Luther’s Doctrine of Justification in the Light of Thomas Aquinas’ Doctrine of Justification:

The Same Light or Different?

by

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Abstract

This thesis probes the question as to whether Martin Luther significantly differs from Thomas Aquinas, with respect to the doctrine of justification. The significance of a comparison between these two theologians concerning justification lies in the perception that they are both, in their respective traditions, representative of the Protestant and Catholic positions upon this subject. The Joint Declaration, signed in 1999 between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, indicates an almost unified modern confession on the doctrine of justification. The purpose of this thesis is to determine if the Protestant concern for justification is adequately addressed in such a “joint” confession. This is accomplished by: examining the background and relevant issues at stake; exploring Aquinas’ justification-related theology; comparing Luther’s doctrine of justification in relationship to both Aquinas’ and to that of the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther; making final conclusions. Pal concludes that Luther’s doctrine of justification differs significantly from Aquinas’.
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Chapter 1

Thesis and Background

1.1 Thesis

This paper will investigate Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone in the light of Aquinas’ doctrine of justification by “faith formed by love.” Luther’s doctrine of simul iustus et peccator will be central to the discussion since it is best understood as an eschatological reality noted within Luther’s doctrine of justification. Eschatology here will be confined in its definition as it bears to justification by faith (“alone” for Luther and “informed by love” for Aquinas), for this is what remains pertinent to our discussion. Eschatology is that which speaks of last things. Our concern is how this relates to justification. Torrance sums up the important elements of this more specified definition of eschatology for Luther, when he says,

The term imputatio... indicated that justification is forensic in the sense that it is grounded on the judgement of Christ on the Cross, but indicated also that what happened there for us is yet to be fully disclosed at the Advent of Christ. Imputatio is the concept which holds together those two moments, the forensic and the eschatological, in one. That the believer is imputed righteous means that he possesses a righteousness which is real, though not yet fully realised. It is that relation between having and not having which lies at the heart of Luther’s eschatology.... It is the eschatological dialectic of justus et peccator.¹

I would like to add that when Torrance speaks of the “the forensic,” it is also eschatological (realized eschatology), and when he speaks of “the eschatological,” (future eschatology as related to the before mentioned realized eschatology) it is the fulfillment of the forensic, of

what God first brought in the “judgement of Christ on the cross.” The “Advents” of Christ, both in the Incarnation/ Crucifixion and in the Parousia yet to come, are the eschatological poles which imputation holds together as one. The simul iustus et peccator (totus/totus) thus speaks of the imputation of righteousness, in terms of what it has already accomplished, in terms of what it is currently accomplishing in part,\(^2\) and in terms of what it yet will fully accomplish.

According to such Scriptures as Acts 2:17 and Heb 1:2; 9:26, the end has come in the crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ. But whereas the end has come in terms of imputed righteousness, because our sin has been “judged on the cross,” yet for the world, it awaits the purgation of fire (II Pet 3:10), while the governments of power within it, also await their judgement. This includes all church governments. Torrance says concerning these judgements which Luther’s eschatology embraces, that

Neither Church nor the State can assume absolute power. Both are under the judgement, and that judgement relativises and restricts the authority of each. Rebellion against that limitation is apparent in the wielding of spiritual and worldly authority into one, the potestas tyrannica which Luther discerned in the action of the Papacy on the one hand and the action of the Schwarmer on the other.\(^3\)

As will be discussed below, Aquinas’ continuity-related aspects in his soteriology, between nature and grace, the world and the church, and reason and revelation, all reveal that practically no “judgement” awaits the present order. This is particularly true with regards to his doctrine of the Church, wherein he says that “faith adheres to all the articles of faith by reason of one mean, viz. on account of the First Truth proposed to us in Scriptures, according to the

\(^2\) See Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* 1535, vol. 26 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and associate editor Walter A. Hansen (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963-64), 351, where he says, “mean while our comfort is that we have the first fruits of the Spirit and have begun to be leavened, but that we shall be completely leavened when this sinful body is destroyed and we arise new with Christ.” Although Luther speaks of “first fruits,” which is Luther’s expression of sanctification, he always confesses that sin remains in our sinful bodies until the resurrection of the body.

\(^3\) Torrance, “The Eschatology of the Reformation,” 45.
teaching of the Church who has the right understanding of them.”⁴ Aquinas goes so far as to call the teaching of the Church, as the proper interpreter of Scripture, “an infallible and Divine rule.”⁵ Hence, for Aquinas, this is one example of how the doctrine of justification within his context does not judge the present order of the Catholic Church in any substantive manner. Furthermore, Aquinas, in combating Joachim’s radical eschatology, says that “now no state of the present life can be more perfect than the state of the New Law: since nothing can approach nearer to the last end than that which is the immediate cause of our being brought to the last end.”⁶ This statement seems to me to be correct, except that for Aquinas, the New Law, in that it often pertains to the Catholic sacramental system, is associated with a chiliasm that is fulfilled in the present state of the Church. This essentially makes the church the kingdom of God on earth.⁷ Furthermore, if Aquinas’ understanding of justification does not include imputation as its primary component, then this gives rise to the question, whether the interpretation of the New Law he promulgates, is as “perfect” as Aquinas assumes. Luther’s doctrine of justification says that we have not merely approached justification as the beginning of both the goal of sanctification and of eternal life, but that rather in the present time we have perfect righteousness by imputation, and as such we already have the end in Jesus Christ. Luther’s theology of the cross works in conjunction with the judgements of the cross. Apocalyptic elements are strong in Luther’s theology, because his soteriology embraces such judgements upon the world order. In imputation God views us “in Christ” (in His kingdom) as though the end had fully come, and hence as being “perfect.” But this kingdom of grace (Christ) is brought

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⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid., I-II, q. 106, a. 4.
⁷ See below in chapter two on Aquinas.
to us via the judgement of the cross of Christ. Therefore, nature, when described as elevated
and healed, offers an inadequate description of the disruptive and purely divine elements of
grace. This disruption is wholly connected to the tensions inherent in the biblical eschatology
of “the already/not yet.” On the other hand, Aquinas’ soteriology reveals that a metaphysic of
final causes, rather than eschatological realism (fulfillment in history), is the driving force of
the telos (goal) of his doctrinal system. For example, and as will be further discussed below,
Otto Pesch makes the claim that Aquinas’ soteriology is focused on God as the Creator. In this
emphasis, the continuity between pre and post-conversion, reason and revelation, nature and
super-nature (grace and its effects and role), is a highlighted feature of Aquinas’ soteriology.

Therefore, in order to highlight these eschatological differences, as noted above, this
paper will address how both Luther and Aquinas deal with theodicy, with its inclusion of
Providence and predestination, as interpretive frameworks for their respective doctrines of
justification. For Luther, his heightened eschatological perspective, whether pertaining to the
world around him at his time or whether impinging upon his own inner world
(psychological/religious/spiritual), led him to view justification as a re-creative event occurring
in the Word preached and heard by faith alone. Therefore, for Luther, the telos or goal of
human life is thus not sought in relation to the first creation but rather to the second creation
in Christ, occurring ex nihilo from our spiritual death, poverty and our state as enemies and
sinners before God. For example, Luther says, “For He is the Almighty Creator, who makes
everything out of nothing.”

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8 For further discussion of this, see the section below in chapter two, “Two Essays by Yearley and Moltmann.”
from moral ethics, by saying, “In theology there is a new ‘doing,’ one that is different from moral ‘doing.’”\(^\text{10}\) This theme will be further developed towards the latter part of the paper.

Thomas Aquinas on the other hand, interprets justification in keeping with his view of second causes, so that as providence is seen as indirect, in that God as the Prime Mover (initial) has set into motion the universe, so also justification has a tendency to be teleological, and as such oriented towards a process. Hence Aquinas holds to faith formed by love as prerequisite for justification.\(^\text{11}\) As such nature is elevated and healed\(^\text{12}\) rather than seen as primarily being led into a disruption which leads to death in order to be re-created. Although Thomas from a theological perspective also ascribes the new creation in Christ to the believer with its death/resurrection themes,\(^\text{13}\) this is held within the framework of his Creator/creation theological emphasis. Therefore, on both sides of the equation, whether that of life before conversion or whether of life after conversion, Thomas stresses continuity. This continuity is further expressed in the unification between reason and revelation, as in a continuum rather than in opposition to each other. It results in a theology of continuity between the Church and the world, in which a greater stability-factor exists than in Luther’s theology. It is such a disposition towards the Church which disposes Aquinas’ theology towards one that has no judgement towards the present order. For Aquinas, the “present order” of which I have above

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 264.

\(^{11}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians* (Albany, N.Y: Magi Books Inc., 1966), 156: Aquinas says “For faith is a knowledge of the word of God- ‘That Christ may dwell in your hearts’ (Eph 3:17) - which word is not perfectly possessed or perfectly known unless the love which it hopes for is possessed.” Or again, “But when one does not have ‘formed faith,’ Christ has died in him,” 133.

\(^{12}\) See Lee H Yearley, “St. Thomas Aquinas on Providence and Predestination,” *Anglican Theological Review*, 49 no 4 (O 1967): 414. Although divine intervention is central to Aquinas’ doctrine of predestination, this is seen as overlaying Providence, so that “God does not directly control all particular happenings in the world, having ordained most of them to occur contingently.” Yearley goes on to say, “The *felix culpa* idea in Thomas is always in tension with his sense of the goodness of the created pre-Fall world,” 416n16.

\(^{13}\) Aquinas, *Commentary on Galatians*, 62.
made reference, largely consists in the Church, since as Torrance above says, under the papacy both spiritual and worldly authority are wielded into one.

By contrast, in looking at Luther, discontinuity is stressed in his Law/Gospel dialectic. This dialectic is ever maintained in Luther’s theology, both pre- and post-conversion, and as such his eschatology is heightened to accommodate this. Providence, predestination and theodicy fit then into Luther’s eschatological and even apocalyptic vision, which both he and the Reformers of his day (including Protestants at large) held in common with respect to their historical context. For example, Luther saw himself as a prophetic figure of deliverance from the “Antichrist” of the papacy. Cunningham and Grell say, “By far the most significant... prophecies were those of the fifteenth-century Franciscan monk, Johann Hilton, who had predicted the rise of a great reformer who in 1516 would initiate a reformation of the Church. No clearer proof could be given for Luther’s prophetic consequence, and even the Reformer himself accepted this prophecy.” Hence Luther’s estrangement from God, in the personal quest in which he struggled to find peace with God, coincides with the turbulent and catastrophic times in which he lived. The formula Luther discovered in Scripture concerning Pauline justification, and which became his own theological breakthrough, also aligned with the events of his times as Luther and the other Reformers understood them, and thus affliction

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14 By “conversion,” I here mean it in terms of the reception of justifying grace.
15 Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13, 20; “Luther’s appearance on the scene as a religious reformer and recoverer of the Gospel, came to be seen in a prophetic and eschatological light.... The value of being able to claim that they (Reformers) were the godly troops of Christ fighting the ungodly soldiers of the papacy- Antichrist in Rome- in the last eschatological battle... can, as we shall see, hardly be overestimated.”
16 Ibid., 21.
17 Ibid., 319: “Thus to contemporaries the increase and growing intensity of warfare, new epidemics and diseases, not to mention the higher incidence of famine, and the perceived increase in celestial signs, such as
and despair in society are indirectly addressed in his doctrine of justification by faith alone. This is so, as affliction and suffering in the world at large, resonate with Luther’s own world of Anfechtung, be it an inner world (psychological/spiritual) or the external world around him. Thus the times in which Luther lived helped him to understand justification in a less “stable” context than the times in which Aquinas lived. In essence, Luther’s phenomenal world, by means of the Anfechtung described above, drove him to discover the theological world of Scripture. The centrality of Luther’s theologia crucis (theology of the cross) reveals that this turbulent context (both within and without) in which Luther lived, was not merely a catalyst which informed his doctrine of justification, but rather became itself integral to his doctrine of justification by faith alone. The existence of theodicy is then a reality held within Luther’s doctrine of simul iustus et peccator, which along with the total sinfulness and total righteousness (passive alien righteousness of Christ by imputation) of a Christian, highlights the necessity to keep intact the fullness of the eschatological elements in his doctrine of justification. If this is not the case, then justification will be less eschatological and thus succumb to a gradualistic/continuity-related soteriology, such as is manifested in Aquinas’ soteriology. Practically speaking, for Aquinas and Catholic theology, this means sanctification, which as will be shown below, becomes the focal point of discussing justification. As such, this combined with Aquinas’ chiliasm as expressed in the Catholic Church and in its sacramental

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18 Alister McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther’s Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1985), 151: McGrath says this about Luther’s doctrine of the theologia crucis: that “the significance of suffering, whether this is understood as passiones Christi or human Anfechtung, is that it represents the opus alienum through which God works out his opus proprium.” McGrath goes on to say “God assaults man in order to break him down and thus to justify him.”

19 This will be further explained below.
theology, means that justification inevitably does not stand on its own two feet. The *in nobis* emphasis of Catholic soteriology eclipses the *extra nos* foundation of justification. As such, Aquinas’ doctrine of justification primarily reinforces the institutional Church rather than reforms it and as such does not judge “the present order.” For example, Aquinas says, “And since we cannot in ourselves obtain grace, but through Christ alone, hence Christ of Himself instituted the sacraments whereby we obtain grace: viz., Baptism, Eucharist, Orders of the ministers of the New Law, by the institution of the apostles and seventy-two disciples, Penance, and indissoluble matrimony.” Aquinas also says about the “universal Church,” that it “cannot err, since our Lord said (Luke 22:32): *I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not.*” Both Apostolic succession and the primacy of Peter undergird Aquinas’ sacramentalism. Although this paper is not out to prove whether Aquinas or Luther are more biblical in their doctrines of justification, it is evident from Scripture (to both myself and many others) that the Lord Jesus did not institute all of these as “sacraments,” and furthermore, that the Church Christ instituted was not the institutionalized Catholic Church. However, Aquinas primarily places the reception of grace and the giving of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of the Church. On the other hand, Luther’s sacramentality is reformed by his soteriology so that two sacraments remain essentially valid to him; the Eucharist and Baptism. The Word of God becomes more central within his theology in order for this to occur. The reduction in the Reformers from seven to two sacraments is on the basis of the Word of God, which both defines and enlivens the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, since it is based

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20 *Summa Theologiae*, I-II q. 108, a. 2.
21 Ibid., II-II, q. 2 a. 6.
scripturally upon “a promise and command.”

Hence, together with the Word and under the Word of God, these sacraments are potentially revolutionary, even towards the ecclesiastical order of the Church. Luther is similar to Aquinas in giving great importance to these above two mentioned sacraments for the reception of grace. However, he differs in the greater emphasis he places on the Word in and upon the sacraments.

Therefore inclusion of Luther’s and Aquinas’ understandings of theodicy, with its interrelated topics of Providence and predestination, will help to compare and contrast Luther’s view on justification in relation to Aquinas’. Does St. Thomas’ light of justification suffice for Luther or does Luther’s justification theology truly shine something new of the knowledge of salvation? Specifically, is Luther’s handling of theodicy with its related elements of providence and predestination as understood eschatologically, the key to understanding such a new knowledge of God within Luther’s theology? Furthermore, this paper will deal with the traditional differences, as highlighted by Luther himself, between faith formed by love and faith formed by Christ.

But as noted above, the hope will be to focus such elements within a comparison of Luther and Aquinas as related to eschatology and theodicy. It is my belief that Luther’s eschatological perspective on justification, as it interacted with his Anfechtung, and particularly in relation to theodicy (suffering and affliction), forged a new perspective on salvation with regards to the doctrine of justification, one different from that of Aquinas’. An example of this discussed below is Luther’s “assurance of salvation.” Luther’s consistent

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23 In “Sermon on the Lord’s Supper,” LW 51: 188-189, Luther says “if you have lost these words you have lost the sacrament.... The Word of God is the chief thing in the sacrament.”
pastoral theology spoken so as to “comfort consciences,”25 meant present certitude of salvation and the knowledge of being “in grace,” were both attainable and normalized within a proper understanding of one’s justification by faith alone. There is interplay in Luther’s theology between affliction, suffering and sin on the one hand and Christian righteousness on the other hand. Luther’s Anfechtung then becomes that which “drives” the Christian constantly to Christ and in this “drivenness” believers are encouraged to console themselves in nothing but “Christ for us,” (Gal 1:4) with Christ as a Christian’s passive and alien righteousness. From this then flows “new life” in Christ along with the “assurance of salvation.”

Although beyond the scope of our present study, Luther believed great reform would take place within Catholicism. I mention this here as it ties to Luther’s doctrine of Anfechtung and the assurance of salvation. For Luther, Church reform was to occur so that “the entire papacy with all its brotherhoods, indulgences, orders, forms of worship, invocation of saints, purgatory, Masses, vigils, vows and other endless abominations of that sort,”26 would either be changed or overthrown by the doctrine of justification by faith. Luther however places the “uncertainty of salvation” as taught in the papacy of his day, as greater than all the other “abominations” mentioned above by him. For Luther said regarding these “abominations” and assurance, “in addition, we can become sure this way that we have the pure and true doctrine of the Gospel- an assurance of which the papacy cannot boast. If everything else were sound there, still this monster of uncertainty is worse than all the other monsters.”27 Only as one examines Luther in his own context is it possible to discover how suffering and affliction

25 Ibid., 5.
26 Ibid., 222.
27 Ibid., 386.
undergirds this passionate claim from Luther regarding assurance. In Luther’s teaching, such assurance of salvation toward the individual occurs as a result of direct access to God via the truth of Scripture, in which papal authority becomes secondary to this. In this sense Luther’s debate with Cardinal Cajetan, as will be examined in chapter three and as mentioned below according to Bayer’s interpretation, is a debate which concerns both Church reform and “personal assurance.” Again, this is where Aquinas’ doctrinal stress on justification fails to judge the present order, and namely, the institutional Church. Hence, in the context of the Christian being at once a sinner and righteous and this amidst a suffering, afflicted world, Luther says “any Christian is a supreme pontiff, because, first, he offers and slaughters his reason and the mind of the flesh, and secondly, he attributes to God the glory of being righteous, truthful, patient, kind, and merciful.”28 True belief in the doctrine of justification by faith alone requires no less than this “double sacrifice.”29 The first sacrifice concerns assurance of salvation stemming from justification by faith alone and the “killing” of all reason opposed to this truth; the second, the attribution of God’s glory to His sheer grace. Both are the work of faith. Assurance of salvation is then no mere afterthought but ties directly into theodicy as it is addressed in the eschatology of justification. This is particularly true in Luther’s “two-kingdom” theology.30 The consolation of assurance occurs then in the dialectic of sin and affliction on the one hand and the perfect, imputed and alien righteousness of Christ on the other hand.

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28 Ibid., 233.
29 Ibid.
30 These two kingdoms are known as the ‘geistliches Regiment’ and the ‘weltliches Regiment.’ Within these kingdom concepts the heavenly eternal kingdom prevails over the earthly temporal one, but in a way in which both are under and comprise the one reign of God. See Torrance, “The Eschatology of Faith” in Yule, George, ed., Luther: Theologian for Catholics and Protestants (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985), 152-157.
1.2 Background

As we look at this section, my intention is to highlight the traditional differences between the Protestant and Catholic positions on the doctrine of justification and to note some of the pivotal efforts in the modern ecumenical movement to bridge these differences. In this regard, both Luther and Aquinas become prominent figures in representing their respective traditions. There are two key issues I wish to highlight here. The first is the issue of whether justification is comprised of declared, imputed righteousness or whether it is to be understood as inherent righteousness (by infused grace or by participation in the Holy Spirit). The other alternative is to consider justification as comprised of both types of righteousness, which, from a Protestant perspective and as will be shown below, does not differ substantively from holding to the Catholic viewpoint. From a Lutheran perspective, the first option regards humanity’s standing (righteousness) before God (\textit{coram Deo}) while the latter bespeaks humanity’s righteousness before men (\textit{coram hominibus}). The second issue concerns whether the differing theological emphases of Aquinas and Luther amounts to compatible or incompatible doctrines of justification. Thus, we are here setting the table for the rest of the paper.

