³ He would go on to preach

¹ Frederick H. Quitman, *A Treatise on Magic, or, on the Intercourse between Spirits and Men: with Annotations* (Albany, NY: Balance Press, 1810).

² August Wackerhagen and Frederick H. Quitman, eds., *A Collection of Hymns and a Liturgy, for the Use of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches* (Philadelphia: G. & D. Billmeyer, 1814).

³ Frederick H. Quitman, *Evangelical Catechism: or a Short Exposition of the Principle Doctrines and Precepts of the Christian Religion* (Hudson, NY: William E. Norman, 1814).

three sermons on the anniversary of the Reformation.⁴ Quitman's hymnal and catechism are the primary sources for this study. Although Wackerhagen is listed as co-editor of the hymnal, scholars generally call it "Quitman's Hymnal." Its preface bears all the grammatical and stylistic hallmarks of Quitman himself. The methodology of analyzing this hymnal is predicated on the assumption that, even if a hymn is not written by an editor, it is selected for inclusion by the editor due to its merits and overall congruence with the remainder of the hymnal. Therefore, although none of the hymns have authors ascribed (although some are recognizable from other English sources), it is presumed that none of the hymns will contain significant content contrary to what the editor is trying to convey. A reading of the catechism is fortunately straightforward and can be used to interpret Quitman's intentions in editing and compiling the hymnal.

Also important to note is Quitman's use of English. He was probably at least facilitous in Low German, High German, and Dutch, to which he added English later. One can see in his writing style (particularly in the use of commas to delineate clauses) his debt to German. Quitman himself warns his readers not to critique his writing, "As I have not written this essay, as a specimen of my proficiency in the English language, I am indifferent about alphabet critics."⁵ Self-deprecation aside, Quitman can be adroit in his use of theologically precise language when he cares to be. Through this language, Quitman reveals his curious world of trying to live both as an enlightened rationalist as well as an ordained steward of the mysteries of God.

I. Reason, Revelation, and Natural Law

The formulation of a coherent systematic theology from Frederick Quitman's writings must involve a thorough understanding of his view of reason and faith, natural law, and epistemology. While studying in the great Pietist center of Halle, Quitman came under the influence of the rationalist biblical critic Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791). This "Father of German Rationalism" had advocated an essentially historical-critical hermeneutic and labored to promote a religion with less of theology and

⁴ Frederick H. Quitman, *Three Sermons: the first preached before the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, convened in Christ's Church, in the town of Claverack, on Sunday the seventh of September, 1817, and the second and third on the Reformation by Doctor Martin Luther commenced October thirty-first, A.D., 1517*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: William Fry, 1818).

⁵ Quitman, *Treatise on Magic*, vi.

more of good works—in the spirit and model of Christ and his apostles so he claimed. Although there is evidence that Semler retreated from some of his rationalist tendencies toward the end of his life, his influence upon Quitman occurred at the height of Semler's intellectual prowess. For the German rationalists, orthodoxy, with its abstruse doctrinal rules and accounts of a vengeful and capricious Hebrew deity, held little relevance to the enlightened thinker. Semler had advocated an accomodationalist view of the Scriptures whereby miracles could be explained away and the supernatural excised because Christ had merely accomodated himself to the barbaric and unenlightened peculiarities of the ancient world. In order for these teachings to be useful 1700 years hence, thought Semler, they must be reconciled to the current time.⁶ Quitman echoes this sentiment in one of his sermons:

"The Bible," says a late divine of our Church, "is a book designed for men, and it ought to be read in the spirit of man." The same method therefore, which we observe in the investigation of the proper intention of any uninspired writer, ought to be pursued in the examination of the true sense of the holy scriptures.⁷

This "spirit of man," is simply pure reason. Reason is able to uncover this "true sense" of scripture. This is a rather curious use of the term, as though somehow God has deigned to mystify humanity by hiding his thoughts somewhere within this conglomerated mass of Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. The gulf between faith and reason here becomes clear: in order to discover God's true revelation and the true sense of the Scriptures, one must apply reason, through which only a faithful application would be rewarded by eventual individual revelation. Quitman, therefore, continues by noting that, "the Gospel of Christ does not shrink from the tribunal of reason, but even invites to a close and impartial examination of its origin and contents."⁸ This idea holds little novelty to modern liberal Protestants, but this rationalism applied to the Lutheran faith (if not to Christian orthodoxy in general) negates a long scriptural tradition of faith

⁶ John Fletcher Hurst, *History of Rationalism* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1865), 130.

⁷ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 8. The "late divine" mentioned here is probably Semler.

⁸ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 14.

superceding reason, of which Luther spoke: "That which is to lead us to heaven must be something above our reason and wisdom."⁹

Quitman's epistemology is evident in his *Treatise on Magic* (1810), in which he addresses two supernatural events in the Scriptures: the account of the Egyptian magicians and the witch of Endor. Rather than reading the Scriptures literally, Quitman explains through complicated *non sequiturs* what this account of the Exodus means:

Our attention is directed to the magicians of Egypt, who opposed Moses, the divine legislator of the Jews. These sorcerers are said, in the second book of Moses . . . to have changed their rods into serpents, the water of the Nile into blood, and to have produced abundance of frogs. But who sees not the mark of the IMPOSTOR branded on the forehead of these magicians? . . . For such men it was no difficult task to make all others believe what they pleased. . . . Thus circumstanced, they found no difficulty to make it appear by sleight of hand, as if their rods were changed into serpents, to give to the muddy water of the Nile a reddish color, and slily to introduce some hidden frogs, into the royal apartment. But when they were bidden to act on a broader scale, and to enter, after the example of Moses, the open tracts of nature, they humbly confessed that their power had forsaken them.¹⁰

What is meant by the "secret arts" of the Egyptian sorcerers is not at issue here. That they were tricksters is possible. However, Quitman's rationale makes one wonder as to whether he believed in any miraculous occurrences. The backward Egyptians provided an easy literary target; but, if these conjurers' secret arts are so easily explained away, down what sort of rationalistic path does this lead? He addresses the witch of Endor event with this assessment: ". . . the famous witch of Endor was nothing else but an infamous imposter, who had acquired great proficiency in her art; and that she well knew how to turn this trade to her interest."¹¹ The villain provides a good theological scapegoat, and one might argue that the Scriptures' aims could still be accomplished in either story whether the antagonists were tricksters or genuinely called upon the supernatural. The

⁹ Martin Luther, "John 6" in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986), 23:80 (hereafter *LW*).

¹⁰ Quitman, *Treatise on Magic*, 44.

¹¹ Quitman, *Treatise on Magic*, 47.

juxtaposition in both stories of the supernatural powers of good versus evil provides a context through which the acts of God are powerfully recorded. If the Egyptians could so easily duplicate the plagues using common scientific principles, who is to say Moses engaged in no sleight-of-hand himself? Quitman himself seems to anticipate where this line of reasoning will take him, and he addresses this concern:

This sacred book [the Bible] is no encyclopaedia, or source from whence the knowledge of all the arts and sciences must be drawn. Its authors wrote in a simple and uncultivated style, accomodated to the unpolished genius of remote antiquity; so that from the forementioned accounts we can infer nothing more than that those notions prevailed in their time. In this regard, therefore, we ought to follow the advice of the fathers of the primitive church, who laid it down as a maxim: that in dubious scriptural passages, we must first enquire, what reason dictates and what daily experience teaches, and explain such passages accordingly; and since the art of magic or supernatural operations, performed by the agency of spirits, cannot be proved by reason or ascertained by experience, it follows that the scriptures cannot be applied to this case.¹²

Although this passage contextually follows the two magician discussions, the language does not proscribe the use of reason to deny God's miracles in the scriptural narrative. This is about as close as Quitman comes to denying the miraculous. Naturally it is difficult to construct a theology out of that which is unmentioned, but perhaps it is significant that even Jesus' miracles are omitted from any specific discussion in the catechism (save the virgin birth and the resurrection.) Later in the catechism, Quitman is able to discuss the Seventh Commandment, even mentioning "the presence of our Lord at the wedding of Cana" without mentioning the first miracle!

In Quitman's understanding of the universe, as it is in many contemporary strands of biblical criticism, God works only through the natural laws he has designed. For God to do otherwise negates reason and, therefore, himself. Within the hymnal, one hymn ascribes to God very different titles than those traditionally ascribed to him, "Supreme and universal light! Fountain of reason! Judge of right! Without whose kind, directing ray, in everlasting night we stray. Assist us, Lord, to act, to be, what all thy sacred laws decree; worthy that intellectual flame, which from

¹² Quitman, *Treatise on Magic*, 57.

thy breathing spirit came.”¹³ Here again is Adam’s rationality the necessary prerogative for being human; he now owns that “intellectual flame” which, apparently, is breathed by God’s spirit. Perhaps Quitman has in mind some notion of Aquinas’ classification of animate beings; regardless, it seems a dangerous prospect to consider one’s intellect the guarantor of one’s humanity or soul. A line from another hymn clearly exhibits this idea of equating the soul with the intellect, “And men, whom reason lifts to God, Tho’ oft by passion downward driv’n.”¹⁴ The dichotomous relationship between reason and passion echoes a Gnosticism that never seemed to die throughout intellectual history – if one could only deny the sensual in favor of the intellectual, one would somehow attain spiritual closeness with God.

This high view of reason naturally involves a diminished concept of sin as well as an optimistic understanding of humanity’s moral and spiritual capabilities. To view one’s generation as somehow more enlightened than the superstition-prone ancient civilizations, to the extent that the Scriptures need new interpretation, involves an optimistic and progressive view of human history which Quitman himself champions:

Reason suggests; that since God as a wise and benevolent being cannot have produced the world without a certain good purpose; it would be absurd to suppose, that he should have left it to chance, or should discontinue to employ the best means of advancing it, to the end for which it is created.¹⁵

He elsewhere lauds the *Zeitgeist* by observing that the nineteenth century will prove to be even grander in aspirations and realized potential than the eighteenth, which he calls the age of reason, “. . . the present century is deemed to surpass all former ages in philosophical knowledge, so the inhabitants of the United States of America are often styled in public print, the most enlightened nation on earth.”¹⁶ This idea of continual cultural improvement, be it moral or spiritual, is the necessary result of the rationalist elevation of human reason and, as quoted from Quitman earlier, not only reverses the orthodox view of theological anthropology, but

¹³ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 192. All references from this hymnal are to page, not hymn, numbers.

¹⁴ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 55.

¹⁵ Quitman, *Catechism*, 23.

¹⁶ Quitman, *Treatise on Magic*, 26.

places the human mind in a position to judge faith, which by its very definition cannot be proven, and likewise elevates the human mind above the mind of God. In fact, reason seems to define human existence: "Thy goodness like the sun dawned on our earliest days ere infant reason had begun to form our lips to praise."¹⁷ What goodness is this? The orthodox Lutheran might say that this is God's working in baptism; before reason is developed, the Holy Spirit works faith in the heart. This hymn, however, neither reflects this, nor is it reflected anywhere else in the hymnal or catechism. This ambiguity suggests that a different interpretation is needed, an interpretation more in accord with rationalist theology. Indeed, one may read in this an exclamation of praise only enabled by reason, before which time one is merely dependent on God's benevolence through parents (this is stated clearly elsewhere in the catechism.)¹⁸ What improvement does this signify? Is one less dependent on God the more reason one attains? What implications does this sort of thought have for those who cannot reason—small children, yes, but the mentally handicapped as well? Is their dependence upon God somehow indicative of a less human status? Luther believed otherwise when he wrote, "He who does not kill and bury his reason and become as a little child does not enter into the kingdom of heaven."¹⁹ Luther reflects here the teaching of Jesus himself (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17).

II. Sin

As Voltaire's maxim goes, one must define the terms in order to engage in a productive discussion. Within his catechism, Frederick Quitman really does not give a theologically useful definition of sin except to respond to the question "What is sin?" with the befuddling-correct statement, "Everything that is inconsistent with the law of God."²⁰ This definition certainly accords with Christian orthodoxy; yet, Quitman's entire catechism is replete with the Pelagian notion of sin as a mistake to be

¹⁷ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 177.

¹⁸ Quitman notes that parents are entitled to the love of their children because of "Not only the care and trouble they take in rearing and educating them, but also their greater experience and ability to direct their offspring"; *Catechism*, 66. He goes on to define parents, or "superiors," as "Aged persons, and all those that excel in mental faculties and moral goodness"; *Catechism*, 67.

¹⁹ Martin Luther, *What Luther Says: An Anthology*, ed. Ewald M. Plass (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 1162 = Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 47:328.

²⁰ Quitman, *Catechism*, 89.

corrected and improved rather than a crippling spiritual condition inherited from Adam. Quitman's theological position might best be summed up by one of his intellectual descendants, Samuel Simon Schmucker:

Dr Kunze, probably the most learned of our older ministers, and no less distinguished for his piety, than learning, in his history of the Christian Religion, thus expresses his views on the imputation of Adam's sin: "To derive original sin from the first man's being the federal head or representative of the human race, seems not satisfactory to a mind inclined to derive or expect only good and perfect things from the good and perfect Creator. By one man's disobedience, it is true, many were made sinners, but not on account of an imputation of this man's sin, but because by him, sin entered the world."²¹

Even in the rationalist viewpoint, Adam's fall provides more than an exemplar for humanity's sinfulness, as it has introduced a brokenness not originally present in God's creation. However, it is through following Adam's example rather than a resulting spiritual condition that sin has befallen subsequent generations. Quitman declares, "That the divine image, after which man was originally created, has been stained by sin, and as often disfigured by brutal iniquity; but that, by means which God has graciously offered and continues to offer, it may be restored and preserved in its native lustre."²² This sin does not necessarily cripple the will or a Christian's moral capabilities, for when Quitman poses the question, "Is the improvement of the will, of great importance?" he responds with the rather optimistic opinion, "Yes, for the more the inclinations are improved, the more fertile they will be of good works, and the more productive of happiness in life."²³ The disparity between actual and original sin in rationalist theology bears witness to the difference between the Pelagian and Augustinian views of sin and of the exact meaning of "sinful nature" bespoken in scripture (Eph 2:3; Ps 51:5.) To confess in the words of Psalm 51 that one was "sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" implies a characteristic state neither

²¹ Samuel S. Schmucker, *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated* (Springfield: D. Harbaugh, 1852), 174.

²² Quitman, *Catechism*, 21.

²³ Quitman, *Catechism*, 18.

earned nor avertable, which precedes any subsequent sinful actions.²⁴ Luther himself acknowledges that hereditary guilt seems unjust and is certainly unreasonable:

To wise reason and worldly wisdom it seems to be a big, stout lie that the entire human race should die because of the guilt of a single human being. For it certainly appears exceedingly unfair and absurd on the part of God to react so oddly to Adam's folly and to take a position so foolish as to judge that because Adam bit into an apple he brought about the death of all human beings who come after him down to the end of the world.²⁵

Luther's understanding of original sin is also reflected in Article II of the Augsburg Confession and Apology. This certainly had been the predominate view of the Lutheran Church and is evidenced in Lazarus Spengler's hymn, "All mankind fell in Adam's fall, one common sin infects us all; From sire to son the bane descends, and over all the curse impends."²⁶ In contrast, one wonders how much more in common Lutheran rationalists might have had with deists such as Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Jefferson than with the Lutheran reformers of the sixteenth century.

Quitman's view of sin curiously leads him into eschatological ponderings. When addressing the question of why good people must suffer evils, he responds, "That this life is not a state of perfect retribution, but rather a state of probation and trial, and that the very sufferings of the pious are intended as a means for their moral improvement, and to render them more fit for the enjoyment of eternal glory."²⁷ Here two matters are of interest, the first being humanity's potential for improvement. Unencumbered with *Erbsünde* ("hereditary sin"), humanity is free to conquer the bonds of ignorance and superstition (a word of which Quitman is particularly fond) in order to achieve happiness on earth.²⁸ This

²⁴ For further biblical evidence of original sin in the Scriptures, see Charles A. Gieschen, "Original Sin in the New Testament," *Concordia Journal* 31 (2005): 359–375.

²⁵ Martin Luther, "Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15," *LW* 28:114.

²⁶ *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 369:1.

²⁷ Quitman, *Catechism*, 29.

²⁸ It is not unreasonable to presume that a number of the hymns collected within the hymnal come from Quitman himself. Although there is no way to prove authorship, Quitman uses a number of phrases and words in the catechism, which also appear in many hymns. The fact that these words ("superstition" [or "dismal superstition"],

catechetical statement is reflected in a stanza of Hymn 83 in Quitman's hymnal: "Blest trials those that cleanse from sin and make the soul all pure within, wean the fond mind from earthly toys to seek and taste celestial joys."²⁹ While acknowledging the very scriptural context of Christian suffering, does this stanza imply that sin (or at least "trials" brought on by sin) somehow sanctifies? Interestingly, this "cleansing from sin" to make the "soul all pure within" really harbors baptismal implications yet only subconsciously. One question from the catechism answers a totally different question than it is even supposed to raise: "Would man left to himself, and destitute of particular divine aid have been able to rise to moral perfection?"³⁰ That moral perfection is possible is not even debated, only the means of such perfection is of dispute! Sin not only does not constitute a crippling condition, it is a means toward moral improvement. The second matter of interest in eschatology is that Quitman frequently utilizes the theological and poetic tension between present and future eschatology. Absent from his hymnal are the eschatological doxologies in the final stanzas of, say, Charles Wesley's hymns. Although Quitman threatens with hell and often waves the carrot of eternal bliss, his teleology is one that leads to happiness and intellectual fulfillment on earth rather than in heaven. After all, moral improvement renders one "more fit for the enjoyment of eternal glory." Calling sin a "perversion of God's benevolent designs," Quitman expounds that ". . . it is the great aim of all and every divine commandment to promote the welfare of mankind in general, and of every individual in particular, and consequently every transgression of this law is destructive to human happiness."³¹ Arguably, this may be one definition of sin, but it seems a rather destitute one. Sin seems to have negated the world's enjoyment of itself rather than having brought pain, death, and destruction. Naturally, if Adam merely introduced sin to creation thereby setting a bad example for ensuing generations, one might expect that such a theology will have profound implications on Christ's atonement.

"earth, air, skies," "influence" [in relation to God], "dignity" and "reasonable") are unusual for either a catechism or a hymnal at least suggests a significant representation of his own hymns.

²⁹ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 64.

³⁰ Quitman, *Catechism*, 92.

³¹ Quitman, *Catechism*, 91.