Since Luther’s protest against the papacy of his day, from which ensued great spiritual, religious, political and social turbulence, much has changed in the modern context between the opposing parties involved. Particularly, the ecumenical movement has accelerated since the penning of Hans Kung’s doctoral thesis in 1957, which claimed that the greatest twentieth century Protestant theologian (Karl Barth), in the totality of his dogma, held to the same doctrine of justification as did the Roman Catholic Church. The most recent phenomenon of
this ecumenical acceleration is the agreement signed between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in 1999, known as the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (later referred to as the JDDJ or as the *Joint Declaration*). Here we will briefly investigate the claims that have issued from the recent ecumenical dialogues, particularly, from the *Joint Declaration*. This document is unique in that it declares that the anathemas of both sides no longer apply in the present context. But it is also unique because as Anthony Lane says of the ‘Annex to the Official Common Statement’ of the JDDJ, “This Annex offers genuine clarification on some issues and includes the momentous acceptance by Rome of the *sola fide* formula.”\(^{31}\) Although both sides have their opponents as to the validity of the *Joint Declaration*’s ecumenical claims, the signing of the agreement by both sides is a milestone in terms of ecumenical goodwill.

In continuing to look at the modern context, which has been the inspiration for this paper, we will begin by briefly examining the *Joint Declaration* document. It is not my purpose to study this document in any great depth, nor is it to either approve or critique the *Joint Declaration*’s accuracy concerning its claims for a unified confession between Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the doctrine of justification by faith. We will however look at two articles in the document of obvious significance. Paragraph 5 clearly states the intention of the *Joint Declaration* when it says

The present *Joint Declaration* has this intention: namely, to show that on the basis of their dialogue the subscribing Lutheran churches and the Roman Catholic Church are now able to articulate a common understanding of our justification by God’s grace through faith in Christ. It does not cover all that either church teaches about justification; it does encompass a consensus

on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and shows that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations.\textsuperscript{32}

The significance of this paragraph is the agreement upon a mutual articulation or confession of the doctrine of justification by faith (alone). Furthermore, this is seen as eliminating the need for either of the two parties to continue to uphold their past (since the Reformation) doctrinal condemnations of each other (in this case between “subscribing Lutherans” and Roman Catholics). Also, the \textit{Joint Declaration} states that this agreement is neither exhaustive of all which each church teaches about justification, nor ignorant of remaining differences.

Paragraph 15 is a pertinent summation of the above mentioned articulation, which says,

“Justification thus means that Christ himself is our righteousness, in which we share through the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father. Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.”\textsuperscript{33} Within this article and as we shall further explore below, justification is taken here in its broader sense to include renewal of the heart or regeneration with its accompanying good works. There is a sense in which either party could read their own particular doctrine into this key text and feel they have been validated, but by and large the Roman Catholic position is favoured at this point, in its inclusion of inherent righteousness (renewal of the heart). I say this because below I will show that “renewal” is the effect of justification for Luther, while for Aquinas it is the cause. As an “effect” it should not be mentioned in the definition paragraph of justification. That is why Lane says, “The \textit{Joint Declaration} opts to use the word ‘justification’ in

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Joint Declaration}, Paragraph 5.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., Paragraph 15.
the Catholic sense.”34 As will be shown, a conjoining of the imputation and impartation of righteousness as the Joint Declaration above appears to do is not the Protestant or Lutheran position on justification. “Receiving the Holy Spirit” is a part of sanctification for Protestantism and a sign that justification by faith alone has already occurred. Furthermore this bias also works in conjunction with the Joint Declaration’s complete omission of the word “imputation.” As Lane says, “The traditional Protestant doctrine of the alien righteousness of Christ imputed to us, clearly set out in Justification by Faith, is not mentioned in the Joint Declaration.... This is a serious omission.”35 Lane also states, “The crucial question, therefore, is whether all this obscures the distinction between (in Protestant terms) justification and sanctification.”36 More will later be discussed along these lines, but it is worthwhile to note a substantial difficulty with paragraph 15 of the document, namely, its lack of precision resulting in one side being favoured over the other, and this at the most crucial juncture of defining justification. Paragraphs 23 and 24 concerning “renewal,” do not seem to resolve this “precision” difficulty.

There has already been considerable response to the Joint Declaration’s claims of a united confession on the doctrine of justification by faith. We will examine two at this point, one favourably disposed and one less favourable to it. Beginning with Margaret O’Gara, she describes the Joint Declaration and its progress as a “great step of convergence and reconciliation between Roman Catholics and Lutherans, a step that Pope John Paul II called a
‘milestone’ in our path toward healing the divisions within the Church of Christ.”

O’Gara goes on to say that the responses of objectors to the validity of the Joint Declaration’s claims, despite the “fact” that both represented parties speak “unanimously,” all contributes to reminding her of “the description offered by Karl Rahner of the neurotic fear that we may be in agreement.”

On the other hand, it would seem that George Hunsinger, while also acknowledging the significance of the Joint Declaration’s accomplishments, states that “the more the Joint Declaration is pondered, the more uncertain it becomes whether the unity made visible is real or largely verbal.” Hunsinger claims that because “the doctrine of justification by faith has not always been seen as a doctrine that is thoroughly eschatological,” therefore “the Declaration too often seems to be an exercise in studied ambiguities.” So which is it then? Is the Joint Declaration actually an agreement grounded in real doctrinal unity? Or is it on the other hand “an exercise in studied ambiguities?” I intend to lend weight, according to the above thesis, to the conclusion that, for the reasons of the thoroughly eschatological nature of justification, the latter is the truer assessment.

Time would fail to look in great depth at the background to this discussion, regarding pertinent historical documents and their history. To summarize briefly then, the Roman Catholic understanding of justification is one which occurs by faith, which is comprised of “formed faith” or of faith having caritas (“charity”), and because of its inherent emphasis on

38 Ibid., 29.
40 Ibid., 69.
41 Ibid., 70.
42 Ibid., 82.
regeneration and of its *in nobis* ("in us") grounding, is understood as saying that the Christian is “made righteous” (also called “imparted righteousness”) and not merely or only “declared righteous.” Aquinas supports this notion of being “made righteous” and that justification is primarily accomplished by sanctifying grace with its “*in nobis*” emphasis, when he says that grace is “one whereby man himself is united to God- and this is called *sanctifying grace*.... Grace is said to make pleasing, not efficiently, but formally, i.e., because thereby man is justified and is made worthy to be called pleasing to God.”43 On the converse, this latter emphasis of “declared righteousness,” which comprises both the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer, has come to be the traditional Protestant understanding, which also stands in opposition to any inherent (formal) righteousness as included in justification by faith.44 The Protestant tradition has viewed regeneration and any intrinsic aspects of salvation as lying under the category of sanctification. Luther did not develop a distinction between justification and sanctification as such, but he held to two kinds of righteousness, with one being the passive “alien” righteousness of Christ and the other active righteousness.45 And Luther often spoke of a tree bearing fruit, with the tree being passive righteousness and the fruit active righteousness. This will be examined in greater depth in chapter three. By making this distinction and by remaining faithful to it, well into his mature

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43 *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 111 a. 1.

44 John Calvin on justification says the following: “On the contrary, a man will be *justified by faith* when, excluded from the righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous. Thus we simply interpret justification, as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as if we were righteous; and we say that this justification consists in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ” (*Inst*. 3:11:2). Calvin is rightly representing Luther at this point.

45 “Lectures on Galatians,” *LW* 26: 4-8.
theological thinking, he was in resonance with the later traditional Protestant distinction between justification and sanctification, of which John Calvin became the greatest proponent.

In looking at the Tridentine Council, which represents the official response to the Reformation in the sixteenth-century and which is still considered as binding, two pertinent statements to this discussion are worth examination. The first is that the Council of Trent defines sanctifying grace as the formal cause of justification. For example, concerning the causes of justification, the Council of Trent states,

The single formal cause is ‘the justice of God, not that by which he himself is just, but that by which he makes us just,’ namely the justice by which we have a gift from him and by which we are spiritually renewed. Thus, not only are we considered just, but we are truly called just and we are just, each one receiving within oneself one’s own justice, according to the measure which ‘the Holy Spirit apportions to each one individually as he wills.’

The emphasis is thus placed squarely on in the in nobis of salvation. This is to say righteousness must be equivalent to a moral change in the person, rather than be a new relation before God by imputation. (The basis for assurance of salvation, which this paper argues for, is only possible if justifying righteousness is extra nos. Assurance flows from this extra nos foundation.) Also, there is an implicit reference in this decree of Trent, to either Peter Lombard’s doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the infused grace within the believer, or to the Thomistic idea of a “created habit.” Such anthropology shows that Trent is following in Aquinas’ Aristotelian-like footsteps. This will become more evident in chapter two. As becomes apparent from examining the Council of Trent, the concern of Roman Catholics to include inherent righteousness with its infusion of faith, love, and hope is a reaction against

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46 Chapter XII, “The Nature and the Causes of the Sinner’s Justification,” The General Council of Trent, Sixth Session: Decree on Justification, 1547.
47 Ibid.
the Protestant doctrine of imputation as the sole formal cause of justification. Lane expresses well, the concern on both sides, when he says that,

Catholics fear the idea of imputed righteousness will lead to neglect of the transforming work of the Spirit and give rise to people with untransformed lives who have an assurance of salvation. Protestants fear that reliance upon imparted righteousness leads to a dependence upon one’s own righteousness and a corresponding loss of assurance as well as a weak view of sin. In honesty it must be said that neither set of fears is imaginary.48

It is fitting to acknowledge both of these concerns, before below, we examine, Luther’s theology in the light of Aquinas’. However, this paper will focus on Luther’s concerns, having acknowledged at the outset that the Roman Catholic concerns are equally legitimate. Since both parties have had legitimate concerns throughout their histories, it is for this reason that unity must be “real,” as said above by Hunsinger, and hence the purpose of this study.

The second pertinent text to this debate concerns the nature of Catholic justification as an incomplete event. The Council of Trent says, “When ‘faith is active along with works’ (James 2:22), they increase in the very justice they have received through the grace of Christ, and are further justified.”49 Although one may credit this statement to the Catholic blurring of justification and sanctification, the point is that justification is not merely a beginning point, nor is it complete and perfect, but rather it is a process which can be improved and thus a Christian may “increase in the very justice they have received.” Hunsinger says concerning this ongoing process of justification such as is stated in the Council of Trent, that “all known scholastic doctrines of justification, whether nominalist, Scotist, or Thomistic, finally saw justification as a

48 Lane, 160.
49 Chapter X, “The Increase of Justification in the Justified,” The General Council of Trent, Sixth Session: Decree on Justification, 1547.
goal to be obtained at the end of a purifying process in nobis. Oberman, whom Hunsinger draws upon at this point, says of the “whole medieval tradition” which Luther attacked, that “The iustitia Dei remains the finis, the goal, or the ‘Gegenuber’ of the viator who is propelled on his way to the eternal Jerusalem by the iustitia Christi.” On the other hand and in contrast to this, Oberman concludes that “Luther’s doctrine of justification can therefore be designated as the reunification of the righteousness of Christ and the justice of God by which the sinner is justified ‘coram Deo,’ which forms the stable basis and not the uncertain goal of the life of sanctification, of the true Christian life.” As will be further examined below, this stable basis within Luther’s understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, is thoroughly grounded in eschatology. At this juncture, it can be seen that Luther’s concern with the doctrine of justification is about the whole bent of spirituality, which admittedly flows in two diverging directions, depending on which stream one adheres to. And as has been mentioned above, this concerns the after-effects of one’s position on the doctrine of justification, namely, on the one hand, the place of the assurance of salvation and of the possible diminishment of the seriousness of sin (Protestant concern), while on the other hand, the fear of antinomianism leading to untransformed Christian living (Catholic concern).

The Regensburg Colloquy, which became the precursor to the Council of Trent, was a noble effort, and represented the best of theologians on both sides of the debate. Although the parties involved achieved agreement in paragraph 5, which concerned justification, yet

52 Ibid., 25.
failed on other pertinent points,\textsuperscript{53} Lane points out that Luther was not impressed with the article. He thought it was merely an overlaying or patchwork of the Protestant and Catholic understandings of justification. His May Letter to Johann Friedrich, states, “‘so they are right, and so are we.’ This is like sewing a new patch onto an old garment (Matt. 9).”\textsuperscript{54} Lane notes that Daphne Hampson agrees with Luther’s assessment, and also that it came as no surprise that Calvin was in happy accord with article 5. This was owing to Calvin’s soteriology and particularly his Christology, which held in balance what the Regensburg article 5, affirmed, namely, the “coupling (of) an Augustinian belief in transformation with the idea of imputed righteousness.”\textsuperscript{55} It is important to mention this, because if Luther saw Regensburg in such a negative light, and if, as in Lane’s analysis, Newman saw it as “ambitious of a Protestant interpretation,”\textsuperscript{56} then one wonders how Luther could view the Joint Declaration in any better a light than he did Regensberg, considering that paragraph 15 in the Joint Declaration possibly favours the Catholic definition of justification. For example, as noted above, this article includes inherent righteousness in the same breath as justification. Furthermore, and this will be dealt with in greater depth below, already a difference can be noticed in Calvin and Luther towards the doctrine of justification. McGrath rightly notes how Calvin differs from Luther. Luther will be examined in chapter three, but at this point we should note that McGrath says, for Calvin, “Sanctification is not the effect of justification; both justification and sanctification are effects of union with Christ. Notice also how sanctification is now conceived Christologically, in terms of ‘becoming what we are’- that is to say, actualising our new status in

\textsuperscript{53} Lane, 52.
\textsuperscript{54} Martin Luther, Letter of 10/11 May to Johann Friedrich (WA Br. 9:406-409, #3616).
\textsuperscript{55} Lane, 57.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 59.
Christ in our lives through the process of being conformed to Christ.” Calvin’s theology is ontological in nature. How ontological or not is Luther’s doctrine of justification? The New Finnish interpretation of Luther would say an affirmative ‘yes’ to his doctrine of justification as being ‘thoroughly ontologically-based.’ The extent of the validity of this claim will be explored below as we come to understand how Protestant theology from a Lutheran viewpoint, has an eschatological thrust, which differentiates both its doctrine and its orientation as substantially distinct from medieval scholastic theology.

In briefly looking at the Formula of Concord, which upon Luther’s death became the compromise within Lutheranism that averted immediate fragmentation, we can already note that Lutheranism was in certain aspects true to Luther’s doctrine, while in other ways it varied from his theology. McGrath goes so far as to say, “Luther’s concept of justification, his concept of the presence of Christ within the believer, his doctrine of double predestination, his doctrine of servum arbitrium- all were rejected or radically modified by those who followed him.” Of interest for us is that Melancthon, Luther’s primary prodigy and a key spokesman for the Formula of Concord, developed Luther’s doctrine of justification along the lines of forensic justification, with imputed righteousness as its central component. Luther’s doctrine of the

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58 An example of this can be found in Simon Peura, “What God Gives Man Receives: Luther on Salvation,” in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 86. Peura says, “Luther’s view of *unio cum Christo* has not been accepted in its true ontological sense or as an expression of his understanding of justification.”

59 Calvin’s theology is also eschatological, but this paper is specifically dealing with Luther in the light of Aquinas. In this regard, there are significant differences between Luther and Calvin in considering ontology. Concerning this difference see Torrance, “The Eschatology of the Reformation,” 49-61. Here Torrance esteems Calvin’s ontology over Luther’s. However, as will be further discussed in the conclusion of this paper, I see in Luther’s position the grounds for a Protestant ontology on the basis of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer.

60 McGrath, *Justitia Dei*, 248.
“divine marriage” of the believer with Christ is eclipsed in Melancthon’s forensic emphasis on justification. Is this “eclipsing” true to Luther’s doctrine of justification? This question will be addressed below, as it relates to both Aquinas and the New Finnish interpretation of Luther. Furthermore, the paper will finish with a connection between ontology and ethics, particularly for Luther.

In returning to the modern context, Robert Jenson evaluates the debate in the following way:

There would be great ecumenical relief in so doing: if it could simply be noted that Catholic transformational doctrine and Reformation hermeneutical doctrine are about two different things and therefore need not be defended against each other, and that Paul’s doctrine is yet a third matter that may calmly be studied together, as indeed it has been. But this relief is stubbornly refused.61

Jenson believes that Protestants and Catholics are addressing two separate issues as though they are one and the same and hence conflict arises from this lack of specification. Although this is a very insightful point in that it highlights that Protestant justification distinguishes itself from sanctification while Catholic justification includes sanctification, the effect of conceding this does not specifically define justification, nor address the fact that these differing theological emphases, as embraced by both Protestants and Catholics, result in differing sets of spirituality. What requires specification is whether or not justification is to be understood as theologically prior to, independent and distinguishable from sanctification. If Roman Catholics wish to admit the Council of Trent made an error in judgement by confusing sanctification with justification in this regard, then indeed Jenson is correct and both sides can now acknowledge that the past grievances were simply owing to this error in doctrinal ambiguity. And then both

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sides can from now on acknowledge that justification is by faith alone and is not dependent on “infused charity” in order to be effective.

In finishing the background section, we need to look at one more modern pertinent figure, namely, Otto Pesch. He has accomplished monumental work in comparing Luther and Aquinas. In briefly summarizing, Otto Pesch’s argument is essentially that Luther and Aquinas have the same doctrine of God, if with different emphases. Pesch says, “Thomas asks about God as Creator; Luther, it seems, asks about God’s grace, about God as salvation.”\(^\text{62}\) Essentially Luther is depicted by Pesch to be inquiring about God as the Merciful Judge. To add to this, Lane says,

Otto Pesch has played a prominent role since 1964 with a number of studies ranging from short articles to massive tomes. Pesch sees an underlying compatibility between Thomas and Luther on the grounds that they did theology in two different ways- sapiential (Thomas) and existential (Luther). He argues that the differences between their doctrines of justification were only secondary and warrant no anathemas.\(^\text{63}\)

It is important to acknowledge at this point, not the denial of Pesch’s claims of two different ways of doing theology for Luther and Aquinas, but rather the extent of using these divergences, as does Pesch, to claim that no substantive differences exist between Luther’s and Aquinas’ doctrines of justification. The “fact,” if one accepts Pesch’s research, that Aquinas centers his theology on God as Creator, is also a “fact” which in my opinion is grounded in Aristotelian philosophy and metaphysics. This will be shown below. What are the ramifications of this? Does this truly allow Aquinas’ doctrine of justification to be thoroughly eschatological? If not, and if Luther’s doctrine of justification is thoroughly eschatological in nature, then can


\(^{63}\) Lane, 91-92.
we truly agree with Pesch’s assessment that there is no substantial differentiation? What will become apparent as we examine Aquinas in the next section, is how his treatment of theodicy, Providence and predestination, are indicative that his doctrine of justification is primarily grounded in a soteriologically-related continuity, rather than in biblical eschatology. In this respect I agree with Pesch that this is indeed owing to Aquinas’ “God as Creator” emphasis. I disagree that this essentially makes Aquinas and Luther compatible on the doctrine of justification.
Chapter 2

Aquinas

2.1 Justification

In looking at Aquinas’ doctrine of justification we need first to note “anachronistically” some commonalities of it with Luther’s. In his Lectures on the Letter to the Romans, Aquinas is clear that only faith justifies and this without “works of the Law.” Secondly, Aquinas states that the meritorious cause of this justification is “through redemption.” He goes on to say this redemption is through the propitiation of sins and that it is made effective by “faith in His blood.” Furthermore, only faith justifies and this is “not as though by faith we merit being justified, as if faith exists from ourselves and through it we merit God’s justice, as the Pelagians assert.” There is no doubt that Aquinas as a mature theologian, understood salvation to be by sola gratia, wherein even the faith that justifies is a gift given from God. As is mentioned above, Aquinas says, “we cannot in ourselves obtain grace, but through Christ alone.” Furthermore, Aquinas defines the New Law (“Law of the Gospel”) in this manner: “the New Law is chiefly the grace itself of the Holy Ghost, which is given to those who believe in Christ.” Aquinas qualifies this further by saying, “But there is no salvation but to those who are justified. Therefore the Law of the Gospel justifies.” Aquinas speaks of two elements of the New Law, with the second element being “the teachings of faith, and those commandments which direct

67 Summa Theologiae, I-II, q.108 a.2.
68 Ibid., q. 106 a.1.
69 Ibid., q. 106 a.2.
human affections and human actions.” Concerning this second element Aquinas says “the New Law does not justify.”\textsuperscript{70} Up until to this point, all appears as if there is practically no debate between Aquinas and Luther, at least from our perspective.