Sin and conscience are as closely aligned in Quitman's theology as they are in traditional Lutheran theology. For both, the law is manifest on the human heart through the conscience, but Quitman's understanding of the word *conscience* is colored by an individualistic approach. Not only does God write his law upon the conscience, one is also bound to uphold the dictates of his conscience above all other outside forces, religion included. The third stanza of Hymn 349 testifies to this individualist faith, taking Halle Pietism to its logical conclusion but in a way that would have horrified the older Pietists: "Who with another's eye can read? Or worship by another's creed? Trusting thy grace, we form our own, and bow to thy commands alone."³² The human conscience seems to work synergistically with God's natural law in order to produce an individualistic law workable with a person's heart, namely, the conscience. This really reverses the *ordo* with which traditional orthodoxy has approached God. Whereas the Creed(s) had formed the basis for the Christian life and imbued collective meaning to the Christian and indeed defined what the Christian was as well as what he or she was not, this *ordo* places the human conscience, or reason, above any sort of specific law from God (at least as revealed in the Scriptures). Quitman anticipates modern biblical criticism as he subtly subverts the role of faith when he asks: "By what means can we preserve and improve the power and operations of conscience? By the continual study and attention to the true sense of the word of God, and rational consideration."³³ The Scriptures and faith, therefore, must be approached by and filtered through this human "rational consideration," a thought which not so discreetly places human reason above divine faith. The fifth stanza of Hymn 330 really equivocates God with the conscience: "While conscience, like a faithful friend, shall thro' the gloomy vale attend, and cheer our dying breath; shall, when all other comforts cease, like a kind angel, whisper peace, and smooth the bed of death."³⁴ In essence faith, intellect, and natural law coalesce to form that trustworthy conscience: faith is provided by God and insures the human acts rightly; the intellect, being capable of overcoming sin, can reason properly, and natural law can easily be deciphered (through reason) to reveal about God's will whatever cannot be discovered through the first two processes.

³² Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 238.

³³ Quitman, *Catechism*, 19.

³⁴ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 225.

To equate one's conscience with the surety of God and his revelation results in sin becoming merely that which counters the conscience. Indeed, that seems evident from the first stanza of Hymn 349, "All-seeing God! 'tis thine to know the springs from whence wrong opinions flow; to judge, from principles within, when frailty errs, and when we sin."³⁵ To hold a wrong opinion is to have reasoned wrongly and, therefore, to have separated oneself from God, a natural consequence of human frailty. With a theology of sin that does not curse and a conscience that does not convict with the decrees of the law, it should not be surprising that this section of the catechism is as close as Quitman ever comes to describing the tripartite nature of the law being a curb, mirror, and rule. Quitman's liberty from sin likewise prevents him from understanding the real freedom of the gospel.

III. Atonement

If the doctrine of original sin is subsumed to a Pelagian idea of preventable actual sins, one might expect Quitman's doctrine of the atonement to lose much of its justifying power. In theologizing on that great evangelical verse from the third chapter of John, Quitman states as follows:

That God is a propitious father of the whole human race, that, as a pledge of this truth, he had sent his only begotten son into the world, so that if men repent of their errors and sins, and believing in Jesus Christ as their saviour, take him for their guide, he will not only pardon their sins, but also enable them, by the assistance of his holy spirit to lead a godly life, and in this manner prepare and render them meet for a better and happier world.³⁶

This language exudes the non-confrontational deism prevalent at the time—as one can virtually hear strains of Schiller "*Über Sternenzelt musst ein lieber Vater wohnen*"—while Quitman expounds on the glories of this "propitious father" at the expense of the Son. To equate errors and sins was natural to Quitman, who stood closer to Aquinas than to Luther in holding reason as capable as faith in revealing God's will. In the section entitled "Repentance and Conversion" in his hymnal (there is no "Confession and Absolution" section) is found a hymn that illustrates the intellectual nature of rationalist faith: "Blest Instructor! From thy ways,

³⁵ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 238.

³⁶ Quitman, *Catechism*, 36.

who can tell, how oft he strays! Save from error's growth my mind, leave not, Lord, one root behind."³⁷ In hymnology's likely sole instance of addressing God as "Instructor," Quitman moves the worshipper from any sort of doxological *orthokardia* as might be found in the German Pietists or the English Evangelicals to a type of dry intellectual accession to no particular doctrine whatsoever. Intellectual error is sin, and from this error does Christ save humanity. Wrong opinions necessarily negate reason, which necessarily stands contrary to God and his law, which hearkens back to Quitman's original definition of sin being anything "inconsistent with the law of God." In a sermon, Quitman notes that Christ's atonement resulted in the deliverance "... from ignorance and superstition, from sin and misery. . . ."³⁸ Within Quitman's editorial corpus, the prayers to deliver from superstition are copious and lengthy. To a thorough-going rationalist, error and superstition were cardinal sins.

Quitman also exhorts the Christian to "take him [Christ] for their guide,"³⁹ again not a theologically indefensible position except when viewed within the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Socinianism, in which the role of Christ as savior was lessened and his role as an example to follow was heightened. In following Christ's example, he says, the Christian is pardoned from sin (again, in a Pelagian sense) and is enabled "by the assistance of the holy spirit to lead a godly life" so that happiness in this life may result. Although this is prose in a catechism, one can veritably hear a missing doxological eschatological stanza at this point: Is the only result of the redemption from sin the increase in happiness on earth? Quitman does not deny the existence of heaven or life after death, but its diminution seems really to foreshadow later nineteenth-century theological developments with the Social Gospel movement. Furthermore, rationalist ideals presupposed that religion had a quantifiable purpose and a measurable goal. Closely related to the decadent Pietism that preceded it, rationalist thought valued the clear presence of the fruits of the spirit, which were not only tangible but also provided proof by which other humans could judge their own inner faith. The concept of mystagogy, whether in a sacramental context, a liturgical sense, or in one's personal faith, bore little weight in the minds of those whose philosophy required a measurable result in order to be useful. Quitman writes elsewhere about

³⁷ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 171.

³⁸ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 9.

³⁹ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 9.

his lack of concern for the unknowable, only begrudgingly acknowledging its existence: "Mysteries, in the proper sense of the word, are in direct contradiction to a revelation. What we do not know, can affect neither our understanding nor our heart, and of course, cannot be a proper subject of our religion."⁴⁰ Rationalist theology is one of practical, not speculative, religion.

Whatever might be said about this catechism's theology, it can fairly be said that Quitman did not skirt difficult questions in favor of harmless platitudes. He addresses the issue of universalism in the question which asks whether "all those who are destitute of the light of the gospel, and consequently are unacquainted with Christ are to be damned?" He answers:

Far be this from the righteous judge of all the earth: for how should they believe in him of whom they have not heard. Rom. 10:14. God will rather deal with them according to the measure of their religious knowledge, and the opportunities they have for improving it.⁴¹

Once again, Quitman returns to the idea of intellectual improvement as the greatest import to any religionist (Christian or otherwise) as well as a type of works righteousness in which God judges one's heart and life based on their intellectual attainments. Although knowledge of the Christian God is limited to those who know his revelation in the Scriptures, reason is available to all and only through reason can one discern God's character. Thus, Quitman states: "Reason and revelation are the only sources, from which religious knowledge is to be decided. . . . Are not both reason and revelation descended from heaven, always in harmony and supporting each other?"⁴² Accordingly, Quitman never denies the existence of hell, but tempers it with the warning that, ". . . the servant that knows his Lord's will, and has not acted according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that did know not, and did omit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him also shall be much required."⁴³ It is because reason and faith are complementary that salvation may logically be found at the end of rational ponderings. As long as one does not know

⁴⁰ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 9.

⁴¹ Quitman, *Catechism*, 48.

⁴² Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 40.

⁴³ Quitman, *Catechism*, 122.

the gospel in order to reject it and so long as one does no wickedness, Quitman's heaven is universally attainable.

IV. Christology

Only in rationalist systematic theology could one discuss the concept of the atonement while only peripherally mentioning Christ. Quitman's Christology is perhaps as difficult to deal with as his notion of sin; in many cases, one must construct his theology by inferring negatively from what is not said about Christ. Quitman's rationalism neither denied Christ's existence, nor even his divinity in a certain sense. The section of the hymnal entitled "Mission and Nativity of Christ" provides some evidence for incarnational theology, and even greater evidence of poor poetry. Hymn 96 notes: "Of angels, praising God, and thus warbling their choral song: 'Glory to God, from whom on high All-gracious mercies flow! Who sends his heav'n-descended peace to dwell with man below.'" ⁴⁴ A few hymns later one sings of God saying: "'Go, my beloved Son. . . Be thou their Saviour, thou their guide.'" ⁴⁵ Once again, being savior and guide are equated: Christ's life serves as a model of moral perfection for humanity. Christ's divinity is referenced in a number of stanzas that observe that God's face is seen in Christ's face ("Ye, who see the Father's grace, beaming in the Saviour's face" ⁴⁶), although by logical extension Quitman takes this to a rather Socinian conclusion elsewhere: "So may my conduct ever prove my filial piety and love. Whilst all my brethren clearly trace their father's likeness on my face." ⁴⁷ Quitman's incarnational theology may not be exactly adoptionistic, yet the reader is left with a supposition at least that they are as capable of showing God's face as Christ is (this is not unreasonable given Quitman's essential rejection of the sinful nature.) Perhaps one should not attempt to wrench a theological system out of hymns that, by their very nature, preach little doctrine, yet the inclusion of these hymns demonstrates that Quitman at least viewed Christ as preexisting before his incarnation and that he had some sort of divine mandate.

The idea of divine mandate may be a good starting point in dealing with such Christology. Whereas more orthodox theologians might connect their

⁴⁴ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 71.

⁴⁵ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 75.

⁴⁶ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 88.

⁴⁷ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 182.

Christology with some kind of mention of the Trinity, Quitman's reasoning never leads him into any explicit mention of the Trinity; instead, he makes clear that Christ had the blessings of God:

Q: Do you perceive herein also an evidence for the divine authority of Jesus and His doctrine?

A: A very striking one: for it is morally impossible that such a person as Jesus, descended from a humble parentage, destitute of the means for receiving a learned education, bred among an illiberal, bigoted and perverse generation; without any influential connexions, or powerful aid, and in spite of the most desperate opposition; should have formed the extensive plan, of reforming the whole human race and saving them from errors and sin without an express divine commission. In this all embracing plan, which is still successively carried on, we cannot but perceive the finger of God.⁴⁸

Not only does he here equate sin and error again, one can also ascertain Quitman's own priorities by the nature of this question and answer. That he notes Christ's thriving success *despite* his lack of education, family connections, and the presence of a bigoted bunch of brutes trying to thwart him, implies that such advantages might very well help a modern individual (recall Quitman's thoughts on the moral perfection of the post-apostolic generations). Indeed, Christ's example shows that he ". . . delivered mankind from the prevailing superstition and ignorance and imparted to them all the necessary religious instruction of which they were susceptible."⁴⁹ Here Christ is again portrayed as the heavenly instructor sent down to preach moral doctrines in order that humanity might have an example of how likewise to succeed.

Within the section of the hymnal entitled "Sufferings and Death of Christ" are several hymns that are taken from other authors, the most notable is Isaac Watts' "Alas! And did my Saviour Bleed." This hymn obviously made Quitman and Wackerhagen uncomfortable, as they excised almost half of it, finally including only four of the original six stanzas. Omitted was the second stanza ("Thy body slain, sweet Jesus! Thine, and bathed in its own blood, while all exposed to wrath divine the glorious sufferer stood!"), which admittedly hearkens back to the prior

⁴⁸ Quitman, *Catechism*, 31.

⁴⁹ Quitman, *Catechism*, 34.

century with its English blood-soaking, and the third ("Was it for crimes that I had done He groan'd upon the tree? Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree!"), which manifests clearly Watts's Calvinist doctrine of innate depravity as well as referring to the word *grace* as a concept that becomes less important as humanity is given more potential for spiritual improvement. Quitman edits Watts's fourth stanza and makes it the second, altering the original "When God the mighty Maker dy'd" to "When Christ, the mighty Saviour, died." Perhaps this is the single instance in the hymnal where Quitman did not wish to confuse his reader with heretical Trinitarian tendencies—perhaps he wanted to make clear that it was not God the Father who died on the cross. But it is also possible, and more likely given evidence found elsewhere, that he wished to dissociate as much as possible Christ's humanity from God's divinity.⁵⁰ Quitman's Trinitarian theology will be explored below.

One leaves this section of the catechism with a tantalizing query that raises more questions than it answers. The question, "Why is Jesus styled, the only begotten son of God?" receives the mystifying reply, "As well on account of his exalted dignity and pre-eminence above all created beings, as on account of the great love, which his heavenly Father has manifested for him."⁵¹ Unclear here is whether Christ is preeminent above *other* created beings like himself, which would place Quitman at odds with two of the ecumenical creeds, or whether he is preeminent above the created beings by the fact that he is *not* created like them. This obfuscation may be due in part to the flowery, rationalistic language of the time which inherits from Pietism a wanton use of the term *love* as well as various endearments for God the Father, while deriving from more deistic humanism such concepts as "exalted dignity," which could function either as a theological description or as a sociological view of the Italian Renaissance. One does not know! It is not difficult to believe, based on the ambiguities found elsewhere in his catechism, that Quitman may be intentionally vague. The times that he is precise as to his meaning prove that he *can* be clear in defining his reasoning or his terms. In this instance, the heresy-prone reader might be led into Arianism.

⁵⁰ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 106. The unedited Watts hymn is found in *The Poetical Works of Isaac Watts*, DD, Vol. IV (London: Apollo Press, 1802), 13.

⁵¹ Quitman, *Catechism*, 34.

V. Pneumatology and the Trinity

It has already been mentioned that Quitman is ambiguous toward the doctrine of the Trinity, and it is the nature of this ambiguity that is of interest. Some writers may not mention certain doctrines, simply taking them as a matter of fact and possibly focusing their theology on less-covered ground; however, one would think a hymnal should contain the essential truths of its particular religion. One would further expect a catechism to devote itself to the nature of its particular God. Quitman's writings do neither. As mentioned, the hymnal contains no doxological stanzas. In fact, they seem to have been omitted intentionally. Bishop Ken's great evening hymn, "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night" is shorn of three stanzas, including the doxology!⁵² The Holy Spirit receives scant attention in either the catechism or hymnal. In treating the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, Quitman spends only the first four questions (out of 34) dealing with the Holy Spirit, and these answers are not only short, but vague. He mentions that to the Holy Spirit "... the sacred writers ascribe . . . not only every talent and gift, which is requisite to raise and to enlarge the kingdom of God in general . . . but also every good quality of which the christian is possessed."⁵³ His next answer devotes a sentence to the reception of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, while the next expounds on the powers the apostles received at Pentecost. So much for the Holy Spirit in the catechism.

In the hymnal's lone section devoted to the Holy Spirit, entitled "The Influence of God's Holy Spirit," are found a mere fourteen hymns, some of which do not even mention the Holy Spirit. By way of contrast, the Father and the Son each received multiple categories, including "The Perfections of God," "Divine Providence and Government," "The Mission and Nativity of Christ," "Christ's Example," and "The Office of Christ." One cannot help but infer from the lack of trinitarian thoughts and the curious heading "The Influence of the Holy Spirit" that, for Quitman, the Holy Spirit is perhaps only a veiled metaphor for God's occasional activities in humankind. After all, the deism which so permeated the intellectual ethos of the time did not particularly allow for a God active in human affairs—this deity had created all and given humanity the intellect to improve themselves and would leave the world at that. The orthodox notion of the

⁵² Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 271.

⁵³ Quitman, *Catechism*, 42.

Holy Spirit as the active agent in the world and the person in whom the church on earth is collected stands in contrast to the great “watchmaker in the sky” who has divorced himself from human interaction. That Christ lived physically on earth to set a moral example also makes rationalistic sense—one can strive to moral perfection based on his characteristics. A doctrine of the Holy Spirit who is living and active in the church, however, threatens rationalistic independence. Hymn 190 addresses this: “For ever blessed be the Lord, my Saviour and my shield! He sends his Spirit with his word, to arm me for the field.”⁵⁴ Note first that this stanza contains the only reference to the Holy Spirit in its three stanzas. Second, this passing mention, which somehow qualifies it for inclusion in the section devoted to the Holy Spirit, does not negate a deistic understanding of God’s activities. God arms Christians, specifically through his word, to go out on their own. This is not an entirely unorthodox idea, as Lutheranism has always held to the importance of word and sacrament as means that strengthen faith, but this singular mention seems to imply a sort of abandonment by God, not out of cruelty, but because humanity has all it needs to improve itself. This is consistent with rationalist ideals.

The Holy Spirit as a distinct person with his own personality does not find expression in any of Quitman’s writing. His concept of the Holy Spirit accords more with an impersonal, magnetic force pervading the universe through which God acts. Students of heresies might call this Macedonianism, or the idea that the Holy Spirit is a power rather than a person. If this is accepted, the entire doctrine of the Trinity must be reconstructed as some sort of dualism. The first stanza of Hymn 186, still under the so-called Holy Spirit section, perhaps alludes to this as it says: “Thine influence, Lord! Is felt throughout nature’s ample round. In heav’n, on earth, thro’ air and skies, Thine energy is found.”⁵⁵ The only time this hymn mentions the Spirit is in the third stanza when it implores, “Father! Thy Spirit grant, to guide our doubtful way.” Only the capitalization of the word *spirit* implies that there could be any sort of trinitarian confession. Even so, this pneumatology strongly suggests an impersonal, divine, guiding, and universal influence rather than a distinct person. To slight the Holy Spirit even further, the hymnal contains only four baptismal hymns, none of which explicitly mentions or even overtly suggests any activity of the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁴ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 135.

⁵⁵ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 132.

To make a case, albeit a weak one, for Quitman's trinitarian orthodoxy, one could turn to the second stanza of Hymn 107: "Thus doth th' eternal Spirit own and seal the mission of the Son; the Father vindicates his cause, while he hangs bleeding on the cross."⁵⁶ At least here all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in one breath, and they seem to be engaged in independent activities found in the Scriptures. Admittedly, this may be an overly-optimistic, modern, and trinitarian view of this verse; nevertheless, it still cannot be said that there is not expressed here a type of macedonianism.