However, as we continue to examine Aquinas’ doctrine of justification, it will become apparent where the differences lie. The chief or first element of the New Law which Aquinas identifies in relation to our discussion above is “the grace of the Holy Spirit bestowed inwardly. And as to this, the New Law justifies.”\textsuperscript{71} Aquinas follows Augustine’s teaching in this regard, for immediately following this statement he quotes Augustine as saying, “\textit{the Law was set forth in an outward fashion, that the ungodly might be afraid; here, i.e., in the New Testament, it is given in an inward manner, that they may be justified}” (\textit{De Spir. et Lit. xvii}).\textsuperscript{72} Hence, at this juncture we can say that for Aquinas the grace of justification is an inward Law, which is “\textit{written in the fleshly tables of the heart},”\textsuperscript{73} and given by the Holy Spirit. Also, as is implied here, this inward New Law of grace is also a formal grace and only this formal grace justifies. The reason for this grace having to be inward is stated when Aquinas later says that “sin is remitted to us, when God is at peace with us, and this peace consists in the love whereby God loves.... Now the effect of the Divine love in us, which is taken away by sin, is grace, whereby a man is made worthy of eternal life, from which sin shuts him out. Hence we could not conceive the remission of guilt, without the infusion of grace.”\textsuperscript{74} For Aquinas, only grace \textit{in nobis} justifies. Aquinas later states the reasons for this and it connects to the two important themes this paper has set forth in the thesis. This is the role of charity or love in justification which

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., a. 1, Augustine quoted in Aquinas. \\
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., a. 2. \\
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., q. 113 a. 2.
\end{flushright}
Aquinas deems as necessary, and secondly, it is the anthropological casting in which justification occurs. In my mind, this is formed by the influence of Aristotelian metaphysics upon Aquinas’ soteriology. More will be said about both of these topics below. At this point, the infusion of grace occurs *in nobis*, in correspondence to the inwardness of the New Law of the Holy Spirit. Hence, Aquinas is of the school of thought which locates justification as occurring through sanctifying grace. It is for this reason that Aquinas says that grace is “one whereby man himself is united to God- and this is called *sanctifying grace*.... Grace is said to make pleasing, not efficiently, but formally, i.e., because thereby man is justified and is made worthy to be called pleasing to God.”75

Aquinas also says, that “the remission of sins is justification.”76 Again, this seems to be agreeable with Protestantism at first glance. But for Aquinas the forgiveness of sins does not occur prior to an infusion of grace in the believer, but rather it occurs as the goal or end of justifying grace and this after the infusion of grace; or as in the terminology explored above, after the infusion of the New Law given by the Spirit inwardly upon the heart. That is why Aquinas says, “There are four things which are accounted to be necessary for the justification of the ungodly, viz., the infusion of grace, the movement of the free-will towards God by faith, the movement of the free-will towards sin, and the remission of sin.”77 These four things occur so that justification is instantaneous, but yet this philosophical/theological sequential ordering remains. However, the movement of faith, which is a turning to God, cannot occur or be “perfect,” as Aquinas says, “unless it is quickened by charity; hence in the justification of the

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75 Ibid., q. 111 a. 1.  
76 Ibid., q. 113 a. 1.  
77 Ibid., q. 113 a. 6.
ungodly, a movement of charity is infused together with the movement of faith.”78 The net effect of all this is that for Aquinas the remission of sins is actually about a rectitude occurring within the believer, which makes the believer inherently righteous. Justification implies being brought from a state within the believer, of ungodliness to godliness. This rectitude describes justification. That is why Aquinas says that “justification implies a transmutation from the state of injustice to the aforesaid state of justice. And it is thus we are speaking of the justification of the ungodly.”79 It is apparent at this point, that forgiveness of sins for Aquinas entails more than it does for either Luther or Calvin. In my mind, this stems from the Aristotelian kinetics of a Mover and the moved object. For example, Aquinas says, “Now the motion of the Mover is the infusion of grace, as stated above (A. 6); the movement or disposition of the moved is the free-will’s double movement; and the term or end of the movement is the remission of sin, as stated above.... the fourth and last is the remission of sin, to which this transmutation is ordained as to an end, as stated above (AA. 1, 6).”80 The fact that the kinetics of a “Mover” (God) and the moved (object) is here coupled with the metaphysic of cause and purpose (end), signals the strong likelihood that Aristotelian kinetics/metaphysics guides Aquinas’ soteriology. Aquinas says as much, in his reply to objection three in this eighth article. When Aquinas refers to the “Philosopher,” this is understood to be Aristotle. Aquinas says, “As the Philosopher says (Phys. ii. 9), in movements of the soul the movement toward the speculative principle or the practical end is the very first, but in exterior movements the removal of the impediment

78 Ibid., q. 113 a. 4.
79 Ibid., q. 113 a. 1.
80 Ibid., q. 113 a. 8.
precedes the attainment of the end."\textsuperscript{81} Hence, this whole article has Aristotelian kinetics as its underlying foundation.

In my mind, theologically, this is where Aquinas does not satisfy Luther’s needs. This will be made apparent in chapter three. At this juncture, it is evident that Aristotelian metaphysics contribute formative elements to Aquinas’ understanding of justification. These elements are a testimony to my overall argument that Aquinas’ soteriology has continuative rather than disruptive features to it. In this case, what Pesch terms as Aquinas’ “God as Creator” theological emphasis, allows Aquinas to make ready use of Aristotle’s metaphysics. This then places the doctrine of justification within this emphasis. Certainly, although Scripture argues strongly for God as the Creator (Rom 1-2) and with this Luther is in perfect agreement, the extra-biblical “support” of Aristotle upon this pertinent doctrine of Scripture, lends credence to my claim that Aquinas seeks to maintain soteriologically-based continuity. This continuity is between reason and revelation and nature and grace, as in this example examined above. But does this best serve the cause of the doctrine of justification? Luther does not think so, as will be shown, and neither do I. Certainly it can have great value in fleshing out sanctification, but that is not the topic of this paper, at least for Protestants! If it is, I disagree with those Protestants, as well as with any other tradition claiming that sanctifying grace formally causes justifying grace.

Before looking more closely at the relationship between faith and charity, it is here relevant to consider the anthropological dimensions of Aquinas’ discussion of love. For Aquinas, as has been shown above, an infused grace elevates human nature so as to lead to

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 113, a.8.
justification of the person so elevated. But more specifically, this occurs through charity, which Aquinas calls “the most powerful of the virtues.” Aquinas, in speaking of Aristotle, says “for, as is said in Book III of the *Ethic.*, according as a man is, such does the end seem to him.” Question nine of article one, makes clear the use of Aristotelian categories which are under consideration in Aquinas’ work, *On Charity*. It says, “Moreover, everything that is in the soul is either a potency, or a passion, or a habit, as is said in Book III of the *Ethic*.“ Aquinas throughout this entire work argues with such anthropological terminology as an accepted basis of discussion. In this article and also in article twelve, Aquinas denies Peter Lombard’s hypothesis that the “charity in us is the Holy Spirit.” However, Aquinas assumes Lombard’s logic of the soul’s movement towards its end as created within the believer. The mover in this case is the Holy Spirit. Aquinas says of the Holy Spirit that “He moves the soul without any habitual medium. Therefore, Peter’s opinion was indeed true insofar as he maintained that the soul is moved by the Holy Spirit to love God and neighbour. However, it was imperfect in this respect that he did not posit in us a certain created habit by which the human will is perfected to the act of this kind of love.” Because Aquinas adopts such an Aristotelian metaphysic, it becomes apparent that it is driven by the ethics of virtue, of which charity as noted above is the supreme virtue. This exists by nature of a created habit which then operates as the potency of an elevated nature and which enabled by cooperation with infused grace (operative grace), allows love to have its course towards its “end” and thus be justified.

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83 Ibid., 100.
84 Ibid., 18.
85 Ibid., 98.
86 Ibid.
2.2 Faith and Charity

From what has been said thus far, charity for Aquinas is not merely charity as defined by Scripture. With Aquinas love falls under the category of the potency of habits and as such it is a created habit of the soul. Furthermore it is infused grace. As well it is the chief virtue which drives the motion of the soul towards all virtues and to their perfection or \textit{telos}. Faith is also considered a virtue and if it is infused with the supreme virtue of charity, as Aquinas believed, it seems improbable to consider it as anything else. In light of the discussion above it is not surprising that in the \textit{Commentary on Galatians}, as in both the \textit{Summa Theologiae} and the \textit{Lectures on the Letter to the Romans}, faith that is “informed by love” is required in order for faith to justify. In reading the \textit{Commentary on Galatians}, the first half tends to speak highly of faith as the chief principle of the Christian life. At first glance it seems that Luther would have no issues with Aquinas regarding faith. But as one continues to read, as in the discussion of the forgiveness of sins above, so also in the topic of faith, without infused charity as that which informs faith, justification cannot be obtained.

Furthermore, justification is merely the beginning point, which must be accompanied thereafter with the “meriting” of eternal life by means of cooperating grace. This is where the criticism from Protestantism comes into play that this all amounts to a process and thus justification is not essentially obtained before the process is over. Hence Aquinas says a two-fold grace is needed, “first, a habitual gift whereby corrupted human nature is healed, and after being healed is lifted up so as to work deeds meritorious of everlasting life, which exceed the capability of nature. Secondly, man needs the help of grace in order to be moved by God to
Thomas’ stance on a believer not being able to ascertain whether or not they are in a state of grace also appears to stem from this process-based justification. As such, one cannot know of their election, except by special revelation from the Holy Spirit. Hence Aquinas says, “Even if by some special privilege their predestination were revealed to some, it is not fitting that it should be revealed to everyone; because, if so, those who were not predestined would despair; and security would beget negligence in the predestined.” As has been shown above in the thesis, this contrasts with Luther’s doctrine of the assurance of salvation. Luther also teaches that one should not doubt their predestination providing justifying faith is present. For example, and in contrast to Aquinas’ in nobis focus on grace in justification, Luther makes it clear that the extra nos basis of Christ’s merit is the grounds for the knowledge of our predestination. He says, “Seek yourself only in Christ and not in yourself and you will find yourself in him eternally. Thus when you look at Christ and all his saints and delight in the grace of God, who elected them, and continue steadfastly in this joy, then you too are already elected.”

Before proceeding to the next section of the discussion, I would like to make reference to Gerrish’s work, Grace and Reason. According to Gerrish, Luther claimed that “Thomas was largely to blame for the distinctive Scholastic context given to ‘grace’ and ‘merit’ in medieval theology: and in his view this meant that the strictly religious viewpoint of the apostle Paul had been sacrificed to the ethical and metaphysical categories of Aristotle.” Gerrish also makes

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87 Summa Theologiae, I-II, 109 a. 9.
88 Ibid., I, q. 23 a. 1.
89 “Devotional Writings I,” LW 42: 106.
mention of those who claim Luther either misunderstood or was unfamiliar with Aquinas’
works. Here Gerrish connects some of the main themes examined above.

It has been alleged that Luther’s ‘polemic against fides caritate formata...proves only that he
never understood St. Thomas.’91 But the truth rather is that he understood the implications of
Thomas’ doctrine well enough to divine that just here is disclosed the fundamental
presupposition of Scholastic soteriology, namely, that ‘virtue’ (in one form or another) is
absolutely necessary for acceptance with God: justification is through faith—yes, but faith is a
virtue, and its justifying power is in the love which ‘informs’ it. Luther perceived this
consequence clearly; hence the demand that his opponents should call a spade a spade and
confess that, for them, justification is by love, and not by faith.92

We will more closely examine and in Luther’s own words, just this point regarding “faith
informed by love.” The point here is that Gerrish’s analysis of Luther is still relevant, despite
certain modern attempts at locating Luther’s complaint as solely directed against Nominalism.

More specifically, Thomas’ use of Aristotle is pivotal to Luther’s complaint against Thomism.

Gerrish sums up Luther’s complaint against Thomism, when he says that for Luther, Thomas
sets the whole discussion of grace within what is strictly a treatise on ethics; he insists that
salvation must be a reward accorded to merit; he views faith as ‘unformed’ without the virtue
of charity; and he regards justification itself as a real improvement in the moral and religious
personality. The whole plan of salvation is thus under the sign of the law. Eternal life and
moral attainment are inextricably bound up together in Thomas, as in the Nominalists.93

We will see in the next chapter that these “emphases” of Aquinas’s theology stand in stark
contrast to the heart of Luther’s teaching on justification.

2.3 Background

In looking at Aquinas’ historical context, I realize that my comparison of Aquinas’ time with that
of Luther’s can only be considered as more “stable” in a relative sense. Certainly Aquinas had

91 Reference here by Gerrish to John Burnaby, Amor Dei, 277.
92 Gerrish, Grace, 126-127.
93 Ibid., 134.
his own turbulent events with which to deal, be it at a personal, societal or Church level. For example, he had to deal with heresy and the aftermaths of the Crusades. Pesch has this to say about Aquinas’ times:

His time was almost as insecure and chaotic as Luther’s. The high watermark of Scholasticism and the fame of the University of Paris as a center of theological thought coincide with the horrible time when there was no emperor. Thomas’ family was caught up in the hostilities between the Curia and Emperor Frederick II, in the course of which his brothers lost their lives. So one should not paint a black and white picture of a decadent Renaissance over against the High Middle Ages shaped and ordered by Christianity!94

I concur with Pesch that when comparing Aquinas’ and Luther’s times, one should not paint “a black and white picture.” However, I think he overstates the idea that Aquinas’ times were almost “as insecure” as Luther’s. This will become more evident as we look at Luther in the next chapter. As Pesch does note, Thomas, who was born and died in the thirteenth century, lived during the pinnacle of scholastic theology. McGrath highlights what is historically pertinent to our discussion when he says

In the course of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries there was a remarkable advance and consolidation within the church and society as a whole, in literature, science, philosophy and theology. In part, this renaissance must be regarded as a direct consequence of increasing political stability in Western Europe....The Berengarian and Investiture controversies further stimulated the need for systematic codification in theology. This need for theological development and codification was met by the monastic and cathedral schools, which quickly became the intellectual centres of a rapidly developing society.95

Aquinas helped to solidify, with his monumental theological and philosophical work, the political stability of the times in which he lived. Obviously, McGrath paints a different picture from that of Pesch. Moreover, as will become evident in looking at Moltmann’s understanding of Aquinas’ “eschatology,” Aquinas viewed the Catholic Church with its sacraments and

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95 McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 186.
traditions, as enshrining the perfection of God’s will on earth until the Second Advent of Christ. For example, Aquinas taught that “concerning the sacrament which is given by the ministry of the Church’s ministers, it can be said that holy men by administering the sacraments give the Holy Spirit.”\textsuperscript{96} Such chiliasm meant that theology, State and the Church, were “positively” intertwined. Particularly, this was evident in the academic form of the \textit{Questio}. Aquinas’ \textit{Summa Theologiae} is written wholly in the academic form of the \textit{Questio}. Martin says, “The medieval attitude of trust in the tradition, of hope for development and improvement through the reconciliation and harmonisation of authorities, is typified and enshrined in the medieval academic form of inquiry. This was originally a live debate within the university schools....They took place within all faculties.”\textsuperscript{97} In conclusion of this section, although Aquinas had his struggles and turbulent issues with which he had to contend, he also enjoyed and thrived upon the stabilizing elements of his times. This is apparent in the academies in which he thrived and in the increasing political stabilization within Western Europe, which together combined to allow such a renaissance to occur in the intellectual and theological enterprises.

\section*{2.4 Aquinas’ Handling of Providence, Theodicy and Predestination, Particularly as Found in His Work, \textit{The Literal Exposition On Job}}

Aquinas in his work, \textit{The Literal Exposition on Job}, says concerning Job’s sufferings, that God “ordained it in His eternal disposition.”\textsuperscript{98} God’s will and foreknowledge is thus acknowledged by Aquinas in seeking to understand Job’s sufferings. For Aquinas, “God’s providence works

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{96}] Aquinas, \textit{Commentary on Galatians}, 74.
\item[\textsuperscript{97}] C.J.F. Martin, \textit{An Introduction to Medieval Philosophy} (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 45.
\item[\textsuperscript{98}] Thomas Aquinas, \textit{The Literal Exposition on Job: A Scriptural Commentary Concerning Providence}, transl. by Anthony Damico with Interpretive Essay by Martin Yaffe (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989), 1:12.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotes}
one way in the case of rational creatures and another way in the case of irrational creatures.”99

For this reason, Aquinas says that “Job inquires whether the cause of his affliction is similar to
the cause for which the sea or the whale is confined—namely, that he is afflicted not because
of any lack of merit on his part but because of some advantage accruing to others from it.”100

As Aquinas says in the *Summa Theologiae*, “predestination is a part of providence.... Moreover
all that has been said about the divine knowledge and will must also be taken into
consideration; since they do not destroy contingency in things, although they themselves are
most certain and infallible.”101 The important point here, with the manner in which Aquinas
deals with Job’s sufferings and hence with the issue inherent within it of theodicy, is that it
occurs with predestination as a sub-category of Providence. As such, contingency in things
themselves, and the “freewill” implied in these things, particularly in rational beings, is given
the highest regard, while on the other hand predestination of the elect is declared to be
infallible purely on the basis of God’s election. Below, Yearley, although truly speaking from a
complementary position towards Aquinas, notes the problematic involved in reconciling such
free will and contingency with predestination. On the other hand, I will argue below, that
Luther with his double predestination doctrine essentially places Providence as a subset of
predestination. In this sense grace is not merely an elevation of nature, but a disruption of it, in
the order of predestination governing Providence.

What is of significance here is that Aquinas does not focus his attention on the injustice
of Job’s sufferings but rather on the causes, and thus he defers answers to the question of

99 Ibid., 7:12.
100 Ibid.
101 *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 23 a. 6.
theodicy to the resurrection of the body. Instead, and here again Aristotle comes into the
discussion, he opts to focus on the reasonableness of divine providence in the light of
philosophical understanding. Yaffe says concerning Aquinas’ view of the Book of Job that
Thomas himself understands the story as conveying Christianity’s authoritative teaching about
divine providence, namely, that God, despite appearances, orders and governs for the best the
particular accidents befalling human life. Yet Thomas’ detailed interpretation admittedly relies
not on the scriptural text alone, nor simply on other Christian authorities, but somewhat
anachronistically on the writings of the pagan philosopher Aristotle.

Yaffe explains further, that the use of such an anachronistic reading of Aristotle upon the Book
of Job is due to the fact that “Thomas poses the broader problem of the relationship between
divine revelation and human reason. His analysis of Job’s pious suffering, and of Job’s
subsequent debate with his unbelieving friends and with God, aims to show that Christianity’s
belief in divine providence is plausible in the light of rational or philosophical
understanding.” Although one may not agree with Yaffe’s assessment, it certainly fits into
Aquinas’ broader theological lens, wherein the continuity is stressed between reason and
revelation, and nature and grace. In my mind, it is for this reason, that the question of theodicy
is essentially not addressed, but instead it is pushed forward as a future concern to be
answered in the resurrection of the body, namely, at the Beatific Vision.

Although Aquinas does not present The Literal Exposition on Job in the form of the
Questio, he certainly aims to present Job’s defence in the form of a debate. For example he
says, “For Job intended to defend and prove the truth about divine and human matters.”