VI. Ecclesiology

A pneumatology silent as to the personality of the third person of the Trinity naturally results in an ecclesiology likewise devoid of much spiritual content. From a denominational perspective, Quitman refused to bind himself to anything but the Scriptures. The symbolic documents of the Reformation held only passing historical interest as he did not consider himself bound to shallow ecclesiastical traditions, doctrinal or otherwise. He writes of these good-natured reformers: "They were men of probity, and consequently did not hesitate to make public profession of their faith; but these symbols, which were mistaken by their too zealous followers as invariable forms, have unhappily become a partition-wall, which . . . will divide the protestant church."⁵⁷ He appeals to historical precedent as he continues to plead for an organic and progressive, rather than a static, church:

. . . the friends of Luther ventured even in his life time to differ from him, in some doctrinal points. And as the great reformer was silent to these improvements by his friends; it appears as well from this circumstance, as from many expressions, contained in the works, which were published by him in the later part of his life, that he approved of these emendations. Thus the dogmas of the entire moral incapacity of man, and of the absolute or unconditional divine decrees, which most of the reformers had imbibed . . . were very early discarded from the list of the creed of the Lutherans, and the more rational and scriptural doctrines of free agency and universal grace substituted in their place.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 78.

⁵⁷ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 7.

⁵⁸ Quitman, *Catechism*, 175.

Quitman cleverly proves (through Luther's silence or lack of objection) that he must eventually have agreed with the more rational principles to which he was so virulently opposed his entire recorded career. Luther must have been enlightened later in life whereby he rejected innate human sinfulness! Why Luther would suddenly become agreeable to doctrinal compromise, when his entire career was predicated on his courageous stands, can only be traced to a rationalist yearning for superficial agreement and peace. After all, much like the modern evangelicals, Quitman thought little of denominational beliefs or differences. Several of the hymns attest to this unionism: "Let party feuds no more have place nor tongues be 'set on fire for hell'"⁵⁹ and "Let party-names no more the Christian world o'erspread: Gentile and Jew, and bond and free, are one in Christ their head"⁶⁰ are only two hymns that convey a lack of importance placed on doctrine.

Not surprisingly, Quitman expects religion to attain a practical, measurable goal in much the same way as Charles Finney's "New Measures" claim to do. This teleological approach is evident as he defines the kingdom of God as "every institution which God has employed, and continues to employ for raising man to higher moral perfection; but this word is, in a particular sense, applied to the church of Christ."⁶¹ He then asks what distinguishes the Christian ministry from all other religious institutions:

That they are not allowed, like the abettors of superstition, to rule over the consciences of others, or to arrogate to themselves civil, or spiritual authority, or to pretend to a supernatural mediatorial power: but that it is their chief duty, as faithful pastors, to attend to their spiritual flock; to instruct, to exhort, and to comfort them, with all meekness, to lead them by their advice to religious knowledge, and godliness, without employing any other weapon in defence of truth, but reason and argument.⁶²

Rather than defining the church as that which is built around God's word and sacrament or the ministry as that which is marked by any semblance of the office of the keys, Quitman's church presupposes an aim

⁵⁹ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 281.

⁶⁰ Wackerhagen and Quitman, *Hymns*, 239.

⁶¹ Quitman, *Catechism*, 43.

⁶² Quitman, *Catechism*, 43.

of improvement and perfection. He states, "[I]t is one of the chief ends of the religion of Christ, to deliver the world from the bondage of superstition."⁶³ In styling itself as the educator of the masses, Quitman's church minimized its creedal constraints, instead of returning to that supposed glory of the early church and of the apostles themselves as evidenced in the simplicity of the Apostles' Creed, which of course historically follows by several centuries the Nicene. Nevertheless, Quitman attributes the accretion of the futile doctrinal ramblings of the supposedly-later Nicene Creed by observing: "as long as religion was more a concern of the heart, than of the understanding, the number of articles of the Christian faith was but small, which is evident from [the number of articles] of the commonly called Apostolic Creed."⁶⁴ Of course, this catechism reduces this creed even further by overlooking some of its essentials (i.e., the nature of the Church) while focusing on needless theological ephemera (i.e., "Is there life on other planets?").⁶⁵

VII. Critical Analysis

Friedrich Heinrich Quitman, although less-studied than other principals in American Lutheran history, has only himself to blame for the amount of negative scholarly publicity he has received through the years. His brand of insipid and anemic spirituality sets forth little to warrant its serious consideration in the twenty-first century, except to note it as being the nadir against which Lutheranism had no choice but to react with some sort of confessional revival. Abdel Ross Wentz, therefore, writes of Quitman's catechism: "It denied the inspiration and authority of the Bible and set at nought all the main doctrines of the Lutheran Confessions and the Apostles' Creed. A few years later he published a hymnal and a liturgy. This was also un-Lutheran and un-evangelical throughout, and it was

⁶³ Quitman, *Treatise on Magic*, iii.

⁶⁴ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 6.

⁶⁵ Quitman, *Catechism*, 22. "Since the kingdom of God is boundless, and the worlds which he has created not to be numbered, it is not probable, that the everliving God should have left these numberless mansions destitute of rational inhabitants: And since we perceive that the creator has observed a regular progress in the nature and constitution of his creatures on earth; we may with reason suppose that his gradation extends beyond the terrestrial world." Quitman then continues with a discussion of angels, demons, and "messengers."

officially rejected by the synod. . . . The Quitman catechism did not sell.”⁶⁶ Certainly it takes little exploration to verify Quitman’s denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures. As is usually the case, the question becomes rather what kind of inspiration he had in mind. The prior analysis of his denial of the Egyptian magicians and the powers of the witch of Endor do not necessarily constitute a denial of the other miracles mentioned in the Scriptures, since neither involves a direct act of God. In fact, Quitman stands with orthodoxy in some profound ways. He acknowledges that creation occurred in six days⁶⁷ and he affirms Christ’s miracles:

Our Saviour himself refers to them in his answer to the message from John the Baptist. Where he says: Go and tell John what things you have seen and heard; how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached.⁶⁸

In relation to Christ’s virgin birth he states that Jesus did not “come into the world like other men,” rather, “he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, or, by a direct intervention of God’s almighty power.”⁶⁹ Quitman likewise throughout the catechism references Christ’s literal resurrection—never does he attempt to reason it away. Given his propensity for political and ambiguous language elsewhere, there is no doubt what he means here. He acknowledges the major miracles as they relate to Christ’s life, but he is blaringly silent about others. Given his historical critical approach to the Scriptures, one can cautiously form a type of systematic theology here. Quitman many times implores the Christian to read the Scriptures in terms of a modern understanding and with the foolishness of the superstitious ancients in mind. The casting out of demons or the healing of the sick might be attributed to healing in a natural and scientific way; other miracles might be attributed to mass hysteria or to the superstitious ancient mind. The accuracy of the minor miracles did not concern him—as did the reality of those involving Christ—as much as he lamented the miniscule (in his mind) doctrinal differences between denominations. Quitman gives few clues as to how he can accept some miracles and not others—if one can rise from the dead, then feeding a few thousand people

⁶⁶ Abdel Ross Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History* (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1933), 116–117.

⁶⁷ Quitman, *Catechism*, 14.

⁶⁸ Quitman, *Catechism*, 30.

⁶⁹ Quitman, *Catechism*, 35.

or changing water to wine does not seem incongruous. Perhaps evidenced in this conflict is that the man of faith could not totally be engulfed within a rationalist mindset. Even for Quitman, reason would eventually reach a point from which only faith can proceed.

Setting Quitman within his pietistic-turned-rationalist historical background, Sydney Ahlstrom regards Quitman's catechism as "a monument to the enlightened theology of that age, a skillful effort to Americanize German rationalism."⁷⁰ With all his faults, Quitman was still no deistic Jefferson or atheistic Voltaire. His theological anthropology might have been Socinian, and he may have understood sin as only a minor inconvenience; but perhaps his Hallensian upbringing allowed him to concede his inability to achieve perfection, when he writes with an unusual amount of personal expression: "Man is naturally liable to frailty and error, and even the wisest among us in not exempt from this deficiency."⁷¹ This is far from a Lutheran or Calvinist notion of sin, yet one may detect the still voice of faith carrying on when reason and human achievements have reached their zenith. Luther Reed derides Quitman's hymnal by noting that "Some of its forms were highly objectionable, and its entire tone reflected the low doctrinal and liturgical spirit of the time."⁷² Yet, Quitman's liturgy at the end of the hymnal still contained the Apostles' Creed in the baptismal service.⁷³ His catechism still contains five of the six chief parts of Luther's catechism (confession is omitted), and the section devoted to the Apostles' Creed is the most extensive. His creedal confession stops there, never mentioning the Athanasian Creed and only in scorn referencing the contentious and complex verbiage of the Nicene

⁷⁰ Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 378.

⁷¹ Quitman, *Three Sermons*, 12.

⁷² Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), 174. For a brief analysis of the sacramental implications of the hymns included and omitted from the *Hymns*, see Peter C. Cage, "Sacramental Hymnody in American Lutheran Hymnals During the Nineteenth Century," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66 (July 2002): 195–220. For a definitive analysis of Quitman within the broader historical and hymnological context, consult Carl Schalk, *God's Song in a New Land* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995).

⁷³ Douglas C. Stange, "Frederick Henry Quitman, DD: The Flowering of Rationalism in the American Lutheran Church," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 39 (July 1966): 67–76.

Creed. He holds up only the Apostles' Creed as the example of true, unadulterated Christian doctrine.

The sort of rationalism practiced in the North American colonies and advocated by Frederick Quitman was unable to replace God's true word and sacraments. Douglas Stange sums up Quitman's accomplishments thus:

When Quitman died in 1832, at the age of 72, the main impetus in rationalistic theology and liberalism in the American Lutheran Church died with him. His catechism never had taken hold. He traveled little outside the Ministerium and his impact was largely confined to his own people. The hymns he had collected and the liturgy he had fabricated possessed the greatest longevity, but in the end, they too, were overtaken in the rise of a nascent liturgical revival.⁷⁴

In 1817, Claus Harms reacted to German rationalism with his own 95 theses inciting a call to arms to reclaim historic Christian orthodoxy. The rise of the LCMS a few years later was spurred by immigrants who wished to be Lutheran in doctrine and practice, deriding Prussian unionism while risking their lives on a voyage to a new country. The Henkel family would become salt and light, publishing an English *Book of Concord* and almost single-handedly keeping the Tennessee Synod from lapsing into rationalism or revivalism, much to the constant scorn of Samuel Simon Schmucker. C. F. W. Walther's *Kirchengesangbuch* of 1847 evidenced a return to the normative *Kernlieder* of the Reformation, allowing the worshipper to hear and to sing about the sacraments without confusing justification and sanctification, and to proclaim the truths of the Scriptures in song without merging law and gospel into an ill-conceived muddle. Quitman's theology epitomized the times. In his *Zeitgeist* he was as rationalistic as he could be while still being considered a Christian. That a renewal of confessional Lutheranism was inevitable even without Quitman is probable—the Saxon immigrants probably knew nothing of his dealings. Yet, his catechism's publication and subsequent poor sales might have been the impetus for the Ministerium to publish its next catechism, more faithful to Luther's, in 1829.⁷⁵ Only three years after the publication of his hymnal, Quitman was part of a committee that developed the *Gemeinschaftliche Gesangbuch*, a hymnal for the union of Reformed and

⁷⁴ Stange, "Frederick Henry Quitman, DD," 75.

⁷⁵ Stange, "Frederick Henry Quitman, DD," 72.

Lutheran churches in Pennsylvania. While hardly an exemplar of confessional hymnody, this hymnal at least represents a slight retreat from Quitman's previous cold rationalism—not only is this indicated by its reverting to the German language, but the hymnal contained one hymn by Luther and eleven by Gerhardt! Only in comparison to the hymnal of 1814 can this be seen to be an improvement.⁷⁶ Quitman's example taught some propitious lessons during a time when Lutheranism was struggling with its identity in a world characterized by secular rationalism and evangelical revivalism. One cannot but wonder if early twenty-first century American Lutheranism can also learn from Quitman so that more do not follow the rationalistic path he mistakenly marked out for an earlier generation.

⁷⁶ The *Gemeinschaftliche Gesangbuch*, published at the anniversary of the Reformation in 1817, contained hymns of many of the German rationalists such as Sturm, Lavater, and particularly Gellert. Although Quitman was part of the hymnal committee, this volume seems to have been assembled with a greater variety of theological input and is arguably less representative of Quitman's own theological leanings than it is simply a mirror of the unionistic theological trends of the time. For a more detailed discussion of this hymnal, see Carl Schalk, *God's Song in a New Land*, and Benjamin Kolodziej, "Realms in Conflict: Rationalism and Orthodoxy in Early Nineteenth-Century Hymnody," *The Hymn* 53 (July 2002): 22–29.

Theological Observer

Here and There on Theological Journals

We have received a few notes reminding us that the dates on issues of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (CTQ) do not correspond to the calendar dates when the issues are being received in the mail. Surprisingly we have not received more, but perhaps not surprising at all.

Theological journals are rarely read, at least in their entirety, at the time of arrival in the mailbox. Summer is the designated time for uninterrupted reading. The *Lutheran Theological Review* (LTR) from the Edmonton and Saint Catharines seminaries of our sister church in Canada arrived a few weeks ago with the years 2004–2005 on the cover. So we are in good company. LTR XVII (2004–2005) along with other issues can be obtained by contacting the Saint Catharines seminary. Among the pertinent topics in the 2004–2005 issue are the dilemma of the Australian church's consideration of membership in the Lutheran World Federation as well as order and submission in the New Testament, topics that surfaced in the December 2006 and April 2007 at the LCMS's consultation on women. Thomas M. Winger offers an essay in the same issue under a familiar phrase "*Simul Iustus et Peccator*" but with the intriguing subtitle, "Did Luther and the Confessions Get Paul Right?" You will have to get a copy to find out.

The CTQ is making up for lost time. Since December 2006, ten issues have been mailed. The 2008 dates of publication will, hopefully, correspond to real time. Credit for overcoming the temporal deficit goes to Charles Gieschen, who became the Associate Editor in August 2006, Graduate Students Jason Braaten and Peter Gregory, and CTQ secretary Annette Gard. Our new Book Review Editor is Lawrence Rast Jr. We hope the many recent issues of CTQ enriched your theological reading. While we are at it, here are some random thoughts about other journals.

Pro Ecclesia tries to put in place again an historic Christianity across the wide denominational spectrum in which a Lutheran voice is often heard. Its founding editors Robert Jenson and Carl Braaten have been lecturers at recent seminary symposia. *First Things* combines religious and secular issues. Classical Lutheranism is not part of the agenda but emerges in the nostalgia of the editor's childhood training. Its Catholic editor was Lutheran from his cradle to pulpit. *Lutheran Forum* provides theological articles on current issues occupying the attention of Lutherans, as does its sidekick *Forum Letter*. Spectacular events in Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) mean less space for the more mundane in the LCMS.

Logia, an explicitly confessional, trans-synodical Lutheran journal, has beaten all odds with 1500 subscribers at its fifteenth anniversary. It has attracted such German university professors to its pages as Oswald Bayer and Klaus Schwarzwaller along with old standbys from the synods of the old Synodical

Conference. All this bodes well for active theological exchange in a religious culture where theology often is given a back seat.

Purely theological journals are not tightly bound to the calendar. This is our weak defense of the lateness of *CTQ* issues. Theological journal articles can be read years after their publication. Proof of this is the Spring 1988 issue of the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* (*WLQ* 85/2) which was bouncing around unread for nearly twenty years in my study. Some articles are as pertinent today as they were twenty years ago. Others are a window to how things used to be. For example, an overview of the confessional Lutheran situation twenty years ago across the seas is provided by "The Lutheran Free Churches of Europe" (127-139). Now that the LCMS is in fellowship with the Lutheran churches in Lithuania and Latvia and those around St. Petersburg, Russia; things have changed. A free Lutheran church has emerged in Norway and a "mission province" in Sweden: things have changed.

In "News and Comments" of the same issue of *WLQ*, Armin J. Panning looks at the changing complexion of LCMS colleges in moving from their original purpose as church worker training institutions to liberal arts college. Alan F. Harre, now president of Valparaiso University, deplores the shrinking synodical support "for worker-training education." He states: "For the 1978-79 academic year, synodical funds provided fifty-six percent of educational expenditures of the seminaries and forty-five percent for the colleges. During 1984-85, comparable figures were thirty-four percent for the seminaries and just twenty-four percent for the colleges" (143). Then tuition and room and board came to a robust \$8000. Now it is not only an issue of the lower percentage of church worker students, but the percentage of Lutherans in the student body. Synodical affiliation does not factor into the Lutheran equation. Costs now at Harre's Valparaiso might be around \$30,000 and synodical schools a bit less. So far as funding is concerned, synodical educational institutions are on their own. Twenty years makes a difference.

In the same "News and Comments" section of the *WLQ*, Wayne D. Mueller comments on "God's Woman For All Generations," more commonly known as the "Report of the LCMS President's Commission on Women." Another report is on the way from the LCMS consultation on women. Twenty years later and things have not changed that much. Even when the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the LCMS were in fellowship, they did not share a common doctrine of the ministry. Francis Pieper knew this but did not make an issue of it. Mueller gets it right that in the LCMS the ministry focused on the pastoral office, or to put it in his own words: "Missouri sees the pastoral office as the unique, all-encompassing office of the public ministry from which all other offices and authorities derive. So today almost all positions of authority are open to women in the LCMS except that of the parish pastor" (144). LCMS ministers might find it unusual to learn that this is "Missouri's peculiar doctrine of the ministry." Compare this with the WELS position: "Men and women, as private priests and, when permitted by the Scriptures, as public

ministers in the church, must be urged to render service when needed" (145). In other words there is a little minister tucked away in every Christian ready to emerge when called. A contribution by Ernst H. Wendland, "ELCA's Inclusiveness," addresses the ELCA requirement that ten percent of the 250 executive staff position go to minorities. Quotas were a sticking point then and still are.

Wendland's observations are as valid now as they were twenty years ago, which provides a good lead into the Spring 2007 issue of *Lutheran Forum* (LF). One article laments the removal of masculine references to God in the new ELCA hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. This might be called neutering the divine, one step beyond quotas. ELCA pastor Dan Biles entitles his article, "ELW and the Abuse of Language." He concludes with "ELW simply has a hard time saying that the Second Person of the Trinity is the Man Jesus, Son of God, Who addressed His God 'Father.' The Docetists had hard time with that, too" (42). One might ask how this all fits with what St. Paul says, "No one can say that 'Jesus is the Lord' but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12:3). In the same issue, Jennifer Baker-Trinity sees the appearance of the ELCA hymnal as an occasion for celebrating the work of the Holy Spirit ("The Fruits of our Labors: The Arrival of Evangelical Lutheran Worship" [43-47]). We will watch the sales of *ELW* in ELCA congregations. Some might take the LCMS option with *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB). ELCA readers of *LF* are introduced to *LSB* in a published interview with its editor Paul Grime (14-20). Robert Benne's "A Confessional Lutheran Voice in the Contemporary Scene," originally a lecture given at our seminary's January 2007 symposium, finds its way into the same *LF* issue. *Forum Letter* reported on the vigorous response the lecture received in the seminary's Wambsganss Gymnasium. Good news travels fast. A section in Benne's article entitled "Missouri and Sectarian Tendencies" should not close the ears of some attendees to the next section, "The ELCA and Liberal Protestant Drift."