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104 Ibid.
Aquinas also mentions in this paragraph, Aristotle’s “quarrelsome and sophistic debates.”\textsuperscript{106} This is an example of Aquinas never straying too far afield from his use of Aristotle in his exposition of Job. Aquinas also later says, “Now one should consider that Job is proceeding in the manner of a debater, for whom it is sufficient in the beginning to refute false opinion and afterward to disclose what he himself thinks about the truth.”\textsuperscript{107} This is where there is strong evidence to support Yaffe’s conclusion as noted above, that Aquinas, besides his use of Scripture and Church tradition, also relies upon an anachronistic reading of Aristotle in order to explicate Job’s sufferings. These particular instances of Job being viewed as a debater/theologian and as a wise teacher/student, becomes evidential of Aquinas’ historical situation informing his interpretation of the \textit{Book of Job}. As such, Yaffe’s conclusion to his “Interpretive Essay” on Aquinas’ commentary on the \textit{Book of Job} seems to be accurate. He says “here, as in the \textit{Summa Theologiae}, Thomas builds on the premise that grace does not destroy nature but completes it. The reader is offered the edifying insight that Christian wisdom is more than an academically satisfying argument. It is also humility, prudence, and charity.”\textsuperscript{108}

My point in all of this as mentioned above is that the theological focus of grace as elevating and healing nature is accomplished in a two-fold manner in Aquinas. The first occurs by means of predestination being relegated as a part of Providence, as that which perfects the latter. This maintains the connection between reason and revelation, nature and grace, even within the context of great human suffering. Secondly, Aquinas’ focus on Providence, as in the

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\textsuperscript{106} Aristotle, \textit{On Sophistical Refutations} I.11, 171 b 18ff.
\textsuperscript{107} Aquinas, \textit{The Literal Exposition}, 7:21.
\textsuperscript{108} Yaffe, 65.
\end{flushright}
general use of his “God as Creator” theological emphasis, relies upon Aristotle in order for the continuative aspects of his soteriology to be preserved to the degree that it is. Synthesis becomes Aquinas’ main concern in all of this. Is such a synthesis also a theology that supports the *status quo* of the Church in his day? The consolidation of the increasing political stability in Western Europe, as mentioned above by McGrath, and the high watermark of concomitant Scholasticism, seems to imply this much. Sacramental ecclesiology as a central instrument of administering the Holy Spirit also seems evidential of the continuity aspects of Aquinas’ soteriology between the world and the Church. As will be discussed below, Aquinas’ aversion to Joachim of Fiore’s eschatology, as representative of subversives within society who were dissatisfied with the *status quo* of the Church, also lends weight to this conclusion. Hence, I would say to some degree, a “yes” to my question above, although proving this claim is well beyond my capability here. But once again, this raises the question of how much, if at all, Aquinas’ soteriology, of which the doctrine of justification comprises an integral part, judges the present order.

I wish to touch upon one last topic within Aquinas’ explication of the *Book of Job*. This is his handling of the topic of sin in Job’s life. In the Prologue, Aquinas describes Job as “perfect in every virtue.” Aquinas draws near a conclusion in his commentary, by speaking of Elihu as one who “had assumed to himself the office of determining the debate.” However, only divine authority could “comprehend the truth of divine providence,” and thus Job, his three friends and Elihu, were judged by God when He appeared to Job. Aquinas says, “But since Job

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110 Ibid., 38: 1.
111 Ibid.
had the right opinion about divine providence but had been so immoderate in his manner of speaking.... the Lord, therefore, just like the determiner of a debate, criticized Job’s friends... Job himself because of his manner of speaking.”¹¹² Sin seems to here be compartmentalized into a manageable entity, as in the example of Job’s “immoderate speech.” The Aristotelian-like anthropological thrust in Aquinas’ theology, as highlighted above, tends to view sin as an interference (a “disease”) with a person’s proper focus on life. This lends itself to the Protestant concern that such anthropology belittles the severity of the human dilemma as “totally sinners.” As such, sin must be viewed as somewhat less than “total depravity.” This is precisely one of the chief arguments that Barth holds against Catholic theology and which seems here to be demonstrated in Aquinas’ theology. For example, Barth says concerning the “statements of Trent,” that in them “both sin and grace are understood as quantities, and on this assumption they are compared and pragmatised and tamed and rendered quite innocuous.... The practical consequence of all this is that the misery of man is not regarded as in any way serious or dangerous either for Christians or non-Christians.”¹¹³ Furthermore, for Barth, such a weak view of sin is grounded in a fallacious presupposition.

For this Roman Catholic co-ordination of moral philosophy and moral theology is based on the basic view of the harmony which is achieved in the concept of being between nature and super-nature, reason and revelation, man and God....This presupposition of the Roman Catholic construction is in every respect unacceptable. Strong opposition must be made to the idea that the metaphysics of being, the starting-point of this line of thought, is the place from which we can do the work of Christian theology, from which we can see and describe grace and nature, revelation and reason, God and man, both as they are in themselves and in their mutual relationship.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Ibid.
¹¹⁴ Barth, CD II.2, 530-31.
When we look at the next chapter on Luther, it will be shown that Barth largely owes his theological adversity towards this gradualistic Roman Catholic continuity-based soteriology, to none other than Luther.\textsuperscript{115} By understanding this, it should be further clarified that when considering the doctrine of justification by faith alone, Luther is better understood as standing in a “different light” from Aquinas.

In bringing our discussion towards its conclusion, Harm Goris in his essay, “Divine Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination, and Human Freedom,” says that “Providence, when understood not only as God’s eternal plan to bring creatures to their destination, but also the execution of that plan in time, presupposes conceptually both God’s foreknowledge and divine causation. The same goes for predestination, which Aquinas calls ‘a part of divine providence,’ and which concerns the supernatural end of rational creatures.”\textsuperscript{116} Two things are significant from Goris’ conclusion to his essay. The first is that for Aquinas, predestination is a subcategory of Providence. Although Goris afterward claims “that this distinction does not reflect any real distinction in God,”\textsuperscript{117} the point here is that in terms of human conceptualization, Aquinas opts for predestination as a subcategory of Providence. In other words, this allows Aquinas to flow or transition relatively smoothly from the natural realm, with which Providence is concerned, to the “supernatural end,” with which predestination concerns itself. This in turn leads us to the second point, that, what occurs here, however subtly, is that predestination in serving the category of Providence, inevitably is defined in terms of its “natural end,” rather than its supernatural end. This then raises the Protestant concern, as

\textsuperscript{115} See George Hunsinger, “What Karl Barth Learned from Martin Luther,” in Disruptive Grace, 279-304. 
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
quoted above by Barth and in resonance with Luther that the “metaphysics of being” becomes the basis from which we do theology. Although Aquinas does not see a particular distinction between the natural and supernatural ends (teleological) of humanity, Protestant theology does. The main reason for such a difference is that the continuity-based soteriology of Catholicism as grounded in Aristotelian principles and metaphysics, stands in opposition to the Lutheran and Protestant hermeneutic of disruptive grace. This hermeneutic will be shown below to be grounded in the eschatological reality of God’s kingdom, namely, “the already/not yet.” As such it is not merely a subjective differentiation. This is then a contrast between nature that is elevated and healed versus nature that is killed and raised to newness of life. One is continuative and the other is disruptive. One puts justification within us as an incomplete process requiring an increase in justification; the other places justification outside of us, in which we “participate,” as a perfected and completed eschatological event vis-à-vis Christ’s death and resurrection.

2.5 Two Essays by Yearley and Moltmann

What Yearley then adds to our discussion of this topic is a more generalized understanding of Aquinas’ dealings with Providence, predestination and theodicy. Yearley says that “it is important to note that Thomas seemed to feel that it was absurd to deny free will or for that matter contingent causality; they are "empiric" givens.”\textsuperscript{118} With regards to this contingent causality, Yearley further says,

In moving from providence to predestination all the questions relating to theodicy...are heightened.... As providence is the structure of human nature, the natural form, the telic cause

\textsuperscript{118} Yearley, 419.
that must be followed if there is to be actualization, so predestination is the movement to fulfillment as seen in rational creatures. “[Providence is concerned only with the ordering]...but predestination with the outcome or result of that ordering.”

Yearley more specifically addresses the question of theodicy and he directly links it as “heightened” when moving from Providence to predestination. Yearley concludes by noting that at the level of Providence, “Thomas’ account is coherent, understandable, and fairly demonstrable.” This seems to agree with our above analysis of the goal of Aquinas’ *The Literal Exposition of Job*, namely, to present Christian wisdom as balanced with charity, humility and prudence, by means of Job as the expert debater but somewhat flawed messenger. All of this however deals primarily with Providence and thus with the realm of nature. But Yearley goes on to say, “In the realm of predestination the coherence and understandability become strained and the general demonstrability almost disappears.” This seems also to agree with the essential absence of the issue of theodicy being addressed by Aquinas in his exposition of the *Book of Job*. Essentially Aquinas does not deal with theodicy in any central way within his theology. This is likely, in large part, due to his use of contingent causes which are necessary in Aquinas’ theology, in order for him to keep his theological focus on “God as Creator.” Yearley says

The integrity of the natural world with its web of interacting secondary causes and its fundamental structure is upheld. In fact, it is maintained to the degree that God seems only able to work through them, and thus be thwarted by them. God seems to have ordained the world and then stood aside, exercising his sovereignty only insofar as punishment comes from misuse of his ordained natural structures.

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119 Ibid., 416.
120 Aquinas quoted in Yearley, 417, *Disputations, 6: de Veritate*, 1. See also Thomas Aquinas, *S.T. 1:23, 8.* Aquinas says, “For predestination is a part of providence.”
121 Yearley, 423.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., 422.
As Yearley earlier says, “The felix culpa idea in Thomas is always in tension with his sense of the goodness of the created pre-Fall world.”\textsuperscript{124} The greater emphasis inherent on “nature” as good, as possessing free will, as set in the Aristotelian metaphysics and motion of secondary and contingent causes as initialized by the Prime Mover (God); all this speaks of Aquinas’ theology as that wherein “grace presupposes nature and perfects rather than destroys it.”\textsuperscript{125} Therefore, the synthesis which Aquinas achieves between nature and super-nature, between Providence and predestination, comes at the expense of the disruptive elements of grace. Moltmann, whose viewpoint on this topic we will now address directly below, goes so far as to say that it comes at the expense of biblical eschatology.

Moltmann, in his article, “Christian Hope: Messianic or Transcendent? A Theological Discussion with Joachim of Fiore and Thomas Aquinas,” sets out to defend himself against the charges by Henry Lubac and Hans Urs Balthasar, regarding his book, \textit{The Theology of Hope}. These charges are that it is written “‘messianically’ in the spirit of Joachim of Fiore.”\textsuperscript{126} Time fails us to do justice to either Moltmann’s debate with these scholars or with Aquinas’ debate with Joachim, wherein he outright rejects Joachim’s eschatology.\textsuperscript{127} But let us look in brief at this debate. Joachim essentially, with his interpretation of I Cor 13:10, for example, advocates that the phrase “when the perfect comes,” as used in this Scripture, is referring to “the age of the Spirit,” in which the Third Age of the spiritualized Church, headed by monks, would supersede the ecclesiastical institutional Church. Aquinas, taking exception to this, thinks that

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 416n.16.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 410.
\textsuperscript{127} The refutation by Thomas of Joachim was central to Thomas’ commentary on Lateran IV: \textit{In decretalem secundum exposition}. Also, the \textit{Summa Theologiae}, I-II, q. 106 a.4; despite not mentioning Joachim’s name, is considered to be Aquinas’ arguments against the essential theses of Joachim.
the Church, in having the New Law, is “perfect,” owing to the reasoning of his perfection
(finalistic) metaphysic. As Moltmann says, Aquinas “thinks finalistically in the framework of his
metaphysic of perfection: the imperfect points to the perfect. That which is nearest to the goal
and directly reaches toward it is the most perfect. The goal (finis) of all perfection is eternal
blessedness, which lies in the visio beatifica and is thus transcendent, incapable of being
realized in time and history.”\textsuperscript{128} Moltmann goes on to say of Aquinas, that

“That Thomas did not translate biblical eschatology into another language or way of thinking—he
fundamentally liquidated it. His ‘theology of hope’ is, in fact, not the theology of a biblical
‘hope,’ but rather the anthropology of natural desire (appetitus naturalis), of humanity’s inner
self-transcendence which finds its response in the metaphysical theology of the Highest Good
(summum bonum).”\textsuperscript{129}

What is significant here is that Aquinas’ Aristotelian-like anthropology, which has the above
mentioned finalistic metaphysic, can be seen in the example of the debate with Joachim, to
replace historical eschatology with an ahistorical transcendence. Torrance agrees with
Moltmann’s analysis, when he says, “When St. Thomas, for example, considered the questions
raised by Joachim, he removed the eschatological end to a realm beyond history, and
concluded that the Church, which has the pattern of that end embedded within it, is as static as
history.”\textsuperscript{130} Note here, that Torrance views Aquinas’ chiliasm as negating any judgement upon
the present order of the Church. Furthermore, Moltmann speaks in no uncertain terms about
the Aristotelian and even Platonic (summum bonum) metaphysics of Aquinas’ anthropology.
Moltmann concludes his essay by saying, “The ecclesiastical theologians in Rome declared the
Church as the millennium (Tyconius, Augustine). Thomas Aquinas was in this sense also a

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 332.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 333.
\textsuperscript{130} Torrance, “The Eschatology of the Reformation,” 38.
chiliast towards the present state of the Church.... Joachim and Thomas stand for two sides of Christian hope, for the chiliastic and for the eschatological sides.”¹³¹ McGinn says that “of all the Scholastic authors his reaction (Aquinas’) to Joachim and the Joachites is by far the most hostile.”¹³² Thomas’ chiliasm was no doubt heart-felt. Any “third-age of the Spirit,” such as Joachim’s eschatology presented, meant the end of this chiliasm which he endorsed. This article by Moltmann presents clearly the anthropological and finalistic metaphysic in Aquinas’ soteriology, which makes his theology a “liquidation of biblical eschatology.” But as noted above, this is only in so far as Aquinas has replaced biblical hope with the anthropology of natural desire and for that reason Aquinas represents only one side of Christian hope.

Moltmann at the beginning of his essay asks this rhetorical question in presenting his thesis; “Is Christian hope aligned toward its fulfillment in the historical future or is it, along with faith and love, a ‘theological,’ that is, ‘supernatural’ virtue?”¹³³ Moltmann argues that hope is not merely a transcendental virtue, such as faith and love might be categorized as, but rather, hope is the human response to an eschatological historical future. As we will see later, Luther and the Reformers in general, are found in to be in closer alignment with this latter understanding of Moltmann’s.

2.6 Aquinas’ Ontology

In concluding this chapter on Aquinas, I would like to make reference to Aquinas’ ontology and thus to Augustine, whom he closely followed in his theology. Paulson, in the quotation below,

¹³¹ Ibid., 348.
Paulson in examining the “imperfections of Augustine,” says that Augustine misses imputation. There the missing matter is the direction and the discontinuity—it is not that God’s being is where the real justification lies, and we have to get in there. God wants to be right outside, in the publicized words in Christ, and only there. So we must reject an imagined righteousness that occurs only when we make our journey back to love of God via the church.... God is true Holy Spirit who creates out of nothing by speaking.\footnote{Paulson, “The Augustinian Imperfection,” in \textit{The Gospel of Justification in Christ}, 121.}

Since Aquinas’ theology has been summed up, especially in his \textit{Summa Theologiae}, as the “exit from” and “return to” God,\footnote{Yearley, 411.} what Paulson says above of Augustine also applies to Aquinas. This is especially so in the light of all that we have examined above. When Paulson further says that “Augustine remained an ontologist instead of following the biblical eschatology,”\footnote{Paulson, 116.} this statement is also applicable to Aquinas’ position, as Aquinas is found to follow in Augustine’s footsteps. Concerning Aquinas’ refutation of eschatological views such as Joachim represented, McGinn says, “If Aquinas is anti-historical here, it would seem that Augustine must be tarred with the same brush.”\footnote{McGinn, 41.} This is owing to the fact that Aquinas, in his refutation of Joachim, draws upon such works of Augustine’s as his \textit{Epistola ad Hesychium}.\footnote{Ibid., 45.} In like manner, both Aquinas and Augustine refuse to join, within their respective historical times, in the search for eschatological signs in history.\footnote{Ibid., 40.} As well, similarly to Augustine, Aquinas, in focusing on the righteousness obtained by “faith formed by love,” and thus as a transformative process beginning with justification, understands this as a “return to” God \textit{vis-a-vis} the journey back to the love of God via the church. Aquinas’ metaphysics of being, his anthropology of natural

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\item \footnote{Paulson, “The Augustinian Imperfection,” in \textit{The Gospel of Justification in Christ}, 121.}
\item \footnote{Yearley, 411.}
\item \footnote{Paulson, 116.}
\item \footnote{McGinn, 41.}
\item \footnote{Ibid., 45.}
\item \footnote{Ibid., 40.}
\end{itemize}
desire, and his chiliasm with respect to the present state of the Church, thus liquidates biblical eschatology. Biblical eschatology concerns the judgement of all things, summed up in the crucifixion of Christ, with its effects being administered in history since Pentecost. This judgement is upon both the worldly and spiritual powers; upon both State and Church, and as such it carries revolutionary potential into either sphere. Thus the contrast to Aquinas is the kingdom of God “from above” measuring to us, by the re-creative event of the heard Word in the Spirit, thus bringing the imputation of God’s perfect righteousness to us. As Hunsinger says, “Fallen human creatures are affirmed insofar as they are creatures, negated insofar as they are fallen, and raised again to new life.” Below we will look at how Luther’s Anfechtung doctrine acts as a means of driving the Christian towards this re-creative event of justification by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. Therefore, as we now turn to Luther, we will see that Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone truly stands in a “different light” from that of Aquinas’.

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140 As has been noted earlier in the paper (n.30), Luther’s two kingdoms theology is about Christ’s kingdom from above and the kingdom of the world below. However, both comprise the one rule of God. Hence, this is why I specify here the kingdom of God “from above.” The important aspect is the parousia event of this kingdom from above. The “coming to us” aspect of it is crucial in the heard Word of Christ. From this eschatological event God creates ex nihilo our justification by imputation and maintains it with its effects, in the already/not yet of salvation.

141 Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace, 270. For further discussion of the Reformation’s understanding of justification as a re-creative event ex nihilo, see in this section, 267-275.
Chapter 3

Luther

3.1 Luther’s Understanding of Passive Righteousness, Imputation and the Simul Iustus et Peccator

To begin, this chapter on Luther will often rely on Luther’s Lectures on Galatians 1535, which William Wright calls “the most perspicuous statement of the Reformer’s mature theology.”

In the spirit of Luther’s work, the approach in this section will be less systematic than that taken in chapter two. As such our aim here is not to systematize Luther but rather to follow the contours of his thought as touching upon our discussion. Brevity will require condensation of Luther’s pertinent points as they touch upon our discussion. In this brevity, Luther will be compared to both Aquinas and to the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther, as a means of investigating Luther in relation to both his past and future contexts, while making comparisons as pertinent to our discussion.

In this discussion, I will show that Luther’s extra nos basis for justification, along with its imputation of passive righteousness, means that the Catholic understanding of imparted or inherent righteousness is as such, incompatible with Luther’s understanding of justification. I will argue that Luther’s order of salvation places justification as theologically prior to sanctification (fruits of justification). Even new birth falls under the category of a “fruit,” and hence this is distinguished from Thomas’ pneumatic causality, wherein formal righteousness or sanctifying grace is what justifies. I will further identify Luther’s Anfechtung doctrine as synonymous with his theology of the cross at an existential level. Hence, I will argue that faith

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142 William J. Wright, Martin Luther’s Understanding of God’s Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenge of Scepticism (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2010), 42.
is truest to itself as a process of the emptying of all self-confidence in preparation for salvation. Therefore, “charity” is not needed in order to make it effective and in this important aspect of self-emptying, it can even be considered as contrary to faith’s nature. Luther’s two-kingdom theology will be shown to be the basis for his eschatology, which presents justification as a total event, entire and complete, existing in the already/not yet of the *simul iustus et peccator*. As such, it concerns both epistemology and soteriology, as will be shown below. Theodicy, predestination and Providence will help us to locate the existential aspects of faith on the one hand, while on the other hand, the perfect imputed passive righteousness of Christ becomes manifest to the Christian. This occurs as a person’s *Anfechtung* drives them to trust only in Christ’s righteousness as their justification. The end result is that the assurance of salvation is paramount, not merely as an add-on to justification, but rather as both a blessed comfort and as an indicator of the nature of justification itself. It is from this place of assurance that the Gospel is to be proclaimed, or else one must ask: What can we truly declare with utter confidence, and what is the nature of that (justification or sanctification) which we preach?

As a pastoral, rather than a systematic theologian, Luther often says things that seem contradictory. In terms of justification by faith and the order of salvation, it is true that at times, the sense is that union with Christ with an *in nobis* emphasis, effects our justification. I am herein arguing to prove the opposite, that justification by imputation effects union with Christ. Although Luther has passages which can support the former claim, it is certainly the exception in Luther’s works, as opposed to the norm. So I will begin with the normal sense of terminology to which Luther designates Christian righteousness. However, it is worth noting that one weakness of the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther is their general denial that
Luther *solely* taught forensic justification as a Christian’s righteousness before God (*coram Deo*). Since this position is not adhered to, it amounts as in the case of Simon Peura, to the Roman Catholic doctrine of imparted righteousness, albeit by means of ontological participation in union with Christ. Peura says, “Justification is not only a change of self-understanding, a new relation to God, or a new ethos of love. God changes the sinner ontologically in the sense that he or she participates in God and in his divine nature, being made righteous and ‘a god’. This interpretation is based on the thesis that both grace and gift are a righteousness given in Christ to a Christian.”

It is evident that this interpretation as represented by Peura falls under the category of “imparted righteousness.” The primary difference between the New Finnish position and that of Aquinas is that the former resorts to ontological participation in a process of divinization (Orthodox notion of *theosis*) while the latter uses Aristotelian-scholastic metaphysics. In either case, the argument is for a pneumatic causality. On the other hand, a weakness of Lutheranism, as represented in the *Formula of Concord* and as highlighted above by McGrath, is the absence of Luther’s stress on Christ as present in the faith which justifies. Does “Christ within” constitute one’s justification, whether by ontological participation or by inherent qualities, or is it the fruit of justification? With these two poles of thought in mind, Luther said that

Righteousness is not in us in a formal sense, as Aristotle maintains, but is outside us, solely in the grace of God and in His imputation. In us there is nothing of the form or of the righteousness except that weak faith or the first fruits of faith by which we have begun to take

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143 Simon Peura, “Christ as Favor and Gift,” in *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 48. For the traditional Protestant view of Luther on the discussion of *coram Deo/coram hominibus*, see B.A. Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: At the Clarington Press, 1962), 25. “Man lives in relation with his fellow men (*coram hominibus*) and also in relation with God (*coram Deo*). He has to do both with the created order and with the Creator Himself. His life is lived in two distinct spheres: the one is natural, temporal, earthly; and the other is spiritual, eternal, heavenly.”
hold of Christ. Meanwhile sin truly remains within us.... To take hold of the Son and to believe in Him with the heart as the gift of God causes God to reckon that faith, however imperfect it may be, as perfect righteousness. Here we have an altogether different world—a world that is outside reason.... here we are in a divine theology, where we hear the Gospel that Christ died for us and that when we believe this we are reckoned as righteous, even though sins, and great ones at that remain in us.  

Luther here contrasts his concept of “merely passive righteousness,” which at the outset of his Lectures on Galatians 1535, he says is descriptive of “the righteousness of faith,” with Aristotelian and Thomistic righteousness. For Aquinas righteousness is dependent on “charity,” sanctifying grace and moral ethics, in order for it to be true righteousness. This was shown above. Aquinas’ righteousness is always formal by infused qualities, while for Luther, this is not the case for the Christian with regards to justification. Note here, that Luther calls imputation and God’s grace “solely” our righteousness, while it exists also “outside us” (extra nos).

Although this statement by Luther might appear contradictory to the formal righteousness of faith in nobis, of which he also speaks, the “perfection” element found within his doctrine of justification might clarify Luther’s position for us. As Luther said, “His grace does not come to us in portions and pieces, separately, like so many gifts; rather it takes us up completely into its embrace.” For Luther, and as we examine Luther’s Anfechtung doctrine below, we will see that only the alien righteousness of Christ, extra nos, can justify us by imputation alone. For Luther, Christian justification must be perfect, complete and entire, or else it does not count as justification. Essentially all persons have no hope in se (nobis) for their justification since it is at best partial. Hence, this passage as indicative of Luther’s overall doctrine of justification by faith alone, shows us that passive righteousness is theological and descriptive of what God does.

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144 “Lectures on Galatians,” LW 26:234.
145 Ibid., 4.
146 “Word and Sacrament 1,” LW 35: 370
“for us” in Christ (in Christo) by faith alone. As Luther says above, faith is hearing “the Gospel that Christ died for us.” The idea of “gift,” as in this passage and in this context, occurs with Luther’s “for us” stress and thus with Christ as its extra nos foundation. In this respect, Christian righteousness occurs in and is itself a “different world”, and hence immediately, as opposed to reason, it is disruptive with nature and natural thinking. This “different world” is synonymous with the regum Christi, as indicative of Luther’s two kingdom theology. Therefore, this different world constitutes a new relation with God, in which as Luther says, “Christ protects me under the shadow of His wings and spreads over me the wide heaven of the forgiveness of sins, under which I live in safety.” As such this righteousness is as vast as heaven itself. It can thus not be reduced to inherent or formal righteousness, except that formally we have, in Luther’s words, the “first fruits” of this reality. Thus, when one considers Luther’s concept of the divine marriage, wherein are found such statements as “His righteousness is yours; your sin is His,” this commonly used marriage metaphor which Luther employs is best understood as grounded in Luther’s two kingdom theology. More will be said of this throughout this chapter. In consideration of the doctrine of justification, this should not be reckoned as either a process of divinization (in the Eastern Orthodox sense), or as an infused quality of the soul wherein we “are made righteous.” To assert this to be Luther’s position, in the face of such quotations about the extra nos imputation of passive righteousness, as considered above, is in my estimation, to fall prone to a misrepresentation of

148 Ibid., 233.
149 Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 48; for example argue that, "These views ignore the radically different metaphysical base of Luther’s understanding and that of the Eastern church, and they ignore Luther’s understanding of the dynamic, re-creative nature of God’s Word.”
Luther. That is why Luther said, for example, “But the inner man, who owes nothing to the Law but is free of it, is a living, righteous, and holy person—not of himself or in his own substance but in Christ, because he believes in Him.”\textsuperscript{150} Righteousness in our own “substance” (“being”) stands opposite to Luther’s \textit{extra nos} and Christological focus. As Luther further expounds in this passage, “sin, the devil, and death are crucified in Christ, not in me. Here Christ does everything alone.”\textsuperscript{151} Therefore, when Luther said that “faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ.... This is the formal righteousness on account of which man is justified”,\textsuperscript{152} this treasure of Christ is \textit{formally} a partial possession, and hence not our justification in itself. This is because faith is never perfect for Luther and only faith can hold onto this treasure of Christ as present within the believer. As such faith is “weak faith” and as Luther says, it “is barely a little spark of faith, which only begins to attribute divinity to God.”\textsuperscript{153} Luther says this, not to belittle the power of faith and its transformative aspects, but instead to note its formal limitations in the light of justification. In this manner Luther is distinguishing himself from the pneumatically-ordered faith of Thomas, wherein justification is primarily an \textit{in nobis} experience of sanctifying grace. For Luther the weakest faith can justify, based on its object of Jesus Christ; whereas for Thomas faith infused with love is the “transmutation” from a state of injustice to a state of justice (rectitude) \textit{in nobis}. As noted above, Aquinas says that “justification implies a transmutation from the state of injustice to the aforesaid state of justice. And it is thus we are speaking of the justification of the ungodly.”\textsuperscript{154} It is this new state of rectitude within the believer which comprises Aquinas’ justification and this stands in stark

\textsuperscript{150} “Lectures on Galatians,” \textit{LW} 26: 164.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 165.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 130.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 230.
\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Summa Theologiae}, I-II, q. 113 a.1.
contrast to Luther’s definition of justification, as quoted above. To conclude this discussion on these aspects of sole imputation on the one hand and the Christ as present in faith on the other: Christ is present by the Holy Spirit in the _regnum Christi_ as it “comes” to us via the preaching of the re-creative Word of Christ, being grasped by faith alone in believers, in that He brings with Him imputed passive righteousness (justification) outside ourselves. He is also present in the Word, as bringing the _effects_ of this alien righteousness, namely, the “first fruits” of faith.

An example of the “first fruits” is evident in Luther’s _The Freedom of the Christian_.

“In continuing to explore this, since love and joy are “fruits of the Spirit,” the Spirit is prerequisite to the manifestation of these fruits. But furthermore, perquisite to the believer’s reception of the Holy Spirit is their justification or being “declared righteous.” That is why Luther puts the reception of the Spirit as a sign of justification. “The Holy Spirit descended in a visible form upon believers. By this sign... He also testified that those who heard the Word of faith from the apostles were accounted righteous in the sight of God, for otherwise He would not have descended upon them.”

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156 “Lectures on Galatians,” LW 26: 204. Although it is difficult to fully determine the _ordo_ in Luther’s pneumatology, it is apparent that the reception of the Spirit in its visible sign, and which thus includes the cleansing of the heart with its “visible changes,” comes after the initial presence of the Spirit in the preaching of the Word of Christ. Luther said regarding the heart, “By his proclamation he brought the Holy Spirit into their hearts, and visibly at that; for they spoke with tongues and praised God,” 206. As Luther said, “the Holy Spirit is granted solely by hearing the message of the Gospel with faith,” 208. I would propose that the Spirit’s primary initial purpose is His attestation of Christ _pro nobis extra nos_. For example, Luther in this passage has the Spirit visibly coming at the preaching of the “forgiveness of sins” (Acts 10:44). Upon this faith given as a gift of the Spirit, justification becomes individually possessed by the heard Word. Hence, when Luther later states that “the proclamation of faith—when this is heard...brings the Holy Spirit who justifies,” (208) he is primarily referring at this point to the work of imputation. In this way, Luther is not seen as contradicting himself, within the same
“faith formed by love,” which can also be considered as a pneumatic grasping of faith.

Unfortunately, Aquinas misses the importance of imputation as the only grounds of our justification. If imputation is the only grounds, faith is merely the key to open this door, which door is the righteousness of Christ becoming ours by imputation. For Luther, the Spirit renewing us inwardly is an effect or fruit of this justification, whereas in Aquinas, it is our justification. As such, for Aquinas justification is the beginning of the Christian life which is then perfected in sanctification. Kolb and Arand say, “To speak of growth in the way of Aristotle (ad modum Aristotelis) calls passive righteousness into question and undermines its reality. We dare not consider sanctification one-dimensionally in terms of an ascent from unrighteousness to righteousness. Luther refuses to view the Christian life in terms of partialities, quantities, or percentages.”

As also mentioned in the introduction, Luther did not generally think in terms of sanctification. Instead, he shied away from it. Unlike Calvin, where sanctification stems from union with Christ (unio cum Christo) as an inseparable double grace but as not necessarily dependent upon justification, for Luther “active righteousness” flows as an outflow from passive righteousness. Luther’s order of salvation is evident also when he said, “First He justifies us by our knowledge of Him. Then He creates a clean heart (Ps 51:10), produces new motives, and grants the certainty by which we believe that for His sake we are pleasing to the Father.” Here Luther also speaks of both a “clean heart” and of the certainty of salvation as an outflow from such a justifying knowledge of God. This knowledge pertains to Christ “for us,”

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157 Kolb and Arand, 125.
158 For an informative discussion of Luther’s interpretation of sanctification, see Kolb and Arand, The Genius of Luther’s Theology, 123-128.
rather than as present “within us,” whether by the “formed faith of charity” or by ontological participation with Christ. This is evident because Luther here puts this “knowledge of God” as antecedent to a “new heart,” which is to say, participation in God’s being is here not prior to this “knowledge of God” which justifies, since such participation would require the new heart first. Therefore, this knowledge of God is the imputation of passive righteousness and our participation in that imputation. This interpretation aligns with Luther’s second “daily” “double sacrifice” which Christians must perform, as earlier mentioned and which is “the attribution of God’s glory to His sheer grace.” Of this double sacrifice Luther also said, “No one can adequately proclaim the value and the dignity of Christian sacrifice.” As Luther also said, “Therefore, faith justifies because it renders to God what is due him; whoever does this is righteous.” Furthermore, this connects to faith as the right knowledge about God. Luther said, “Faith is nothing else but the truth of the heart, that is, the right knowledge of the heart about God.... A man thinks correctly about God when he believes in God’s Word.” We can add to this, as the further context of this passage implies, it is here “about God ‘for us’ in Christ,” as demonstrated above and as seen from Luther’s overall emphasis on the Word of Christ crucified. Also, as noted in the footnote above regarding the reception of the Spirit, this reception brings with it a new heart. Therefore, new birth or regeneration as not yet occurring makes participation in the divine nature, before “declared righteousness,” impossible. As Paulson argues in relation to this, and as it connects both to participation, justification and eschatology, he says,

160 Ibid., 233.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid., 227.
163 Ibid., 238.
Everything God does with us, all of Scripture, is revealing God’s coming to us in order to be righteous in His words—there alone, in the promises that have their ‘yes’ in Christ, the Father seeks to be declared right.... Participation is not what we do in God’s being, but what God has already done in His Son Jesus Christ, who is the word who came to dwell among His rebellious creatures. Christ completely undoes Plato here.¹⁶⁴

The death of Christ is always the touch point of “participation” with Christ. As such, the expression that the “the old has gone,” (II Cor 5:17) means that precisely by death and crucifixion alone has this occurred. Any participation in the divine nature that is not theological, in that the Christian is first “slain” in Christ, misses the mark of Luther’s ontology.¹⁶⁵

An evidence of this is the difference between Luther and Aquinas regarding the assurance of salvation. Aquinas still seeks to “be slain,” so to speak, in his soteriology. To put this in Aquinas’ terms, he seeks for the Christian to be “perfect” in “faith formed by love.” For example, if we commit “mortal sin” we lose charity and Christ needs to be reformed in us.¹⁶⁶ In reference to the first of Luther’s “double sacrifice,”¹⁶⁷ it concerns the mind of the flesh, which has to be daily sacrificed with all of its doubt, to the disruptive nature of justifying grace. Luther’s sacrifice is not to add to one’s justification, but only to return continuously to its perfection as first received. Aquinas’ sacrifice, on the other hand, is to add to justification by way of sanctification. This difference is apparent, in that if Luther were one with Aquinas on the doctrine of justification, then certainty of salvation would not be doubted in Aquinas’ teaching.¹⁶⁸ As noted above, Aquinas says, “Even if by some special privilege their

¹⁶⁴ Paulson, “The Augustinian Imperfection,” 120.
¹⁶⁵ See Robert Kolb, “God Kills to Make Alive: Romans 6 and Luther’s Understanding of Justification (1535),” in Lutheran Quarterly, vol. XII (1998), 33-55. For example, Kolb says, “Luther viewed God’s baptismal action of killing and making alive by the forensic action of God’s Word which joined sinners and Christ as that which accomplished the bestowal of righteousness in God’s sight.”
¹⁶⁶ Aquinas, Commentary on Galatians, 133.
¹⁶⁷ “Lectures on Galatians,” LW 26: 233; 238-239.
¹⁶⁸ See Appendix: Certainty: A.
predestination were revealed to some, it is not fitting that it should be revealed to everyone; because, if so, those who were not predestined would despair; and security would beget negligence in the predestined.”¹⁶⁹ I think the Thomistic-based and Tridentine understanding of an “increase in justification” leads to “uncertainty.” If justification can be improved, then the converse is true, that it can be decreased and lost. It is thus “incomplete.” Therefore, Catholicism is essentially saying that “love” saves us, rather than faith. That is why Luther says: “Why do they (sophists) not call a spade a spade? In other words, why do they not say in clear words that works, not faith, justify?”¹⁷⁰ Here, Luther calls “love” the fulfilling of the Law, which is scripturally valid (Mt 22:37-40; Gal 5:14) and which, according to Luther, includes all works, “whether by divine power or by human.”¹⁷¹ Therefore, Pesch’s argument cannot stand, that no substantive differences exist between Aquinas and Luther on justification. Both the difference on the certainty of salvation and the differences implied between imputed versus imparted (formal) righteousness make this clear.¹⁷² For Luther such “justifying faith ‘formed by love’ is an empty dream”¹⁷³ of the scholastics. Luther’s view of total depravity cannot contain what he considers to be the flawed notion of “inherent righteousness” as justifying a sinner before a Holy God. As Luther said, “For we teach that all men are wicked; we condemn the free will of man, his natural powers, wisdom, righteousness, all self-invented religion, and whatever is best in the world.”¹⁷⁴ And this reality remains even after conversion, as Luther said, “The only thing necessary is that we accept the treasure that is Christ, grasped by faith in our hearts, even

¹⁶⁹ Summa Theologiae, I, 23 a.1.
¹⁷⁰ “Lectures on Galatians,” LW 26: 145.
¹⁷¹ Ibid., 122.
¹⁷² See Appendix: Certainty: B.
¹⁷³ Ibid., 88.
¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 58.
though we feel that we are completely filled with sins.”\textsuperscript{175} To be clear, Luther never contends against the role of a “clean heart,” new birth or “new motivations.” He simply denies that these inherent changes are enough to constitute our justification before God or to appease His wrath. Luther said of “active righteousness,” given even as a “gift from God,” that “I cannot trust in it or stand up before the judgement of God on the basis of it,” and Luther adds: “I embrace only the passive righteousness which is the righteousness of grace, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins.”\textsuperscript{176} Luther’s doctrine of simul iustus et peccator makes this clear. For Luther, the Christ we take hold of in justifying faith is the Christ who died “for us.” This bespeaks the extra nos and pro nobis emphasis that Lutheranism’s doctrine of justification is famous for, and rightly it is fitting of Luther himself. As Luther said, reason thinks all this absurd.

Thus a Christian man is righteous and a sinner at the same time (simul iustus et peccator), holy and profane, an enemy of God and a child of God. None of the sophists will admit this paradox, because they do not understand the true meaning of justification.... Therefore this is a marvellous definition of Christian righteousness: it is a divine imputation or reckoning as righteousness or to righteousness, for the sake of our faith in Christ or for the sake of Christ. When the sophists hear this definition they laugh; for they suppose that righteousness is a certain quality that is first infused into the soul and then distributed throughout all the members. They cannot strip off the thoughts of reason, which declares that righteousness is a right judgement and a right will. Therefore this inestimable gift excels all reason that without any works God reckons and acknowledges as righteous the man who takes hold by faith of His Son, who was sent into the world, who was born, who suffered and who was crucified for us.\textsuperscript{177}

Aquinas falls within Luther’s description above. The doctrines of the “merit of condignity” and the “merit of congruity,”\textsuperscript{178} which Aquinas promulgates, inevitably amounts to a confusion of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[175] Ibid., 139.
\item[176] Ibid., 4, 6.
\item[177] Ibid, 232-234.
\item[178] Ibid., 134. Luther said, “For through my works preceding grace I cannot merit grace by congruity, nor can I deserve eternal life by condignity through my merits following grace; but sin is forgiven and righteousness is imputed to him who believes in Christ.”
\end{footnotes}
active (inherent) righteousness with the righteousness imputed to us in justification “apart from the Law” (Rom 3:21). Here the “merit of congruity” refers to one’s works before the reception of justifying grace, while the “merit of condignity” refers to the meriting of eternal life by one’s works in cooperation with the grace previously received since justification. With this “system,” the confusing of passive and active righteousness remains inevitable, even despite its Augustinian foundation “that all our merits are gifts of God.” For Luther, “merit” can only be Christ’s merit accomplished on the cross “for us.” Furthermore, “gift” here is clearly the “gift” of the “grace” of the Incarnated Christ “crucified for us.” Peura’s “blurring” wherein “Christ himself is the grace that covers a sinner and hides him from God’s wrath, and Christ himself is the gift that renews the sinner internally and makes him righteous,” is in this case expounded to support imparted righteousness as justification. Luther equates “for the sake of faith” with “for the sake of Christ,” because the faith warranting imputation is the faith which grasps the gift of Christ “outside of us,” namely, the Incarnated Christ “crucified for us.” God’s gift of justification is simply His “grace” of Jesus crucified for us as our imputed righteousness. Hence, when Christ “was raised to life for our justification,” (Rom 4:25) heaven itself was spread with the garment of our passive righteousness in Christ. The “Spirit’s primary initial purpose is His attestation of Christ pro nobis extra nos,” and hence the “garment of Christ” which faith wears, always first covers us “before God” before enlivening us “within.” The Spirit testifies first of “Christ crucified for us,” before imputing Christ’s righteousness to us

179 Gerrish, 126.
181 See n.156.
by faith, and then filling us with Himself. Therefore, the passive righteousness Luther stands on and which alone justifies us is the “righteousness of grace, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins.”