Sectarian tendencies are like original sin. We all have it. It is just a matter of the form that these tendencies take. WELS theologians might make common cause with Benne in assessing the LCMS sectarian tendencies, even if they might not agree on what they are. Theology is a matter of assessing and reassessing ourselves, and this means seeing ourselves the way others see us. That is what theological journals are all about, even if we are a little late.

David P. Scaer

Philipp Melanchthon, Confessor

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church has called him "one of the most erudite and intellectually powerful figures of his age." He was born on February 16, 1497 in the Palatinate, in Bretten, near Karlsruhe in southern Germany. He was the first of five children, the son of Georg Schwarzerdt, who was a master of gunnery founding and skilled in forging light-weight strong armor, and Barbara, daughter of a prosperous merchant. His name was Philipp. On March 5, 1509, when he was twelve years old, his great-uncle Johannes Reuchlin, the great Hebrew scholar in the humanist tradition, said to him in view of his brilliant mastery of Greek: "Your name is Schwarzerdt [German for black earth], you are a Greek, and so your name shall be Greek. Thus, I will call you Melanchthon, which means black earth." A child prodigy and not yet thirteen years old, he entered the University of Heidelberg where he studied philosophy, rhetoric, and astronomy/astrology, and there became known as a Greek scholar. In 1512 he went to Tübingen, where he devoted himself to the study of jurisprudence, mathematics, astronomy/astrology, and even medicine. At the age of twenty-one, he wrote a Greek grammar used for more than 200 years. As a man he reached the height of only 4'10" tall, but he was an intellectual giant, a universal genius having few peers. His contributions to the intellectual and educational life of Germany are too numerous to mention here. He came to be known as *Praeceptor Germaniae* "Germany's Teacher."

But his principal and lasting contribution was to theology, and specifically to the theology of the Lutheran Reformation. His Augsburg Confession remains the fundamental confession for Lutheranism and served as a model for other Protestant confessions. Along with the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Treatise on Power and Primacy of the Pope, Philipp Melanchthon's other great contribution to the theological literature, both of the Lutheran church and to the church at large, was his *Loci Communes*, in which he in effect systematized the theology of his colleague and friend, Dr. Martin Luther. The *Loci* were made available in English translation by the late J. A. O. Preus II, one time president of Concordia Theological Seminary and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Despite the emerging differences between them, Luther near the end of his life (1542–1543) could say of Melanchthon, whom he fondly called Philipp:

If anybody wishes to become a theologian, he has a great advantage, first of all, in having the Bible. This is now so clear that he can read it without any trouble. Afterward he should read Philipp's *Loci Communes*. This he should read diligently and well, until he has its contents fixed in his head. If he has these two he is a theologian, and neither the devil nor a heretic can shake him . . . There's no book under the sun in which the whole theology is so compactly presented as in the *Loci Communes* . . . No better book has been

written after the Holy Scriptures than Philipp's. He expresses himself more concisely than I do when he argues and instructs. I'm garrulous and more rhetorical. (LW 54:439-440)

On a journey to Leipzig in March of 1560, Melanchthon caught a cold. He died shortly thereafter at the age of 63 years, 2 months, and 2 days. He was buried next to Luther, his friend and colleague in the cause of the Reformation, in the Schlosskirche in Wittenberg. While some have labeled him a "theologian without honor" because of controversies generated in large part by things he wrote in later years, Philipp Melanchthon remains in our living memory as a truly great gift to the church from God, and especially to us in the Lutheran Church. One hymn written by Philipp Melanchthon, *Dicimus grates tibi*, appeared both in *The Lutheran Hymnal* and *Lutheran Worship* with the title "Lord God, to You We All Give Praise," and is retained in the *Lutheran Service Book*, where it is now sung to the tune of Luther's hymn, "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word." In this way the two great reformers continue to make the same confession. This hymn is appropriately sung on St. Michael's and All Angels Day, September 29.

Jerald C. Joersz

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The "Pentecostalization" of Christianity

The influence of renewalist movements on global Christianity is predicted to change the look of what is called *Christian* or *Christianity* in the not-too-distant future. It is generally recognized that Pentecostalism has been growing globally at an amazing pace, but the recent Pew report, *Spirit and Power*, documents the first comprehensive study of the phenomenon, which it labels "renewalist movements," conducted by professional researchers in several countries around the world.

Luis Lugo, director the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life writes: "What we found, in short, is that Pentecostal beliefs and practices are literally reshaping the face of Christianity throughout the developing world." He emphasizes the point, adding, "I don't think it's too far fetched at this point to seriously entertain the question of whether Christianity is well on its way to being pentecostalized throughout the world, and certainly in the developing world."

The appeal of Pentecostalism is due, at least in some part, to the "health and wealth" message proclaimed by many renewalist preachers. Princeton professor Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar, in their book, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges*, discovered that many people's earthly lives are improved by becoming a part of a Pentecostal church. They suggest that health-and-wealth theology is perhaps a viable

option in place of the mainline emphasis on the doctrine of justification by faith. They also propose that renewalists movements are a more effective alternative to liberation theology, which in the past had been somewhat dominant in developing nations, at least for the lecture-circuit theologians.

A common thread that appeared as a result of the Pew Forum's *Spirit and Power* research was the way in which renewalists generally did not buy into the Western dichotomization between the spiritual and the material. In other words, God is involved in all aspects of the renewalist's life, including health, wealth, politics, and general well-being. "Renewalists all around the world really do believe that God has promised them health and prosperity as a product of their beliefs and religious practice, so it's a very common belief," commented Lugo.

Other discoveries included the adaptability in Pentecostalism to the local culture. Lugo states, "[W]hen an African converts from animism to Pentecostalism, they [*sic*] don't leave behind the world of spirit. They don't become little René Descartes running around. The spirit and the body are intimately connected in many of these traditions and Pentecostalism is very, very successful in making that link."

The sense of community is very strong among renewalists. Most renewalists are internal migrants, and upon arriving in Sao Paulo or Nairobi, they find an acceptance and sense of community among the Pentecostal churches that replaces what they lost when leaving their home villages and towns. Small-group Bible studies and other small-group activities are an important part of fostering this sense of community.

Perhaps the most impressive factor in the rapid spread of Pentecostalism, according to the study, was the personal witnessing that is a part of the typical renewalist's life. The study found that sixty to seventy percent of renewalists witness to at least one other person on a weekly basis.

Yet, one must be concerned, ultimately, about the message being promulgated by this metamorphosis of Christianity. Lugo reports that the majority of people involved in the Pentecostal, charismatic, or renewalist movements, in all of the ten countries where the survey was conducted, "agree that God will grant good health and relief from sickness to believers who *have enough faith*, and in nine of the countries most Pentecostals say that God will grant material prosperity to all believers who *have enough faith*" (emphasis added). From a biblical, Lutheran perspective, while there is much to be lauded about the lives and zeal of renewalists, such beliefs are seriously at odds with orthodox Christianity and can result in many people suffering emotional and spiritual trauma because they have been led to believe that if only their faith were strong enough, they could be cured of their cancer or other disease, or obtain the wealth and prosperity they desire

For more information the complete report can be found at <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal/>.

Douglas L. Rutt

Book Reviews

Pastoral Ministry according to Paul: A Biblical Vision. By James W. Thompson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2006. 174 pages. \$17.99.

A precise definition of the “New Perspective on Paul” eludes consensus, thereby allowing diverse theological opinions to vie for inclusion under this popular moniker. While agreement on every detail of the New Perspective remains a challenge, all agree on what the New Perspective is *not*—namely, Luther’s reading of Paul’s justification *sola fide* as a polemic against legalistic forms of works righteousness. James Thompson argues that this denial of the Reformation perspective on Paul has direct implications for pastoral ministry. In lieu of *sola fide*, Paul’s central thought is “a theology of transformation which provides the basis for Paul’s pastoral theology” (19).

In Thompson’s view, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians provide the key to understanding Paul. These epistles reflect upon a “community that lives in the ‘now’ between God’s creative act of establishing the community and the ‘day of Christ’” (59). In this “now,” “the ethical progression by which the community abounds in love will result in the community’s blamelessness on the day of Christ” (44). Blamelessness through love, rather than justification through faith, becomes Paul’s ultimate desire. Justification is necessary to achieve blamelessness, though it merely provides the pretext for transformation or sanctification. “Although God’s righteousness includes the forgiveness of the sinner . . . it includes significantly more. God’s righteousness cannot be separated sharply from sanctification” (96–97). Moreover, “the ultimate result of sanctification is ‘eternal life’” (104).

Yet many passages in these two epistles remain unaddressed. For instance, Thompson is silent on Paul’s treatment of faith versus blamelessness in Philippians 3. Paul counts his blamelessness as “rubbish” and “suffers its loss” in order that he might obtain that “which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” (3:6, 8–9).