In further explicating Kolb’s and Arand’s quotation above, concerning “the way of Aristotle,” this above quotation from Luther, highlights that any Aristotelian system essentially undermines the existence of Luther’s theological or passive righteousness upon which his doctrine of justification is based. As earlier mentioned, the Joint Declaration entirely avoids Luther’s word of “imputation.” Yet, Luther’s doctrine of being “at once both a sinner and righteous,” which exists because of his doctrine of the imputed passive, alien righteousness of Christ; all of this comprises the heart of his teaching on justification. To look for another emphasis, amounts in my mind, to imagining a non-existent Luther. Luther’s doctrine of justification is thus about another world, namely, the kingdom of Christ which has come by the preaching of the Word, bringing with it the imputation of passive righteousness. Grace for Luther, in the doctrine of justification is as such, never an infused quality. Grace is always extra nos in its nature and it is all together Christ’s merit on our behalf. Our relationship to it is purely theological. This is to say that grace comprises the blessings of God’s favor in our relationship to God’s action and reality, which ever remains purely God’s in Christ. It is not of “this world.” It is therefore not phenomenally-based. Can it have powerful effects on the physical world and on the world of sense and perception? Christ’s bodily resurrection is the affirmative answer, “absolutely!” And absolutely they are eschatological effects as will be explored further below. Luther for example said, “When I have this righteousness within me, I descend from heaven like rain that makes the earth fertile. That is, I come forth into another
kingdom, and I perform good works whenever the opportunity arises."\textsuperscript{183} From this analogy of theological Christian existence, we can see that formal righteousness is the “descending down” from our passive righteousness of Christ’s heavenly kingdom to the earthly kingdom. Luther here describes this formal righteousness, by saying, “When I have this righteousness within me.” Since for Luther, “Christ is our principal, complete, and perfect righteousness,”\textsuperscript{184} this “Christ within me” righteousness is the fruit of the tree and not the tree itself, unless one wants to claim that they have received irreversible “formal perfection.” Note that Luther makes this descent a natural outflow. It seems in this outflow that the Christian cannot stop the “descent” from occurring, as long as she continues to come to the fount of this passive righteousness. The partiality of this fruit signals that it is not our justification. Hence, the conclusion which I will further develop below is that for Luther, Christ “within us” is ever the fruit of Christ “for us.” Ultimately we have no reason to fear, but rather we should run to, “Christ within,” \textit{provided} it is ever grounded in both its dependence on and distinction from “Christ for us.”

3.2 Two Kingdoms

As we will see below, Luther’s two kingdom theology determines his epistemology. For Luther (and hopefully us), theological reality or “existence” cannot be reduced to that which is less “real” than the phenomenal world of sense and analytic knowledge, or to one’s ontological deductions arising from it. Hence, when Luther said, for example, “you have taken hold of Christ by faith, through whom you are righteous,”\textsuperscript{185} the context of such a passage comes in the

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., \textit{LW} 27:71.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., \textit{LW} 26:133.
reality of Luther’s doctrine of the *simul iustus et peccator*, so that “sin is always present, and the godly feel it.”\(^\text{186}\) Only in the context of a Christian as both a sinner and as righteous, should such an “ontological” statement by Luther about “being righteous” be understood. Therefore, there is ontology in Luther’s justification which is based upon theological epistemology. Christ’s Presence is also never known as wed to faith, except in the theological world in which justification places the believer, as the believer in that world is “in Christ.” Therefore, Christ is only “present within” (“first fruits”- our formal righteousness before humanity) because we are in a new relation *coram Deo* (“the tree”- our imputed *extra nos* passive righteousness *before God* in the theological world of the *regnum Christi*).\(^\text{187}\) As Luther says above, justification pertains to a theological world. Luther also states above, “we are in a divine theology,” rather than state that we speak about God theologically. The theological world of which I refer is then a Lutheran term, descriptive of both God’s kingdom in Christ and of His manner of relating it to us. Hence we are both sinners and saints simultaneously. As Luther so often said, sin still “clings to the flesh.”\(^\text{188}\) This is descriptive of the Christian as being in two worlds at once. Wright, in commenting on Gerrish’s work, *Reason and Faith*, says “In the *Commentary on Galatians*, the most perspicuous statement of the Reformer’s mature theology and the centre piece of Gerrish’s analysis, we may see that Luther’s view of reason was based on the two kingdoms.”\(^\text{189}\) All of the dualisms of Luther, such as “grace versus faith, spiritual (passive) versus civil (active) righteousness, gift and example, theology and philosophy, spirit and body,

\(^{186}\) Ibid.  
\(^{187}\) The tree and fruit analogy is common in Luther. See for example the evil and good trees, respectively, in *LW* 26:126; 169.  
\(^{188}\) Ibid., 132-133; 232.  
\(^{189}\) Wright, 42.
morals and faith," in the end, come back to the doctrine of the two kingdoms. As Gerrish writes, “Luther is thinking of the two kingdoms as two dimensions of existence.... Justification before God is instantaneous and complete; and if we are to distinguish clearly between Luther’s position and that of the Schoolmen, this ‘all at once’ (gans auff eyn mal) is perhaps as important as the ‘faith alone’ (sola fide).” What Gerrish says here ties the reality of the theological realm of existence, which stands in juxtaposition to our natural and earthly existence (phenomenal world of temporality), directly to Luther’s doctrine of justification. Furthermore it is connected to a second primary difference for Luther from the Schoolmen, other than the sola fide distinction. This is part and parcel of what the Joint Declaration fails to adequately address, and this is precisely Hunsinger’s point, concerning the thoroughly eschatological nature of justification as above noted. As mentioned in the introduction and highlighted directly above, it is the “perfection” element of Luther’s doctrine of justification as “already come,” (realized eschatology) which sets him apart from Aquinas, and which also sets his doctrine of justification apart as more eschatologically-based than Aquinas’. Gerrish also differentiates Aquinas and Luther along the same arguments that I am proposing:

Perhaps the crucial difference lies in the fact that justification for Thomas is not yet salvation: it is only the beginning of the road, nor is it the guarantee of finally arriving. For Luther, on the other hand, justification and salvation are virtually synonymous. Heaven is here; the pilgrim has arrived and lives already in the sphere of grace. There is no necessity for the Christian to establish another relation with God, on the basis of merits. We might almost say that for Luther eschatology is ‘realized.’ The Christian has been translated already into the Kingdom of Christ (eyn mal, once and for all), and his standing there is entirely a matter of faith, not of merits (sola fide).  

190 Ibid.  
191 Gerrish, 119-120.  
192 Hunsinger, “Fides Christo Formata,” 69-84.  
193 Gerrish, 125-126.
The theme which Oberman above highlights and which Hunsinger agrees with, that scholasticism viewed justification as the beginning of a process of salvation, is also here made distinct from Luther’s emphasis on justification as our entire soteriology. It is for this reason, as mentioned above, that Luther taught one can know of their election. Justification is the articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae, precisely for this reason; that at both ends of the eschatological poles of imputation, all of salvation for the entire cosmos is summarized. Gerrish also resonates strongly with Torrance at this point with the realized eschatology, which Luther holds in the forensic imputation of our righteousness. All of this is grounded in the two kingdoms theology and as such it agrees with Moltmann’s definition of biblical eschatology as the “coming” of God’s kingdom to earth in the notion of “advent.” The “standing by faith” bespeaks the already/not yet, or the future fulfillment of the promise not yet realized, namely, the effects of our perfect righteousness which we now have “in Christo.”

Finally, the only way to understand the already/not yet of justification, is to resort to Luther’s eschatologically-based truth of the simul iustus et peccator. Barth is such a modern theologian who adopts just this viewpoint. He sees, for example, that nothing else can keep God’s grace as “pure” and as “sheer” grace, whole and entire, without division into qualities and the bits and pieces implied in inherent righteousness. Such wholeness of grace wherein Christ is our righteousness, means as Hunsinger says, that “Barth defined the Christian life by Luther’s doctrine of simul iustus et peccator. Believers were totally righteous in Christ while yet

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194 Hunsinger, in Disruptive Grace, 287n.12, says concerning Luther and Barth: “The precedence of the Word over reason and experience meant for both theologians—in their common christocentrism—that our being completely righteous “in Christ” was utterly real coram Deo despite its hiddenness apart from faith between the times.” This is in direct contrast to Peura’s emphasis as highlighted above, and also in contrast to Aquinas’ soteriology.
remaining totally sinners in and of themselves (totus/totus).”\textsuperscript{195} On the other hand, such dividing of grace into the Aristotelian-like categorizations of “inherent righteousness,” not merely belittles grace (and inevitably sin), but the eschatological foundations of our salvation. All of these issues are the concerns which Luther’s doctrine of justification addresses. As we refer to Jenson below, we will see that Luther’s further concern of finding the proper manner in which to worship God must also include the doctrine of the simul iustus et peccator, or else one’s worship of God falls prey to idolatrous tendencies.

### 3.3 Anfechtung Defined

As mentioned above, Luther’s Anfechtung doctrine becomes central to understanding how theodicy, predestination and Providence fit into his doctrine of justification. Before discussing these issues, it is useful to define the term Anfechtung, and to equate it as virtually synonymous with Luther’s “theology of the cross.” McGrath says

For Luther, death, the devil, the world and Hell combine in a terrifying assault upon man, reducing him to a state of doubt and despair. Anfechtung is thus a state of hopelessness and helplessness, having strong affinities with the concept of Angst.... Two aspects of the concept can be distinguished, although they are inseparable: the objective assault of spiritual forces upon the believer, and subjective anxiety and doubt which arise within him as a consequence of these assaults....God himself must be recognized as the ultimate source of Anfechtung: it is his opus alienum, which is intended to destroy man’s self-confidence and complacency, and reduce him to a state of utter despair and humiliation, in order that he may finally turn to God.... It is for this reason that Luther is able to refer to Anfechtung as a ‘delicious despair.’\textsuperscript{196}

Much is contained in these words by McGrath and I quote him at length because various aspects of McGrath’s description have already been or will be further explicated in this paper.

The pertinent point to be made, is that Anfechtung becomes, as stated in the thesis, the

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 299.
\textsuperscript{196} McGrath, Luther’s Theology of the Cross, 170-171.
“drivenness” to the kingdom of grace in Christ, whereby we find our justification extra nos. 

Anfechtung represents the emptying of all self-confidence. It is utter weakness and humiliation in one form or the other, or as McGrath says, vis-a-vis God’s “alien work” (opus alienum). More will be explicated below, regarding this alien work and its connection to theodicy. As we turn now to Loewenich, we find a statement made after considerable development of the arguments in his book, Luther’s Theology of the Cross, which also has significant bearing upon the entire thesis of this paper. Loewenich first makes “trials” synonymous with Anfechtung, when he says, “trials (Anfechtungen) run through Luther’s entire life.”197 And in the conclusion of this section of his book on “Trials,” he goes so far as to say, “All of this will have made clear that trial is a central concept of the theology of the cross. It could be seriously considered whether the entire theology of the cross might not best be developed on the basis of this concept.”198 The concept to which Loewenich is referring is the existential aspect of faith, where life is lived under trials or in Anfechtung. Therefore, Anfechtung, as implied in the thesis of this paper, is the driving-force of Christian faith to its object and to its solution found in justification by faith alone. Anfechtung keeps faith in motion and hence true to itself. There is at this point almost an antithesis between faith and love, even though the apostle Paul said, “all that matters is faith working through love” (Gal 5:6). Luther therefore said, “Let love bear all things, believe all things, hope all things (I Cor 13:7). Let faith, by contrast, bear absolutely nothing; but let it rule, command, triumph, and do everything. For love and faith are exact

197 Walter von Loewenich, Luther’s Theology of the Cross, transl. by Herbert J.A. Bouman (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 135.
198 Ibid., 139.
opposites in their intentions, their tasks, and their values.”199 This is because faith must be emptied so as to only trust in Christ, its object. Luther continues on to say in opposition to Aquinas and the scholastics, “And while they say that faith is the mere outline but love is its living colors and completion, we say in opposition that faith takes hold of Christ and that He is the form that adorns and informs faith as color does the wall.... It takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself.”200 What is significant from Loewenich is that he practically states that the theology of the cross for Luther, at the existential level, is synonymous with his doctrine of Anfechtung. Christ as “present” in faith always occurs for Luther, after faith is forged in the emptying of self-confidence, through the work (theology) of the cross. Existentially synonymous with this, it is through Anfechtung that faith becomes truest to itself.

3.4 Background of Luther and His Times in Relation to Anfechtung

Luther’s spiritual and psychological struggle as a Catholic monk is well-known. He himself writes about his insatiable desire to find peace with the Holy God. Therefore, as mentioned in the introduction of this paper, Luther’s tortured soul found its peace, within his understanding of the New Testament and particularly, of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith.

However, Robert Jenson notes that the underlying issue is not merely Luther’s Anfechtung and inner Angst, but rather, it is primarily his quest to know that he worships the true God.201 Essentially, Luther sees the dilemma in the human predicament of humanity falling prey to

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200 Ibid., 129.
idolatry, even in the midst of the most ardent religious fervour and devotion. Luther’s solution is to find God’s sheer grace. This is the sole grace of God, with its coming whole, entire, complete, and in its extra nos basis of imputed righteousness, thus preserving God’s glory. As Luther says, “grace is sufficient to enable us to be counted entirely and completely righteous in God’s sight because His grace does not come in portions and pieces, separately, like so many gifts; rather it takes us up completely into its embrace for the sake of Christ our mediator and intercessor, and in order that the gifts may take root in us.”202 This “taking up” is theological, into the “other world” of Christ’s kingdom. As such, it has formal side-effects “within us,” but this does not explain the “completeness” of this righteousness. It is “in God’s sight” (coram Deo) that we find it “complete.” Luther here contrasts “gifts” or what elsewhere he calls “fruits,” with justification itself. Only the grace of justification is entire and complete and hence, as Luther above states, justification is “solely in the grace of God and in imputation.” Furthermore, despite the fact of Luther’s concern to worship the true God, it is unimaginable that Luther would have found his answer without the Anfechtung which led him continuously to “the stable basis” of justification. More will be said below of the continuous-aspects of the Anfechtung in a Christian’s life.

In continuing to understand Luther’s times, what becomes evident, is that the period of European history in which Luther lived was incredibly tumultuous. The turbulent period of history stretching from 1490-1648, lent itself to Apocalyptic expectations and interpretations with regards to history. Concurrent with this, was the scepticism arising against current epistemologies, to which Aristotelianism also fell victim. Luther’s aversion to Aristotle must be

considered as multifaceted and as a developmental process occurring over time. As McGrath points out in his book, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, Luther in the beginning of his career, despised the rationalizing of Aristotle and of reason as revelation’s companion. But later this aversion steered away from pitting reason against revelation (although not entirely), and developed against Aristotelian ethics.\(^{203}\) As in the quotation above, Luther argues against Aristotelian ethics, which only has the propensity to confuse passive righteousness with active righteousness. As mentioned in the thesis section and as dovetailing to the above section, for Luther, a new type of doing exists for the Christian which is wholly theological. But there is a third reason for Luther moving in the direction he did against Aristotelianism. William Wright highlights this reason, in his book, *Martin Luther’s Understanding of the Two Kingdoms*. Wright argues that Luther’s scepticism towards human knowledge must be understood in the context of Renaissance humanist scepticism and particularly in its relationship to Luther’s two kingdom theology.\(^{204}\) As Wright says in more detail concerning scepticism,

As Luther appeared on the scene, the specter of scepticism was in the air. One could no longer be certain about the accuracy of ancient authorities on subjects of natural philosophy, philosophy, or theology. In addition, great doubts had been raised about how one might obtain certain knowledge about anything. Epistemological doubt was probably more important than doubt about the accuracy of traditional views on the subject matter of astronomy, physics, metaphysics, and theology. It has been said that the problem of the late Middle Ages was ‘at once epistemological and theological.’ Some contemporary historians have attempted to downplay the importance of the epistemological side of Luther’s concern with certainty by categorizing his contrast of faith and reason as a soteriological question rather than an epistemological one.\(^{205}\)

\(^{203}\) McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, 136-141.

\(^{204}\) Wright, 45-77.

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 53.
What is stunning to realize from Wright’s analysis, is that epistemological “certainty” for Luther, hinged upon an epistemology which could transcend the epistemological doubts as grounded in the scepticism of his times. Luther was in this sense in the “modern world,” just then emerging, and as a pioneer of it he had to find a “certain” way to knowledge, above the phenomenal world’s obstructions to it. Aristotle’s philosophy, though invaluable for its grounding in respect to the physical world, could not be the place in which Luther found his answer to the Anfechtung he experienced. On the contrary, epistemological doubt caused Aristotelian philosophy to further contribute to and intensify his Anfechtung. The theological world, found in the midst of the despair, sin and death of human tragedy, was the new “real world” in which Luther discovered his solution to his own Anfechtung. It is here, in this flux between the phenomenal and theological worlds, that Luther discovered the two kingdoms, and that God is both hidden (deus absconditus) and revealed (deus revelatus) in the cross. To paraphrase McGrath, it is in God’s “alien work” (opus alienum) of the Anfechtung, that God leads the predestined to his “proper work” (opus proprium). This is the revealing of His theological world, namely, the kingdom of Christ, in which by imputation, perfect righteousness and free access to the Father is found. God’s spoken Word, creating life from death, in baptism with Christ, is the place of refuge for Luther, from the turbulent and “apocalyptic” times in which he lived. In summing up the epistemological issue for Luther, Wright says that “it is my contention

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206 McGrath, Luther’s Theology of the Cross, 172. Although lying beyond the scope of our discussion to explore in greater detail, McGrath mentions that “Pannenberg pointed out the intimate relationship between Anfechtung and the idea of predestination.” W. Pannenberg, ‘Der Einflub der Anfechtunserfahrung auf den Pradestinationsbegriff Luthers’, Kerygma und Dogma 3 (1954): 109-39.
that the existence of God’s two kingdoms was a Christian reality for Luther. The concept represented Luther’s Reformation worldview or Weltanschauung.”

In continuing to explicate what Wright calls Luther’s “worldview,” Cunningham and Grell summarize the overall arguments of their book, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, by stating that

We have been arguing in the course of the book that there really was an exceptional number of wars, of outbreaks of epidemic disease and of famines in the period 1490-1648, and that the spontaneous interpretation of these events in apocalyptic terms was natural in a period of great religious fervour and friction. Further, we have argued that what underlay these disasters was the constant pressure of population increase. The population of Western Europe as a whole doubled during this period, despite all the hundreds of thousands of premature deaths that war, epidemic disease and famine caused.

Combined with this apocalyptic fervour was the propensity for peoples of this era in history to interpret signs as bespeaking the imminent end of the world. The study of signs, writes Barnes, “became a many-sided preoccupation in the sixteenth century, for this study encompassed an enormous range of human experience....The signs of society had been almost all discovered by Luther himself.” What is interesting to note is that Luther is so central to this whole apocalyptic visioning, in both his furthering the cause of such an interpretation of his immediate history, and in being himself viewed by Reformation Christians as its leading figure. He is seen as a Reformation soldier (warrior), fighting against the tyranny of the Antichrist(s) of the Papacy on the one hand, and of the Turks on the other.

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207 Wright, 15.
208 Cunningham and Grell, 322.
3.5 Theodicy, Predestination, Providence

With all this as the backdrop of Luther’s historical context and with keeping in mind his inner struggles of Anfechtung, we can appreciate that theodicy becomes a central component of Luther’s theology of the cross. In contrast to Aquinas, Luther does not seek to make Providence amenable to reason in the explication of human suffering, and to push one’s interaction and resolution with the question of theodicy to the future resurrection of the body. Instead, Luther embraces a suffering God as the only God which we are to know. For Luther, God has chosen to be known only in the cross. In one respect and similarly to Aquinas, the answer to theodicy is not fully rendered in an intellectually satisfying manner. However, Luther embraces theodicy as more central to his doctrine of justification, than does Aquinas. In the very act of Christ on the cross providing our justification, Christ suffered His own Anfechtung.\textsuperscript{210} The central question of theodicy is the question which Jesus cried aloud in the greatest possible anguish; “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” The question of theodicy is the question, “Where has God gone in the world?” It raises the greatest doubts about the existence of God, let alone of a benevolent God. For Luther, theodicy is very akin to his doctrine of the “hidden God.” In his essay, “Luther on the Hidden God,” Paulson says concerning Luther’s insights, “In short, God hides in the world behind the question, ‘Why?’ Why did God allow this to happen? At such moments a person cannot distinguish neatly, as a theologian might like, between God

\textsuperscript{210} McGrath, \textit{Luther’s Theology of the Cross}, 173. See also “Selected Psalms III,” \textit{LW} 14: 272, where Luther says in speaking on Psalm 109:22, “The meaning of this verse can be understood from the suffering of Christ. He was not only poor and needy outwardly, in His body, forsaken and persecuted by everyone, but also troubled and stricken inwardly.” When commenting on Psalm 2:4, in \textit{LW} 14:320-1, he says “For that which is written here concerning Christ is an example for all Christians. Anyone who wishes to be a sincere Christian...will suffer his Herods, Pilates, rulers, king, Gentiles, and other people who rage against him, meditate vain things, set themselves against him and take counsel together.”
Therefore, Luther’s inner anguish as derivative of his religious quest to find the true worship and peace of God, and to also make sense of the turbulent times in which he lived, whether in the Church or in the world at large—all combined in allowing Luther to deeply resonate with the very anguish of Christ’s Anfechtung on the cross. Therefore, in the very center of God’s meritorious act of our redemption, theodicy is embraced as central to this redemption. The divine marriage metaphor is thus not primarily an ontological or mystical doctrine for Luther, but it is rather a doctrine chiefly concerning itself with the extra nos torture of Christ on the cross pro nobis. And this torture, in terms of theodicy, is at its greatest, not in the moment of Christ’s physical scourging and crucifixion, but in the moment of His expressed psychological and spiritual anguish to the Father. As Yule says, in his essay, “Luther’s Christology,” “For to be forsaken by God is far worse than death...‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.’ For that is His real sublime spirited suffering which no man can imagine or understand... in short He must suffer everything that a condemned sinner has deserved and must suffer eternally.”

Yule also notes Luther’s close association with Athanasius’ theology at this point; and in a later footnote, concerning Luther, he says, “the full humanity of Christ was essential for his whole understanding of the Gospel.” This is why Hunsinger says, “His person is in His (Christ’s) work, and His work is in His person.” The Passion of Christ is inextricably tied to both Christ’s incarnation and to His work of salvation on the cross. It is for this reason that Luther speaks about the duality of knowing God in the cross and in Christ’s humanity. As Luther said about Christ’s humanity in relation to justification,

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212 Yule, 102.
213 Ibid., 110n.54.
214 Hunsinger, “Fides Christo Formata,” 74.
Therefore begin where Christ began—in the Virgin’s womb, in the manger, and at His mother’s breasts.... Therefore whenever you consider the doctrine of justification and wonder... in what condition to find a God who justifies... then you must know that there is no other God than this Man Jesus Christ.... It does not begin at the top, as all other religions do; it begins at the bottom...Therefore whenever you are concerned to think and act about your salvation, you must put away all speculations about the Majesty, all thoughts of works, traditions, and philosophy—indeed, of the Law of God itself.215

In all this we see that Luther’s theology is intensely Christological, and particularly is this so in the imputed passive righteousness of justification, because in this Christ works and lives “for us.” Luther’s Christology is rooted in Christ’s humanity. In this way and in resonance with Paulson above, Luther’s “Christ completely undoes Plato here.”

What should be realized is that for Luther, theodicy is about the apparent contradiction which life itself so often brings to anyone approaching the promises of God.216 Theodicy for Luther is also about “the judgement of Christ on the cross,” as mentioned by Torrance at the beginning of this paper. Theodicy represents the after-expression of the abandonment, wrath or punishment which one may suffer, along with the anguish and doubt that it brings, and all this as seemingly coming from God’s hand. Theodicy is thus about existential judgement and affliction, in both the “wrong” and “proper” places as viewed from the human purview, and often with disproportionate severity. In this phenomenal world of torment, the alien and hidden God works in certain persons to bring them to the heavenly world where one is “in a divine theology,” as above mentioned. The notion of “certain persons” bespeaks the doctrine of predestination. This is particularly so for Luther, for all the reasons highlighted above regarding God’s grace. Luther, for example said, when commenting on Psalm 143: 5, “The ‘works of the hands of God’ are the pious, whom He gives birth to and creates out of grace.

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216 Pesch, 17: “Luther was the first theologian to admit that many things which we experience in the world in which we live contradict the loving providence of God.”
This happens without any co-operation on their part, for this is how they become new creatures in Christ.\(^{217}\) The doctrine of total depravity, which Luther embraces, means that only God’s grace moves a sinner to receive by faith alone the imputed and passive righteousness of Christ. Hence, as noted above by McGrath, Luther believed in double predestination.

However, Luther’s focus is not on this, but rather on the fact that anyone who so finds the God of the cross by faith alone, has indeed found the hidden God, and thus the true God. Only at this point can grace be grace and sin remain as sin, without falling prey to diminishment by “mortal” and “venial” categorizations. Only then can righteousness solely be Christ’s alien righteousness, since as Luther says, Christ alone “is perfectly righteous in a formal sense.”\(^{218}\) Indeed, only in the revealed God of the hidden God on the cross, can God be God and our worship of Him no longer fall prey to idolatry. Then can the peace of God flow to those who by faith alone have received justification. As the revelation of God makes the knowledge of God known to faith, the assurance of salvation can also flow to the believer’s conscience.

_Anfechtung_ is, figuratively speaking, the container (means) in the phenomenal world, which drives us to the place of justification by faith alone. It is the place of being emptied out. It is not the place of “love forming faith.” Rather it is the place of faith having its own identity.

Although Luther may have overstated his rhetoric concerning the differences between faith and charity, there is considerable merit to this differentiation. Luther further said,

>The scholastics do the same thing in our day. They say that we must believe in Christ and that faith is the foundation of salvation, but they say that this faith does not justify unless it is ‘formed by love.’ This is not the truth of the Gospel; it is falsehood and pretense. The true Gospel however, is this: Works or love are not the ornament or perfection of faith; but faith

\(^{218}\) “Lectures on Galatians,” _LW_ 26: 233.
itself is a gift of God, a work of God in our hearts, which justifies us because it takes hold of Christ as the Savior.... But faith in its proper place has no other object than Jesus Christ.... it does not look at its love and say: “What have I done? Where have I sinned? What have I deserved?” But it says: “What has Christ done? What has He deserved?.... Therefore what the scholastics have taught about justifying faith ‘formed by love’ is an empty dream. For the faith that takes hold of Christ, the Son of God, and is adorned by Him is the faith that justifies, not a faith that includes love. For if faith is to be sure and firm, it must take hold of nothing but Christ alone; and in the agony and terror of conscience it has nothing else to lean on than this pearl of great value (Matt 13:45-46).219

Luther’s concern for the comfort of consciences and the assurance of salvation is only addressed when faith “has nothing else to lean on than this pearl of great value.” Faith is most at home in the Anfechtung experience, for in this experience it only embraces Christ as “for us.” Contrary to any participation in Christ in nobis, Luther here puts the stress on what Christ has done and deserved (merited Himself) for us. Charity is the movement by which a Christian “descends beneath himself into his neighbour,” as Luther said in The Freedom of the Christian. On the other hand, Luther just prior to this said, “By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God” and thus “He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbour through love.”220 For Luther, living “caught up” in this “theological world,” is Luther’s solution to the Anfechtung, as derived from existence under the Law. This is the solution to the issue of theodicy. Reason does not perceive this solution but it merely appears as “foolishness” to it. Such “foolishness” of “the preaching of the cross,” (I Cor 1:18) pertains then to reason, moral ethics and to the alienation of a world subjected to the crisis of theodicy. One need not claim Luther is an irrationalist at heart. He is an eschatological theologian at heart, who sees any resolution of the tension inherent in the doctrine of the simul iustus et peccator as it is derived from the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as idolatry. God’s utter glory and His sheer grace are Luther’s only

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219 Ibid., 88-89.
true concerns in our salvation and in God crucified for us. For Luther, only as these concerns are tended to, can any personal assurance also be received. Therefore, from what has been both implied and argued thus far, Luther stands in a different light on this topic of justification, from that of Aquinas. Now we can also add with more specificity, in a different “eschatological light.”

We hope, although much more could be said along the lines of theodicy, we have established a pertinent difference between how both Aquinas and Luther handle the topic of theodicy. As has been shown, this difference, particularly in the handling of the issue of theodicy, highlights the eschatological differences between Luther and Aquinas, and distinguishes Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith as significantly variant from Aquinas’. As such, I have aimed to leave Providence as Aquinas’ primary concern in dealing with suffering, while for Luther predestination is implied as his primary concern in his Anfechtung. Both Luther and Aquinas also address respectively, providence and predestination, but the order of priority for Luther within his “God as Merciful Judge” soteriology, is: theodicy-predestination-Providence. While Aquinas places the order in his “God as Creator” emphasis, as: suffering/affliction-Providence-predestination- with theodicy primarily pushed to the future resurrection for both its addressing and resolution.

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221 See the thesis above for a quotation from Luther’s Lectures on Galatians, LW 26:386-7, which shows that Luther held strongly to the assurance of salvation as pertinent to one’s justification. See also Appendix: Certainty.

222 See ibid: 18 for an example of Providence at play in Luther’s understanding and life. “I could preach throughout the papacy, provided they let me” and then he says “I have no right.... But I should commit the matter to God.... For He is the Lord of the harvest who will send labourers into the harvest; our task is to pray (Matt. 9:38).
3.6 Faith, Anfechtung and the Two Kingdoms

Luther’s doctrine of faith has been called eschatological in nature.\(^{223}\) I propose this is particularly true in that faith lives or thrives in its antithetical relationship of Anfechtung. This is so because, as argued above, Anfechtung drives the elect to God in Christ. Christ’s kingdom is a kingdom of faith (regnum fide). As Loewenich says, “when we call to mind the contexts of faith, the hidden God, and the cross, we are not surprised to hear that the cross stands in the midst of this kingdom of faith. But we share in Christ’s cross only when we take the cross upon ourselves.”\(^ {224}\) Faith is existential, primarily because its opposite of Anfechtung, which raises doubts and questions about God, makes the Object of faith, namely, Jesus Christ, present to the believer. Concerning how this occurs, Luther says, “but how He is present—this is beyond our thought; for there is darkness, as I have said.”\(^ {225}\) Of this darkness of faith, Luther just prior to this, says

Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple. Therefore our ‘formal righteousness’ is not a love that informs faith; but it is faith itself, a cloud in our hearts, that is, trust in a thing we do not see, in Christ, who is present especially when He cannot be seen.

Luther, who is fond of the definition of faith according to Hebrews 11:1 wherein faith “is the evidence of things not seen,” locates faith at work in trials which hide God from view. As such, both Anfechtung and even theodicy as central to trials are embraced in Luther’s conceptualization of faith. Anfechtung is not merely the beginning of faith but its continual companion throughout the Christian life. As Loewenich says, “according to the theology of the

\(^ {223}\) See Torrance, The Eschatology of Faith, 145-213.
\(^ {224}\) Loewenich, 126.
\(^ {225}\) “Lectures on Galatians,” LW 26: 130.
cross the worst kind of trial consists in not having any trial; for trial keeps faith in motion.... The movement of faith constantly pushes through from the hidden God to the revealed God, from the alien to the proper work.”226 Here we can appreciate more fully the hermeneutical circle of the theology of the cross (Anfechtung) and faith.227 (See below for more discussion of this.) Since faith is “dark,” reason and moral ethics are not its concern, nor is the Law of God. Such things are obvious to the mind, as things that are seen, and hence not the immediate concern of faith. Faith is truest to itself when it is most under trial, for then it grasps hold of its content; of that which it cannot see in the phenomenal world (our life “hid with God in Christ”[Col 3:3]). As such, faith is the doorway to the theological world. When faith arrives in this world (brings the believer to this theological knowledge of God), no sooner than this (or rather in God’s Providence), faith is subjected again and again to trial or to Anfechtung. And thus the circle continues. As we can see from this, there is no easy relationship between nature and grace at work here, with regards to Luther’s understanding of faith in general, or of justifying faith. As Bayer says,

Reformation theology, therefore, is a theology that is always engaged in conflict. We see this especially in connection with the incomprehensible hiddenness of God, which comes out in two ways: 1) as the question of theodicy that all people struggle with; and 2) as the problem of predestination that is felt especially by believers. This theology cannot be satisfied with the idea of a world established according to a cosmic order (ordo) with a picture of God to fit in, as classically held by Thomas Aquinas.... Faith that is certain of salvation will keep overcoming attack (Anfechtung).228

Furthermore, for Luther, this disruption between nature and grace was not merely one which concerned his own troubled and often tortured soul as a Catholic monk. That is why Torrance

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226 Loewenich, 135-136.
227 See directly below under “Assurance, the Law and Anfechtung,” for more discussion on the hermeneutical circle.
228 Bayer, 10-11.
says, “But then when he (Luther) saw that the tension between grace and nature ran right through the fabric of the institutional Church, he knew that the only General Council of the Church which would vindicate him would be the final judgement of Christ at His Advent.”

The theology of the cross as central to Luther’s kingdom of faith is about discerning all things properly and not merely about discerning justification. That is why, for example, Luther said, “If we fortify ourselves with this faith, and if with all our hearts we cling to this man Jesus Christ, we shall get a light and a sound judgement that will enable us to make free and certain judgements about every way of life.”

This is particularly so concerning such distinguishing or “judging” between the two kingdoms. With regards to either church or political authority, two errors arise, as has been highlighted in the thesis statement above. As Torrance also says of Luther,

Ultimately and eschatologically there are not two kingdoms but one, though it is of the utmost importance to distinguish the two kingdoms in this world. To confuse the two kingdoms together, Luther held, is the great mark of Antichrist. That confusion may be brought about either by the subordination of the spiritual kingdom to the worldly kingdom as among the Turks, or by the subordination of the worldly kingdom to the spiritual, as in the Papacy, but whether the movement comes from the one side or the other it is really the same act of the devil, for what he seeks to do in each instance is to gain the mastery by anticipating the final judgment. That is the very acme of sin.

Eschatological faith is the only antidote to either error as described above by Torrance. Luther saw this as clearly as he saw the doctrines of imputation and of the simul iustus et peccator. He saw all of these concerns as one issue, so to speak, because for Luther the cross represents God’s judgement on the present order. It is the coming of God to judge sin, death, hell, Satan, the world and all who pervert the ways of God on the earth. Only faith as made lively in its

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229 Torrance, “The Eschatology of the Reformation,” 42.
antithesis of *Anfechtung* and the cross can be thus inclined to not co-mingle inappropriately the two aspects of God’s chosen rule on earth in the present order. In the present time, faith alone preserves the eschatological nature of the church, as it awaits the Parousia and the final judgement. At this point we can say that Aquinas’ understanding of faith “informed by love,” in that it is not eschatological in nature *as is* Luther’s, fails to do this. In this manner, justification by faith is a critique of the present order, including the Church, and not merely a soothing of the conscience of believers by means of the doctrine of the assurance of salvation. That is precisely why Luther anticipated that great reform in the Catholic Church would occur by the promulgation of the doctrine of justification, as noted in the thesis statement. It is also why, as Bayer notes, Cardinal Cajetan saw Luther’s doctrine of the assurance of salvation as representing more than a mere personal conviction concerning assurance. He saw it as reformatory for all things existing in the church up to that time. As Bayer says, “What is the basis for the certainty of salvation? And what does this mean for the understanding of the church? It was these two closely related questions that were in dispute between Luther and Cardinal Cajetan when they met in Augsburg in October of 1518.”232 As Bayer further comments regarding Luther’s hearing before Cardinal Cajetan, “Luther’s report shows how the hearing began with this understanding of faith and then moved to the question of the authority of Rome. In view of Luther’s understanding of word and faith, Cajetan perceptively declares: ‘This means constructing a new church.’”233 However, although as indicated in the thesis statement, Luther’s writings warrant an in-depth investigation of justification in relation to the doctrine of the Church, this lies beyond our immediate concern. What is pertinent here is that

232 Bayer, 2-3.
233 Ibid., 5.
Luther’s assessment of the radical nature implied in his doctrine of justification, along with its ensuing assurance of salvation—that it would lead to the reform of the Church—was also an opinion shared by Luther’s “opponent,” Cajetan. We will now finish this chapter on Luther by examining the role of the assurance of salvation in our discussion.

3.7 Assurance of Salvation, the Law and Anfechtung

Luther often speaks pastorally about the “comfort of conscience” and when he does, this is primarily in reference to the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and of being in a state of grace with its ensuing effects of the assurance of one’s salvation. However, to truly contextualize this concern of the assurance of salvation, of which a pertinent quotation has been given in the thesis statement, we need to understand its place in Luther’s Anfechtung theology. Again, the dual concern Luther has for both the glory of God and the peace of God, which are known by faith alone, find their resolution as one is driven to look away from oneself, and towards Christ as crucified “for us.” Assurance of salvation is no mere afterthought to Luther’s theology, but it is a guiding light of the hermeneutical circle existent between both the theological and phenomenal worlds, or between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world. Simply put, without the assurance of salvation, Luther did not think that one could speak authoritatively about anything theological.234 Here Luther is not out to dispute orthodoxy, but to state rather that God’s proper work (opus proprium) must become every Christian’s personal possession by faith, or else Christians have little if anything to “assure consciences” with or to speak theologically about. Luther’s stress on Christ as “present in faith,” is primarily about

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234 See Appendix: Certainty: C.
assuring that one has obtained personally this “treasure of Christ.” This is evidential of Luther’s pastoral theological orientation, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. However, Luther was not an armchair theologian, since during his life he had every right to think that at any time he could be martyred for his theological convictions. Therefore, the assurance of salvation for Luther concerned a great spiritual battle. In his mind, and based upon it, souls hang in the balance, tilting either towards heaven or towards hell. Assurance of salvation, contrary to medieval and Catholic theology at large, places the end at the beginning of the Christian life. The kingdom of God has truly come and it is not the structure of the Catholic Church or the Papacy. As was said at the beginning of the paper, in Christ perfect righteousness has come at the judgement of the cross. But Luther saw that to be “in Christ,” who is this perfect End in Himself, is to be “perfect” ourselves as found “in Him.” Imputed righteousness means no less than that we are finished with the Law, sin, death, unrighteousness and wrath. As Luther says, “And where He (Christ) is: there the Law, sin, wrath, and death have no place. In their stead there is present now nothing but grace, righteousness, joy, life, and a filial confidence in the Father, who is now placated, gracious, and reconciled.”235 All this is a “total state,” and all this is the theological world of which Luther speaks concerning justification by faith alone. It occurs only in the eschatological light of the *simul iustus et peccator*. In this passage by Luther, realized eschatology is the focus and hence he says “there is present now.” The forensic end of imputation, as mentioned earlier by Torrance, can here be seen as the only grounds of the assurance of salvation. Therefore, assurance of salvation has no less than this as its foundation. It is only possible because this new existence of the kingdom of Christ has come

to us, as we have been found in the *ex nihilo* of the *Anfechtung* to which the Law, the world, suffering, sin and death have driven us. Ultimately, this alien work of the hidden God drives us to Christ Himself and then we are done with the Law, sin, the world, the Devil and death.

Luther for example said, “After the Law has humbled, terrified, and completely crushed you, so that you are on the brink of despair, then see to it that you know how to use the Law correctly; for its function and use is not only to disclose the sin and wrath of God but also to drive us to Christ.”

Luther further said, “For although the Law is the best of all things in the world, it still cannot bring peace to a terrified conscience but makes it even sadder and drives it to despair.” Ultimately it leads to the *Anfechtung* described above. That is its purpose. Luther still retains its positive purpose on earth, but only for civil righteousness. Theologically it is “finished” and done away with. Its purpose is to “drive us to Christ.” In such a manner, Luther is a supreme dialectical theologian who pits the Law against the Gospel, as this differentiation bears upon the explication of two different realms or kingdoms. That is why Luther said, “Therefore the Law is a minister and a preparation for grace. For God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the afflicted, the oppressed, the desperate, and of those who have been brought down to nothing at all.” Only in this “nothing at all,” does God’s grace of justification “create” in the Word enlivened by the Spirit, bringing faith. The *Anfechtung* means assurance of salvation is not based on experience, inherent righteousness, holiness, the Law, the Church as God’s kingdom on earth, and whatever else pertains to the worldly kingdom. As Luther says, “And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us away from ourselves and

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236 Ibid., 315.
237 Ibid., 5.
238 Ibid., 314.
places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is on the promise and the truth of God which cannot deceive." It is the extra nos basis of our justification alone which assures us of our salvation and it is the Word of the promise of Christ and the hearing of faith alone which bring this. The “right knowledge of God” from the heart, as mentioned earlier, is here “the truth of God,” that by the preaching of His Word, in His Son and “outside ourselves,” we are snatched away to the theological world of the kingdom of Christ: in this way, namely, in Christo, we are justified.