A hypothesis that presumes Pauline support for progressive sanctification must inevitably reconcile with Romans 7. In place of detailed exegesis, Thompson simply claims that “Paul is not speaking autobiographically” (106) even though Paul speaks in the first person singular, “I.” Paul’s confession, “I do the very thing I hate” because of “sin that dwells in me” (7:15, 17), simply becomes a warning to the sanctified about the potential threat of sinning. This leaves the author free to conclude, “Paul does not build a pastoral theology on the basis of our acceptance that we each remain ‘simul justus et peccator.’ . . . Paul argues that transformation is already occurring and that the community now ‘fulfills the just requirement of the law’ through the Spirit” (117). With salvation dependent upon the perfection of the community, the traditional role of the minister as “the evangelist who offers God’s grace to individuals” is “no longer tenable” (15, 149). Instead, ministry is the “*participation in God’s work of*

transforming the community of faith until it is 'blameless' at the coming of Christ" (20; Thompson's italics).

By denying the doctrines of justification *sola fide* and *simul iustus et peccator*, Thompson succeeds in articulating a theology opposed to that of Luther. While he takes much from the New Perspective, Thompson's conclusions extend well beyond New Perspective exegesis and more accurately reflect his Church of Christ tradition. Since Thompson fails to address the specific passages that pose the greatest stumbling blocks to his transformation-based soteriology, the reader is left with serious doubts as to whether Thompson's viewpoint is indeed faithful to Paul.

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***Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary In Your Community.* By Ed Stetzer and David Putnam. Nashville: Broadman, 2006. 244 pages. Hardcover.**

This book raises the missiological questions of indigenization and contextualization: How does the church communicate the Gospel and give expression to the Christian faith in a way that is relevant and meaningful to the culture and people who surround her? How does the church serve as a transforming agent in the very culture that sustains her?

A second assumption of the authors, that North America is one of the world's largest mission fields and most unchurched global populations, defines the content and urgency of this text.

The purpose of the book is to challenge church leaders in North America to think like missionaries and to break the missional code that enables individual congregations to communicate the gospel in work and witness with clarity to those who are unchurched. Breaking the code is seeing the unchurched as people groups with ethnicity and other demographic specifics, as population segments with particular lifestyles and values, and as cultural environments with geographic, language, education, and other interests that give people common identity. Breaking the missional code implies loving people like Jesus—incarnationally. It means being among them with understanding, compassion, commitment to action, and proclamation of the gospel.

Although the authors' theological language is evangelical, the fresh challenge to break the missional code is valuable. While they do not engage in broad theological reflection of the church, they are most helpful in bringing insight to the mission purpose and challenge of the church today in North America. While they could have written of single missional examples of growing churches, they are honest to call readers to the reality that one size

does not fit all who desire to be missionally effective. While the authors do not spend extensive time speaking to the issue of the Holy Spirit's primary role of winning the lost and building the church through the proclamation of the gospel, they certainly include it, and their sociology of "best practices" in mission is valuable.

Readers who want to thoughtfully engage the challenge of breaking the missional code in order to be Christ's witnesses, especially to their Jerusalem (Acts 1:8), will find this book to be a very fine resource. With a North American population that is transitioning from a modern world view to a postmodern world view, Christian to post-Christian culture, and, now, surpassing 100 million unchurched, the Christian church cannot ignore the call to mission nor can it be comfortable in isolation from the population that surrounds it.

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***Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study.* By Markus Bockmuehl. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2006. 297 pages. Paperback. \$21.99**

This volume, the first in Baker Academic's new *Studies in Theological Interpretation* series, charts some of the directions that New Testament scholarship has traveled—or shall we say stumbled—over the past several decades, but primarily issues challenges for the discipline to recapture its task (thus the subtitle). Markus Bockmuehl, who recently moved from a professorship in biblical studies at the University of Cambridge to one at the University of St. Andrews, is among a growing number of significant New Testament scholars who are showing the poverty of purely literary approaches to the Scriptures and who are calling for truly theological interpretation. (Richard Hays and Francis Watson are two other examples.) Although this volume serves up much that is helpful, I will highlight two primary contributions.

First, Bockmuehl emphasizes that the study of New Testament texts as a sympathetic implied exegete is central to the interpretative task. Sharing the world view and convictions of those who were expected to read and understand the original text puts one in a much better position to understand the text than taking the posture of a detached scholar or a critical scoffer. He explains this by using a powerful analogy from his time at Cambridge: "there are limits to how much you can usefully say about the stained glass windows of King's College Chapel without actually going in to see them from the inside" (75).

Second, Bockmuehl offers a very intriguing *apologia* for living memory as the basis for the history communicated about Jesus in the Gospels. Against the

historical skepticism that has plagued the study of Jesus in the past century, Bockmuehl joins his seasoned voice to a growing chorus refocusing our attention on how texts communicate historical and theological reality, a chorus that includes Samuel Byrskog (*Story as History—History as Story: Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient and Oral History*, 2000) and Richard Bauckham (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2006). Readers will not find much in this book about the interpretation of particular New Testament texts, but they will definitely learn about the art of interpreting the New Testament.

Charles A. Gieschen

***Lively Stone: The Autobiography of Berthold von Schenk.* Edited by C. George Fry and Joel R. Kurz. Forward by John Hannah. Delhi, NY: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2006. Paper. 152 pages. \$12.50.**

Berthold von Schenk (1895–1974), long time pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in the Bronx, was controversial in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for such liturgical innovations as sung eucharists and chasubles. With the discovery of his handwritten autobiography, he tells his own captivating story. Handwritten manuscripts retain an authenticity that computer-composed documents lack because they allow for a constant re-writing. Authenticity is sacrificed for the sake of precision. Have no fear—the editors put corrections alongside of the original text. Discovery of the handwritten manuscript reads like finding the temple scrolls during Hezekiah's reign. Charles Evanson, deployed by our seminary to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania, knew that such a manuscript existed. With the aid of Concordia Historical Institute director Martin Noland, it was found in its archives. The editors are C. George Fry, a former faculty member, and seminary alumnus Joel R. Kurz.

As a younger pastor I was fascinated by the autobiographies of pastors, Lutheran or not. This one is "a must" for Missourians, especially for those who are interested in knowing how we evolved as a church body between the 1920s and the 1970s. As a twenty-two year old seminary student, I met Schenk in his dark, paneled office at Our Savior's in the Bronx. He was chomping on a cigar, although photos show him with a pipe. At that time one could smoke a cigar and still be a Christian. There was also a personal connection. He grew up in the parsonage of Trinity Lutheran Church in Rockville, Connecticut, the same church where forty years later I would be pastor. The dedication of a new edifice provided the second and last time that I met him. Sadly, Trinity belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

In his lifetime von Schenk was not without his detractors, and *Lively Stone* has stirred up others, but few can match his record, from seminary days into his retirement, of turning around impossible situations. He built a parochial

grade school and high school with a congregation of little over 200 members in the Bronx. His was a life of beating the odds. Down-on-their-heels congregations in St. Louis and Newark were challenges that he wanted.

There is a note of personal tragedy—or is it insult? After World War II he was approached by the assistant to the LCMS president to head the relief effort among the independent German Lutheran churches. After everyone agreed to this, the LCMS found that von Schenk was not the one for job. He then offered his services to aid the territorial churches. (Why not?) For this he was named a Knight of St. John and received a doctor of theology degree from the University of Marburg, where Rudolph Bultmann was formulating his hermeneutic of demythologizing and ushering in the town church. Schenk has some nice things to say about the method, but then goes into reverse. (Computer generated manuscripts lose the back and forth that goes on in the human mind.)

Somehow von Schenk was able to become friends with anybody who was anybody. He accomplished the impossible by being elected to the Board of Education of the City of New York and then became chairman—a Protestant clergyman in a city which had more Jews than any other city and with so many Italian and Irish Catholics that Archbishop Cardinal Spellman was a virtual city official. On these pages Schenk spills everything out regarding what he thinks about other pastors and what he thinks about their preaching. Since I grew up in that era in New York, there is a bit of nostalgia to it all.

The editors guide the readers through von Schenk's teaching on the Lord's Supper, which may not be as fully developed as most would like. Two years after his founding of the St. James Society (circa 1933), he dissociated himself from it because it had become devoted to liturgical formalism. After leaving the Bronx, he moved to his farm near Albany and obtained use of an Episcopal church building to found a Lutheran congregation. He did not get the support of the district president because he favored communion every Sunday. (Imagine that!) Explanatory footnotes supplied by the editors provide a running and really a separate narrative along with the autobiography itself.

Stories of other ministers are waiting to be told. Until they are, this one holds first place. Readers will be informed, annoyed, and delighted. All this makes for a good read.

David P. Scaer

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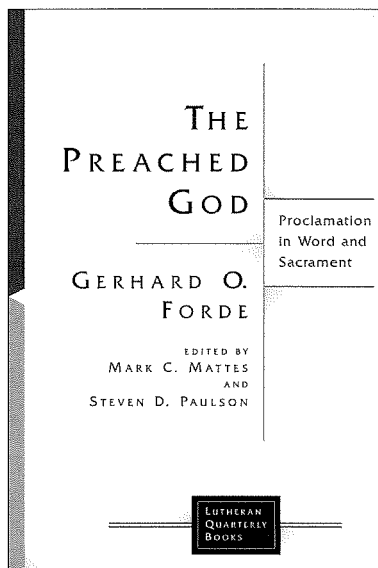
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