What is the final result for Luther, practically, of his doctrine of justification? He said, “Afterwards, when Christ has thus been grasped by faith and I am dead to the Law, justified from sin, and delivered from death, the devil, and hell through Christ then I do good works, love God, give thanks, and practice love toward my neighbour. But this love or the works that follow faith do not form or adorn my faith, but my faith forms and adorns love.” This is the whole point of keeping justification separate from sanctification. Therefore, Luther in many pertinent respects sits opposite to Aquinas on the discussion of the justification debate. The End has come in Christ, and all works, even through “grace,” do nothing to justify us. We love out of sheer freedom, even as we are loved in the sheer freedom of God’s grace and love in Christ crucified for us. In that freedom we also wait for the full effects of righteousness. My primary argument here and I wish it not to be missed, is that the only basis for “this freedom” which we now have is the extra nos pro nobis basis of our justification. The assurance of

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239 Ibid., 387.
240 Ibid., 161.
salvation as taught by Luther is for this primary purpose; namely, to testify within the heart of
the Christian by the Spirit, that we are trusting in Christ’s *extra nos* work for us as our “sole”
justification. Although, the new Finnish interpretation of Luther acknowledges the theology of
the cross, it seems it does not fully appreciate its connection with imputation. As such, *unio
cum Christo* amounts to the same problem which Protestants have with Roman Catholicism.
This is the idea of inherent or imparted righteousness as comprising, at least in part,
justification. As soon as one does this, then the “partialness” of imparted righteousness
becomes part of passive righteousness, which ultimately weakens the theological reality of
righteousness, so that one cannot be assured of one’s salvation. On the other hand, only the
total righteousness of the Christian by imputation can bring the full assurance of salvation and
for this reason, when Luther above said that Christian righteousness “is outside us, solely in the
grace of God and in imputation,” we do not err in truly representing him, even as we teach the
same. How else will we console consciences? How else will we give God the glory? The bits
and pieces of grace and righteousness that imparted righteousness brings is not enough to
ensure assurance. For Luther, certainty of salvation is essential to the whole Christian life and
to being able to speak theologically about anything. *Theosis* also falls short with its stress on
participation in the being and attributes of God, for ultimately our transformation is never
finished and “sure” and hence neither is our justification; and so also here the assurance of
salvation is potentially wanting, although the forensic elements of the Finnish interpretation
offset this to some extent. Just as in Catholicism, where sanctification dictates an
understanding of justification by its lack of separation with it, so also in the New Finnish
interpretation of Luther, Christ “within us” as inseparable from Christ “for us,” (unification by
the supposed *donum* and gift distinctions respectively)\textsuperscript{241} determines the understanding of justification. The end result is a lack of assurance in the former and a potential tendency to the same lack in the latter.

\textsuperscript{241} Tuomo Mannermaa, *Union with Christ*, 38. “Forgiveness and indwelling of God are inseparable in the person of Christ, who is present in faith. In that sense, in Luther’s theology, justification and *theosis* as participation in God are also inseparable.”
Chapter 4

Conclusion and Finishing Thoughts

4.1 Justification, Soteriological Gradualism and Hope

In conclusion of our study, it has been my intention, in showing Luther’s order of salvation with sanctification as an outflow or fruit of justification, to establish an important difference between his soteriology and Aquinas’. To put it another way, Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone is the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, because of such an order of salvation. This order signals justification as a total, complete and perfect event, in essence accomplished, when Jesus said, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). It is thus realized eschatology. On the other hand, Aquinas’ preference to continue in Aristotle’s and Augustine’s philosophy and soteriology, means in essence that justification is dependent on sanctification. Ironically, Protestant theology has also fallen prey to the same error. Hunsinger, in drawing upon Sauter’s work, says that “later Protestant theology typically came to see sanctification as the ‘completion’ of justification, and eventually as its virtual replacement. Soteriological gradualism thus reasserted itself in a way that made it difficult to distinguish ‘the article by which the church stands or falls’ from the tendencies of traditional Catholicism.”

Furthermore, when the metaphysics of being (ontology) becomes the point of reference from which we do theology, such a result is inevitable. Does the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther avoid these pitfalls? My argument is, “no.” However, and in resonance with the New Finnish interpretation, I have said Luther is an ontologist, but not in a philosophical sense such

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as in Plato or in the metaphysics of the doctrine of *theosis*, as held by Eastern Orthodoxy. For the New Finnish Interpretation to imply that the traditional German interpretation of Luther’s imputation is one-sided,\(^{243}\) because in their estimation it is either less Christological or less “real” in its attitude towards participation with Christ’s Presence, is to betray a bias towards a phenomenal ontology and epistemology, which is held as more “real” than a theological ontology and epistemology.\(^{244}\) Who is to say where exactly Christ’s Presence is more “real,” whether in the “heavenly” or the “earthly” “worlds” which Luther taught?\(^{245}\) As Luther above says, the “how” of Christ’s presence, remains a mystery. Again, as with Aquinas, all this is prone to the assumption that nature and grace in their interrelatedness are more continuous than discontinuous, as we have argued above with respect to Aquinas’ anthropology. The Eastern Orthodox influence inevitably brings with it the notion that original sin is not an issue. Hence, the New Finnish Interpretation’s ontological bent, despite their general admittance of Luther’s forensic theology, will inevitably be leaning towards ontological participation “in us.” To nuance this considerably, I have argued that Luther is an ontologist in the sense of the theological world of the *regnum Christi* and as such his primary focus in justification is not ontological participation “in us.” Union with Christ or participation for Luther always puts the stress on Christ’s participation with us and “for us.” However, secondarily and yet importantly, Christ’s presence formally by faith, is also vital to Luther as the effect of justification. As such, I am steering a course that acknowledges ontology, but keeps this in check against Luther’s two kingdoms stress, so that what we are speaking of is primarily a theological world. Furthermore, 

\(^{243}\) Braaten, *Union with Christ*, vii-x, 163.  
\(^{244}\) Mannermaa, *Union with Christ*, 37. Here Mannermaa equates the word “formal” from *LW* 26:29-130, thrice as “real.” “Reality” is thus phenomenally based for him.  
\(^{245}\) “Lectures on Galatians,” *LW* 26: 8.
Luther’s conceptualization of stepping out of the theological and heavenly world into the phenomenal or earthly one sets this whole discussion in an eschatological light. Kolb and Arand agree with this assessment, when they say, “The Christian possesses the complete righteousness of Christ—possessing it as one’s own—and reenters creation in order to serve. This view of growth affirms that we never leave behind the need for the total righteousness of Christ because the righteousness of Christ is the very power of sanctification.” As Forde says, “the absolutely forensic character of justification renders it effective—justification actually kills and makes alive. It is, to be sure, ‘not only’ forensic, but that is the case only because the more forensic it is the more effective it is!” This is Forde’s answer given so as to counteract the Catholic theology of being formally “made righteous.” (However, both perspectives are open to critique as to their formal effectiveness.) Imputation, as Torrance earlier said, is realized eschatology. Thus the kingdom has come and we are in it. The *in nobis* participation of Christ thus never occurs without this *extra nos* participation as its basis. More specifically, for Luther, it is always the case that the *in nobis* participation comes as an outflow of the imputation of Christ’s alien and our passive righteousness. This occurs after the *extra nos* existence of the theological world allows such an *in nobis* participation. What is the point of making such distinctions and establishing this priority in Luther of imputation over participation *in nobis*? The point is to establish clearly that sanctification (fruits of passive righteousness for Luther, which above also includes a “new heart” or renewal) can now go forward as it should, without its interference into or upon justification. Sanctification has nothing to do with justification,

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246 Kolb and Arand, 125.
except that it establishes it as true for the Christian, and that it is ever pursued in the light of its
dependence on justification. As such we merit nothing but rather “make our calling and
election sure” (II Pet 1:10) by seeing the fruits of righteousness flow into the phenomenal
(earthly) world from the heavenly one. The flow is from the alien *extra nos* and passive
righteousness of the Christian *in Christo*, to the formal present Christ *in nobis*, and then through
“us” into the earthly world.

Therefore, the general lesson we can take from this study, comes in terms of the topic
of hope. Our hope as Christians is first of all not grounded in the transcendent metaphysics of
being, wherein justification is a type of “boost in the arm” which sets us on our happy way to
the “Highest Good” of God, as we sanctify ourselves for this good. Certainly, Aquinas is of great
value in many respects, not the least being his practicality towards our sanctification as
Christians. But with regards to justification Luther offers us eschatological faith hidden under
its opposite of *Anfechtung*, grounded in the eschatological reality of the Christian as *simul
iustus et peccator*. Sauter says concerning this reality of the *simul iustus et peccator*, that “in
this way the doctrine of justification is instruction in the hope of faith.”248 As such, three issues
regarding hope are evident. The first is our utter hopelessness in our selves, whether in our
philosophy, our ethics, our intellect, our sanctity or our ingenuity. Within this hopelessness we
become aware that even our understanding of God is “hidden” and hence our hopelessness is
only intensified to immense proportions. Secondly, our only genuine hope is Jesus Christ in His
act of imputation for us. As such, He is the “coming God,” again and again, in the three

moments of perfect past, present and the final future.249 This leads to hope’s third element, namely, that we await the full manifestation of the “first fruits” which we have received now as a down payment. We ought to look, watch, pray and work in the Lord, as though the end were coming soon. Our hope is not grounded in any form of self-transcendence via injections of grace *in nobis*, but rather it is hope that is sustained horizontally and historically, that God will redeem us as we are as humans, from all that we need such redemption for. The *simul iustus et peccator* is a realistic testament of both what we have and have not yet received in our redemption. Hence, we are “just” in just this way.

4.2 Luther’s “New Doing” and Ontology

To finish, I wish to leave open the question this paper holds in its title. Does Luther’s doctrine of justification stand in a different light from Aquinas’? I have answered “yes” but I have not focused on defining the extent of incompatibility between them. Our comparisons were primarily done in chapter three on Luther, as well as throughout the discussion to a lesser degree. However, I would like to address ethics as the last comments of this paper. The “new doing” that Luther upholds, which he says confounds scholasticism and Aristotelian ethics, is only a new doing, because it is grounded in a “new being.” Luther is thus an ontologist in the sense that from the drivenness of our *Anfechtung*, wherein the cross counteracts by negation, self-confidence, we are *vis-a-vis* co-crucifixion with Christ, raised as new creatures.250 The

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249 See Appendix: Advent: A.
250 See in “Lectures on Galatians,” *LW* 26: 284, where in the divine marriage metaphor Luther bespeaks this theological ontology and its basis for our new doing. “By this fortunate exchange with us He took upon Himself our sinful person and granted us His innocent and victorious Person.” As Luther later explicates, in this exchange we say to Christ, “I am Thy sin, Thy death, Thy wrath of God, Thy hell. But Thou are my Righteousness, Blessing, Life, Grace of God, and Heaven.... we are His curse,” *LW* 26:292.
theological world is for Luther, always accessed by way of the “dark faith” as described above.

Dark faith is then the existential grounds of our new doing, which occurs from the *ex nihilo* of the *Anfechtung*, or stated differently, from the alien work of God which renders faith as God’s proper work, not merely *extra nos* but also *in nobis*. In a manner of speaking, *Anfechtung* means that this new being occurs simultaneously alongside our non-being of the *ex nihilo* of our sin, despair, suffering and death. In other words, we only speak of ontology as the total state of our righteousness in Christ, which occurs simultaneously in the non-being of our earthly existence and its total state therein as sinners. When Jesus said, “let the dead bury the dead,” (Mt 8:22) this bespeaks our non-being as sinners *in se*, which for Luther always remains true of Christians whenever they consider themselves outside of Christ. This is indicative, that ontology for Luther concerns the “new doing,” as it constitutes the reality of true freedom, and which stands in contradistinction to the “bondage of the will” experienced “in our selves.” This is then theologically-based rather than philosophically-oriented ontology. McCormack agrees with this, when he says

In truth, forensicism (rightly understood) provides the basis for an alternative theological ontology to the one presupposed in Roman and Eastern soteriology. Where this is not seen, the result has almost always been the abandonment of the Reformation doctrine of justification on the mistaken assumption that the charge of ‘legal fiction’ has a weight, which in truth, it does not.251

Hence, as long as Luther is explicated in the eschatology of the *simul iustus et peccator*, then discussion of “being” *in Christo* is fitting. We may also discuss sanctification as the fruit(s) of faith, or as Luther put it above, as that love which faith forms and adorns, rather than as the

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faith which love forms and adorns. We may further speak of being partakers of the divine nature (II Pet 2:4), providing this also occurs in the darkness of faith. The cross is ever central to faith and hence Anfechtung is always present to faith’s existence. Faith is hidden under its opposite, wherein theodicy is most diametrically opposed to it as the center of this Anfechtung. As such faith is the “substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). Since faith flourishes in what is not seen, it never exists in that which is most perspicuous, such as the Law of God. It does work through the Law (and love), but remains in nature its opposite. Just as in Paul works are antithetical to faith (Rom 3-4), so in Luther and on the same premise as Paul, faith is antithetical to moral ethics.252 This is the offense of the cross. Here we speak not of faith as “faithfulness,” but rather as that principle to which God renders us empty of self-confidence and self-hope and hence of all self-glorification. Only in this way, can Luther be left as Luther, God be left as God, and Luther’s concern of properly worshipping the “true God,” accomplished.

All ethics are thus to be embraced theologically for the Christian. They are ever centered in the present time in the darkness of faith. Ethics are the concern of faith, only insomuch as they are embraced as part of both the Anfechtung and of the resolution of Anfechtung, as given vis-a-vis faith (trust) in Christ’s work pro nobis on the cross. Active righteousness has its place, as it expresses true faith within this continuous process of the Christian pressing through Anfechtung, from the hidden to the revealed God. But formal righteousness is ours only in part, and only in the mystery implied in the darkness of faith, so that all works are "dark" also. This is to say that what we can properly interpret from a work of righteousness with regards to its

“merit,” is simply beyond human knowledge. It is an expression of “faith working through love” (Gal 5:6). To seek holiness, which is a fruit of justifying faith, is to seek to walk in the darkness of faith. There is thus no direct access to Christ's Presence in nobis, except through this self-emptying faith of the darkness of the cross. The sacraments also show Christ to us, but never “in themselves” but instead always in faith (dark) and as illuminated by the Word.\textsuperscript{253} Here, there is no room for boasting, nor are there any works of our righteousness in which to stand, but it is simply Christ crucified for us. A new doing does exist. A theological doing as Luther says. This new doing comes only from our new being in the theological world of Christ’s kingdom. Here there must remain the constant working of the cross to maintain this new doing. Since holiness is ever the outflow of this dark faith, Anfechtung is ever the cross existentially known to the Christian. Luther’s understanding of the Spirit comes into play just here. The Spirit effects and keeps effecting our justification by faith alone.\textsuperscript{254} This allows holiness to continue in order to testify to the eschatological event of justification with its imputed righteousness. As this testimony is made sure in the midst of trials and suffering, Christian hope awaits its full redemption. This is indeed, “the hope of righteousness,” (Gal 5:5) that one day “a new heavens and a new earth” will come, “wherein dwells righteousness” (II Pet 3:13). Then the final eschatological effects of imputation will occur and eternal life, the result of God’s work of judgement, righteousness, love and grace as manifested in Christ on the cross pro nobis, will be “fully realized.”

\textsuperscript{253} In “Defense and Explanation of All the Articles,” LW 32: 14, Luther says, “it is not baptism, but faith in baptism that saves.”
\textsuperscript{254} See Appendix: Advent: B.
APPENDIX: CERTAINTY

A. See “Lectures on Galatians,” LW 26: 376, where Luther says, “Therefore we must not doubt that the Holy Spirit dwells in us; but we must be sure and acknowledge that we are, as Paul says, ‘a temple of the Holy Spirit’ (I Cor 6:19).” This is diametrically opposed to Garrigou-Lagrange’s interpretation of Aquinas, concerning self-knowledge as to whether or not a Christian is in a state of grace, and who as a representative of a major strand of traditional Thomists, states that “without special revelation, we cannot know with genuine certitude whether He dwells in us or not,” in Reality, 309.

B. I do not propose to claim I have solved the “certainty” debate in Luther’s theology. My position is one of an informed naivety, since in my opinion, only with “less certainty” can one claim Luther did not preach the “assurance of salvation.” For the view I take here, see Oswald Bayer, “What is Evangelical? The Continuing Validity of the Reformation” in Lutheran Quarterly, vol. XXV (2011):1-15. For a view which dwells on the limits of Luther’s certainty, see Sven Grosse, “Salvation and the Certitude of Faith: Luther on Assurance,” Pro Ecclesia, 20 no 1 (Wint2011): 64-85. See also for further discussion, Robin Bruce Barnes, “The Assurance of Salvation,” Lutheran Quarterly, ns 3 no 2 (Sum 1989): 209-222.

Although in Luther’s Lectures on Romans, in the gloss of Rom 8:16, Luther’s reference to Ecclesiastes 9:1 indicates a scholastic view of uncertainty; yet in Luther’s Lectures on Galatians 1535, and as a more mature theologian, he says of the sophists, “To prove and support this wicked error of theirs, they used the statement of Solomon
in Eccl. 9:1: ‘The righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hands of God; whether it is love or hate, man does not know.’ Some of them applied this statement to the hate of God in the future, others to that in the present; but neither group understood Solomon.... the chief point of all Scripture is that we should not doubt but hope, trust, and believe for a certainty that God is merciful, kind, and patient.... But no matter how much the whole Gospel sets this forth everywhere or how many times it teaches it, this one statement of Solomon, misunderstood at that, was worth more... than all the promises and comfort of all Scripture, yes, than Christ Himself, ” LW 26:386.

C. See Robin Bruce Barnes, “The Assurance of Salvation in Luther,” Lutheran Quarterly, ns 3 no 2 (Sum 1989), 218. Barnes, in response to Bayer’s so-called “dispassionate” view, says that “If we are to avoid that reductio ad absurdum, we need to recognize that whether we construe his subjective sense of assurance negatively as ‘ego-centric,’ positively as ‘theocentric,’ or more or less neutrally as ‘existential,’ Luther saw that sense of assurance as a necessary basis for any theological certainty whatever.”

APPENDIX: ADVENT

A. Our study has not had time to focus on the “coming daily” aspect of Luther’s pneumatology and soteriology which bespeaks again the eschatological character of justification. For example Luther says, “Christ comes every day; through the Word of the Gospel faith also comes every day.... But Christ comes spiritually as we gradually acknowledge and understand more and more what has been granted to us by Him.”
Peter 3:18 says: ‘Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,’” LW 26:351. Note here that this “coming again” differs eschatologically from the New Finnish’s theosis emphases of participation. My conclusions regarding the three tenses of justification also concur with Hunsinger’s analysis. See Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace, 299n.32. “Note also that although righteousness is being instilled gradually, it also comes to us whole and entire by grace, again and again, bringing daily forgiveness, daily assurance, and above all, daily participation in Christ, so that through faith we are always completely ‘one with him, having the same righteousness as he’ (LW 31:298).”

B. See Lectures on Galatians, LW 26:360, where Luther speaks of the continual coming of Christ to the believer, obtained through the operation of the Spirit. “Secondly, that same Christ who once came in time comes to us in spirit every day and every hour. With His own blood, to be sure, He redeemed and sanctified all men just once. But because we are not yet perfectly pure remnants of sin still cling to our flesh and the flesh wars against the spirit, therefore He comes spiritually every day; day by day He completes the time set by the Father more and more, abrogating and abolishing the Law.” The Spirit continuously brings justification to us, as a completed and perfect past event, by the blood of Christ.
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Second Vatican Council

*Smalcald Articles*

*The Condemnations of the Reformation*

Thirty-nine Articles

*Westminster Confession of Faith*

**Book Reviews**